

What's New in Metrix 3.0?

LithoTechnics' Metrix version 3.0 is a major release with loads of new features, both on the surface and under the hood. This document lists the main new features.

Mac OS X Support

Metrix version 3.0 is now supported to run on Mac OS X 10.4 and 10.5.

Auto Plan (Max and X-80 Editions Only)

The Auto Plan function is an amazing new feature. It takes a bunch of products that are all on the same stock and calculates the most efficient way to print them, even across multiple layouts. It allows the user to select up to two different presses to produce the jobs and calculates everything based on the user-defined costs of stocks and presses. A whole day's production can be planned and imposed in just minutes.

The Auto Plan function scans the products, considering the various commonalities and differences and provides one or more solutions. Each pass aims to improve on previous calculations until the most efficient method is found.

Drag and Drop

Drag and drop of instances and marks on the layout is now supported. Once an instance or mark is placed it can be moved to a desired position with a simple mouse stroke. As you move an instance close to another instance it will snap into the correct position considering the bleeds, offcuts, and any binding margins. If you move instances into the bottom left or right corner of the press sheet they will also snap into position considering the properties of the product and the press, such as the no image (gripper) margin.

Holding down the Alt key when first dragging will automatically start step and repeating the instance or mark, again automatically calculating the appropriate offset between the items.

Nudging of Component Instances and Marks

You can make small adjustments to the position of instances and marks by "nudging" in one direction with the use of the arrow keys while holding down the Ctrl or Apple key. When running in millimeters, nudging will move items 1 mm at a time, and in inches, 1/16".

Improved "Butt To"

The "Butt to" function now considers properties like bleeds, offcuts, and any binding margins, to appropriately position instances, rather than simply butting the trim edges.

Improved "Add Component Instance"

When you manually add an instance to a press sheet, rather than just position the instance to the bottom left corner of the sheet, the component and press properties are now taken into consideration.

Delete All Marks

There is a new menu item which allows you to delete all marks currently on the layout.

New Mark Properties

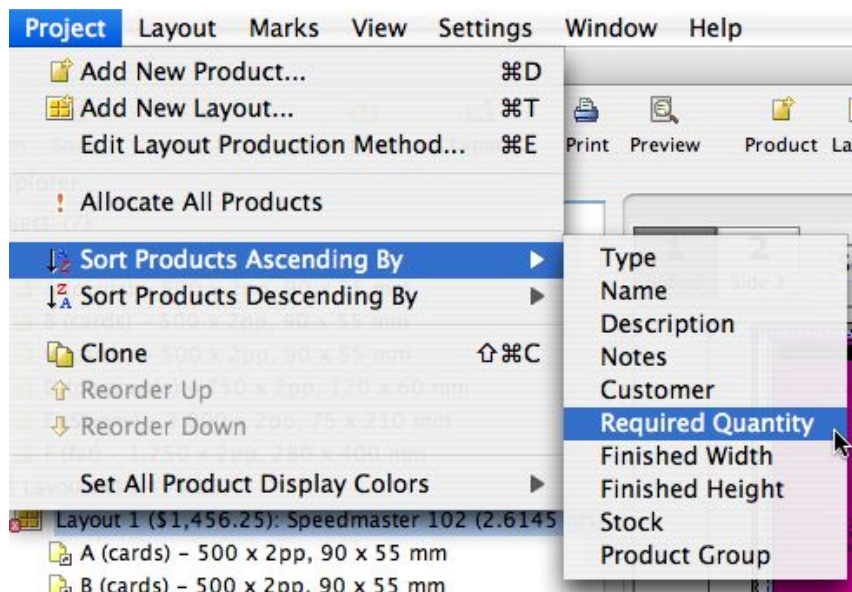
All marks now have an "Output" property which determines whether the mark only appears on the printed report (useful for marking perforations or making notes on the layout using text marks), or to the export, or both. Line marks can have their width edited and also be set to be dotted or dashed.

Text Mark Font can be Embedded in Imposed PDF

A TrueType font (like arial.ttf) can now be added to the 'Font' subdirectory and Metrix will use this font for text marks displayed in the Layout View and will embed this font in the Imposed PDF, offering true WYSIWYG and more predictable results in the RIP.

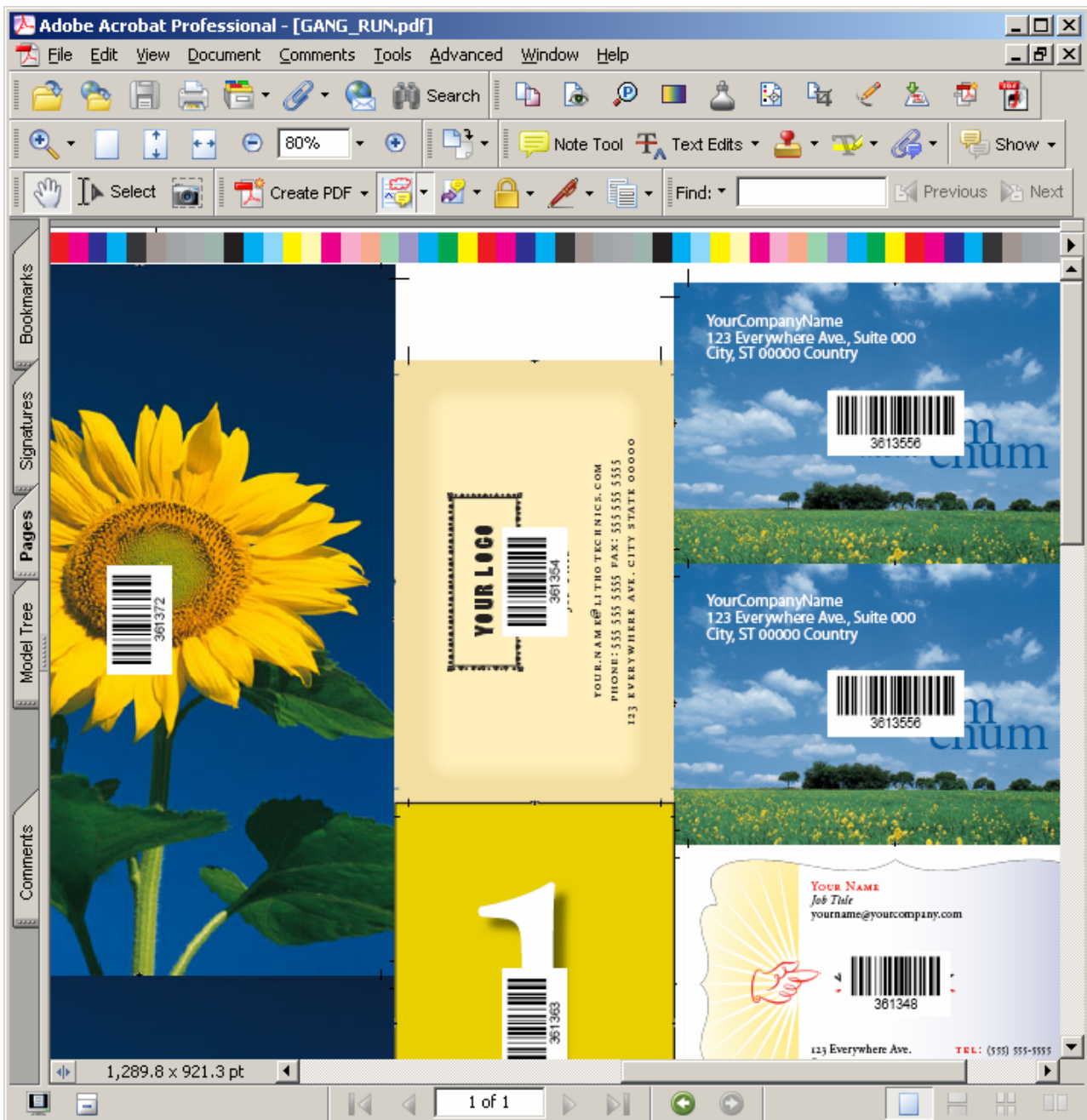
Sort Products

Sometimes it is helpful to be able to sort all products in the project by their properties.



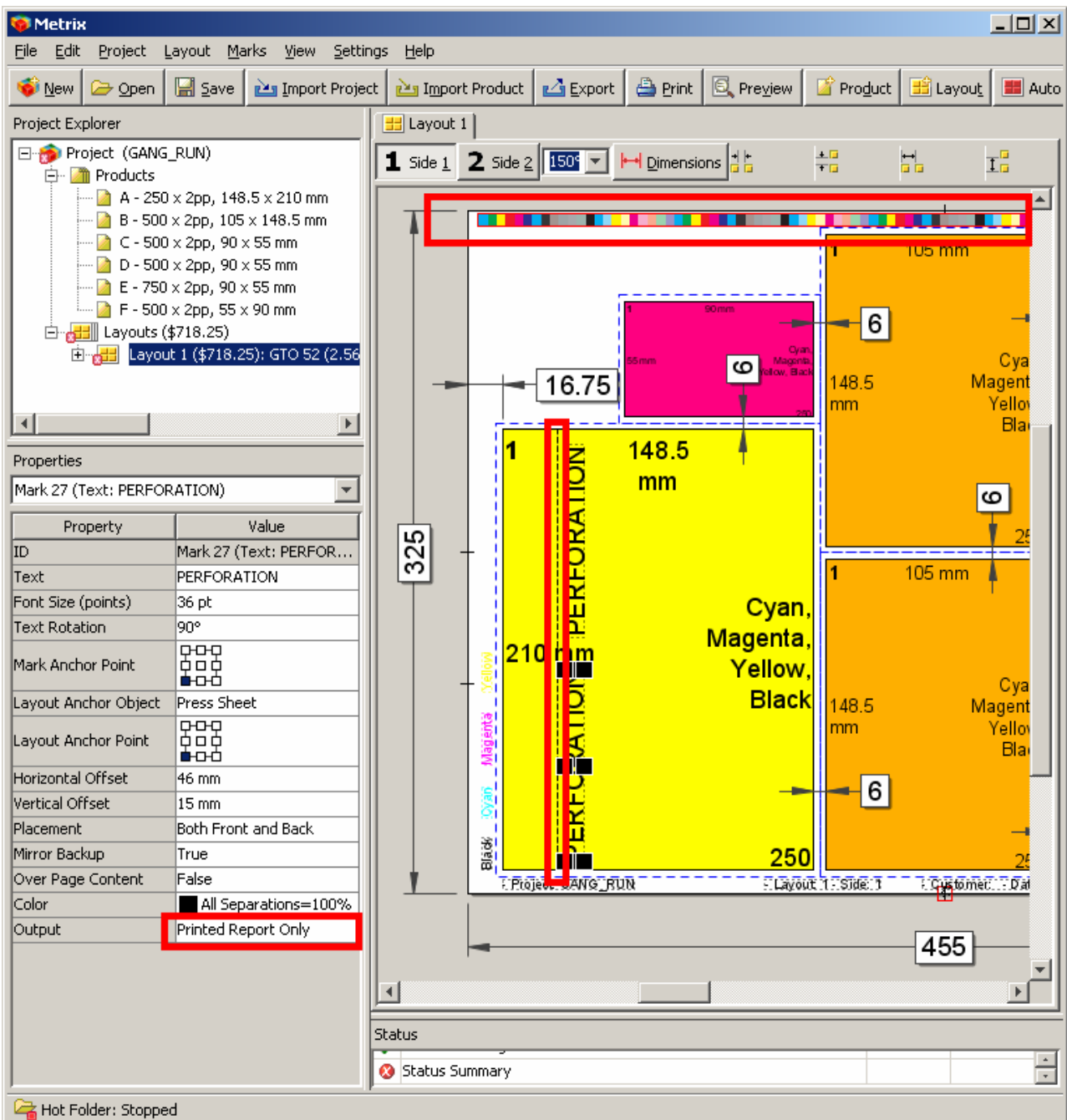
Export Barcoded Imposed PDF (Max Edition Only)

A new export item allows you to export a Barcoded Imposed PDF. The resulting PDF file is one sided and contains an imposed image with a barcode placed in the centre of each page. The barcoded data is one of the user-definable Metrix product properties, such as the name, or notes field, and would usually contain a unique number recognizable by the company's MIS system. A typical gang printer would send this PDF file to their proofing device and print one or more full sized proofs to the press with the plates. After printing, the barcoded proofs would be laid on each stack of sheets before cutting, so that every stack of business cards, for example, would have a barcode on top making it easily identifiable for dispatch.



View Marks in the Layout View

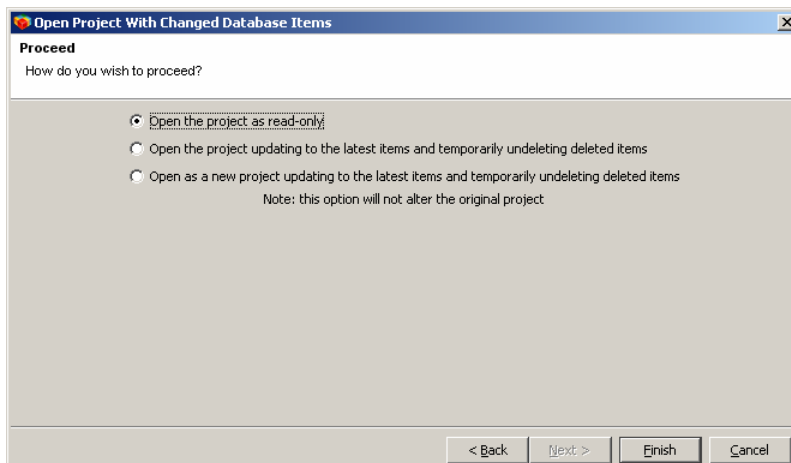
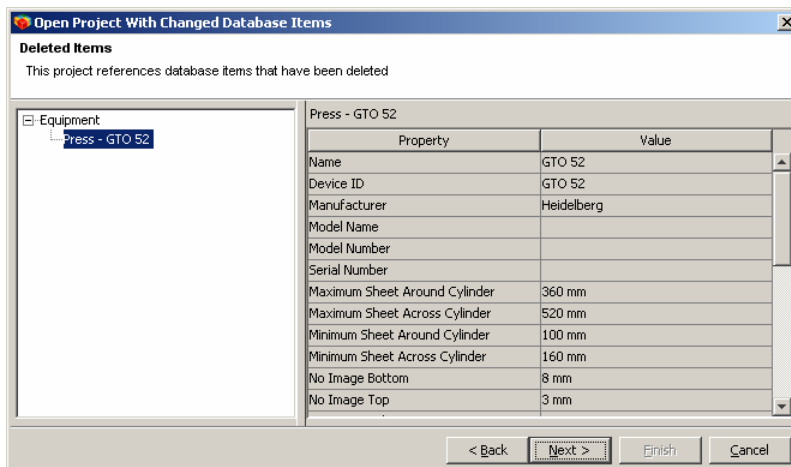
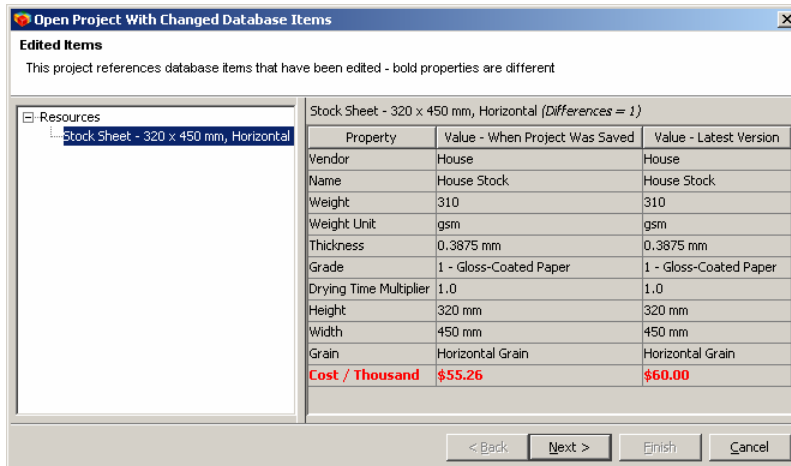
Metrix 3.0 displays JPEG and PNG files for file marks in the Layout View. Simply place a file with the same name as the PDF file but with a .jpg or .png extension in the marks folder and when Metrix is next started it displays the file.



A Metrix 3.0 screen showing a few the new changes: (1) the "Output" property of the text mark is set to "Printed Report Only" so it can be used to mark things like perforations; (2) the line mark can be dashed; and (3) the color bar and other file marks can be displayed within the UI.

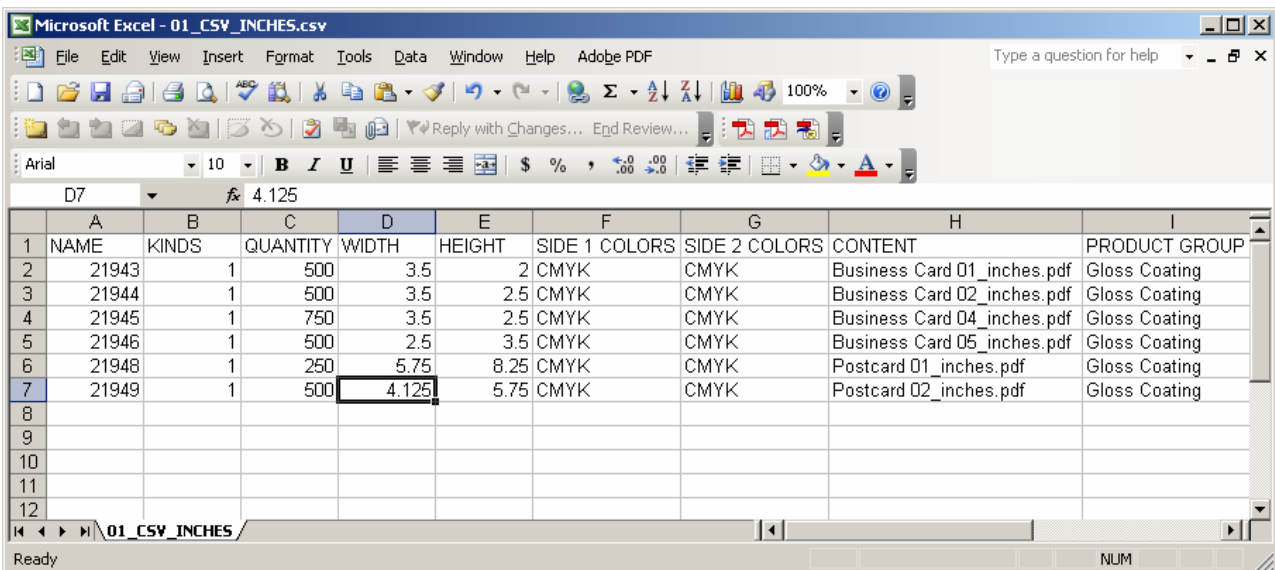
Open Projects with Edited or Deleted Database Items

You can now resurrect old archived projects that have become read-only because something in the database they reference, like a press, customer, or stock sheet, has been edited or deleted. Users are offered the choice to view such a project exactly as it was last saved in read-only mode, or to update to the latest edited items and temporarily undelete deleted items so these items can be changed and project re-saved.



Comma Separated (CSV) Data Import

Metrix can now import job data as comma separated (CSV) files. Although Metrix has provided a growing level of JDF support since version 1.0, JDF is not trivial and it is also not designed for gang run printing. Metrix 2.0 introduced support for Metrix XML (MXML) which can be used to describe both ganging and bound jobs, and which continues to provide unprecedented access to Metrix, but even MXML requires some programming knowledge and therefore remains prohibitive for some gang printers. The new CSV import means any printer with Microsoft Excel can easily feed job data into Metrix, and most with "home-grown" databases can export all their job information straight to Metrix.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	NAME	KINDS	QUANTITY	WIDTH	HEIGHT	SIDE 1 COLORS	SIDE 2 COLORS	CONTENT	PRODUCT GROUP
2	21943	1	500	3.5	2	CMYK	CMYK	Business Card 01_inches.pdf	Gloss Coating
3	21944	1	500	3.5	2.5	CMYK	CMYK	Business Card 02_inches.pdf	Gloss Coating
4	21945	1	750	3.5	2.5	CMYK	CMYK	Business Card 04_inches.pdf	Gloss Coating
5	21946	1	500	2.5	3.5	CMYK	CMYK	Business Card 05_inches.pdf	Gloss Coating
6	21948	1	250	5.75	8.25	CMYK	CMYK	Postcard 01_inches.pdf	Gloss Coating
7	21949	1	500	4.125	5.75	CMYK	CMYK	Postcard 02_inches.pdf	Gloss Coating
8									
9									
10									
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12									

Other Features

- Multi-screen support - Metrix now behaves properly if more than one monitor is used.
- Most wizard and dialog windows now remember their size and position.
- Double clicking an item in the Database opens it in edit mode (Administration mode only).
- Bound and folded product minimum size has been reduced to 1" x 1" (25.4 mm x 25.4 mm).
- Folio numbers can now be displayed large on the pages instead of the page number.
- JDF Export now supports dedicated Rampage options.
- Support for the Microsoft SQL Server database.
- Updated the JDF Folding data export.

More information about these features and how they work can be found in the over 700 pages of user documentation. If you have any questions please email: LTinfo@lithotechnics.com