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How the Austrian State Printing House balances security, efficiency and citizen convenience with their new eID personalization and distribution process

by Carl-Otto Künnecke, Otto Künnecke

The personalization and distribution process of security documents like ID-1 ID cards or ID-3 passports differs quite widely from country to country around the world. For numerous reasons, most countries prefer a centralized personalization system instead of instant issuing. These reasons stem from security issues, in particular regarding fraud and problems associated with keeping the internal security standards all over the country. Especially with the new electronic ID documents, which are based on biometric data, a microprocessor chip and latest laser engraving technology, a central issuing center has more advantages.

Centralized ePassport personalization

If an issuer opts for centralized personalization, then the distribution of the finished product becomes an issue. The problems that need to be solved center around security during transport and informing the citizen that his ID document has arrived at a local office. The convenience for the citizen, who has to return to the local office a second time to get his ID document also has to be considered.

The most common way to distribute passports is by sending the personalized document to a local authority where the citizen picks it up personally. This is a has-

sle for the applicant, especially in rural areas. Mailing ID cards or passports to the "customer" is not at all common, even in those countries where bank cards are regularly mailed to the client.

The "Austrian way"

Austria has gone a different way to serve its customers with the newest ID document technologies and at the same time to facilitate the communication between public authorities and citizens.

Based on the high levels of customer satisfaction seen with instant issuing at local branches as was customary with the old ID documents, the government of Austria was searching for a way to ensure higher security through central issuing while reducing costs, time and effort for the distribution of the new ID documents both for the local authorities and the citizen.

The "Austrian way" – which has had a high impact on the distribution processes of such documents in other countries – meets the needs for a highly secure and effective distribution method and also considers the convenience for citizens of receiving their new ID card or passport directly at their homes.

ePassports directly to the home

In Austria, all ID documents

are now personalized centrally and distributed to citizens exclusively by the Austrian State Printing House (OeSD). The local authorities transfer the applicant's personal data to OeSD and the citizen conveniently receives their new document at home by registered mail within a few days. The recipient signs a return receipt which is then forwarded to the authorities. This acknowledgement letter proves that the citizen got his new ID.

The customized solution for Austria's specific requirements was designed by Germany-based Otto Kuennecke. With this innovation, OeSD has now been successfully mailing passports and ID cards to citizens for nearly two years. With the use of an Otto Kuennecke C 3000 mailing machine, OeSD can now read and verify the ID-1 or ID-3 documents and print a personal letter for each citizen. For security reasons, ID documents and the letters are verified again before matching. OeSD uses specific envelopes with an acknowledgement letter attached to the front side of the envelope. After inserting the ID document, carrier and enclosures, the envelopes are verified again with the help of a scanner which reads a specific barcode through a window in the envelope. With this verification the actual weight of each single envelope is automatically counted and checked. In this way, missing enclosures are detected and the letters are
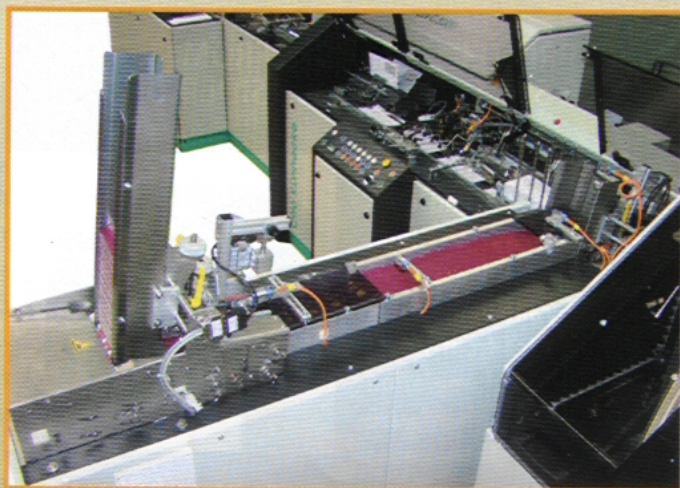
diverted to manual inspection.

In the next step, a high quality 600 dpi ink-jet printer prints the customer's address and return address on the acknowledgment letter. By means of a video system the printed data are verified again and the finished envelopes are sorted to different couriers.

The technology is highly flexible, employs highest security measures and can be tailored according to each customer's specific requirements. The OeSD also processes

the new Austrian ID card and driver's licenses (which have a credit card format) with the MAILok Integration C3000.

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