

Layout-8000

Auto-Dummy Enhancements

Spring 2016

(April 11, 2016)

Layout-8000 v15.3 includes many improvements to automatic placement of ads, a.k.a. auto-dummy. These improvements address real-world needs that customers like you identified.

This document explains improvements that SCS made in the first quarter of 2016.

Pre-Flight Check

When you ask Layout to Dummy, Layout runs a pre-flight check. It checks if there are unplaced color ads but no color pages. It also checks if there are unplaced double truck ads but no pages that were marked as double truck. If any of these conditions are true, a message pops up suggesting that the user might want to cancel the auto-dummy process and designate some color or double-truck pages.

Left/Right Page Requests

A Layout operator can now specify whether a request for a left page or a right page is degradable. The "More Details" dialog has checkboxes for indicating whether the ad has a left-page request or a right-page request or neither. If the ad has a left-page or right-page request, there is another checkbox where the operator can specify whether the request is degradable.

The degradable box comes into play when auto-dummy can't find a page that satisfies all of the ad's requests including its right-page or left-page request. If the request is degradable, auto-dummy will place an ad with a right-page request on a left page, or a left-page request on a right page. If the request is not degradable, auto-dummy will leave the ad unplaced so that the operator can determine where to place it.

Left/Right page requests coming from the advertising system are non-degradable by default. Prior to this version, they were degradable by default. We decided that it is better to allow the operator to determine how to place an ad with a request that cannot be satisfied. If an ad doesn't get placed because its left or right page request cannot be satisfied, the operator can

either place the ad manually, or check the checkbox in the dialog to make the requested degradable so that auto-dummy will place it.

In this version, if an ad has a left/right page request and is a color ad, auto-dummy will place it only on a color page that satisfies the left/right page request. Prior to this version, auto-dummy may have placed the ad on a non-color page that satisfies the left/right page request.

Placing Non-Color Ads

When placing a non-color ad, auto-dummy tries first to place it on a non-color page. If there is no non-color page that satisfies the ad's other requests, it tries a spot-color page. If there is no spot-color page, it tries a full-color page.

At some newspapers, it is never desirable to have a non-color ad on a color page. Thus Global Layout settings has an Auto-Dummy tab where you can specify whether auto-dummy may place a non-color ad only on a non-color page, on a non-color or spot-color page, or on any page. Regardless of which preference you select, auto-dummy always tries non-color pages first for non-color ads.

Placing a non-color ad on a color page is unlikely to prevent a color ad from being placed on a color page. That's because auto-dummy generally places color ads first. In the unlikely event that a color ad can't get a color page because a non-color ad took that space, auto-dummy will leave the color ad unplaced so that the operator can decide how to place it.

Placing Double-Truck Ads

When deciding which ads to place first, auto-dummy gives priority to double-truck ads. Prior to this version, a non-double-truck ad with a group request was placed before a double-truck ad with no group request. Recognizing the importance of correctly placing double-trucks ads, we have changed that order so that double-trucks have priority.

Auto-dummy will not place a double-truck ad on a double-truck pair of pages unless that pair is designated as double-truck in all zones of the ad.

Reasons Why Auto-Dummy Left An Ad Unplaced

After auto-dummy, if there are any ads that auto-dummy left unplaced, the operator is alerted. The operator can bring up a list of unplaced ads; for each ad, Layout lists each page that satisfies the ad's requests, indicating the reason why the ad could not be placed on that page. In this version, we have improved that report in several ways.

First, the list of reasons shows only pages in the ad's zones. The list is organized by zone. Thus if the ad is for zones 1 and 2, the list begins with pages in zone 1, with the reason why the ad could not be placed on each of those pages. Then it shows the reasons for pages in zone 2.

Second, if an ad can't be placed on a page because the page already has an ad that is designated as a "single" ad (an ad that must go on a page that has no other ads), the reason text is clearer. It says "Page already has an ad marked 'single'". It used to say "Page may have only one ad", which implies that the ad was rejected because the page only allows one ad instead of the real reason, because the page already has an ad that disallows other ads on that page.

How You Benefit

If you use Layout-8000's auto-dummy feature, you will see definite improvements in Layout-8000 v15.3. At least one thing that we have described above benefits you and your newspaper.

If you do not use the auto-dummy feature, we encourage you to take a fresh look at it. Call SCS to see what is now possible. When you are ready to make the leap, work in partnership with SCS's experts. We can help you lay out your newspaper more efficiently.

Please ask your system administrator to update Layout-8000 if they have not already. Don't settle for old software. You are entitled to a free upgrade and all of the improvements that will bring you.