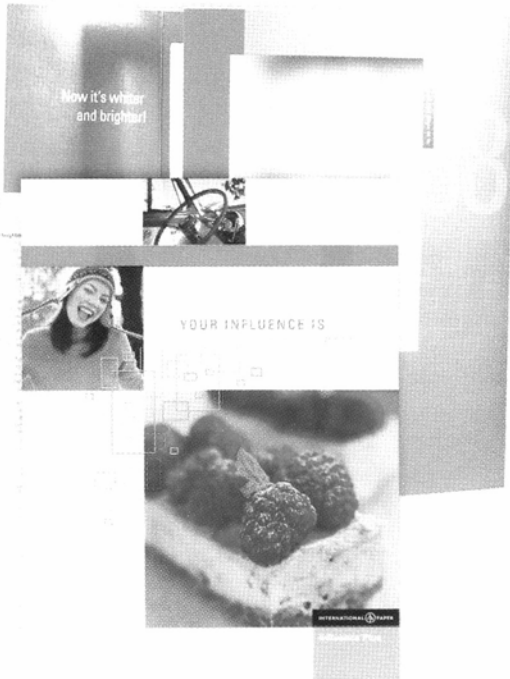


# PAPERWATCH

## Big Rise in Online Paper Buys



One major distributor took in some 700,000 paper orders via its Website in 2006.

**P**aper consumers large and small are moving from spreadsheets and fax lines to PCs and online. Big buyers for multiple plants find providing paper and managing its use is far easier with an online assist. Small shops find online utilities speed repeat orders for stocks they can't inventory.

Some mills and merchants now provide retail outlets and online order systems. Brick-and-mortar outlets work especially well for small orders, often sent via shipping services. Customers can register an account or buy unregistered. (Neenah Paper's purchasing tab from its Internet homepage is a good resource for first-timers.)

Large mills help their largest customers by issuing an XML delivery ticket with each order. This electronic message includes roll weight and number, total weight, billing and delivery information. The XML document can be used in mainframe systems (like EFI, DiMS!, etc.) to feed data to back-end estimating and production scheduling records. Papinet, a paper communication system initiative administered by IDEAlliance, and other such e-documentation schemes, have similar functions

and characteristics.

XML is also easily integrated with commercial management systems, like PaperManager and PaperScanningSolutions, or in-house systems (RR Donnelley uses Roll Inventory, for example). PaperManager is online at several large publishers, catalogers and also retailers who use it to track printing service and paper use at pressrooms for newspaper inserts and mailings. This subscription-based "applet" (required of almost every printer supplying major retailers) can work with existing XML delivery ticket and mainframe program data. Users can order paper, track inventory and excess, create "events," forecast paper consumption and cost.

Recent upgrades include an online calendar (a picture of events on one screen), expanded information and choices for print formats, inclusion of over 4,000 brands and a comparison engine.

Excess paper inventory finds a marketplace at the Go2Paper.com site, newly upgraded to include automated calculators and a processing bar, allowing a more precise look into each offer. A class of dedicated users includes RR Donnelley and large converters. Quebecor World operates its own system for internal trade of excess paper.

PSS from Emsys of Belgium continues its dominance of online paper information transactions in Europe. The system has had some success in the U.S. but primarily for its roll inventory capabilities in tracking paper from mill labels. Most other systems, such as that offered by EFI, require re-labeling of stock once it is received. PSS upgrades include private transactions within multiple print locations for publishers as an add-on feature.

eBuyPaper, still in its infancy, employs an online applet as an easy way to have closed bidding for paper needs, featuring an eBay-type summary screen and direct contact with user-selected suppliers.

Most distributors have online order portals. Unisource and xpedx, the two biggest, have more than 300 outlets for delivery and 250,000 SKUs. xpedx reported growth of over 50% in the last year, to 3.5 million orders in 12 months, 20% through the Website (the rest through direct customer links). Unisource, meanwhile, is making inroads with large commercial and package printers. Domtar has its own network of distribution companies, and independents also have customer systems.

Online: [www.go2paper.com](http://www.go2paper.com), [papermanager.com](http://papermanager.com), [emsysgroup.com](http://emsysgroup.com), [xpedx.com](http://xpedx.com)