

# POSTAL NEWS

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## 1. Postal Corporation embraces ICT

Written By:Faith Kendi , Posted: Mon, Mar 16, 2009

The Postal Corporation of Kenya has deployed a number of strategies geared towards revitalizing the postal and courier services in Kenya.

The Corporation is set to launch video conferencing and hybrid mail in partnership with stakeholders in the industry in the next three month.

The Post Master General Fred Odhiambo said the move is aimed at enhancing ICT capacity at the Postal Corporation.

The Postal Corporation has in the past been accused of being a sleeping giant as it continued to offer traditional services of mail delivery in an era of high technological advancement and ICT development.

The Post Master General says the corporation is now moving away from its traditional role and is set to start video conferencing in the coming month.

Also in the pipeline is hybrid mail that entails delivery of soft copy mails through the internet.

Odhiambo said it will reduce the high cost of fuel and wear and tear of vehicles used to deliver mails in the three hundred post offices in the country.

He was speaking Monday during the first annual postal/courier stakeholders forum organized by the Communications Commission of Kenya(CCK).

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## 2. Trimming shipping costs with the Postal Service

By Marilyn Loeser

Monday, March 16, 2009

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In this economy, many of us are re-examining every purchase: do we need it, what does it cost and what are we getting for our money?

For anyone sending packages — individuals and commercial shippers — the Postal Service can help you stay on budget.

One reason the Postal Service is a better deal than other shipping companies is no matter the final destination — rural or city — a delivery is a delivery. There are no hidden surcharges.

For example, other shipping companies levy a delivery area surcharge (DAS). According to USPS competitors, DAS reflects the higher cost of providing service to less populated and less accessible areas of the country. The surcharge applies to more than a quarter of all domestic deliveries.

In addition to the residential surcharge, DAS ZIP codes — residential or commercial — are subject to an additional DAS. These charges can add \$1.60 for a commercial delivery and up to \$2.65 for a residential delivery.

With USPS prices, what you see is what you pay. The Postal Service picks up and delivers across America, six days a week, every week for no additional cost.

Then there are fuel surcharges. Up to 100 percent of customers' shipments, using another shipping company, will receive a fuel surcharge. Fuel surcharges fluctuate monthly and are assessed on both the base price and delivery surcharges.

And residential surcharges are added to approximately 80 percent of domestic addresses.

USPS address correction is included in the price for expedited shipments and is offered as a low-cost option on other shipping products. On average, 14 percent of the U.S. population moves every year. That's more than 46 million address changes.

Surcharges — fuel, residential delivery, DAS, Saturday delivery and pickup, and address correction — are added on top of other shipping companies' published rates, which are higher than USPS prices to begin with.

More information about all USPS shipping options, check the website [usps.com/shipping](http://usps.com/shipping).

Commercial shippers can now take advantage of new volume price incentives with Commercial Plus, an up-front price incentive for qualifying shippers using domestic Express Mail and Priority Mail, who meet established volume requirements.

On average, Commercial Plus prices for Express Mail are 14.5 percent less than USPS retail prices and Priority Mail prices are 7 percent less.

To qualify for Commercial Plus savings, customers must ship 6,000 or more pieces of Express Mail per year — about 25 pieces a day — or 100,000 or more pieces of Priority Mail per year — about 420 a day.

International shippers also can take advantage of online incentives for Global Express Guaranteed (10 percent below retail), Express Mail International (8 percent below retail) and Priority Mail International (5 percent below retail). Customers who prepare their international shipments online also have the convenience of completing only one form that includes both mailing and customs information.

Shippers who use Express Mail International and Priority Mail International may also qualify for a global expedited package discount if they send more than 5,000 pieces annually.

Express Mail Corporate Account holders automatically receive an 8 percent price reduction. They can qualify for 10 or 12 percent reductions by meeting higher-volume thresholds.

For more details about Commercial Plus, customers can e-mail [commpluspricing@usps.gov](mailto:commpluspricing@usps.gov) or call the Commercial Plus Hotline at 202-268-7669.

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### **3. IDS Deliver imail Postal Service**

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Integrated Documents Solutions (IDS), a document production specialist since 1997, has successfully developed the UK's first electronic next-day postal service.

Taunton, UK (PRWEB) March 16, 2009 -- Integrated Documents Solutions (IDS), a document production specialist since 1997, has successfully developed the UK's first electronic next-day postal service.

UK Mail, part of the Business Post Group, commissioned IDS in January 2008 to produce a system to allow their customers to generate and physically post letters directly from their computer or laptop.

"We wanted to develop a mail solution that combined the ease and environmental friendliness of electronic communication with the impact of physical mail," states Guy Buswell, CEO of the Business Post Group. "Our challenge was to find a partner that was capable of meeting our rigorous requirements and IDS ticked all the boxes."

Users of imail login via an Internet browser, compose their letter using familiar word processing tools then "post" it with a click of the mouse. Following this, the letter is sent electronically to a UK Mail sorting depot closest to its destination, where it is printed and inserted in a pre-paid envelope ready for delivery by the Royal Mail.

Not only does imail provide a convenient desktop to doormat postal service, it also reduces costs associated with the production and delivery of letters. UK Mail estimate the traditional method of generating and posting first class mail can be as much as £1 per item. With imail, this price drops to just 47 pence, inclusive of materials, production and first class delivery.

IDS developed a Web-based interface from the ground up to allow users to compose and administer letters. They also incorporated a combination of existing document production solutions to satisfy imail's back-end sorting, spooling and printing processes.

"A proven software solution called SpoolQ was used to provide the mechanism for managing and printing imail letters", comments Mark Dowson, Managing Director of IDS. "For over ten years, SpoolQ has been used by organisations such as The Bank of England, local Government authorities and the MOD, so we were certain it was robust enough to handle imail's printing requirements."

UK Mail estimated in excess of 80,000 letters would be generated and posted each day using imail, so it was paramount the hardware and software were capable of handling this quantity.

Mark continues: "To ensure we had the bandwidth to cope with the intended high volume of letters, we used a dedicated VPN link to connect the imail server to the SpoolQ systems at each of the eight regional UK Mail sorting depots."

South West Communications in Exeter (UK) was commissioned by IDS to provide a secure Tier 4 data centre for the imail server, along with the VPN link, and communications hardware required at each sorting depot.

IDS also worked closely with UK Mail's printer supplier, Konica Minolta, to ensure each imail letter is output as expected and within the deadline imposed by the Royal Mail to attain next-day delivery.

"Despite the complexity of the imail solution, and the involvement of multiple suppliers, the project was completed on time and within budget," states Mark. "We put much of this success down to our experience integrating bespoke document production solutions for a wide range of industry sectors, and our unprecedented knowledge of the software and hardware necessary to accomplish this."

Since its launch in November 2008, IDS has continued to manage imail, providing 24/7 support, software updates, and hardware tuning.

Mark concludes: "In addition to our managed service commitment, our relationship with UK Mail is destined to continue with the development and integration of an imail facility to create and deliver postcards and direct mail marketing literature!"

To find out more about imail, visit <http://www.ukmail.biz/imail/>

To find out more about the document production solutions available from IDS, visit <http://www.idocsol.com>.

#### About Integrated Document Solutions (IDS)

IDS have supplied and managed document production solutions for global businesses and organisations since 1997. All aspects of the document process are handled, from host to printer connectivity through to document delivery, and all are backed up by first-class consultancy, comprehensive training, and dedicated support.

The company operates as the solutions and services arm of its controlling company, FunAsset, who have developed hardware and software products for the print production environment for over 18 years.

<http://www.idocsol.com>

#### About UK Mail

UK Mail is part of the Business Post Group, the UK's largest independent express delivery company, operating through a network of nearly 60 locations across the UK. The Group and its associates employ over 5,000 people, have a fleet of more than 3,000 vehicles and are responsible for the movement of over 150,000 consignments every working day.

UK Mail was the first organisation to be licensed by Postcomm, the independent regulator, to provide a competitive postal service effectively ending 370 years of Royal Mail's monopoly. It is the leading alternative to Royal Mail for business mail requirements and is the Business Post Group's fastest growing division handling 2.3 billion mail items every year, with a 15% share of the UK mail market.

<http://www.ukmail.biz>

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Collected by Chairul Anwar, Bandung, Indonesia.

E-mail address : [chairulanwar49@operamail.com](mailto:chairulanwar49@operamail.com), [uyungchairul@plasa.com](mailto:uyungchairul@plasa.com).