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Spindrift

...Savouring The Graphic Arts Industry Since April 2003

News Focus • Opinion
Reviews • Techno-Babble
Attitude

Volume 3, Number 8
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flow • ***v.*** **1** move steadily or continuously in a current or stream. **2** (of the sea or tidal river) move towards the land; rise. **3** move or issue forth steadily and freely.

– From the Concise Oxford English Dictionary

Dear Reader,

The conclusion after visiting Ifra Expo this year is that the trick is to get things to flow, whether it's content to many different media, without the need for re-purposing, or pages to the RIP or plates to the presses or indeed copies out of the press. We even met a rather ingenious Finnish supplier trading under the name of Flowman. They act as a virtual production control room for newspaper printers who receive jobs from many different publishers. Flowman collects files on behalf of its printing house customers. It RIPs those page files, after which the editorial staff responsible for each page approves the image. The pages are then automatically assembled into correct impositions and delivered straight to a CTP queue in the printing house. Pretty nifty.

Eliminating possible errors also goes a long way towards creating a proper flow. Gavin Drake of Quark told us it is one of the major topics Quark is currently focusing on: "There is a huge issue with error free digital workflows today. Research from InfoTrends/CAP Ventures shows that 40% of files are currently delivered in PDF format and of these an amazing 60% require intervention. We undertook our own research to validate this and found that 48% of our customer delivered PDF files had errors in them, of which only 36% could be fixed without the source files. This is a huge and costly issue for the industry and one of the main focuses of Quark Job Jackets." More about Quark and others in the second part of our Ifra report.

Well, a lot more could be said about creating an optimal flow, but we're off to partake of some mulled wine now (more sipping than flowing of course). In the meantime, enjoy our special Bonus Track on page 11.

Have a Holly Jolly Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!

Cheers from the Spindrift crew,

Laurel, Cecilia, Paul and Todd

In This Issue

The Versamark Waltz

A transactional printer in Bristol provides their top brand customers with full colour statement printing, a unique service in the UK. Writes Cecilia Campbell: "The reason their offering is so unique is that they can produce high volumes of fully variable full colour print at high speeds, thanks to the continuous inkjet technology they use. DSTi prints about 20 million pages (duplex) a month at production speeds of 500 fpm. With other digital print technologies, high speed, high volume means black only." Read the full story...

see page 12

Ifra – take two

In the second part of our report from Ifra Expo in Leipzig, Laurel Brunner points out that: "In addition to the all singing all dancing front ends CCI Europe, Eidos Media, Protec, Unisys et al develop, many smaller companies are building equivalent systems albeit on a rather less ambitious scale." Find out who they are...

see page 15

Plate giants continued

In our series of profiles of the plate suppliers of this world, the time has come to Agfa and Kodak. The full articles are posted on www.digitaldots.org, here we have picked out the tastiest bits...

see page 19

Regular Columns

News Focus

Agfa's third quarter results show continued volume growth for Graphic Systems, with results reflecting persistent high raw material costs and price erosion. According to Marc Olivié, Agfa's President and CEO: "Third quarter results were affected by the insolvency of Agfa Photo, a group fully independent from Agfa. By setting up a provision and reversing tax assets, we believe that we have put this behind us and that we can concentrate on our core businesses. Both Graphic Systems and Health Care expect to have a strong fourth quarter and we can confirm our outlook for the year."

Fuji has introduced its next generation Brillia High Definition CTP plates, plus new processors. The plates are based on the same new emulsion as is used in the processless plates announced in September. There are three plates each for commercial and newspaper applications. The Brillia LP-NV2 is a violet photopolymer plate and the Brillia LH-PJE is for thermal imaging. Both will be available in March.

Kodak's latest generation thermal head, version 3.0 of Square Spot, has double the number of diodes for twice the performance. And the company's EMS, a linking technology that brings ERP to graphics production workflows, is in beta in the US. Kodak is also working on next generation inkjet technology that images 600 x 600+ dpi with 2–8 bit depth and 6–8 picolitre drop size at extreme speeds.

Time Inc. in the US has launched its new Ad Portal, developed by Vio. Advertisers can use it to directly upload ads to twenty of Time Inc.'s titles, including their four weekly magazines: Time Magazine, People, Sports Illustrated and Entertainment Weekly. Inbound ads are checked for PDF specification compliance prior to being uploaded along with the relevant preflight report and a digital job ticket.

Google is testing a new search engine for weblogs. Google's technology has an advanced search fiction so users can focus their queries on specifics such as topic, author, dates and so on.

Global Graphics Jaws RIP and PDF technology is the basis of new features in the latest version of **Canon's Edicolor** page layout application. Que? Page layout? Well yes, but not the bit that Global Graphics contributes. Version 8 of this technology has tools for creating and printing PDF files directly from the application, so users won't have to buy a third party PDF creation tool. Global Graphics' technology also enables users to make high-precision adjustment to page layouts by making it possible to display high-resolution EPS images on screen.

HP has introduced the HP Designjet 4500 printer for unattended colour production, because it has two media rolls instead on one. The printer also has an extended set of job accounting and facility management features and has an optional stacker and a large format scanner. Or it can be configured as a fully featured print/scan/copy multifunction printer.

Dalim is supplying the prepress workflow management for the new £120 million gravure plant Prinovis is building in Liverpool, UK. Dalim's Twist workflow, Mistral production management and Dialogue proofing technologies will provide Prinovis's worldwide customer base with on line job management and approval.

The German research organisation **Fogra,** together with its Swiss twin Ugra, have announced their plans to offer

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certifications of monitors used in graphic arts production. Fogra already certifies hard copy proofers and this is a logical extension to that service. The basis of the certification is an updated version of ISO 12646, and testing will be done with test software developed in cooperation with the German monitor vendor Quato.

Markzware has released its conversion tool, for turning Xpress into Indesign files. Q2ID (try saying that with your mouth full) is free with Flightcheck Professional v5.7 , but only until the end of the year.

Heidelberg has some new Acrobat plug-ins for Prinergy and Prinergy Powerpack, providing automation and other tools for managing correction cycles and production versioning in a prepress workflow.

Microsoft is being sued by a man in Chicago who apparently claims that his **Xbox** gaming thingy overheats and locks up. This unspeakably unoriginal individual is following in the steps of the Apple litigants and trying to get a class action on the basis that Microsoft didn't properly test the Xbox 360 before hurrying it to market. Get a life Mr. Man.

Screen has installed its first Platerite Ultima dual GLV imaging 32-up platesetter. Imaging 46 B1 per hour this is, per Screen, the world's fastest VLF platesetter and it is now in production at Kohlhammer Druckerei in Germany feeding the company's nine KBA and Speedmaster presses. Screen have also scored in Austria, at Druckerei Janetschek and Neumarkter Druckerei. The pair have shelled out for a Screen B1 PlateRite 8600 and PlateRite 8100 respectively, taking input from Trueflow.

Protec, Spanish editorial systems whizzo, has sold its amazing MILENIUM Cross Mediafront end to Diari de Tarragona the leading regional newspaper in the province of Tarragona, Spain. The group publishes two editions from six editorial offices, using a special communication protocol Protec has developed for low speed telephone lines. Through this protocol, everyone involved in the newspaper can have access to all its applications, working from a single database.

Subsequent to the successful close of its purchase of Macromedia, **Adobe,** the industry's most wealthy company, has announced three new product bundles. They combine CS2 with the Macromedia Flash Professional 8 and Studio 8 software.

The Irish News, Northern Ireland's leading regional morning newspaper, has installed Picdar's Regional Newspaper Edition (RNE) of its Media Mogul Digital Asset Management technology. The newspaper wants to improve reliability for picture management, as the image library grows from its current base of over 160,000 pictures.

Artwork Systems has installed its Odystar workflow technology at **MPG Books** in Cornwall, UK. The company produces around 300–400 book titles each month, with volumes rising substantially towards the end of the year. The technology will improve PDF handling, including preflighting of files from a huge range of sources.

Also in the UK, a News International subsidiary, **Broadsystem,** which specialises in direct marketing, is installing two Xerox Docutech 90 digital print engines, supplied by Express Print Solutions (EPS). These devices complement a Docutech 75 and a DocuColor 2045, to provide extra capacity for producing personalised client mailings.

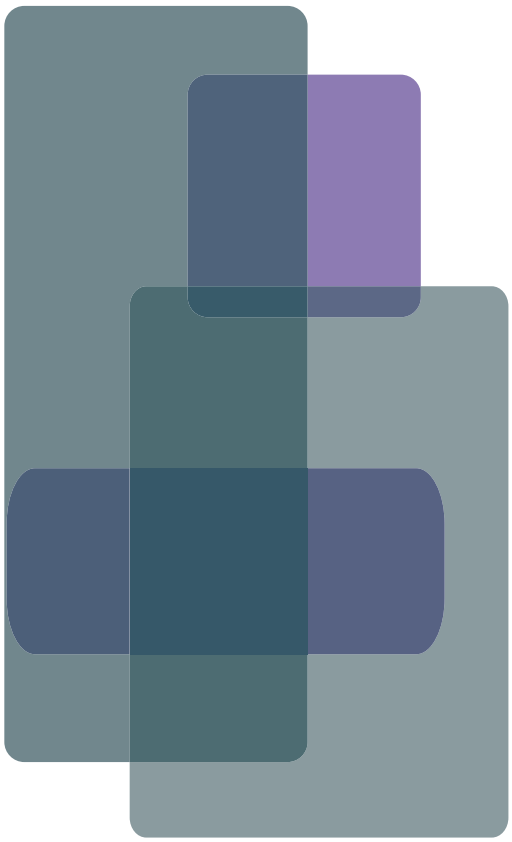
Quickcut has launched its Forward Advice System (FAS) for linking ad booking with design and placement. FAS allows users to control their specific validation parameters so that publishers and agencies will be working from the same accurate booking data. An FAS job ticket sets up ad design templates, avoiding re-keying booking data and making sure that jobs are designed to the proper size and format.

Tansa Systems AS, developers of advanced text proofing tools for various languages, is installing its technology at **Toronto Star Newspapers Limited** and **Citymedia Group Inc.** This Canadian duo will integrate the text quality control technology with CCI Newsdesk at the Toronto Star and with QPS at City Media Group titles.

PerfectProof has updated its colour proofing & printing software RIP. ProofMaster v2.1 has "a completely new technology" to support high-end workflows, spot colours and multi-channel print jobs.

Akbar Ganji has won the World Association of Newspapers' annual press freedom prize, the 2006 Golden Pen of Freedom. Mr. Ganji, a leading investigative journalist and one of Iran's most renowned political prisoners, is serving the fourth year of a six-year prison sentence in Iran.

In order to provide local sales and service support to its rapidly increasing number of customers in Europe, **Beijing Founder Electronics Limited (Founder)** has today announced the launch of a European subsidiary, Founder Europe SA, based in the centre of Brussels, Belgium. J. Derek Fearn, Founder's European sales and marketing director has been appointed to the board of Founder Europe SA and takes on the additional responsibility of general manager, running day-to-day operations. Assisting Derek Fearn is Philippe Duval, technical support manager, who will also assume responsibilities for customer training and assist with operations.



Letter From... Lapland

Dear Pixies,

Ho ho bloody ho. I really hope you are all enjoying yourselves more than I am. This time of year it's a nightmare up here in Lapland. And I've got one reindeer lame, another that's scared of fairy lights, and one red nosed old bugger who's refusing to pull his weight with the sleigh. And all those whinging emails from thirty somethings who want me to help them get back their touch. I tell you this Christmas thing isn't what it used to be.

Anyway, enough ranting. We've had a whip round up here to get you lot something special for Christmas, but there isn't much you can buy these days for €37.83. So we've written you a little song, something to cheer you as you weasel your way through the next edition of Spindrift.

You can sing it to the tune of Jingle Bells.

We can say, that '05 was a special year,
It was when, we began again, to hope and not to fear

This was when, print and friends took heart in what might come
Ad rates up, and colour too, and lots of little runs

Publishers as well, they could sell more ads
Revenues and cost cutting both helped to make them glad
When they saw the range, of markets they might serve
They took a step beyond the web and hit a lively nerve

But this year, was tough as, companies got munched
Think of AB Dick and friends, and all the Creo bunch

HP's nerd, new man Hurd, took no time to start
He was swift with his list, of those who'd have to part

And we saw much change, in fortunes 'cross the board
Agfa's seeing growth, and Heidelberg's less fraught
Even though its tough, we're hoping to get through
And for '06 we will have, all sorts of things for you.

So readers dear, we're all here, to cheer and jolly you
Along the way on every day, to our readers we'll stay true.

And when you, stop to think, of what it's all about
The printed word, is where we see, a silent world made loud

Happy Solsticing!

The Fat Bloke With The Beard

Spindocs

(Where the spinner gets spun!)

A Printing World Gem from the Letters to the Editor section

"The small guy counts too

I was both delighted and relieved to read last week's article about Kodak and its future, now that it has taken KPG, Creo and Versamark under its umbrella.

As a small printer, I find that increasingly I am left out in the cold by sales reps from the big suppliers. While the big multinationals focus their attempts on the big users, us little guys are lucky to get a visit once a year, and if we want any queries turning around, we just get shoved in the queue and wait our turn.

So it was refreshing to read that Kodak, now that it is such a big player, will not go down the route of its rivals and will treat all of its customers the same.

And Barb Pellow's stated intention to help develop their customers's skills can only be good news too.

Of course, being in business for over 20 years means that I take it all with a pinch of salt.

And that when push comes to shove price and quality of product are always at the top of my list. But for some of the more standardised versions that we purchase, I will be delighted to deal with a sales rep who treats me with as much care and attention as he does everyone else – that's as long as it's a decent standard.

I know that in a world of getting more for less, cutting sales forces and service is inevitable.

But it doesn't have to be that way, and if I can help Kodak break the cycle, I will."

Pass the sick bag! What sales rep ignores any potential victim?

Expandocs

(In this section, we aim to cast some extra light on a particular recent news story.)

Heidelberg Prinect Colour Solutions Raising the Standard

Presses don't change at quite the same rate as the flightier prepress technologies, such as databases and workflow management tools, but change they do. So much so that press manufacturers are developing sophisticated colour management controls to function on press. Heidelberg's Prinect Colour software suite is one of a growing number of integrated colour management systems taking colour management beyond prepress to the pressface. Manufacturers such as KBA, Komori and Heidelberg are extending the usual model to control colour performance on press. Heidelberg's technology was unveiled at Drupa, but the company has recently extended it with a new measuring method called Mini Spots, operating within the Prinect Colour suite.

Prinect Colour is a bidirectional closed loop system, based on ICC standards, CIP3/4's Print Production Format (PPF) and Job Definition Format (JDF). It consists of the Metadimension RIP (for raster processing, setting print parameters and output curves), Printready (for workflow management), Image Control (a spectrophotometer which can be connected to up to four presses), and software modules, all working in concert with the CP2000 press control system, via the Prinect Prepress Interface. The collection provides closed loop colour management, from plates to proof to press, to minimise press makeready times by defining production conditions in advance as part of the press presetting.

Heidelberg's Prinect Image Control is based on a Gretag Macbeth spectrophotometer. It generates colorimetric measurement values from a printed sheet and compares values with the stored reference target values. The differences are the basis for colour processing and subsequent recommendations to the press control system for correcting the ink duct settings. Image Control software takes into account specific ink properties as well as the paper,

ink series and target print standard. An internal database with Pantone and HKS colours provide the reference data for spot colours, so that they can be colour managed in the same way as process colours. A challenge here, as always, is to calculate the colour of wet ink and predict the end result with dry ink on dry paper.

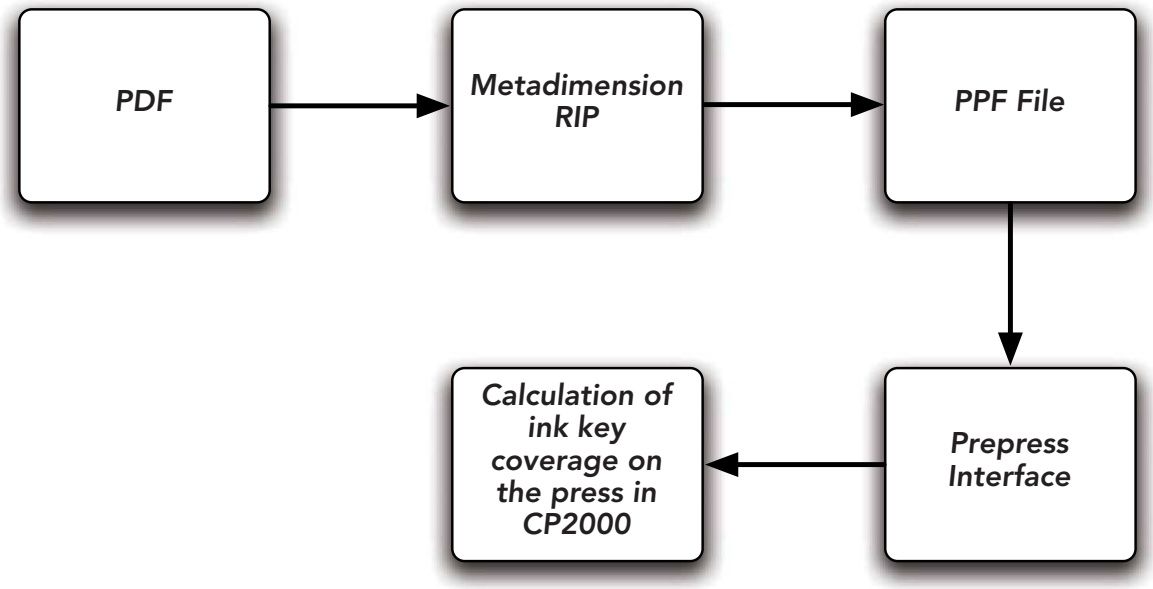
The Prinect Image Control technology looks at a whole sheet and measures the colour bar plus the sheet's content. According to Heidelberg it is the only system in the world to use spectrophotometric measurement of the entire print image in process. Image Control compares the data to a target standard for evaluating specific ink quality, grey balance control, and so on.

Prinect Image Control, including the colour interface, costs around €160,000 and Heidelberg has sold 1,000 of these systems since 1998. Prinect Image Control is included with a rising number of new press sales, especially larger presses requiring workfow integration and colour management; smaller ones tend to choose Axis Control, an option for the CP2000 press control system. Axis Control is also based on the Gretag Macbeth spectrophotometer, but it is not designed to measure huge colour targets and only measures control bars. It is designed for smaller presses and is priced according to the press size.

Mini Spots

Mini Spot checking, released in October, takes Prinect Colour to a new level of control. It checks colour values for a random selection of spots, small areas or colour bars, on the sheet or proof, and works in conjunction with the Quality Monitor module in the Prinect Calibration Toolbox and Profile Toolbox to check target spots for dot gain and inking. Operators can also choose to have larger Mini Spots or lots of them, for example to test 40 or 60 patches for colour gamut checking in both horizontal and vertical directions, wherever colour bars are positioned.

The Quality Monitor control module measures the behaviour of inks on press, ensuring the press functions to specified tolerances. Corrections can be made during the run, and data fed back to production so that subsequent plate output is correctly calibrated and colour profiles adjusted. The Quality Monitor reports any deviation from the target Delta E, and Heidelberg estimates printers can come up to accurate colour with 1–2 pulls. Printers could reduce waste by 25% and make ready time by 15%, ac-



CP2000 Workflow

cording to Heidelberg, which estimates a return on investment for printers in one year.

Besides the Quality Monitor, the Prinect Calibration Toolbox has utilities for resolving problems that come up on press depending on how different inks, screen rulings and substrates interact, checking linearisations and adjusting CTP output. It is as a central repository for creating the same printing characteristics for all output devices, for faster quality management and process control. This could be quite handy for giving multiple presses a single point of reference to make sure outputs match.

Prinect Profile Toolbox for calculating ICC profiles provides rigorous press control using Mini Spots measurement. With it, Heidelberg combines the idea of device link profiles with adaptive process control, responding to how the press performs. This can yield considerable savings in time and effort, because all device profiles are being constantly updated.

The heart of this system is the ink control system sitting in the CP2000 press control system with its database of values, based on colours and print substrates. The database stores the datasets used to calculate the correct amount of ink for each individual job, according to how print variables interact. Operators can rely on the database or create new ink key presetting characterisations themselves for different materials and printing conditions. Using the new Colour Assistant option tools within Prinect CP2000, these values can be adaptive according to how the press behaves during the run. The software compares the reference values with the actual setting of the ink ducts and works out a new reference, according to the percentage coverage on the sheet for a given ink duct, ink series and target print standard. This takes the subjectivity out of the printing process, providing tight, automated process control. Ink presetting optimisation curves can be saved, and curves developed based on adjustments for a given job. Assuming there are no changes to ink, paper and so on, this can simplify later reprints considerably.

In the demonstration we were given this technology of course looked extremely impressive. The operator set the press up deliberately wrong and showed how by letting the control software correct the colour curves the press came up to colour almost immediately. Instead of wasting 500 sheets, the press could have been printing accurate colour in around 156 sheets. The operator could have saved 400 sheets on this job, if the correct curves had been used. On a per job basis that is a substantial saving both in consumables and in time. Of course in these days of short runs and competition with digital presses, many commercial printers, particularly those competing with a digital press, can already come up to colour in relatively few sheets. However whether very high quality colour work can be produced so efficiently, is perhaps less certain.

Printers demand faster production throughput and improved quality control, with less waste and full cost accountability job to job. All of this cries out for standards, but there is no such thing as a standard print job or even a standard printing condition. Prinect Colour and Mini Spots, plus their competitors, move printing towards standardised processes and standardised print conditions. We aren't there yet, but progress is at least being made.

Say What?

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

At a recent press conference Kodak's top brass's combined frankness and market appreciate made a big impression. Here's a selection of some of the more (or less) diplomatic snippets:

CEO Antonio Perez speaking of Kodak's fling with Heidelberg **"it wasn't the most convenient relationship"**

And on Nexpress: **"we still need an entry level machine which Jim [Langley] has been promising me now for two years"**

Jim Langley subsequently on entry level digital presses: "we would like to have an entry level product"

… and Mr. Langley on the positioning of electrostatic versus inkjet printing digital printing in years to come "electrostatic is unlikely to go faster than 200 ppm within our lifetimes"

Many people will have heard about this, but in case you haven't come across it, on the 10th November there was a deliberate leak (is there any other kind?) at Microsoft. Mr. Gates had sent the following memo to his executive staff, direct reports and distinguished Engineers. It outlines where the company ought, but isn't yet (publishers take note), heading. Here are some extracts:

"This coming "services wave" will be very disruptive. We have competitors who will seize on these approaches and challenge us – still, the opportunity for us to lead is very clear."

"We will build our strategies around Internet services and we will provide a broad set of service APIs and use them in all of our key applications."

"What might also change is the way we buy and use Microsoft software and services in the future, with emphasis on Microsoft's ability to drive scale rapidly on broadly accessible Internet services. … Advertising has emerged as a powerful new means by which to directly and indirectly fund the creation and delivery of software and services along with subscriptions and license fees. Services designed to scale to tens or hundreds of millions will dramatically change the nature and cost of solutions deliverable to enterprises or small businesses."

So advertising to fund software development, using the web as the delivery environment.

Yikes.

Acrobites

(Something to get your teeth into)

SNARF

The Social Network and Relationship Finder is a Microsoft invention that in a weird way does what a publisher does with a newspaper or magazine. The idea is to use common social interests as the basis for deciding what matters or not for a given reader. Microsoft researchers have combined the idea of social context with a computer's ability to keep track of how we work with messages to come up with a means of handling email message flows.

SNARF, which is currently just a research prototype, treats a message from a colleague differently than it does a message from a stranger, but it is rather more than a spam filter. It can sort out the rubbish from what is important and organise unread email into a series of panes arranged by author, and linking to all related messages. SNARF lets the user build their own ordering system by assigning metadata to their individual inboxes and these metrics can in turn be organised so that information ordering can be done in all sorts of ways.

SNARF is a free download that works with Microsoft Outlook and it has been tested with Exchange and MAPI servers, Hotmail, POP, IMAP, and the OL Connector for Lotus Notes. SNARF does not work with Outlook Express.

MMORPG

Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game could be an ideal means of keeping teenage boys off the streets. If you have a teenage boy (or girl even) that you can't get to roam the streets in the first place, MMORPG is probably the reason why. For this client server web based technology is the ultimate fantasy for role players. Individual players can exist within an MMORPG as a fantastic graphic representation of themselves, and it is this fantasy character that competes in the game. Game publishers host the nonexistent worlds these players inhabit, and which are their environment for interacting with other players worldwide.

Players in an MMORPG do all sorts of things that they probably wouldn't dream of doing in real life, some of which they probably ought to learn how to do, such as have conversations with strangers, use public transport or eat using a knife and fork.

MMORPG developers are obviously in charge of supervising these virtual worlds. They constantly offer users updated sets of activities, tasks and enhancements. So a new deity perhaps, and perhaps even more popular than even the Beatles.

Boomerangs

(Your feedback fed back)

1, Dec 2005 9:24 am
Page 1 of 1
From: Mail@fbi.gov
To: <x_mail-list@digitaldots.org>
Date: 30, November 2005 5:20 am
Subject: You visit illegal websites

Dear Sir/Madam,
we have logged your IP-address on more than 30 illegal Websites.
Important:
Please answer our questions!
The list of questions are attached.
Yours faithfully,
Steven Allison
*** Federal Bureau of Investigation -FBI-
*** 935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 3220
*** Washington, DC 20535
*** phone: (202) 324-3000

1, Dec 2005 9:23 am
Page 1 of 1
From: Admin@cia.gov
To: <tb@digitaldots.org>
Date: 30, November 2005 3:48 pm
Subject: You visit illegal websites
Dear Sir/Madam,
we have logged your IP-address on more than 30 illegal Websites.
Important:
Please answer our questions!
The list of questions are attached.
Yours faithfully,
Steven Allison
++++ Central Intelligence Agency -CIA-
++++ Office of Public Affairs
++++ Washington, D.C. 20505
++++ phone: (703) 482-0623
++++ 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., US Eastern time

You've probably already seen these, but we wanted to draw attention to them because they are apparently the vehicle for the worst worm attack this year. The Sober X worm can apparently disable security software and firewall routines before sending out similar e-mails to everyone in your address book and blocking access to web sites providing security software. Yet another reason to stick with Mac OS or Linux. The CIA have even issued the following warning:

"If you receive unsolicited e-mail appearing to be from the CIA, like the recent e-mail falsely attributed to our public affairs office, the message is fake. The CIA never sends unsolicited e-mail to the public. If you are not expecting an e-mail from us, delete it. Do not open any attachment; it may contain malicious code that could damage your computer or mail itself to people in your e-mail address book."

Driftwood

(Useful stuff washin' in on our shores)

The First Step in the Multi-Core Revolution

In April of 2005, Intel announced the Intel Pentium processor Extreme Edition, featuring an Intel dual-core processor, which can provide immediate advantages for people looking to buy systems that boost multitasking computing power and improve the throughput of multithreaded applications. An Intel dual-core processor consists of two complete execution cores in one physical processor

(right), both running at the same frequency. Both cores share the same packaging and the same interface with the chipset/memory. Overall, an Intel dual-core processor offers a way of delivering more capabilities while balancing power requirements, and is the first step in the multi-core processor future.

An Intel dual-core processor-based PC will enable new computing experiences as it delivers value by providing additional computing resources that expand the PC's capabilities in the form of higher throughput and simultaneous computing. Imagine that a dual-core processor is like a four-lane highway — it can handle up to twice as many cars as its two-lane predecessor without making each car drive twice as fast. Similarly, with an Intel dual-core processor-based PC, people can perform multiple tasks such as downloading music and gaming simultaneously.

And when combined with Hyper-Threading Technology (HT Technology) the Intel dual-core processor is the next step in the evolution of high-performance computing. Intel dual-core products supporting Hyper-Threading Technology can process four software threads simultaneously by more efficiently using resources that otherwise may sit idle.

By introducing its first dual-core processor for desktop PCs, Intel continues its commitment and investment in PC innovation as enthusiasts are running ever-more demanding applications. A new Intel dual-core processor-based PC gives people the flexibility and performance to handle robust content creation or intense gaming, plus simultaneously managing background tasks such as virus scanning and downloading. Cutting-edge gamers can play the latest titles and experience ultra-realistic effects and gameplay. Entertainment enthusiasts will be able to create and improve digital content while encoding other content in the background.

The new Intel Pentium processor Extreme Edition ushers in a new era in processor architecture design in which multi-core processors become the standard for delivering greater performance, improved performance per watt, and new capabilities across Intel's desktop, mobile, and server platforms. This new Intel dual-core product also represents a vital first step on the road to realizing Platform 2015, Intel's vision for the future of computing and the evolving processor and platform architectures that support it.

Bonus Track

A little something for 2006, with grovelling apologies to Lennon & McCartney, this is to the tune of "Hey Jude"

Hey dudes, just take a mo'
This is the year to go to I-i-i-pex
The minute you get your ticket in hand
You'll understa-and that Ipex is where it's at

Go to Ipex, Ipex, Ipex, I.....

Hey dudes, it's not just a show
If you're into, ink on pa-a-a-per
The minute you take a look at your curves
You know you dese-erve to spend more on your press

Go to Ipex, Ipex, Ipex, I.....

Hey du-u-udes, it's not just print
It's about, just so much mo-o-o-ore
Ipex will show what we all know well
Print is the se-ell, the world can't do without

Go to Ipex, Ipex, Ipex, I.....

Hey dudes, just take the plunge
Tell your customers, to get off their bums
And head there, to lovely Bir-irmingham
Where the-ey can, fulfill all their media dreams

USP: Full colour fully variable statement printing

DST International Output Ltd has taken transactional printing to a new level with variable full-colour print capabilities. Rather than being limited to sending out preprinted stationery and leaflets, DSTi Output's customers have the advantage of communicating with fully variable marketing messages on full-colour statements. Two key technologies combine to enable the company to offer this unique service; their own Hi Output variable data software, and three high volume continuous inkjet Kodak Versamark V-series printing systems, running 24/7 at the DSTi Output plant in Bristol.

DSTi describes themselves as a one-to-one transactional mailing company. The reason their offering is so unique is that they can produce high volumes of fully variable colour print at high speeds, thanks to the continuous inkjet technology they use. DSTi prints about 20 million pages (duplex) a month at production speeds of 500 fpm. With other digital print technologies, high speed means black only – digital colour electrophotographic printing is slow and much too costly for the huge runs produced by DSTi.

Transactional printing

DSTi Output is a one-to-one transactional mailing company with customers in the utilities, banking, telephony and the retail finance sectors. The retail finance customers are required by law to provide monthly statements for all active credit cards, a cost-incurring practice typically seen in this industry as a "distress" purchase. DSTi Output's variable printing capabilities have given these customers the opportunity to turn this distress into a sales opportunity. DSTi Output CEO, Tim Delahay, explains: "Our USP lies in strategically leveraging the marketing database and combining it with the use of transactional mail. DSTi Output's customers, using their cardholder base, initiate their marketing briefs and we create designs to be printed on the monthly statements. We can provide completely variable statements according to their marketing criteria, in full colour on white paper." In addition to transactional printing, DSTi Output utilises the high volume inkjet capacity to produce millions of letters for their customers every month.

The first two Kodak Versamark V-series presses were installed at DSTi Output in the spring of 2002. During the same period, the software that is used to run the press was adapted to manage the entire preprint process as well. DSTi Output is essentially a combination of a software company, with 50% of its UK business focused on software development, and the other half of the company operating print facilities. The first Kodak

"We have found print quality has just fallen away as an issue, thanks to the variability we can provide. Our customers are signing off on maybe 20 or 30 extremely targeted marketing messages, not just a single six-page insert of litho quality. They receive these high quality products for the same price as the single insert, with short lead times and the facility to make changes up to two days before the print run."

Tim Delahay, CEO DST International Output Ltd.

Versamarks are configured as 4/1, i e they print full colour on the face and one colour on the reverse of the web. In 2005, a third Kodak Versamark V-series press was installed, this time the top of the range model, a 4/4w VX5000, with 16 print heads, for full colour on both sides. All three printing systems run at 500 fpm.

The initial decision to go with the Kodak Versamark solution was based on DSTi Output's desire to offer full colour products, with shorter production cycle times, and the ability to increase production capacity without generating additional costs. "During our evaluation of the existing solutions on the market at that time, and based on these top level requirements, it was obvious that no other solution would do," says Delahay.

High quality results in marketing messaging

DSTi Output has its own design department and creates all the design elements and layouts that are used in customers' statements. According to Tim Delahay, the variability the company can offer is key: "The quality of the products we provide lies in the variability. Over the past three years we have significantly improved the way the images look in 300 x 600 dpi. Some of it has been achieved through software adjustments, but more than anything, it's about design skills – knowing how to optimize images, which images to use, and not to use," says Delahay. "We have found print quality has just fallen away as an issue, thanks to the variability we can provide. Our customers are signing off on maybe 20 or 30 extremely targeted marketing messages, not just a single six-page insert of litho quality. They receive these high quality products for the same price as the single insert, with short lead times and the facility to make changes up to two days before the print run."

Guaranteed colour consistency is of vital importance for DSTi Output's big brand name customers. One prospective customer with a CMYK logo showed resistance to switching from offset to inkjet for this very reason. "We collected six or seven pieces of their existing litho printed products, from which it was apparent that there had been no colour consistency thus far," says CEO Tim Delahay. Pictured with Julia Whitehouse, chief compliance officer.

Guaranteed colour consistency is of vital importance for DSTi Output's big brand name customers. One prospective customer with a CMYK logo showed resistance to switching from offset to inkjet for this very reason. Seeing is believing however, and colour test prints changed this customer's mind. "We collected six or seven pieces of their existing litho printed products, from which it was apparent that there had been no colour consistency thus far," says Delahay. "We convincingly demonstrated that once we have achieved the correct colour match, we could accurately reproduce this, run after run, month after month on our Versamark presses."

To further expand the versatility of the printers, Kodak has assisted DSTi Output in developing the ability to electronically stitch the print heads together. Originally, there was a gutter in the middle of the web, with an A4 being printed on either side. The gutter has been eliminated, and the print heads have been aligned, or stitched, in order to reproduce an A3 image across the width of the web. This is now an option when setting the printer up for a new job.

DSTi Output's print software consists of two parts: Direct Access Web is an interfacing software for communicating with clients and is used from

the design phase through to the PDF file it sends out for final sign-off before printing. The second part is an in-house production control software called Factory Control, which generates the print file to drive the printer (as well as the client PDF). The same data is used to control the finishing machinery where the final packs of envelopes, statements and any additional leaflets are combined. According to Tim Delahay, DSTi Output mostly runs Pitney-Bowes finishing equipment because "it mirrors the Kodak Versamarks in terms of the amount of space required to produce the volumes that are needed." DSTi Output can also use the production data to integrate with any outside mail providers.

Although DSTi Output's variable full colour statements are a unique product in the UK market, the company competes head-to-head with large firms who are specialized in commodity-based statement products. "The challenge is to get the prospective client to let us show them what we can do, and based on that, consider changing the basis of the tender document. The key is to bring them here, show them the capabilities of the Kodak Versamark presses, and have an existing customer talk about their experience. Once we do this, the service – the volumes, colour and variability that we can provide – is absolutely compelling," concludes Delahay.

– **Cecilia Campbell**

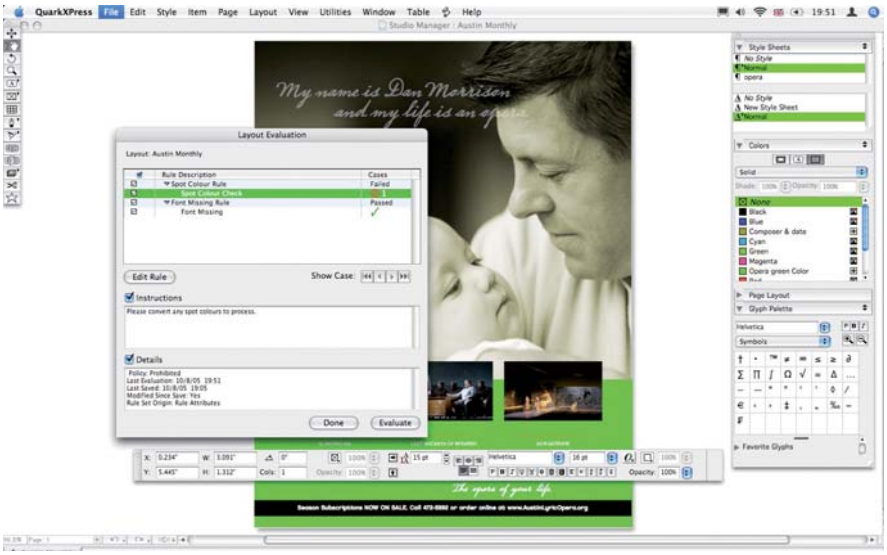
Kodak Versamark VX5000

The VX5000 is the high-end system of the V-series printing systems. The press is available in a wide range of configurations with a choice of controller and finishing options. The roll-to-fanfold configuration selected by DSTi Output has 16 printheads for full colour. The VX5000 is designed to use the same paper handling capabilities of an offset press. It is designed with an upgrade path. Customers can begin with a simple monochrome system and add print modules to enable spot colour or process colour printing. The system can also evolve from a simplex to a duplex configuration and from a 1-up to a 2-up configuration. The VX5000 presses are capable of producing over 2,000 variable data pages per minute and achieve duty cycles of up to 60 million pages per month.

Managing media output - Ifra report part II

This is part two of our report from this year's Ifra Expo in Leipzig. In the last issue we covered developments in digital printing, CTP and publishing systems.

The ideal newspaper production system should be able to support newspaper publishing in a world where media usage and habits are no longer discrete, but based on where and when people want to receive or access information. An increasingly sophisticated readership wants the flexibility to read a newspaper wherever and whenever they want, to shape and customise the content, to view it on television, computer screen or mobile device, with the mobile device used like a kind of remote control for on demand media specification and delivery in print or electronically. In our concluding Ifra Expo coverage we look at how technology supports media delivery that anticipates and immediately fulfills a customers needs. In addition to the all singing all dancing front ends CCI Europe, Eidos Media, Protec, Unisys et al develop, many smaller companies are building equivalent systems albeit on a rather less ambitious scale.



Quark XPress 7

At Ifra there were several systems based on Indesign Server. Essentially a version minus the user interface, the server version allows partners to develop client technologies for all sorts of production including newspapers, with Indesign as the pagination engine. Automation and customisation are thus much easier to do for a highly refined design approach to applications support. Danish company Cacidi Systems announced the Cacidi Extreme Enterprise Server 2 for Indesign Server CS2, providing a web to print system. Sansui announced that Indesign Server CS2 will be incorporated into its self-service, web based publishing and advertising solutions, Publishnow and Classified Market Place. Wilkenson Scoop is basing its new web based Freedom editorial system on the new Adobe technology. Softcare's K4 editorial system, and version 4.1 of Woodwing's editorial software Smart Connection Enterprise, are also based on Indesign Server CS2, as is Wave2 Media Solutions, and so the list goes on. Even CCI Europe is taking a closer look at it.

This heavy endorsement of Indesign reflects the market's interest not just in Indesign. There seems to be a requirement for customising the Indesign engine so that it better suits different market terrains in the wake of changing markets and fragmentation in media habits.

Quark's Xpress 7 is looking impressive but we don't yet know how Quark intend to position it to compete with CS2 or Indesign Server. It is due for release early next year. It supports collaborative working, with the possibility of assigning different document elements to different people, and it has a new graphics engine for faster, more accurate page rendering with improved anti-aliasing. Transparency is supported in various ways, most interestingly by colour as well as object. The new text engine handles both Open Type and Unicode fast and efficiently, and the user interface adds extended information palettes and hovering sub menus. Colour management supports presets and there are JDF ready job jackets, improved PDF management and direct support for PPML (Personalized Print Markup Language). Quark is currently working out a pricing strategy to make upgrading or outright investment as attractive as possible.

Developers are clearly pushing the innovation boundaries and now it's up to newspaper publishers to get on with it.

Harris & Baseview introduced its next generation editorial and production systems, written in Java as n-tiered applications. The client interface is any standard browser, so if you get system crashes it isn't Baseview's fault, just change your browser.

Of course efficient editorial and ad production is all well and good, but it depends on powerful workflow management tools. Workflow aficionado Dalim is consequently finding increased interest in its technology from the newspaper community. Dalim has recently installed its Swing automated production system at Sud Ouest in Bordeaux to manage ad file exchange across titles. Dalim's Twist workflow software is being used at News International to manage back end preflighting of ad and editorial content.

Cassandra Fletcher of Harris & Baseview talked about the suppliers' next generation editorial and production systems, written in Java as n-tiered applications.

Agfa also had some interesting announcements in this area. The New York Times is completely replacing its current transmission technology with Agfa's Arkitex transmission system. We understand the new technology will support all media production for the group. Over 50% of the NYT's circulation is outside New York and the company intends to increase this figure as much as possible. There are also 20 new Advantage platesetters being installed, with the last of them due to go live within next year. Arkitex will be feeding them pages for regional output.

Associated Newspapers and Agfa are also working on developing a comprehensive production workflow architecture using this technology to support the newspaper's growing number of ad region combinations. This is now at 196, substantially up from the 72 five years ago. Those 72 combos apparently generated some £4 million in revenue for the newspaper, which might have been the incentive to offer more combinations to advertisers. The newspaper is also seeing a rise in the number of syndication sites and will be working with Agfa to develop systems to support, as the company's Dave Collette puts it, "more pages, more newspapers". The new technologies will be JDF compliant and provide integrated planning for advertising, editorial, promotions and circulation.

Market fragmentation is going to encourage more such developments for output management in the future, but it is also encouraging more companies to work together to solve problems. Escenic, whose web content management technologies are in use at over 300 sites worldwide, and which underlies DTI's Webspeed amongst others, has announced partnerships with Tansa Systems and with Getronics Pink Roccade. Yes that is the name. Tansa is a Norwegian developer, with more than 7,500 users in Europe and America, which provides quality control for text. It's basically a very, very sophisticated spell checker, which processes text in phrases rather than just checking individual words against a list. The dictionaries, hyphenation and style rules can be tailored to a house style, so this technology is more like automated text proofing and quality control.

Oyvind Orbaek of Escenic, who's web content technologies are in use at over 300 sites worldwide.

Getronics etc is in the business of providing IT services and the media business is just one of many business sectors the company serves. This company has 30,000 employees around the world and provides IT management services across the board from web hosting to server farms.

This is possibly what Atex, now a wholly British company, is on about. We thought it sounded a bit thin during the press conference and a look through the press material didn't do much to change our minds. Atex announced that it has adopted Service Orientated Architectures and Enterprise Application Integration to provide open, modular solutions. And??? It's a step in the right direction but maybe they need to up the pace a bit. The five year contract with IBM Business Consulting is a start, as is commitment to work with anyone necessary to meet customer needs.

More interestingly, Atex has invested in Mediaspectrum, a developer of web based advertising technologies. The press release is peppered with phrases such as "bridge converging advertising services" and "cost-effective multimedia services" but the most telling hint as to what this investment is about, is in the statement that "these SOA solutions wrap around our customers' existing installed client-server solutions and give them new life and value". This suggests that Atex is no longer doing original development.

All of these companies are basing their products on standard hardware, managed networks, databases, tagging, and standard software components. These are the foundations for all manner of interesting tools, including electronic versions of print. Sounds weird but Press Computer Systems has a new web tool for viewing newspaper PDFs that are the actual production PDFs of the paper, so the newspaper can apparently count electronic views in its ABC figures. Pages turn as they do in print and everything on the page is live, dynamically linked to the source content plus whatever else the newspaper wants to put behind it, including other media and archive content. This technology can be seen in action at the Express newspaper sites. Ninestar has developed something along the same lines in its Starview product, but instead converts PDFs to its own electronic paper format for online viewing. The twist here is the use

of Internet tagging to allow advertisers to limit visibility of ads to their preferred target audience.

All newspapers, be they local or national titles, have to be able to support dynamic media interactions if they are to maintain a hold on the media market. Newspapers are in the information business and their markets demand more content, more relevance to specific situations, more flexibility. This, in a mix with brand performance, editorial adroitness and the right advertising content, will help newspapers to develop business models that will help them to maintain and even to develop their positions.

Developers are clearly pushing the innovation boundaries and now it's up to newspaper publishers to get on with it. Front-end system and output advances give newspapers the means to seize the initiative to support rather than fear the continued fragmentation of media markets. If newspapers have the courage and foresight to implement what developers are creating, the industry will thrive.

– **Laurel Brunner**

Agfa & Kodak – the plate giants

Agfa – the golden oldie

With its origins in the development of photo products and chemical dyes, Agfa is the oldest player in the plate business. Founded in 1867 Agfa has pioneered colour photographic papers, X-Ray films and plate technologies, and like its primary competitors, Agfa's product portfolio includes consumables, equipment and software. Since November 2004, when it divested photographic activities to an independent company, Agfa Photo, Agfa has focused wholly on graphic arts and health imaging. Having acquired the Howson and Ozasol plate business, whose plate origins date back to the beginning of the last century, Agfa is the oldest manufacturer of printing plates, having produced them in large volumes for well over 50 years. Agfa moved into digital technologies in the early eighties, and started producing its first digital plates in commercially significant quantities in the early to mid 1990s. Agfa started selling digital plates in substantial volumes in the mid 1990s and, in common with other manufacturers, is seeing increased sales of silver plates.

Prior to Kodak's acquisition of Creo, Agfa considered itself the only company in the graphic arts industry to offer complete solutions, including automated prepress systems, digital workflow systems, film and plates. However in considering recent developments, both Fuji and Kodak can claim involvement in all of these areas of business.

Agfa is perhaps the most open of the major plate manufacturers when it comes to sharing information about its activities, and the company's view of the market relevant for all of them. Like its competitors, Agfa is seeing its volumes in both graphic film and analogue printing plates continue to decline, except in developing markets. Although it won't share information about its production capacity, according to Agfa, in just one decade, more than 40 percent of the total market for digital platesetting has already converted to direct to plate output. Agfa estimates that the European market is still approximately double the size of North America, due to the diversity of languages which results in shorter print runs. Shorter runs also make inkjet and other forms of digital printing more relevant and this view clearly influences Agfa's research and development and manufacturing priorities.

In 2004 Agfa's research and development expenses amounted to €191 million, of which 34.6 percent related to Graphics Systems. Research within Graphic Systems concentrates on continuous improvements to existing technologies and innovation in digital plates and industrial inkjet printing. The Graphic Systems business group's €66 million research and development spend is about 4% of its revenues which were €1,673 million in 2004.

The full versions of the company profiles of plate producers Agfa and Kodak are posted on **www.digitaldots.org**

These include figures on sales and revenues, company structures, and, of course all the plate products. Here we publish portions of both articles, as one.

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Kodak – with renewed blood

Since George Eastman first said "you press the button, we do the rest" in 1888, Kodak, headquartered in Rochester, New York, has revolved around imaging consumables and everything required to serve the markets that use them. In recent years those markets have changed, so since 2003, under the leadership of CEO Antonio Perez, Kodak has been undergoing the most important transition in its history. Kodak is moving rapidly away from analogue consumables towards digitally orientated growth. The company's digital vision is constructed on the strengths of its intellectual property and the three segments where Kodak could be the top or second biggest player. For the graphics industry this means digital plates, but also a great deal more.

Kodak has manufactured offset lithographic plates for decades, having introduced its first pre-sensitised lithographic printing plate in 1968. It introduced the first thermal CTP plate technology at Drupa 1995, and the KPG and Creo portfolios are the bedrock of Kodak's plate business.

Prior to their acquisition it was hard to keep track of how KPG and Creo related to one another. They had what appeared to be a somewhat schizophrenic, on again, off again relationship; this might have been one of the reasons for Creo's move into plate manufacture made because, in the words of one Creo employee, "we had no other choice". Whether the addition of Creo to the roster of independent plate manufacturers would really have benefited the industry or not is now irrelevant, but what is certain is that with KPG and Creo under the Kodak wing, there will be more, rather than less, stability in the market.

Apart from new customers and extended market presence, Kodak's addition of KPG and Creo has given it fresh research resources and perspectives, and substantial additions to its already bulging intellectual property portfolio. Kodak also got Creo's manufacturing facilities, although these are apparently surplus to requirements. Kodak is closing the West Virginia facility, relocating production lines to other facilities in the US and elsewhere.

Kodak is coy about how the specific ratio of analogue to digital plate production has changed over the last five years: "yes, it has changed, and while we cannot give you a year by year breakdown, digital is over 60% of Kodak's production." Nor will it tell anyone how many square metres it produces every year, or how much it contributes to worldwide plate production, or if its manufacturing plants are operating at capacity. One has to assume they are not for established markets, hence the recent relocation of plate lines that came with Kodak's acquisition of Creo. Things are different in Asia however, and Kodak, in common with Fuji and Agfa, is building new production facilities in China.

– Laurel Brunner

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Jim Langley, president of Graphic Communications Group, says the printing industry has a worldwide retail value of €597 billion with some 46% coming from commercial, 44% from packaging and 5% from newspapers. He estimates that there are 90,000 printing companies in Western Europe and that real print sales per employee are up 30% since 1990. According to US based numbers, this is barely half the gain in nondurable manufacturing overall globally (65.8%) – a growth of 1% versus 4% which Mr. Langley believes is because "no one large vendor has stepped up and supplied integrated solutions for the industry … hence the lagging of the industry as a whole".

Mr Langley (right) with Kodak CEO Antonio Perez (left)

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