



## Coding Pool Network (CPN)



***In the early nineties, TNT Post (The national post operator for The Netherlands) recognised that their automation optimisation and infrastructure objectives for the coming years relied too heavily on one or two major suppliers.***

Following an intensive strategic review and needs analysis, TNT Post started the development of the so-called “Letter Post 2000” project (Brief Post 2000).

### **Pioneers; no national post operator in the world had attempted a project on such a scale**

This comprehensive project was effectively a complete re-engineering of the mail-processing infrastructure for The Netherlands, a system that delivered 21 Million pieces per day. The scope and objectives are characterized by, among others, the following goals.

To build a Coding Pool Network (CPN) that...

- Facilitates development of the highest read rates in automatic sortation in the industry;
- Reduces the error rate in automatic sortation to a minimum;
- Facilitates design and implementation of video coding desks all over The Netherlands;
- Creates an infrastructure with truly open and independent interfaces;
- Is sorting machine supplier independent;
- Enables management of all sortation processes supplier independent;

### **Prime Vision B.V.**

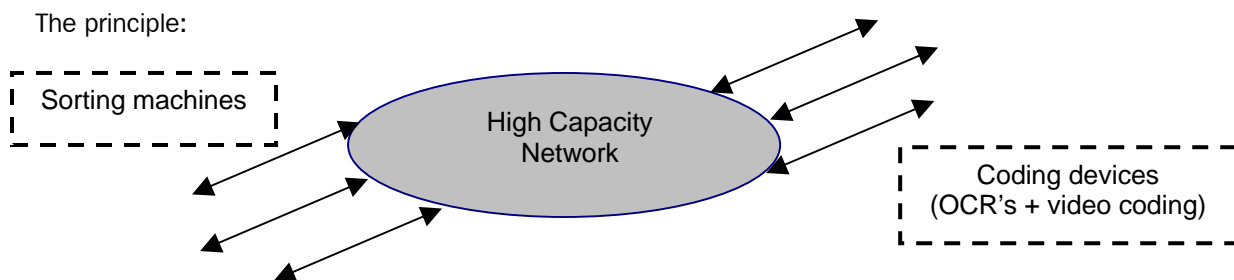
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Ultimately, of course, these objectives enable the organisation to realise its broader business objectives:

- Improve the customer offer, recognising growing commercial threats in the future
- Increase bottom-line profitability
- Increase productivity
- Increase vendor competition and openness; reduce costs, improve performance
- Maintain 100% control of the organisations core-competence



### Introducing the CPN (Coding Pool Network)

On the CPN one can connect many different sorting machines, from any supplier. An image recorded by the camera on the sorting machine is transmitted as a message with a pre-defined protocol to the CPN.

Based on the information in the message, the message is transmitted to one or several coding devices. The way that information is processed in the CPN is fully under the control of TNT Post. In the Netherlands TNT Post have selected a waterfall approach whereby all no-reads from the first OCR engine are fed into the Prime Vision OCR engine.

Based on our input traffic, Prime Vision are able to read an average of 50% of these no reads. Each coding device adds it's information / results to the message. If coding devices can't give the coding result, the message is send to the next one; ultimately if no automated coding device can read the piece, the image is finally sent to the video coding devices.

Independent of any supplier, the Dutch Post can connect a device to the CPN; they can add any sorting machine, or any coding device. A description of the interface / protocol is given to the suppliers and they are required to be compliant to the interface. Assuming the supplier is compliant, the new device can be connected to the network.

From the start, Prime Vision has played an important role in this project. Our activities included:

- Systems design;
- Interface design;
- Sortation plan optimisation;
- Evaluation of new suppliers
- Implementation, commissioning and after sales service.

The CPN networks went live in 1996 and are still in operation today!

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Prime Visions contribution to the CPN started with a Secondary Coding Device (SCD) and video coding applications. A SCD is an OCR/ICR engine that is tuned to no-reads generated by the in-built OCR system in the Siemens and Solystic sorting machines in use at TNT Post.

A few years ago Prime Vision added specific devices to the CPN for processing foreign and priority mail. In 2005 we added a device for improving the read rates on house numbers. This illustrates perfectly how easy it is to connect multiple coding devices to the network.

### The CPN is good for all parties

- The post organisation retains complete control and design freedom
- The post organisation is free to implement any latest technology or process that enhances performance of the system
- Any supplier may work with the post organisation if they can demonstrate their value

At the end of 2006 TNT awarded Prime Vision a contract to improve the read rates further. So still today Prime Vision is enhancing the CPN and maintaining all video coding applications at TNT Post.

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### For more information:

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