

## Front-End Software... what's best for MY business?

With Thomas Electronics' CREW System powering both the Netprinter and Miléca digital photographic printers, there are many options available to provide the front end to your workflow. The CREW System is designed to be open, so that no matter how your current workflow is put together outputting to your printer is simple.

No matter how good your printer is, you can't make money with it unless you can efficiently control the image workflow feeding that printer. Realizing how important this is to any customer, Thomas Electronics offers several robust options for front-end systems that accommodate the needs of many of our customers, and several open methods for submitting images from 3<sup>rd</sup> party programs.

Your choices are open... here's what we have to offer.

### **1. Standard CREW System (included with printer)**

The CREW System itself offers several methods of submitting images to your printer.

Included with the basic system is "CREW Task Generator", which can be used to put images together into batches, set any necessary sizing, image processing, and backprinting options, and submit them to the system. This is a useful tool for printing multiple images from existing image files, and provides some useful image processing options including: automatic center-cropping, resizing, sharpening and smoothing, and rotation. This allows images to be printed in different aspect ratios without having to manually edit them in a graphics program like Photoshop.

Optional CREW Modules include the CREW Plug-In for Adobe Photoshop, which allows direct export and printing of images from within Photoshop, without the need to flatten or even save images before printing. For users who work primarily in Photoshop, this is a convenient tool that is quick and efficient. Currently, this module is available only for the Macintosh.

Additionally, the Graphx RasterPlus Network Print Software for CREW provides several useful interfaces to the CREW System. This program is optional with all Netprinter 812's sold in North America, for Miléca and Netprinter Digital Stations. See section 2 below for details.

### **2. Graphx RasterPlus Network Print Software for CREW (optional with Netprinter 812, NPDS and Miléca)**

This application is a PostScript Level 3 RIP (Raster Image Processor) that provides significant functionality to the CREW System. Provided as optional with the Netprinter 812 (in North America), for the Miléca and Netprinter Digital Station, this tool provides 3 separate and powerful methods of printing to the CREW System and your digital printer.

- "Network Printer" interface  
RasterPlus can act as a normal Windows network printer, allowing users to connect to it from any Windows or Macintosh computer on the network. From any "printer-aware" application, simply use the "File → Print" command to print to the CREW System automatically the same way you would print to your laser printer or inkjet printer. (additional software may be required to connect with Macintosh computers)
- Image-based hotfolder interface  
If you already have an imaging application that can output one of the many supported file formats that RasterPlus can print, you can seamlessly integrate

your workflow with the CREW System. RasterPlus allows you to set up one hotfolder for each “print queue” you have (and you can set up multiple print queues for each printer). Image files saved into these hotfolders will automatically be processed and submitted to the CREW System for printing using the default settings for that Queue. This is a convenient and efficient method of connecting your printer with many 3<sup>rd</sup> party imaging systems.

- **Direct application interface**

Finally, images can be selected and printed directly from the RasterPlus user interface. Although the two options above provide complete automation, it is sometimes desirable to directly control your printing from the “drivers seat”. All options are available from any of the three interface methods.

RasterPlus also has powerful package-printing capabilities. Through any of the interfaces above, users can select a “package” that they would like to produce from their images, and RasterPlus will automatically format, crop, rotate, and size images into that package, and submit them to the CREW System for printing.

With the optional “PackagePlus” application, you can even design your own packages, including bitmap overlays and graphics! This is the ideal solution for labs that need to be able to produce traditional package prints, along with customized graphics, trader cards, and specialty items.

### **3. *Timestone NeoPack, NeoPack+, NeoPack Pro, NeoGroup, NeoComposite***

Timestone offers several powerful imaging packages that directly link to the CREW System for outputting images to your digital printer. Here are only a few of the many features of this optional front end.

- **Network printer driver**
  - Allows all Timestone applications, as well as many 3<sup>rd</sup> party programs to print directly and automatically to the CREW System. This robust driver automatically monitors the status of jobs while they are being processed to ensure that you are kept up-to-date on that status of your production.
- **NeoPack, NeoPack+, and NeoPack Pro**
  - This solution is intended to provide high-volume production of package prints, including overlays, frames, designs, and custom text. These features allow simple and efficient production of all of your package needs, including trader cards, magazine covers, and traditional packages.
  - NeoPack+ and Pro offer full database-driven production, automating the entire printing process, automatically inserting images, text, and graphics while outputting to your printer.
- **NeoGroup**
  - A powerful database driven production system for all of your group imaging needs. This package automatically produces traditional group photos, but adds the capability of including custom designs, frames, graphics, and automatically placed names and text! Group photos have never been so easy, and have never looked so good!
- **NeoComposite**
  - Similarly to NeoGroup and NeoPack+/Pro, this database driven application automates the production of your composite photos. Names, graphics, and text are automatically positioned on the image, and pages are dynamically laid out to best use the available space.

All of the above applications link together to create a seamless system for all of your portrait and social imaging needs. These applications are also very reasonably priced for the functionality they provide.

#### **4. Express Digital Sport & Event**

Express Digital has enabled their powerful software applications with the ability to print directly to the CREW System, creating a seamless and complete solution for on-site and studio photographers! Sport & Event is a complete system that handles the photography session through a digital camera, and follows through to packaging and output to your printer. Features include presentation capabilities, simple ordering processes, graphic overlays and text on images, automatic package printing, and much more.

This system also ties directly into Express Digital's online e-commerce solutions for selling your images via the Internet.

Tailored for sports and event photography, this is ideal for growing your business to the next level, and powering your on-site printing capabilities.

#### **5. Express Digital Portrait & Wedding**

Similar to the Sport & Event package, this system provides full input-to-output control of your photographic workflow. Interfacing to many digital cameras, you can use this suite of applications while connected to the camera in studio, or download a set of images taken on site with your digital camera.

Including full presentation and sales capabilities, special image effects, and package printing functions, this system is all you need to drive your portrait or wedding business. Seamless integration with the CREW System for printing makes this an excellent choice to drive the front end of your imaging business.

As with Sport & Event, this package connects directly to Express Digital's online e-commerce services so that you can provide online viewing, selection, and ordering of your photos.

#### **6. Other 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Systems**

Thomas Electronics realizes that our customers often already have a digital production system that they would like to use to print to our printers, or that they have special needs that require 3<sup>rd</sup> party software.

Many developers already have software that will work with the CREW System. CREW provides backward compatibility with applications that are designed to work with our older "Job Controller" software system. These applications should work as-is with the CREW System.

To accommodate these needs, there are several simple ways to use 3<sup>rd</sup> party programs to produce images for the CREW System to print. Depending on your needs, and the level of automation you would like, one of the following methods should provide the workflow you require.

- Automatic hotfolder printing through Graphx RasterPlus
  - If your 3<sup>rd</sup> party program can output any of the supported image file formats into the Graphx RasterPlus image hotfolder, images can be automatically printed to the CREW System
- Network printer interface through Graphx RasterPlus or Timestone driver
  - If your 3<sup>rd</sup> party program can print to a normal Windows printer, images can automatically be printed to the CREW System
- Batch printing through CREW Task Generator
  - If your 3<sup>rd</sup> party program can output any of the supported file formats for CREW, you can use Task Generator to create batches of images for printing. Images can be resized, rotated, sharpened or smoothed, or automatically center-cropped during printing.