Tabloid • n. a newspaper having pages half the size of those of the average broadsheet, typically popular in style and dominated by sensational stories.

From the Concise Oxford English Dictionary

Dear Reader,

Here's hoping you are in a dryer place than we are – it's August and we're busy dodging lightning and mudslides. Well, at least we have the Olympics to keep us entertained...

2004 may well go down in history as the Year of the Tabloid. Following the Independent and The Times launches of smaller versions late last year, British regionals are now following suit. Pretty much everyone in the newspaper industry worldwide is looking at the opportunities. The Americans have looked, but have decided their advertisers wouldn't like the smaller ad sizes. And have left it at that. This is one interesting aspect addressed by one of the trailblazing newspapers in the Country of Consensus, Sweden.

Malmö paper Sydsvenska Dagbladet has converted two of its three sections from broadsheet to tabloid, and on October 5, section A is shrinking as well. Project manager Anders Svensson has spent considerable time over the past couple of years talking to other newspapers about the advantages of going tabloid, in particular about how Sydsvenskan has dealt with the advertising issues. Partly as a result of his evangelizing, hordes of local and regional papers are converting, as we speak. But there's more. Svensson has also been instrumental in bringing about a coordinated final switch to tabloid of the three major urban newspapers in Sweden: Sydsvenskan, Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm) and Göteborgs-Posten (Göteborg). They have all already converted all sections except the main one, and on October 5, they are going for it, together. Only in Sweden, we tell you! You have to admire them for their eminent practicality. Why they are doing it? Well, in order to make life easier for national advertisers of course, and so to make more money. Read the story of Sydsvenskan's tabloid project on page 8.

Cheers from the Spindrift crew,

Laurel, Cecilia, Paul and Todd
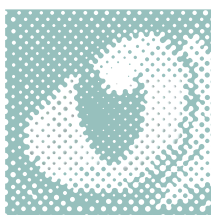
In This Issue

Small is beautiful

It was reader demand that finally persuaded Swedish regional newspaper Sydsvenska Dagbladet to change its format from broadsheet to tabloid. Even the advertisers are now on board. Says project manager Anders Svensson: "With tabloid we are focusing on pages, not the physical size of an ad. In other words, you are paying for the impact your ad is having on a page. We realised we couldn't keep the same prices, but we're charging somewhere between 70 and 95 percent of the broadsheet prices. So we get a bit more in money and the advertiser gets more in the form of impact of his ad on a page." Cecilia Campbell has the rest of the story...

see page 8

Printing's Collossus...

While several areas of printing may be suffering from regressive tendencies, there is one market segment showing definite and continuous growth. That market is digital printing, especially the large format output market. Paul Lindström has been trawling through all that is on offer for those wanting big, huge or enormous output. He gives an overview of the market, the products, the costs and anything else you might need to know...

see page 12

Regular Columns

News Focus

Agfa Pulls Out of Print City...

It had to happen eventually, so it comes as no surprise that Agfa has pulled out of Print City, the vendor cooperation it founded along with MAN Roland some years ago. The cooperation has developed over the years into a proper organisation with over 40 members. Originally set up to provide an antidote to the Heidelberg behemoth, Print City's purpose is to demonstrate connectivity and the fact that a print factory can operate just as well as a hybrid construct, as one where all components are supplied by a single manufacturer.

Well that point's clearly been made, and Print City's raison d'être doesn't have quite the bite it originally had. Cooperative marketing and exhibition efforts are all well and good, but the cost of supporting a formal organisation to underpin such efforts is of questionable worth. Both Synapse Graphics and QuadTech joined Agfa in departure.

Demonstrating connectivity and interoperability really ought to be a given, and for this reason, Print City needs to reinvent itself or encourage companies beyond the traditional print manufacturing chain to join. Not only would that reinvigorate the group, but it might help raise print's profile as a necessary service provider in other industries.

... and Snaffles Lastra

Agfa's purchase of Italian plate manufacturer Lastra is going through. The European Commission has endorsed the acquisition, due for completion at the end of August, following a happily concluded investigation into the competitive ramifications. As a result, Agfa has a 40% share of the analogue plate market, plus new technologies and capacity for both commercial and newspaper plates. We have asked Agfa for pricing details, and we are still waiting to hear.

Punch Drunk Basysprint

Strobbe and Xeikon are getting a new sibling. Punch has acquired loss making Basysprint, in a deal whereby Punch gets the company in return for €3 million and taking care of Basysprint's financial problems, i e assuming its debt. Basysprint had recently had to stop production at its factory in Germany but will resume once Punch can sort out its debt repayment. According to Guido Dumarey, owner of Punch, "Basysprint's activities and technology are complementary to those of Strobbe Graphics and these two companies will be working together. By gearing their activities to one another, we will reap maximum benefit from economies of scale and from diversification of our activities in that market segment." The factory, plus patents, a customer base with 500 installations, half year sales of €7 million, and all for €3 million. That's the way to do it Mr. Punch!

Cross Goss

Goss has filed a request with the US department of commerce to investigate possible fraudulent price increases by Japanese newspaper press manufacturer, TKS. Apparently TKS has used secret rebates, a fraudulent price increase and less than kosher cover-ups to hide its illegal dumping of newspaper presses and alledged efforts to corrupt government processes. It seems that a US district court is upholding a $31.6 million verdict against TKS for violating the Antidumping Act of 1916. This decision detailed a list of evidence proving to Goss's worried mind that TKS dumped presses on the US market and then attempted to destroy the evidence, falsifying documents and so on. Could this be true? Goss CEO Bob Brown says that "TKS's actions undermined the fundamental integrity of the department's investigation ... and [the department should] collect now the duties that TKS should have paid years ago. The department owes it the American taxpayer." Pass the sick bag please!

Creo Pinching Pennies...

Creo is closing its Boston facility and relocating these activities to Vancouver. Although this will cost Creo somewhere between USD3 and 4 million it will obviously save money, most immediately through a reduction of 60 people in the company's head count.

Financials are looking a bit shakey with reduced profitability, despite slightly rising revenues. The latest reported quarter showed a loss of USD1.6 million even though order volumes were up 8% over the same period last year.

Plate revenues have risen by 77.5% which sounds more impressive than it is, since it is based on a pretty low figure in the first place. More interesting is the plate revenue figure of USD21.6 million, around 14% of Creo's total third quarter revenues of USD156.2 million. Creo is looking to further increase plate capacity, to strengthen this revenue stream.

Closing the US subsidiary carries no little risk for Creo, given the tenacious performance of its competitors in this market. The US contributed 37% to third quarter revenues, and absent solid local support this figure could easily slide. Of course the X factor cannot be overlooked and Creo will likely see substantial revenues coming via its reseller agreement with Xerox.

...and launches variable data tool

Creo is launching a low-end Windows tool for creating variable data content. Based on Word plus a layout application, the idea is to create graphically rich documents using Microsoft's Mail Merge utilities. The software is optimised for the Spire server outputting to Xerox engines, but it will work with most desktop applications and digital printers. Creo's VI tools can be used to create variable content jobs for digital press output, and is intended for office applications, plus printers and service bureaus. This software is part of Creo's strategy to develop a range of tools for on demand applications, many of which derive from Creo's Darwin variable information technology. VI Toolbox costs $995 and is available on 30 day trial at: www.creo.com/vitoolbox.

Heidelberg's First Quarter Figures

Life in Heidelbergland might be improving, unshackled as Heidelberg is by the demands of web or digital printing. The company has seen a healthy increase in order volumes, with the press division leading the way, up 82% to €1024 million. The other divisions are postpress and financial services, so press must include prepress technologies.

Incoming order revenues for the first quarter were €1286, a 64% improvement over the same period last year, and the company has an order backlog of €1498 million. Sales were down 4.18% at €710 million versus €741 million and cashflow stood at €121 million compared to €109 million for this period last year, with the net profit at €63 versus €77. Cost cutting has improved Heidelberg's loss situation but sales still need to rise, since the drop in sales occurred despite Drupa and the

company is operating with a negative cash balance. The show's beneficent influence will of course be felt in the next couple of quarters.

Glunz & Jensen Jettisons Imacon

Glunz & Jensen is getting shot of its scanner and digital camera division, which was set up following the company's purchase of Imacon. The new owner is Hasselblad, a division of Hong Kong based Shriro. Shriro is paying DKR72 million for Imacon, a figure that corresponds to an enterprise value of DKR93 million based on the net interest of Imacon's debt. Could this in other words mean that Shriro is taking Imacon off of Glunz & Jensen's hands, Glunz & Jensen having stood surety while bills of DKR72 million were run up? The reason Glunz & Jensen gave for the sale was that it no longer felt confident that it could compete in the digital camera market and that it would focus instead on its core competencies. It isn't obvious that inkjet CTP has a brighter future than digital camera backs, but at least the choices for purchasers of digital camera backs might be simpler.

Working for the People in Maidenhead

Software developer Oppolis has announced that its editorial system is being installed at the Maidenhead Advertiser in the UK. Does the world need another editorial system, one has to ask? It seems that they do in Maidenhead. The Oppolis system wisely maintains some of the newspaper industry's quainter traditions in that it is basket driven, provides live page previews, automatic picture import and access to the newspaper's database archives. Ununiquely it includes copy tracking and h&j depth count. The user interface is browser based for web access via log-on. And?

Well Oppolis' technology doesn't sound like it does much that's special, but the Maidenhead Advertiser folks are happy: Jason Baylis, Director of IT said that "We looked at various editorial systems and feel that Oppolis software will suit our needs exactly. The Go Publish system has clearly been designed with our type of organisation in mind. It's simple to use, yet has all the functionality we require."

Maybe that's the point: functionality isn't as important as how well the technology suits the company. A bit like shoes really.

Affording UV Vutek Offerings

In October Vutek will launch a new flatbed inkjet printer for commercial imaging shops. The Pressvu UV 200/600 is a four or six colour 600 dpi printer capable of photographic colour and sharp text reproduction. Suitable for indoor and outdoor applications the device is claimed to be capable of smooth colour gradients and of accurate and repeatable colour matching. It prints on sheet or roll fed materials and prices start at $199,000.

The company is also introducing a new version of the Colorburst RIP for diriving these beasts. Prices are coming down for all models.

We're also told that UniGraphic Inc. of Massachusetts, has used its Vutek UltraVu 5330 EC to produce one of America's largest billboards, measuring 72 x 6 m, as part of a campaign for the Stop Handgun Violence organisation. The billboard is to be installed at Fenway Park stadium, home to the Boston Redsox baseball team.
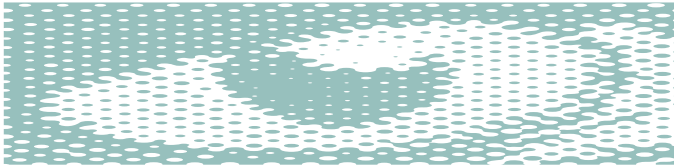
Spindocs

(Where the spinner gets spun!)

Scitex Vision put out this wonderfully waffly piece that seems to have slithered through the time-space continuum into the wrong decade.

"Thinking Digital for Rigid Substrate Printers

Digital technology is opening a new era for packaging printers faced with demands for short-runs and fast turnarounds. Meeting these challenges while increasing margins is now possible with the Scitex Vision CORjet high speed, high productivity inkjet press. However to get the most from the potential of the new technology means that packaging end users, and consequently printers, will have to "think digital".

Thinking digital is more than eliminating films, platemaking, start-up and start-up waste, it requires a shift in mind-set. The tendency is to think in terms of customisation, localisation, short-runs and on demand printing jobs, but there's more to it than that.

Consider a flexographic packaging printer with a Scitex Vision CORjet who is approached by one of his customers on a Wednesday. The customer says he needs 1200 POP displays by Monday. While this is not a job that readily suggests itself as one for the Scitex CORjet, the printer asks, "How many do you actually need on Monday?"

This doesn't seem to be a relevant question to the customer because he isn't thinking digital. It transpires that he actually needs 200 on Monday and the balance by the following Friday. [Are you with us so far? – ed.] Since the customer is thinking of a single, long production run, he assumes they will be all done at once and that he needs them all on Monday, which he does not. …………"

The excitement is mounting, we know, but that's all we've got time for today. We'll let you know the outcome next time… or maybe not.

Letter From… Tuscany

Ciao Digital Dottichinis,

Come sta, ow arrre you? Here in Montefialcinoparmigiani we are molte fine, con bene weather e con bene pasta com always.

Dellora, I esto stampare con uno piccolo printshop. I 'av got il digital workflow, for me systemico ctp e I fancyialemente a changino. I calcolare long e profondo

con tutte books on CTP (I amore il Digital Dots booklettisimos). I aska to il punditos industriarios e dey say I musta no buy terme ctp, I musta buy violetto ctp! So suddenemenotti I esto in problematicos. I love to buy de systematico CTP no piccolie piece of il puzzle-ino. Dellora, I saya to dem punditos industriarios, "no ". I saya to dem, I musta no buy il laserio, I musta buy il productivo dat works best for me e for mio costumarios. Dey no can answerios to det!

Dellora I esto molte 'appy to investio in nuevo CTP, but I only will do it con vendorisimos dat 'av both terme e violetto. Dat way i no matter terme or violetto, dat way de supplieriano can give opionato honestico for me, fo both terme e violetto e molte importante for me businessiano interesticos.

Del mondo del lavoro esto hard enough, we no need bickeringos pettiosotti about il laserios. We needs assistamentimos for workfluires e businessiano developmentini advisios.

Con men felicitas bravissimo e fortissimo!

Luigi del Piatto Latte

Driftwood

(Useful stuff washin' in on our shores)

Tiger Feet

Just when we think we've tamed the Panther, along comes yet another growling beast, prickling with sharp teeth and pointy claws, all set to cause mayhem at the desktop.

Apple's moved on big time from the cheesy challenge of publications production and colour management. The Mac's next operating system upgrade, code-named Tiger, is more about music and entertainment and hanging out with friends than it is about anything else. It's hardly surprising given revenue increases of 30% in the latest quarter and a year on year tripled net profit of $61 million, that are mainly down to the iPod. This is where Tiger's development team have fixed their beady-eyed gazes. Apple shipped a staggering 860,000 iPods during the quarter and 876,000 Macs, and while both are increases, the rise in CPU shipments was 14%, whereas the rise in iPods shipped was 183% over the same period

last year. According to Stevey-baby this represents an increase in "music-based revenue" of 162%. He also tells us that "we've got some amazing new additions coming later this year." It's unlikely that much of this will be to support print and publishing.

So what about Tiger? Enhanced Unix support with 64-bit enhancements, such as the ability to run 64-bit applications that can use 16 exabytes (one million million million bytes...) of virtual memory; new utilities and an optimised Kernel, Xcode 2.0 for faster application building. You get the picture.

There are more than 150 new top-line features, a system search tool called Spotlight, a new version of Safari and Dashboard. This last is likely to be of most interest to graphics professionals, since it provides a sort of subsidiary interface to access specific functions and tools that Apple want to call widgets. The nice people at Guinness might have a problem with this, since they invented widgets and have probably trademarked the name. Dashboard provides access to frequently used information and application controls displaying new mini-applications for faster access to applications. It's an extension to the desktop alias idea, saving the trouble of rooting through folders to find applications and tools.

The Spotlight tool picks up anything that matches search criteria, not just file names, displaying the results categorically. It borrows from the search function on iTunes, and works alongside the improvements to Finder searching. Apple have also added Smart Folders in the Finder, and Smart Mailboxes in Mail, and Smart Groups for contact management.

The iChat AV tool is for video conferencing from the desktop with up to three more people, or audio conferencing with up to nine more. New H.264/AVC video technology in Tiger's QuickTime provides improved picture quality with full-duplex audio for high quality sound.

Safari RSS adds organisational improvements, with tools to consolidate content from thousands of sites into simplified listings. Page archiving saves email or complete Web pages with images and links intact and there is a privacy feature, so that personal information and Web activities are never saved.

There's loads more but most of it is unsurprising. Tiger won't be out until next year, which is when Microsoft's Longhorn was supposed to be out. It will be late though. Which is probably just as well. Whereas the past OS upgrades were a matter of excitement and urgency, for most people the novelty has worn off. More importantly the hassle associated with OS upheaval isn't worth it. Today we only upgrade if we have to, instead of whenever we can.

Say What?

(Iffy Writing Award Presented in the Ether for Obfuscation, Confusion, Misinformation or All Out Pretentiousness)

Is the venerable, much esteemed and internationally renowned editor of the UK's Printing World, our very own Gareth Ward really serious:

"Anyone wanting to come up with the Face of Print to promote the industry as an attractive one to work in would not start with R_____ G_____'s collection of features, has a point. Mind you R_____ has classically proportioned features compared to one time Wace CEO T_____ G_____."

This was part of an editorial arguing that printers need to glam up to make print more attractive. The mind boggles. Surely the sight of sweaty, broadshouldered hunks and the solid, steady throb of a big machine, is enough to get anyone's juices flowing?

Boomerangs

(Your feedback fed back)

Hi Laurel,

Spindrift gets better all the time – keep up the good work.

Dave

We've included this email as a Boomerang, not because we want to show off (although of course we do), but rather to give inordinate pleasure to Dave, when he sees his name in faux print. And to ask him, along with the rest of you who don't have your own private, deepdown-and-personal subscription, to subscribe.

Acrobites

(Something to get your teeth into)

J2EE

Java 2 Enterprise Edition, based on the Java programming language, is a suite of tools for building a wide array of business applications. According to Sun, the J2EE "can combine existing enterprise information systems (EISs) with new business functions that deliver services to a broad range of users. The services need to be highly available, to meet the needs of today's global business environment. They need to be secure, to protect the privacy of users and the integrity of the enterprise. They also need to be reliable and scalable, to ensure

that business transactions are accurately and promptly processed".

This all sounds very convincing, but then why doesn't everyone use the J2EE? Well, many actually do, but then there is Microsoft and especially the range of solutions under the .NET umbrella. Generally, MS based solutions are regarded faster to implement, cheaper to buy and can be installed on cheaper servers/computers. Perhaps not as robust, fast or slick, but doing the job quite OK. The programming community has long been divided into two camps – those who favour Unix based solutions (and for example J2EE programming) and those who go for general Microsoft and Windows-centric solutions. In reality it all boils down to finding a solution that balances the cost, quality and speed factors within the budget available.

Adobe uses J2EE for its new Enterprise Server. Adobe must also have judged that the potential customers for those server solutions prioritise robustness and performance over price (if the calculations analysis ever is that simple). While the Enterprise Server needs UNIX (either IBM AIX, Linux or Sun Solaris), the form design tools and web application servers can run on a Windows server as well.

Silx

This is a compression technology particularly suitable for scanned monochrome documents. Silx is a trademark of the Palo Alto Research Center, and uses at its core the JBIG2 compression technology, which also derives from Parc's research on token based compression. According to the marvellously named Ercan E. Kuruoglu at the Institute of Information Science and Technologies (ISTI) in Italy, token based compression can be described as follows: "The algorithm skims through the page and identifies every distinct connected component on the page. Those which are similar with respect to a certain distance measure are clustered. A prototype token representing each cluster is then formed by averaging the members within the cluster. The distance measure we use is an extension of the Hausdorff distance. Given that the quality of the scan is good, every character will be identified as a separate connected component and will be clustered appropriately. Thus, the algorithm outputs a file containing the set of token prototypes and another file which basically gives the locations of each token and the label describing which prototype it is associated with. The decoding operation simply consists of placing the tokens to locations as indicated by the location. Considering that a typical A4 size 10 pts Times New Roman font paper document contains two to three thousand characters and that the total number of symbols in English, including Arabic numbers and punctuation marks is less than 100, an impressive compression ratio of more than 1/20 can be achieved". So there you are!

Compared to standard PDF (which uses JPEG2000 compression), monochrome files compressed with Silx technology can be up to ten times smaller. More info is available on www.parc.com.
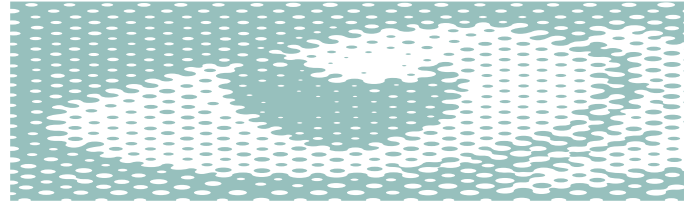
Swedish tabloid project reader driven

There is a tsunamic trend towards the tabloid format in Sweden at the moment. One major paper in mid-transition is Sydsvenska Dagbladet in the southern city of Malmö. For Sydsvenskan, as for most of the Swedish papers, the move to a smaller format is driven by reader demand. And indeed reader involvement is a cornerstone of the format change project at Sydsvenskan, as is openness and cross-departmental cooperation in-house. A major concern was advertising volumes and revenue, but with two out of three newspaper sections now tabloids, it is clear the transition has been a resounding success.

Sydsvenska Dagbladet, known locally as Sydsvenskan, is one of Sweden's largest regional newspapers covering the southern cities of Malmö and Lund and the region beyond. With a circulation of about 140 000 copies, as of about 15 years, the paper is published in three sections, the A-section covering domestic and international news, the B-section with the arts and the C-section with local news and sports. On March 12 2003, sections B and C were launched as tabloids, and recently the official date for the main section to go tabloid has been set: October 5 this year. Interestingly, the three major urban newspapers in Sweden, Sydsvenskan, Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm) and Göteborgs-Posten (Göteborg) have coordinated their final transitions to the tabloid format, in order to retain consistency for national advertisers.

Following an earlier abandoned tabloid project at Sydsvenskan, current project manager Anders Svensson set to work in August of 2002. At the time, he had just left a job as managing director for a group of local newspapers, two of which he'd steered through a move from broadsheet to tabloid, well before most Swedish papers were considering a format change.

Svensson's first task was to set up a proper project group, something he views as absolutely fundamental for such a major project to succeed: "It is crucial that you include members from each and every department of the newspaper in a central project group; you can't have editorial, advertising and marketing running their own races. We also included people from the printing house, since there are a multitude of technical issues that need resolving."

The project group has been meeting once a week since the project began. Below it sits departmental workgroups, which move the project forward between meetings. At the top is a management group consisting of managing director, editor-in-chief and others, to whom Anders Svensson answers. "Early on we realised that issues would not be resolved in the management group, but rather at project group level. We also decided on a climate of openness to make this process easier, i e anything that is said at project group meetings stays between the members. This means people are not afraid to speak their minds and table controversial or creative suggestions. The only rule is that any decision taken has to be unanimous."

So why was it decided that only two of the three sections were to go tabloid in the first instance? Says Svensson: "We felt it was too big a step to take, for readers as well as advertisers. But there were also a

> **"We have managed to create something of a tabloid-hallelujah feeling in the house, people are very excited about what is going on."**
>
> **– Anders Svensson, project manager, Sydsvenska Dagbladet**

Anders Svensson, responsible for the conversion from broadsheet to tabloid format at Sydsvenskan in Sweden has spent a lot of time travelling around the country discussing the issues with other newspapers. Partly as a result of his efforts, the three major urban newspapers in Sweden, Sydsvenskan, Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm) and Göteborgs-Posten (Göteborg) have coordinated their final transitions to the tabloid format, in order to retain consistency for national advertisers. They're all launching their main section as a tabloid on October 5.

lot of internal issues, uncertainty about financial implications and so on, and we did not feel quite confident enough to do it all at once. As it's turned out I think that was the right decision – most of our readers, 80–85 percent, like the new format, but there is that hard core group who don't, so we're giving them time to get used to it. And advertisers are conservative too; the incremental transition meant we could still offer them broadsheet placement in section A while we're convincing them of the advantages of advertising on tabloid pages.

It was decided from the start that the format change was to be carried out entirely internally, with no assistance from outside newspaper gurus of any kind. While most of the work is done in the work groups and project group, everyone in the company, from reception to managing director, is being continually and regularly informed of the progress. Svensson: "We have managed to create something of a tabloid-hallelujah feeling in the house, people are very excited about what is going on."

Also, editorial and the advertising and marketing departments collaborate on how the change is being communicated in the market. For the initial change there were two campaigns, one for advertisers, which was quite fact based, and one for readers, which had a more light-hearted approach: "Now I can look you in the eyes over breakfast as well" was one of the slogans.

Reader involvement

Anders Svensson warns anyone planning to carry out a format change without letting the readers in on it: "You have to involve and prepare readers for what is going to happen. Don't think you can surprise them and get away with it – they'll be very upset. Like many newspapers, Sydsvenskan has a terrific relationship with its readers, they really consider us "their newspaper". That also means that if you change something as radical as the format without first letting them know, the reaction is likely to be: 'You've destroyed my newspaper!' They have very strong feelings about the paper – it is part of their life."

Sydsvenskan approached the reader issues early on, through focus groups. Readers of various ages are invited to sit on these groups for which they receive a small payment, coffee and cake. The discussions are led by a moderator, and the project group watches the meeting on internal TV in an adjacent room (the readers know this). The readers are shown proofs of what new pages and sections might look like and are asked to comment. Svensson: "Comments from these meetings have influenced some of our decisions. We mostly treat this information as an indication that we are on the right path. At a recent meeting we asked whether they'd be interested in four sections rather than three, and this met with no objections. But we also found out that moving up to six sections or more would not be popular. Likewise we've had them choose their favourite for the new page 1 when the A-section goes tabloid in October."

When the actual launched happened, all readers were informed. There was a campaign in the weeks leading up to it. The day before the launch "tomorrow's paper" was sent out in tabloid format. It was done in a humorous but informative way, where all the sections were covered and those responsible at the newspaper were interviewed about why the change was done. The paper also produced a guide which described the new and old, and pointed out that a lot of the existing structure would be kept in the new format. Questions that the paper knew would come
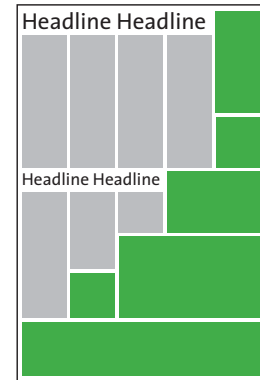
The old five column ad model (above) resulted in the traditional jagged edge of ads going from the top outside corner to the bottom inside. With Sydsvenskan's new six column model (below) you can sell for example, quarter pages, and the pages end up looking much better.
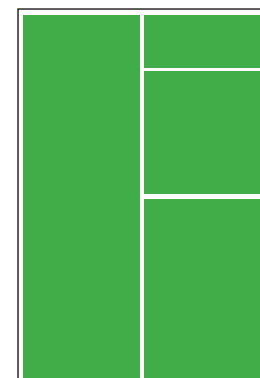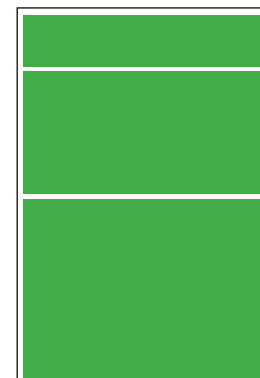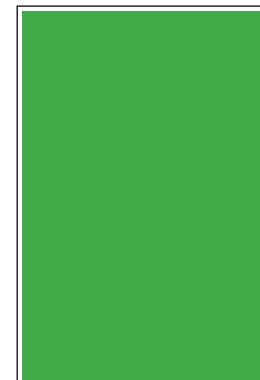
up were asked and answered. These included things like "What was wrong with the old format?" and "Why are you changing the format?" with the management providing the answers.

The day of the launch everyone in management, including the editor-in-chief and the MD, manned the phones from seven in the morning until the evening, answering readers' questions and listening to their reactions. Anders Svensson did phone duty for an entire week: "The readers really appreciated this. And even the most belligerent anti-tabloid subscribers were OK once they'd been able to tell the MD how they felt."

New six column ad formats

One of the main issues to be worked out before the first tabloid launch concerned ad formats. Sydsvenskan had produced odd tabloid supplements in the past, and then five- column based ad formats had been used. What you normally end up with is the familiar jagged edge of ads from the upper outer corners down towards the middle. Something new was needed for the permanent tabloid format.

The advertising department came up with the idea of basing the ad formats on a page made up of six columns instead of five. A fixed set of six ad modules were decided on (see image), and all ads have to fit one of these. Says Svensson: "This allows us to build pages in a much more flexible and attractive way. Editorial really likes it; it makes their job easier and the end result looks much better than the old five column pages. In its simplicity, it looks like a wonderful and self-evident solution, but nobody had done this before, and there was a lot of internal discussion before it was settled. Since then I've travelled around the country talking about this new module based six-column approach, and I'm glad to say other newspapers have been very enthusiastic. Most are adopting it as we speak."

The new model has similarities with broadsheet, in that you can sell quarter pages for example. Moving from five to six columns, the newspaper also gets 20 percent more out of each page, if you calculate in millimetres. Of course, that's not how this is being sold to advertisers. Says Anders Svensson: "With tabloid we are focusing on pages, not the physical size of an ad. In other words, you are paying for the impact your ad is having on a page. We realised we couldn't keep the same prices, but we're charging somewhere between 70 and 95 percent of the broadsheet prices. So we get a bit more in money and the advertiser gets more in the form of impact of his ad on a page."

The new ad module system has been a success, particularly with small local advertisers. Sydsvenskan was loosing them, because increasingly they were getting charged relatively much for ads so small they were hardly noticeable of the page. Now they can choose a smaller ad and still make a much bigger impact on a page. Advertising revenue for this group (local retailers) has so far increased by five percent in sections B and C.

In fact, the increase in advertising, which meant higher pagination, led to the only major hiccup of the project. This occured last autumn, when the newspaper sometimes exceeded 160 (tabloid) pages (compared to a pre-tabloid average of the equivalent of 100). This caused problems in the printing plant, not least because in Sweden broadsheets are glued and tabloids are stapled. The issues have been resolved, and once the ▶

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entire paper goes tabloid in October, production will be more straight-forward.

So the readers are happy with their "new" newspaper. Even advertisers, sometimes said to lose out in transitions to smaller formats, are on board and happy. Says Anders Svensson: "The key is to get everyone involved at an early stage, internally as well as externally. There doesn't have to be any losers, and indeed for us the format change is generating additional revenue. I also think it's breathing new life into the newspaper."

– Cecilia Campbell

You have to involve and prepare readers for what is going to happen. Don't think you can surprise them and get away with it – they'll be very upset.

Printing's Collossus

While several areas of printing may be suffering from regressive tendencies, there is one market segment showing definite and continuous growth. That market is digital printing, especially the large format output market. There is considerable activity in technologies and in applications. One reason why this market is growing so very quickly is because there are so many possible applications for wide format output. Within this somewhat loosely defined category can be found everything from fairly conventional but large format inkjet printers, to very large format flatbed devices. And then, almost in their own category are the extremely large format engines used to print for example outdoor advertising covering complete buildings.

Technology Options

Traditionally the inkjet print heads use Continuous Ink Jet (CIJ) or Drop On Demand (DOD) technologies. Some years ago the discussion was often about whether thermal DOD, lead by HP with their bubble jet technology, or piezo based DOD technology, often represented by Epson, was the better of the technologies. Today the picture is somewhat blurred and the technologies to some extent overlap, however the leading print head manufacturers are Spectra and Xaar, which have taken the lion's share of the printhead market. These two developers both sell so called multi-array printheads, which are considerably faster than the traditional CIJ and DOD heads.

For speed, the development of print head arrays is crucial. For quality the development of multi-bit and multi-level print technologies has much improved colour depth, even at moderate resolutions. While in conventional print we only have single bit "colour depth" (ink or no ink), inkjet technology provides greyscales, as it were, for each spot. Another development that increases image quality is the use of six or seven printing colours. This can either be regular CMYK with light cyan and magenta added or Hexachrome.

New technologies

As technology advances, so too do the applications for it, so much so that large format printing is moving from its specialist niche to become more mainstream. Developers are already responding in anticipation of future requirements. One example of the changing market for large format printing is the recently announced cooperation between Agfa and Thieme. This German company of 500 employees produces screen presses and plastic components. Agfa and Thieme are developing a completely new type of digital screen printing press. Agfa recently acquired the former Barco division Dotrix, developers of the the.factory a high-speed inkjet press which uses high speed array print heads, and a further development of it will be used with the Thieme machine for screen printing applications.

While awaiting the Agfa/Thieme machine we can join the slightly astounded crowd pondering the size and specifications of the new JetPrint flatbed printer from Lüscher. This is one of the fastest and biggest printers on the market. The JetPrint 3530 can output up to 100 square metres per hour at sizes up to 3 x 3.5 meters on a unique fixed vacuum table, with high register accuracy and ease of use, even with large substrates. It can also handle material up to 80mm thick.

Inca has technologies for printing on substrates generally considered off limits for inkjet. Here the Inca Eagle H.

One of the unique advantages of inkjet print technologies is the fact that they can print pretty much on any substrate, ranging from paper, vinyl and cardboard to fabric from heavy canvass-like materials to gauze.

Scitex Vision is amongst the vendors which build the largest and fastest printers. Here the XL Jet+.

Consumables

One of the unique advantages of inkjet print technologies is the fact that they can print pretty much on any substrate, ranging from paper, vinyl and cardboard to fabric from heavy canvass-like materials to gauze. However the choice and cost of ink of course varies a lot. Posters for indoor usage aren't that much of an issue, but outdoor signage is a somewhat different matter because of durability requirements. Here UV curable ink is of great interest and much research money is invested to improve both machines and inks.

One interesting development is the birth of environmentally friendly inks, often referred to as "Eco Solvents". When using conventional solvent based inks, the ink jet printer needs a proper extraction fan installed near it, in order to suck out the noxious fumes. When using Eco Solvent inks this isn't necessary since they are said to not contain VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds).

For endurance and resistance there is always the possibility of laminating the substrate, but if you can do without this, both time and materials are saved. Some new substrates look promising since they have the resistance of laminated materials, however print quality could be a problem if the substrate surface is coarse. The operator is often challenged with a demanding colour management task in order to make sure that the printed result on new materials meets the results customers are used to on printed – and then laminated – paper. With so many advances in this area, following the development of inks and substrates is almost a full time job, not to mention trying them all. Investment into this sector is not trivial however, so comprehensive testing is an absolute must for prospective purchasers.

Investment requirements

The cost of the engine is in fact only a small part of the investment and the engines are not cheap. For example, the Scitex Vision Turbojets start at around $500,000 and a Durst Rho, at around $450,000, is at about the same price level. However there is stiff competition, not least from Chinese (for example Eastsign and Flora) and Korean (for example DGI and Kwangko) companies, that all demonstrate new flatbed printers for UV curable ink at prices well under $100,000.

Consider as well the cost of a suitable front end to drive the machine, the amount of downtime required for servicing and the frequency of service requirement. Obviously a major cost is the ink and substrates, which vary depending on the type of applications the print engine is used for, and the viewing environment for the output. Availability of consumables, service support and the general robustness of the device should all be taken into account in the investment model. The suppliers are generally very helpful with this kind of information, which is one of the benefits of working with trailblazing applications and technologies.

A production machine should not only be fast, but be able to take long hours of constant output. While many of the large format printers in theory can be used as multiple purpose machines, for example as combined proofers and production machines, in reality this might not be such an good idea. Pigment based inks, often used for outdoor products, are not suitable for proofing applications since they are more prone to problems with metamerism. It's not very practical to switch ink between two print runs, so as always, it's important to choose a ▶

One of the more spectacular applications for Very Large Format printing is to wrap entire buildings with some kind of printed material. Here Selfridges & Co in London's Oxford Street. (Photo: Mattias Kristiansson)

As technology advances, so too do the applications for it, so much so that large format printing is moving from its specialist niche to become more mainstream. Developers are already responding in anticipation of future requirements.

printer that meets the demands of the type of production that will be the dominant one.

Super wide Applications

These massive engines can print all sorts of things such as output for building wraps, signs, banners and large posters for exhibitions. For example, the Greek government recently wrapped the Pireaeus Port Authority building near Athens with over 6000 square metres of material printed on the Vutek UltraVu. The use of super wide output is increasingly common for backdrops and even carpets.

This technology is also suitable for all sorts of other purposes. O'Donnell Corporation in the USA uses Inca technology to print onto ceramic tiles. In the UK, UPS parcel services have created colourful graphics for their aircraft using equipment from Scitex Vision.

Flatbed printers are on the rise. One of the newcomers to the market is Lüscher with the Jetprint 3530.

Market developments

Projections for the growth of the wide format market are hard to pin down, however there is a general consensus: growth. Stable technology, a broad development base and imaginative uses for print make for a very compelling future. One of the hurdles for screen printers to move into digital printing has been the inability to print opaque white on dark substrates. This is now possible, demonstrated by several vendors. This means that we can be sure that this market will continue to grow, and grow superwide fast.

– Paul Lindström

Players in the market

Worldwide there are many manufacturers to check out for this broad field of technologies and dynamic applications. The following overview gives a brief indication of the dominant players.

3M
The 2500 UV prints up to 2.5 metres wide using high speed piezo inkjet print heads, preferably using UV curable ink.

BOP
One of the newcomers to superwide format output is the small Swedish company BOP, building a highspeed inkjet printer for widths of up to twelve metres. At the moment BOP use the Xaar print heads, but are about to switch to instead use print heads from Spectra for higher speed and more flexibility with regard to the inks that can be used in the machine. One popular application for the BOP printers is to print on vinyl that then is used to cover the sides of lorries and trucks.

Canon
Depending on where you draw the line for large format printing, the biggest printers from Canon qualify at least in the smaller format group. For example the Canon W8500 outputs up to 44" wide in about 2 minutes.

Colorspan
This USA based company is well known for the Displaymaker series. The Displaymaker 110s, for example, use 72 piezo electric print heads and can print with solvent inks up to 90 square metres per hour.

Durst
Manufactures a range of photo-realistic printers and flatbed printers for industrial production.

Encad
Now part of Kodak, Encad is famous for the Novajet series. The recently introduced Novajet 1000i is the top model and prints at 13.5 square metres per hour, up to 60" wide, using a 640 nozzle print head with up to 1200 dpi resolution.

Epson
This company may not have the biggest printer on the market, but instead, Epson has one of the largest market shares in the midsize segment. Besides manufacturing printers in its own name Epson manufactures printers sold on an OEM basis, by companies such as Agfa. The Epson Stylus Pro 10600 prints at up to 44" widths at about 20 square metres per hour.

Gandinnovation
This Canadian company has been very successful with their Jeti series of large format printers. The Jeti 5000 for example, can print up to 5 metres wide at up to 600 dpi with six colours. It uses print heads from Spectra and can print up to 60 square metres per hour.

Grapo
A Czech manufacturer that has launched a flatbed printer named Octopus X4. It uses Xaar printheads preferably with UV curable ink.

HP
Although they may not be producing the biggest machines, this is the largest company in the market. Most people will agree that 60" wide printers are big, but HP also goes for high resolution and quality. The Designjet series reaches 2400 dpi resolution and a speed of around 12.5 square metres per hour.

Inca
A UK developer specialised in technologies for printing on substrates generally considered off limits for inkjet. The Eagle and Columbia series are flatbed printers that can be configured for a range of applications.

LP (Leggat & Platt)
This American company is one of the bigger players, and captures a considerable part of the market with its Virtu line. LP use the Spectra print heads in an eight head bidirectional configuration that can print up to six colours at up to 720 dpi. The speed is an amazing 200 square metres per hour.

Lüscher is a recent debutante to the market with the Jetprint 3530 flatbed printer. The Jetprint 3530 can output up to 100 square metres per hour at sizes up to 3 x 3.5 metres.

Mimaki
This Japanese company has to be on the list. The JV3-250SP prints up to 2.5 metre widths at up to 1440 dpi, using four print heads and up to six colours.

Mutoh
Like some of the other manufacturers, Mutoh builds machines not only to be sold under its own brand, but also by for example Agfa, which uses Mutoh technology for its Sherpa line of proofers. Mutoh is closely connected to the development of the Eco Solvents.

Noritsu
Like Durst, this is a manufacturer with its roots in the photo finishing business. The Mytis-1 uses special ink coupled with thermal finishing, offering very high image quality as well as water resistant output.

NUR
This Israeli company is one of the veterans in large format printing. It has three product lines. The Fresco series can print up to 3.2 metres wide with eight colours using piezo continuous drop-on-demand (CDOD) inkjet technology. The Tempo engines are flatbed printers able to print on a wide variety of materials. They have a 3.2 x 2 m table and can print up to eight colours. The Ultima series is for high quality, photo realistic printing.

Océ
Through a series of acquisitions Océ has definitely taken a position in this market. Within Océ's Display Graphics Systems

business division are products from Anagraph, Cymbolic Sciences, Onyx Graphics and Raster Graphics. The Arizona series includes both roll fed and flatbed printers.

Scitex Vision

With over 1250 installations world-wide, Scitex Vision is one of the more significant players in this market. For example, the Scitex Vision Turbo Jet is capable of producing up to 400 square metres per hour with high image quality. The Turbo Jet prints from roll to sheet (up to 1.63m x 3.66m/ 64" x 144") with a resolution of up to 448 dpi. It is capable of printing on a range of substrates from coated and uncoated paper, vinyl, canvas and polystyrene, to fabrics.

Seiko

Yet another Japanese manufacturer which builds machines to be sold both under its own brand and by other vendors. The new Color Painter 64S has 512 nozzles per printhead and can output up to 64" width at 16 square metres per hour at 720 dpi.

Vutek

A privately held American company, Vutek is a pioneer of super wide output. The product portfolio includes engines for two, three and five metre wide output. Although the company doesn't share much about its position, Vutek has a substantial market share with its Ultravu series.

Zünd

A Swiss company manufacturing various machines including the flatbed printer Jet 215C. According to Zünd, it can output on most any kind of substrate.

A Special Message

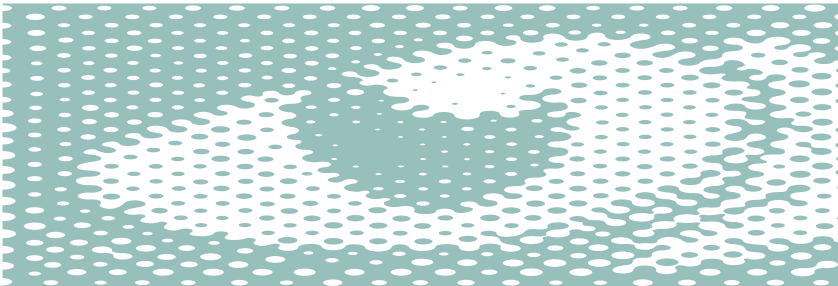We hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of Spindrift.

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