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Another record year for DMGT

THE Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT) which publishes the *Daily Mail*, *Evening Standard* and the Northcliffe Media group of regional newspapers, has announced in its preliminary results for the year ended 30 September 2007, another year of record profits. It puts this down to strong growth in its business-to-business operations although it also reports 'continued out-performance of the market by our key newspaper titles in both circulation and advertising revenues'.

Viscount Rothermere, DMGT's chairman said: "Over the past decade our strategy has been to sustain and invest in our core UK newspaper businesses, and to use the surplus cash flow and leverage of the group to acquire or develop high growth media businesses unaffected by the UK's advertising market and regulatory regimes. As a result of this strategy, over 50 per cent of our operating profits are now derived other than from newspaper publishing".

Group revenue for the period was £2,235 million compared with £2,176 million for the prior year, representing a growth of three per cent. Adjusted profits before tax were £288 million, up 11 per cent on last year, while operating profit was up seven per cent to £322 million.

Associated's performance is described as 'solid' with the *Mail* titles and London newspapers showing improved circulation and the *Daily Mail* achieving a record operating profit. Total advertising revenues increased by eight per cent, print advertising rising by three per cent with display (up six per cent) outperforming classified which fell by seven per cent. On the other hand, the digital businesses grew revenue by 46 per cent to £86 million across their classified portals.

The Northcliffe division is described as being 'revitalised' with underlying operating profits growing by nine per cent despite flat revenues: UK advertising revenues fell by £2 million (0.7 per cent), while UK circulation revenues of £76 million were down one per cent. However, UK digital revenues are up by 77 per cent and, overall, division margins are improving: UK costs declined by almost £10 million due to the business improvement programme. In addition, the Central European operations continue to perform 'strongly, delivering organic profit growth of 19 per cent'.

Newsprinters launches world's largest press

NEWS Corporation chairman and chief executive Rupert Murdoch joined Scotland's First Minister, the Rt Hon Alex Salmond, to officially open the Newsprinters' Eurocentral print plant near Motherwell last month.

Murdoch, whose Scottish ancestors left for Melbourne, Australia, in 1884, said he was proud to be at the unveiling of 'the largest and fastest press in the world'.

"This new plant can produce 86,000 copies an hour of a full colour newspaper up to 144 pages in size. That is three times the speed of our old presses and provides readers and advertisers with greatly improved quality.

He added: "The cathedral of technology you see around you has taken the art of printing papers to a new level. It is a good example of how an

industry founded by Caxton's printing press 500 years ago has adapted to the technology of the digital age.

"The power of print has endured because great journalism that feeds the mind and moves the heart will always attract readers.

"But it is vital that we give those readers the choice of accessing our content on any platform that appeals. Online, via mobiles, hand held devices, ipods and of course on the printed page," said Murdoch.

"Print will continue to be a powerful platform for our content but it will not be the only one. We are giving readers a choice. And these new presses will greatly add to that choice.

Rupert Murdoch paid tribute to Ian McDonald, managing director, operations, at News International: "For Ian this plant, and the others that we will shortly open in England, are the reali-



● Bill Scouller (right) with Rupert Murdoch

sation of a farsighted vision of the future of our industry.

"It is a future in which the newspaper industry embraces new technology to improve the compelling power of the daily printed page. A future in which newspapers continue to place great content at the service of their readers through all media channels. And I am happy to tell you that the future is here and now."

Newsprinters is the newspaper manufacturing subsidiary of News International Ltd, which also used the occasion to announce that it has won the contract to print the Glasgow Solicitors Property Centre Guide (GSPC).

Published weekly, with an average of 140 pages, GSPC is a tabloid publication printed full colour throughout. The first issue printed by Newsprinters was one of the largest ever published by GSPC at 180 pages. The issue was printed in one pass straight, which is believed to be the largest pagination ever run straight by a UK independent publisher.

Bill Scouller, chief executive of GSPC, said: "One of the major reasons

for switching GSPC on to the Newsprinters presses at Eurocentral is their ability to print large pagination titles in one pass. Our previous printer had to print GSPC in three passes of 64pp on one press. Newsprinters' MAN Roland press can print in one pass, with the added bonus to stitch supplements on the single print run. The end result is a significant saving in time and money.

"Newsprinters' commitment to be the best newspaper manufacturer in the world is evident throughout the operation and we have been delighted with GSPC's print quality so far."

Richard Bennett, manufacturing manager at Eurocentral, added: "Our aim is to build long term partnerships with our contract print customers. We can offer them the most advanced printing facilities in the world, backed by a long-term commitment to produce printed products of the very highest standards. GSPC has proved to be an excellent example of just what this plant is capable of and we look forward to working in partnership with Bill Scouller and his team for many years to come."



● Touring the plant (l-r): Rupert Murdoch, Alex Salmond, Ian McDonald, Newsprinters' MD Brian McGee and Eurocentral manufacturing manager Richard Bennett

Newbury wins Single Width Award

FOR the second year running, *Newbury Weekly News* has won the Single-Width Goss User Group Award for the best quality coldset colour. The runner-up was the *Colchester Gazette*, while the winner of the Specialist Award went to *Stranraer & Wigtownshire Free Press*.

The awards were presented at the User Group's annual dinner which was held at The Hilton Central in Newbury during which £500 was raised for the *Newbury Weekly News* Over 80s Christmas Parcel Fund.

The gathering also included presentations by J&E Environmental and Agfa (see page 14) plus a visit to *Newbury Weekly News* where Agfa ctp systems, a Goss Universal 70 press line and Schur mailroom equipment were seen in action.

● Eric Lowe, press manager, and part of the press crew at the *Newbury Weekly News* (right) being presented with the cup for the best quality coldset colour from organiser George Lax



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