



Marketing to an Audience of One

Demystifying Variable-Data Printing



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ParticleLogic
by MONTAGE GRAPHICS INC

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Marketing to an Audience of One; Demystifying Variable Data Printing

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Contents

1. Introduction

Marketing: the old way versus the new way

2. A Variable-Data Printing Project

Many people, many messages

3. Unique Personalities

Differences are more than skin deep

4. Database-driven Printing

Rows and columns, records and fields

5. Where's the Data?

Find it, buy it, make it...use it

6. Scrub the Database

Avoid "garbage in, garbage out"

7. Design for Variability

Familiar tools

8. Prepare the Objects

Bits and pieces

9. Link to the Database

Click here for that, and there for this

10. Load the Press

Get ready, get set...

11. The Ink Meets the Paper

Go!

12. HP Digital Offset Quality

Not your grandfather's laser copier

13. Give Us a Call

We can help

14. About Montage Graphics

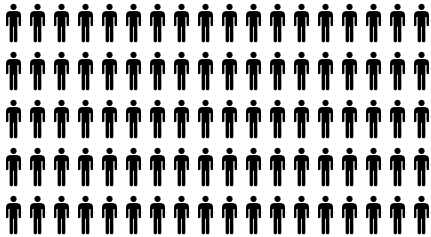
Not Kinko's

1. Introduction

Marketing: the old way versus the new way

Conventional marketing efforts have faced a dilemma: how to appeal to distinctive personalities while necessarily handling them like commodities? While blanket mass-mailings won't be relegated to the dust bin overnight, variable-data printing (VDP) solves the dilemma.

Montage Graphics' marketing and data expertise, combined with Hewlett-Packard digital



Old way: faceless herds.

printing technology, make producing custom-tailored content a reality. As common sense suggests and many case studies have demonstrated, treating people like individuals, not like faceless herds, is the most effective way to increase response rates, generate new business, and maintain customer relationships.



New way: unique personalities.

2. A Variable Data Printing Project

Many people, many messages—one at a time

The hypothetical project illustrated in the following pages is based loosely on a real-world marketing campaign undertaken for a private college by Montage Graphics. The objective of the mailing was to enhance the quality of the college's student population by increasing the pool of qualified applicants.

In preceding years, the college sent out generic mass mailings, hoping that the content was inclusive enough to reach students with varied interests, while not appearing so broad as to look generic and dull. Of course, their brochures, while attractive and appealing, looked like every other school's efforts to achieve the same objective by the same means. Worse, prospective students all got exactly the same representation of the college, regardless of their interests and educational objectives.

With a VDP campaign, the university matched its diverse educational programs and extracurricular activities to the specialized interests of their prospective students, successfully attracting a large pool of qualified applicants.

With this story as an example, follow along to see how VDP projects work, from start to finish.



Variable University.

3. Unique Personalities

Differences are more than skin deep

Different people don't just look different; they have different hobbies, aspirations, styles, etc. Variable-data marketing works by recognizing

the relevant differences and matching them to appropriate content, and presentation style, and motivational incentives.

Amy Ross
Marine Biology
Equestrian
Photography



Samuel Bishop
Architecture
Swimming
Outdoor Rec.



Christina Carson
Pre-med
Track
Music



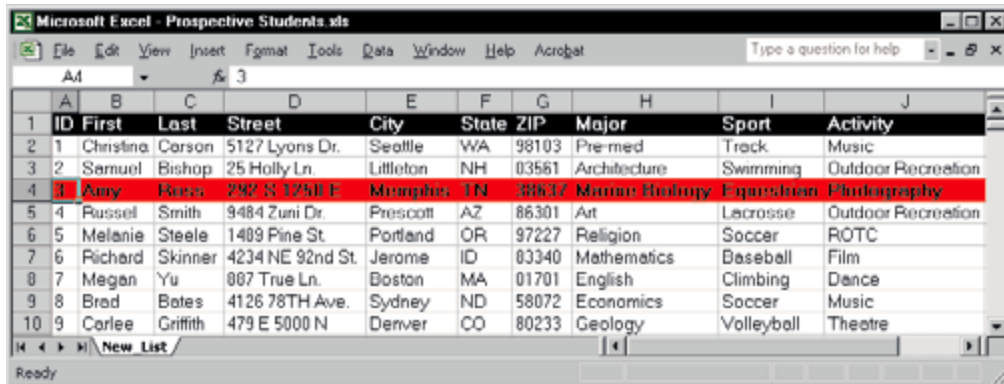
Amy, Samuel, and Christina. Three different degrees, sports, and passions.

4. Database-Driven Printing

Rows and columns, records and fields—they all work

Variable-data printing begins with a database, which is why it's often called database-driven printing. The database contains specific details on each individual that will be used to customize each printed piece.

A VDP project can accept a wide range of spreadsheet and database formats, ranging from Microsoft Excel and Access, to Oracle9i and SQL Server. Before going to press, all formats are converted to tab-delimited text.



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled "Prospective Students.xls". The spreadsheet has ten columns labeled A through J and ten rows numbered 1 through 10. The data is as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	ID	First	Last	Street	City	State	ZIP	Major	Sport	Activity
2	1	Christina	Carson	5127 Lyons Dr.	Seattle	WA	98103	Pre-med	Treck	Music
3	2	Samuel	Bishop	25 Holly Ln.	Littleton	NH	03561	Architecture	Swimming	Outdoor Recreation
4	3	Avery	Rozz	282 S 125th E	Memphis	TN	38637	Music History	Equestrian	Photography
5	4	Russel	Smith	9484 Zuni Dr.	Prescott	AZ	86301	Art	Lacrosse	Outdoor Recreation
6	5	Melanie	Steele	1409 Pine St.	Portland	OR	97227	Religion	Soccer	ROTC
7	6	Richard	Skinner	4234 NE 92nd St.	Jerome	ID	83340	Mathematics	Baseball	Film
8	7	Megan	Yu	887 True Ln.	Boston	MA	01701	English	Climbing	Dance
9	8	Brad	Bates	4126 78TH Ave.	Sydney	ND	58072	Economics	Soccer	Music
10	9	Corlee	Griffith	479 E 5000 N	Denver	CO	80233	Geology	Volleyball	Theatre

A Microsoft Excel database, or table, with ten fields (A through J) and more than nine records.

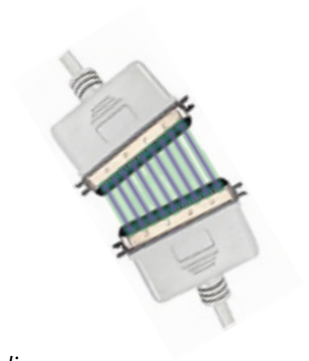
5. Where's the Data?

Find it, buy it, make it...use it

In general, databases are derived from three primary sources: in-house data, purchased data, and solicited data. In-house data includes sales records, donation histories, contact lists, customer-relations records, etc. Purchased data is available from companies that specialize in data collection and processing. Data may also be solicited through conventional or web-based surveys and polls.

Processing, mining, and combining different sources of data may generate a wider and deeper database.

It is even possible to link to live databases in real time.



Data: existing, purchased, solicited...even live.

6. Scrub the Database

Avoid “garbage in, garbage out”

Raw databases aren't always the tidiest and best organized structures. Duplicate records need to be purged, inaccurate fields need to be corrected, invalid information needs to be eliminated, and the records need to be sorted. Some of this

can be accomplished through automation, and some requires a human touch.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	ID	First	Last	Street	City	State	ZIP	Major	Sport	Activity
2	1	Christina	Ch	5127 Lyons Dr.	Seattle	WA	98103	Pre-med	Track	Music
3	2	Sam	Sam	25 Holly Ln.	Littleton	NH	03561	Education	Swimming	Outdoor Recreation
4	3	AMY	Sam	292 S 1250 E	Memphis	TN	38631	Biology	Equestrian	Photography
5	4	Russel	Smith	9484 7 th Dr.	Provo	UT	26301	Art	Lacrosse	Outdoor Recreation
6	5	Melanie	Steele	1000 1 st St.	Idaho	IA	97227	Religion	Soccer	ROTC
7	6	Richard	Sk	12nd St.	Idaho	IA	03340	Mathematics	Baseball	Film
8	7	Megan	Yu	1 st Ave Ln.	Boston	MA	01701	English	Climbing	Dance
9	8	Mel	Steele	1489 Pine St.	Portland	OR	97227	Religion	Soccer	ROTC
10	9	Carlee	Griffith	479 E 5000 N	Denver	CO	80233	Geology	Volleyball	Theatre

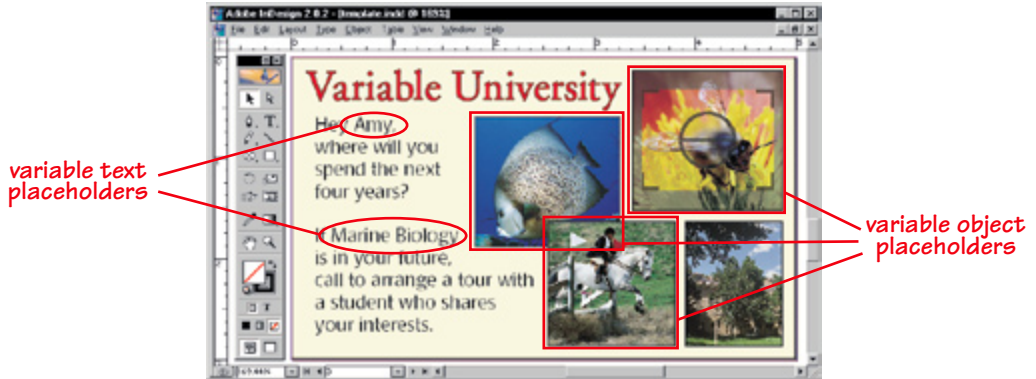
Automated and manual corrections.

7. Design for Variability

Familiar tools

Layouts for variable data jobs begin with templates created with Mac or PC design applications such as QuarkXpress or Adobe InDesign. File formats, procedures, and standards are the same as for jobs prepared for conventional offset printing workflows.

Placeholders are positioned in areas where variable, or dynamic, objects (text, images, illustrations) will flow. Static, or elements common to each printed piece, are placed in the regular fashion.



Template in Adobe InDesign, showing variable object and text placeholders.

8. Prepare the Objects

Bits and pieces

Variable objects are prepared in much the same way as templates. Most conventional file formats are acceptable, including TIFF, EPS, and PDF.

Each object is saved with a unique filename that will be referenced in the database.



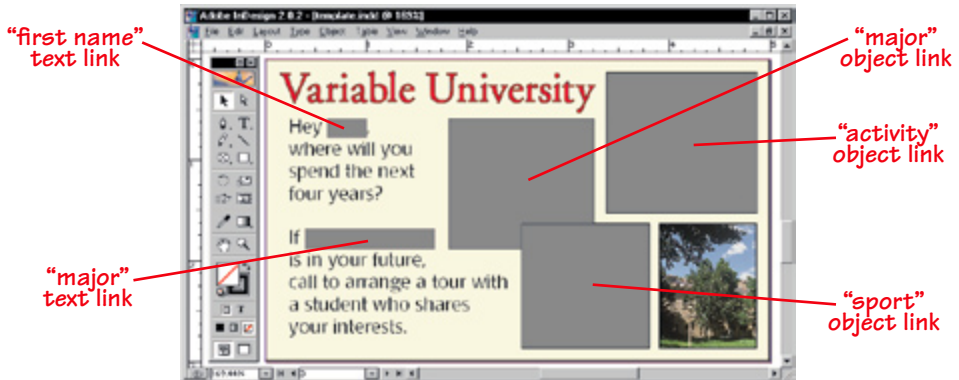
Thumbnails of variable objects.

9. Link to the Database

Click here for that, and there for this

Using Yours Truly Designer®, or a similar application, the dynamic placeholder objects are linked to appropriate fields in the database file. This step can be accomplished by Montage Graphics or by a trained designer.

Once the links are established, the entire job can be soft-proofed, page by page, on screen.



Linked template.

10. Load the Press

Get ready, get set...

The final task before printing the job is to load the template, database, and dynamic objects into the press. A few final test procedures are followed to ensure that the pieces assemble correctly and are ready for printing.



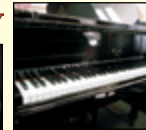
11. The Ink Meets the Paper Go!

Like magic, the press assembles all of the variable and static elements on the fly, automatically building custom-tailored printed pieces for every record in the database.

For direct mailers, the sheets can even be printed in the sequence required to qualify for optimal postage rates.

Variable University

Hey Christina,
where will you
spend the next
four years?



If Pre-med is in
your future, call
to arrange a tour with a
student who shares your
interests.

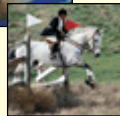


Variable University

Hey Amy,
where will you
spend the next
four years?

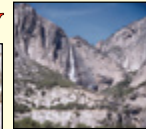
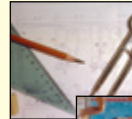


If Marine Biology
is in your future,
call to arrange a tour with
a student who shares
your interests.

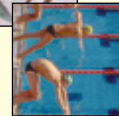


Variable University

Hey Samuel,
where will you
spend the next
four years?



If Architecture is
in your future,
call to arrange a tour with
a student who shares
your interests.



Variable data printing: three pieces for three different people.

12. HP Digital Offset Quality

Not your grandfather's laser copier

Unlike other digital technologies, which are little more than glorified dry-toner laser copiers, HP's wet-ink digital offset technology closely matches the color and appearance of high-quality conventional printing.

You're holding it in your hands.

For precisely matching corporate colors or adding extra "pop," our six-color press is capable of printing true solid spot colors or high-fidelity Indichrome® inks (CMYK plus orange and violet). Only HP digital presses have these capabilities.

With line screens of 145 lpi to 230 lpi, depending on the job, Montage's press will reveal the subtlest details while holding the sharpest dot.



Color? Yeah, we've got color—and detail too.

13. Give Us a Call

We can help

If you would like to learn more about variable-data printing, or give it a try, please give us a call. Montage Graphics is available for consultation and presentations on VDP marketing tactics, project coordination, database management, design considerations, and more.

Contact Montage Graphics:

Toby Gadd, President
Montage Graphics, Inc.
225 North Lemay Ave., Suite 8
Fort Collins, CO 80524
(970) 484-2330

14. About Montage Graphics

Not Kinko's

For over twenty-five years, award-winning Montage Graphics has served the needs of marketing agencies and designers in Colorado. Founded by Bob Coonts in 1976, Montage started as a conventional service bureau and evolved over the years into a one-stop shop for top-notch digital printing and imaging services. President Toby Gadd acquired Montage Graphics in 2001, adding his technical consulting background to the skill-set of an already talented staff.

Services offered by Montage Graphics:

- ParticleLogic personalized marketing
- Short-run digital printing
- On-demand digital printing
- Large-format posters
- High-resolution scans

Printing for an Audience of One: Demystifying Variable-Data Printing is a conceptual introduction to variable-data printing (VDP). Written for advertising and marketing agencies, graphic designers, print buyers, and strategic managers, the text follows a hypothetical VDP job, based on an actual project, from concept through design and printing.

