



# Spindrift

News Focus • Opinion • Reviews  
Techno-Babble • Attitude

Volume 2, Number 3  
June/July, 2004

...Surviving The Graphic Arts Industry Since April 2003

**maturation n.** 1. formation of purulent matter; causing of this; a. 2. ripening of fruit; maturing, development.

**precocious a.** flowering or fruiting early; prematurely developed in some faculty or characteristic; indicating such development, to ripen fully.

From the Concise Oxford English Dictionary

## Dear Reader,

2004 is turning out to be a year of industry change, but the industry is also growing up. Growing up is hard, it's painful, it involves a lot of fuss and argument, and those concerned generally get hurt. Our industry has gone through some serious trauma, wrestling with the inevitable, to finally accept digitally driven automation, process control and colour management. Difficult subjects, peppered with tricky questions and complicated answers; it all speaks of faceless systems and dull automatons. It speaks of an industry striving to reach maturity.

Digital workflow management technologies are ruthlessly excising prepress uncertainty and vagrant processing variables. This bleakly unromantic engineering view is far from most peoples' idea of printing and publishing. However data management and IT efficiencies now drive ideas for new business development, market growth and of course technology investment decisions.

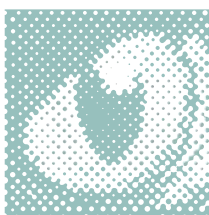
At Drupa we saw an industry blossoming into full-on digital maturity, with a shift to process engineering and control to support unprecedented production flexibility, quality and speed. Publishers and print purchasers have at their disposal an incredible array of possibilities for content creation, format and delivery. However too many publishers and print buyers still lack the awareness and imagination to understand how to really use the services at their disposal. We want to change this, and we'll tell you more about our plans in the next issue of Spindrift.

This is a combined June-July issue, hence the later-than-normal publication date. We are now taking a summer break, not least to celebrate the marriage of Laurel and Paul. Anyway, I hope you will join Todd and me in wishing them many gloriously happy years together.

Enjoy the read and enjoy the summer.

The Spindrift crew,

**Laurel, Cecilia, Paul and Todd**



## In This Issue

### *Colour for one and all*

Writes Paul Lindstrom: "Colour management has been a mantra for digital production professionals for some years now. One is almost tempted to think or hope that whatever the problems were, digital colour management is now solved and the problems have all gone away. Not quite. There is still much work to be done, but what is different is the fact that users finally seem to be embracing it." At Drupa they got a chance to learn more, and for those of you who weren't there, we give you Paul's comprehensive yet condensed lowdown on the colour management state of affairs...

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### *Quickening Aussie expertise*

Since the last time we looked, Quickcut has metamorphosed from a developer of seriously clever file management tools for specific markets, into a worldwide organisation developing holistic workflow technologies for distributed file and data management. There's not much this Australian developer of file delivery systems does not have up its corporate sleeve. Laurel Brunner has more...

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### *Heidelberg builds its own...*

...brand new computer-to-plate device. It's called the Suprasetter, and is not so much a platesetter as a declaration of intent. Laurel's intrigued...

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## News Focus

### *The deal is finally done*

When did these speculations start - we're not sure. Well, actually we are; it was a few weeks before the Ifra show in October last year. And now Goss' take-over of the entire Heidelberg Web organisation is complete. Considering the issues involved, it's not bad going.

The two companies have signed and executed a contract for Goss to acquire Heidelberg's Web Systems business. Included in the transaction are substantially all assets associated with the newspaper and commercial web press business, as well as the high volume postpress activities. It is expected that the transaction will close in the next several weeks, after completion of the remaining regulatory procedures.

This acquisition approximately doubles the revenue base of Goss International and creates one of the largest web offset printing press suppliers in the world. The combined entity will have operations in North America, Europe and the Asia/Pacific region and will have approximately four thousand employees focused on web offset.

As part of the transaction MatlinPatterson Global Opportunities Partners, Goss International's major shareholder, will commit approximately one hundred million dollars of new capital to facilitate the integration of the two companies. In addition, Heidelberg will become

a shareholder in the new company with an equity stake of approximately 15%.

It will be interesting to see how the integration of these two corporate cultures will pan out, and what product lines will come out the other end.

### *Tiger, Tiger Burning Bright*

The next version of Apple's lovely OSX operating system is due for a cautious prowling next week at the Apple Worldwide Developer Conference. Stevie is expected to do his usual admittedly rather frayed-at-the-cuffs thing with a public showing of 10.4. Code named Tiger, 10.4 is likely to be available by the end of the year. Based on Darwin, the open source Unix kernel that is the brains behind OSX, not a lot has been said about what to expect. Security improvements are likely, as are easier more robust file handling at the desktop.

### *Mellow Colour Colour Proof & Print QA*

Little known colour repro specialist Mellow Colour has introduced a new colour quality assurance system. The system is based on work conducted over the last year or so with some of the UK's leading print companies. ISOLitho Report is designed for print buyers and specifiers who want to maintain consistent colour appearance conforming to ISO 12647. Instead of matching the proof to the press or the press to the proof, the technology compares both to predefined ISO specified targets for a variety of printing conditions.

ISOLitho displays print colour measurements along with the ISO specification's targets and tolerances in an onscreen report. This was apparently not very easy prior to the development of this technology.

To use ISOLitho the operator selects from pull down menus in the set up dialogue the required output target for paper type and ink colour, plus the dot gain targets. Colour data from the print sample is captured with a spectrophotometer and a colour report is generated. A pass or fail summary sheet for all ISO tolerances is then produced for proof and print appearance validation. The report shows when colour appearance is in or out of tolerance, with grey balance and density information, and with vital information about what to do to fix out of tolerance colours. ISOLitho also works during the printing process to warn of grey balance and density shifts, before they could cause problems. For any printer who needs to ensure that their output conforms to ISO 12647, this tool is a wonder. Written in Visual Basic and running within Excel, ISOLitho costs around €700.

### *Four Sappi Golds for Pragati*

Congratulations to Pragati Offset on its impressive haul of four golds and one bronze medal in the recent Sappi Asian Printer of the Year awards. Thompson Press

### **Spindrift**

ISSN 1741-9859

A very special newsletter for Graphic Arts, Prepress, Printing & Publishing Professionals, published monthly (sort of) by:

#### **Digital Dots Ltd**

**The Clock Tower • Southover • Spring Lane  
Burwash • East Sussex • TN19 7JB • UK  
Tel: (44) (0)1435 883565**

#### **Subscriptions:**

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**Contributors:** Rt. Hon. Algernon Tripps-Bunkerly

received a silver medal and we are proud to note that both of these companies are subscribers to Spindrift.

The Sappi awards started 25 years ago and are the only awards programme with a worldwide reach. Sappi is a paper manufacturer based in South Africa and the awards programme is designed to promote excellence around the world. Indian printers received six of the 16 medals awarded in the single Asian, Australasian, Central and South American category. This is the first time in the history of the awards that a single company has won four prizes. The gold medal winners for each region qualify to compete for the title of international printer of the year. This competition takes place in Cape Town, South Africa this coming October. Good luck Pragati!

### ***Nexpress reorganising***

With Drupa and its ownership slalom behind it Nexpress is turning attention to reorganising itself. This may be less exciting for everyone, but it's definitely an important first step towards being taken seriously once more.

The colour and monochrome parts of the business have been brought together, and staff from 17 Heidelberg subsidiaries will come under the Kodak wing. According to Chris Payne, vice president of marketing, 98% of people offered jobs have accepted. He doesn't say how many people haven't been offered jobs. How many people this 98% really is isn't clear, but there are still over 400 Nexpress staff located in Kiel, where Heidelberg's impressive new Suprasetter was developed.

Kodak Nexpress is now working with EFI to support the EFI Oneflow workflow, as well as building a closer relationship with Canon. Canon OEMs the monochrome DigiMaster engine, but could be an ideal candidate to provide Kodak Nexpress with an entry level colour press. The lack of an entry level device has considerably impeded efforts to widely deploy Nexpress technology. According to Nexpress's chief executive officer Venkat Purushotham "there will be compatibility between their portfolio and our portfolio". KPG is to market some of the Canon colour engines, and it would make sense to add the Nexpress to this portfolio. In order to maintain compatibility across these offerings, the companies involved need to develop at the very least compatible colour management strategies as well as clear pricing and market positioning.

### ***MAN Roland Heading for Split***

At its recent AGM MAN's chairman Rupert Rupprecht stated that the sheetfed press operations of international conglomerate MAN is to change its status, not necessarily within MAN, in order to give the division "flexibility to manage its future". This doesn't mean that the division is up for sale, but it does reflect concerns that the division's financial health might not live up to

the group's expectations. The newspaper part of MAN Roland isn't under the gun yet, but the sheetfed business is in the red, despite a barrelload of orders at Drupa valued at over €470million. Mr. Rupprecht also said rather chillingly that: "We do not accept any division failing to earn substantially less than its cost of capital in the long term."

### ***Athens gears up for...Océ***

As in Sydney in 2000, digital newsprint pioneers are taking advantage of hundreds of thousands of displaced readers of various nationalities gagging to read what's going on at home even as they are enjoying the competitions. And again, it is Océ who's responsible for the technology.

Athletes and visitors to this summer's Athens Olympic Games will be able to read about their own exploits and the latest news from home in their favourite home newspapers, after several international newspapers enlisted Océ Digital Newspaper Network (DNN) to print daily issues from a unique digital production site being set up in Athens.

Océ DNN has teamed up with print and distribution partners in Greece to establish the site, which will allow thousands of copies of foreign newspapers to be available much earlier than usual in Olympic venues throughout the Games, which take place from August 13–29.

Great service. Although, if we were going to Athens, we'd be happy to forget about home for a fortnight...

### ***HP Services provides SAP infrastructure for Heidelberg***

Heidelberg is outsourcing its IT infrastructure management to HP Services. This five year contract for services is valued at around €30 million and starts this month. HPS will manage Heidelberg's worldwide SAP Infrastructure for about 7,000 Heidelberg end users, taking over some Heidelberg people in the process.

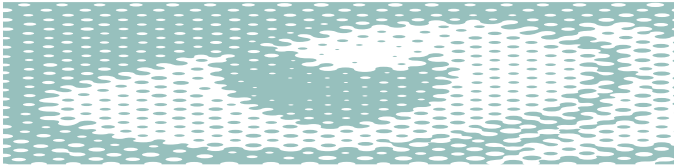
Currently Heidelberg runs SAP systems at three data centers but these will be centralised at HP's data centre in Boeblingen. HP will also "consolidate and optimize the SAP hardware platform and processes" in order to make the existing SAP infrastructure more effective and to reduce costs.

According to Heidelberg's chief financial officer Dr. Herbert Meyer: "Our main IT strategy is [that] the global consolidation and standardisation of IT systems/services [is done] cost effectively. Cooperation with HP has proved to be successful. This latest agreement with HP in the IT sector will improve SAP IT services, globalize and standardize, and at the same time reduce costs up to 30 percent."

### ***MAN Roland and Xaar Collaboration***

Not a lot has been heard of Xaar recently but the company has stated that it is working with MAN Roland to develop digital inkjet printing systems for coating applications. These systems would be used in traditional offset presses, as well as the Dicoweb.

Not a lot has been said about the deal either, however the idea of building hybrid presses makes some sense. The proportion of print applications suited to digital printing is still miniscule compared to the gargantuan array of analogue print. For the less digitally minded printer, adding personalisation or variable pages to a conventional run, through a single station, probably doesn't require quite the same leap of faith as going totally digital. However it isn't going to be long before digital printing isn't a leap of faith at all, so Xaar and MAN Roland had better get their skates on, before the market overtakes them.



## Spindocs

*(Where the spinner gets spun!)*

*So, the deal between Goss and Heidelberg Web is finally final. A comment from the Big Cahuna (taken from the Goss press release):*

**"Bob Brown, CEO of Goss International, stated, "We at Goss are very excited about the acquisition. The combined product platforms, technology portfolio, global operations and team of professionals around the world provide us a great opportunity to create value for our customers. This is an exciting day for Goss International. The acquisition gives us the opportunity to integrate two of the best teams in the industry and build a company focused on the web offset sector."**

*Of course he knows both teams intimately. In fact, he probably knows the Heidelberg team even better than his Goss guys and gals. After all, the Heidelberg Mainstream newspaper press was his baby – until it wasn't anymore. And now, curiously, it's back in the fold. Way to go, Bob!*

## Letter From... Royal Ascot

What Ho Spinsters!

Well all I can ballywell say is that here at Royal Ascot (indulging in the Sport of Kings doncha know), the sun is beating down like there's no tomorrow and our four-legged equine pals are romping in at odds to make their mothers weep with heartbursting pride, not to say their winning owners. Which brings me to the point as it were. Well actually it doesn't bring me to the p at all. What was it? Ah yes. Wilbo Masterton-Chiveley and his family fortune.

My old chum Wilbo Masterton-Chiveley is a wild young pup desperate to sink his family's fortune into a go ahead, high risk, spills and thrills filled biz, and somehow he's got it into his fat head that the printing game is the way to go. Not having much to go on in this particularly field, dear old Wilbo has turned to me for a bit of the old worldly wisdom and what not. Printing of all the deuced things! Well we've agreed that it has to be the digital sort (whatever that is) but there's a slight fly in the old ointment as it were. It seems that according to some damned fool of a hack scribbling in a Swedish trade rag, digital printing is for newspapers. How will they get all those great big sheets of paper into one of

these new fangled presses which look to the untutored eye of yours truly, to be just a smidge too small? Now the question is, will newspaper pages get smaller, or will the presses get bigger? Can't quite get the old noodle around this one.

So should Wilbo drop the old hereditary sheckels into this possibly dangerous black hole? Or should he sling it into the combined organic clothing farm and factory in China, some bloke in the Molesbottom Arms told him about?

They're in the paddock for the 2:45 so must dash. Any words of pearly wisdom you can dispense gratefully received.

Toodle Pip!

Rt. Hon. Algernon Tripps-Bunkerly  
Upper Molesbottom, Condhurst, Surrey

## Acrobites

*(Something to get your teeth into)*

### ILM

Information Lifecycle Management sounds just the ticket. Just wake us up when it's all set up and running smoothly. This is another one of those bizarre acronyms that must have appeared in a haze of mottled purple, after a very long night slogging away at the server face, Valpollicella to hand. Anyway the idea is to provide womb to tomb data handling without compromise to data integrity, privacy, data protection, freedom of information, global warming or hunting with hounds.

ILM's biggest fan is apparently EMC, not a hip hop band but rather one of the world's largest digital storage companies and owners of Documentum, the content management whizzos. EMC believes that we should combine multilevel data storage, workflow and content management in order to provide an easy and flexible means of managing data. Now there's a surprise. It sounds a bit like the same ideas we already use, with garden sheds, garages, attics, cupboards and the like. It follows the multi-tiered concept already widely established in the analogue world: less frequently used stuff goes in the loft or garage, or the shed, or under the stairs, and frequently used stuff goes in the cupboard. Of course the stuff you might need soon, never gets put anywhere, and if it does it is likely that it will never be seen again. In fact this isn't merely an analogue phenomenon, but unlike cupboards and the like, there is also the tricky problem of technology compatibilities. A shelf stays a shelf until

it collapses, but a disk drive without the right computer and operating system, cables and driver software is worse than useless. The ILM concept cannot account for change in the digital base over time. Unlike a cupboard or a shed, digital doors won't always open easily without the right mechanics.

## XBRL

We often get asked if there is any equivalent to JDF in other industries. Well even though the printing industry has been a bit behindtimes with its data interchange standards development, we haven't come across anything that's quite as drop dead gorgeous as JDF (at least not as far as data formats go). But we have come across the eXtensible Business Reporting Language. XBRL is a tagging language for financial data and it is designed to make financial auditing easier. The idea is that banks and insurance companies, brokers and financial bods in general can tag their files for more straightforward reporting and data sharing. This specification is now in version 2.1 and is expected to be available by the end of the year, probably in the US, where banks will be able to use it to submit their quarterly returns. It's clever stuff but it appears to lack the comprehensiveness of the JDF spec and it's limited to financial data management, i.e. anything that is spreadsheet based. JDF is data format agnostic and an XML application, so it ought to step more than happily with XBRL should it ever encounter it in a workflow.

## Say What?

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

*This is just lovely:*

*An unnamed UK editor attended a recent PDF conference and concluded that:*

*"the original digitisation of workflow was something of a digital revolution of which we are experiencing the beginning of a second wave in the form of integration and automation. However PDFs have only just evolved into a reliable standard in print and publishing. For a true efficiency revolution we will require a culture change that embraces new production and business models." Isn't that what we've been trying to do since 1984?*

*We recently received a press release about Triplearc, a print procurement company. However, whoever set up the page to print cut the right hand margins a little tight, with the result that the last words in each line are missing:*

*"Triplearc a leading UK-based provider of integrated online procu*

*printing and graphics industry, has announced the formation of a alliance with HP for Triplearc's online 'collateral-on-demand' syste*

*Triplearc's latest version of its edit2print software, which will be lau and demonstrated with HP Production Flow, to be sold to the print creative and enterprise sectors throughout the German, UK and D will be on the HP stand at drupa [sic] where they will give live demons system on the HP Indigo Press 5000 available later in 2004 in most"*

*it continues thus until concluding:*

*"The collaboration with HP also offers Triplearc the opportunity to into the European marketplace. Triplearc is a young and ambiti along with our recently announced sales and distributor technology in the United States presents the company with the business strategies."*

*Put the business in such hands as these at your peril!*

## Boomerangs

*(Your feedback fed back)*

**We had a letter from one of our favourite PR people, Ms Rasburn at Bespoke...**

Hi Cecilia

Just wanted to say how much I liked your report on the Goss Flexible Printing System in Spindrift -- very good. It was refreshing to read some considered commentary on what you saw at Drupa, rather than regurgitated press release, and I was pretty impressed that you could pick up the salient points of technology so quickly -- no small feat.

Also loved the letter from Düsseldorf. My back and fooschens were equally gepflucked by the time I got back to Blighty -- nice to be able to look back and laugh about it now!

tffn  
Fiona

# Driftwood

*(Useful stuff washin' in on our shores)*

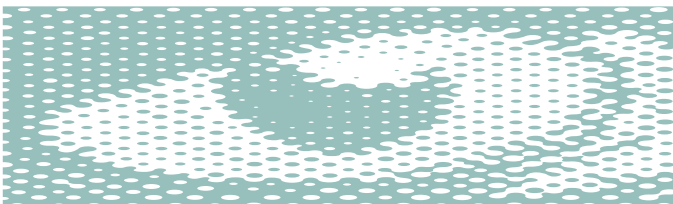
## Push-to-talk

This is the next Big Thing in mobile communications, already up and running (or possibly flying) in the US – where else? If the name gives you walkie-talkie vibes, you're getting there. Basically, a push-to-talk call is initiated from one handset, with a number of intended recipients or participants selected as a calling list. With minimal ringing on the recipient side, everyone is brought into a shared conference call at once. Because of this group functionality, the service is also sometimes called Group Talk. But push-to-talk seems more appropriate, it describes the potential intrusiveness of the thing.

In the US, the service is thus far most popular among consumers (as opposed to corporations). It's a quick and convenient way to organise impromptu coffee bar get-togethers and the like. The service depends on new hardware – phones equipped with a special push-to-talk button. A display of presence indicators can guide the initial caller as to whether members of the calling group are ready or not. In some ways the whole thing is a bit like Internet chatting, you invite those you want, as a group, to communicate with you.

So far, this technology seems to bring scope for chaos; as yet there are no technical means of organising a “talking queue”, nor indeed is there an accepted push-to-talk etiquette, the way there is in walkie-talkie coms – it seems some equivalent of “over-and-out” is needed, as well as some way of indicating you'd like to speak next.

There are various issues yet to be sorted for the European market, but we have a feeling this might take off; if nothing else as a social-events-enabler, and possibly also as an instant conference call option for industry – we're glad we're not in the Corporate Game waiting to succumb to this seemingly ultimate intrusion. Anyway – watch this space.



## Colour Management at Drupa

Colour management has been a mantra for digital production professionals for some years now. One is almost tempted to think or hope that whatever the problems were, digital colour management is now solved and the problems have all gone away. Not quite. There is still much work to be done, but what is different is the fact that users finally seem to be embracing it. The stands of colour management equipment and software vendors were generally very crowded at Drupa. It seems that instead of shying away from the thorny problems of managing colour in a digital environment, printers are starting to accept that there is no choice but to get on with it, and that sooner is better than later.

All colour management begins with the monitor, because most images start their grown up life when they are first seen on a computer screen. It's therefore crucial that the monitor is of reasonable quality and properly calibrated. CRT monitors have so far dominated high end image processing, but based on what was shown at Drupa this is changing, and changing fast. The challenger, the LCD based monitor, has been said to lack sufficient colour gamut and to have too limited a viewing angle. Such criticisms of LCDs are even included in the ISO standard for high end displays for colour proofing, approved as recently as 2002. Well, technology advances without pause, and the situation today is almost the opposite of what it was in 2002. A modern quality LCD typically has a higher luminance (brightness) than a CRT, and an equal or even larger colour gamut than the CRT.

One company that takes monitor calibration very, very seriously is KPG. At Drupa, visitors who wanted to experience Matchprint Virtual Proof had to enter a special room with correct ambient light controlled at 32 lux, the ISO 12646 standard. Ambient light at 32 lux means an almost dark room!

The ISO 12646 standard unfortunately seems to be more or less unknown by many vendors of monitors or colour management hardware and software. At least, it's seldom mentioned in the manuals. The instructions on how to properly set up a monitor for professional colour proofing are often at best vague, and sometimes even plain wrong. We hope this will change with rising awareness of the standard.

The KPG recommends one of Eizo's top of the line LCD monitors, correctly calibrated using the X-Rite Monaco Optics XR. To ensure absolute top quality, KPG doesn't just ship the instrument "as is" directly from X-Rite to the customer. Instead, KPG engineers first calibrate the colorimeter in their own lab and then ship it to the customer. KPG recommends recalibration of the instrument every six months. That's process control from the very beginning.

### And in a Land Far, Far Away

In today's fast, collaborative and teamwork based workflows, remote proofing is an increasingly important component. KPG acquired remote proofing specialists Real Time Image just before the start of Drupa and along with it the Real Time Proof solution. This technology consistently attracted a buzzy crowd on the stand. RTI's technology is an online proofing solution for high resolution documents that works fine even over networks with mediocre bandwidth, thanks to RTI's pixel streaming technology. The technology has had only one weak point, up until now ▶



All the vendors of colour management software or hardware, such as Gretag Macbeth seen here, had pretty crowded stands.



Masato Nakashima from Eizo demonstrates the upcoming Color Edge 22.2 inch LCD. It can reproduce the whole colour gamut of the Adobe RGB 1998 colour space.



that is. The previously weak support for monitor calibration is now in the safe and competent hands of KPG, giving the Real Time Proof colour management support a solid boost. Several companies including EFI, Esko-Graphics and Heidelberg have signed up as OEM partners to RTI, and more are likely to follow.

It always comes back to the monitor however. At Drupa, Eizo demonstrated the new Color Edge 22.2 inch LCD. Eizo claims that this display can reproduce the whole Adobe RGB 1998 colour gamut, and when analysing the gamut using for example Chromix's analysis software Color Think that checks ICC profiles, it looks as if Eizo lives up to its promise. The Adobe RGB 1998 colour gamut is equal to and even exceeds the colour gamut of high quality offset print on coated paper. The space is known to have some difficulties reaching the pure yellows and magentas, but on the other hand it reaches deeper into the blue, green and red/purple regions. In practise this means that one can proof, with reasonable accuracy, the normal offset printing colour gamut on a quality LCD. If the monitor can achieve the Adobe RGB 1998 colour gamut, it can probably give an adequate representation for four colour offset printing.

### Dross into Gold

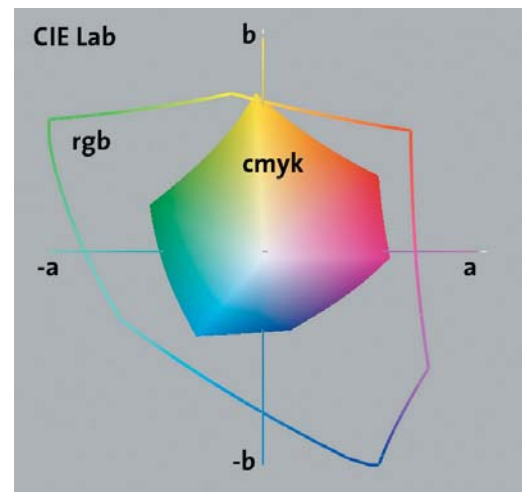
The percentage of digital images originating directly from a digital camera is steadily increasing; this we know. But far from all of them are of print quality directly out of the camera. At Drupa vendors showed a range of more or less automated solutions for fixing digital images for CMYK output or just generally enhancing quality. Kodak showed an easy to use software tool called Image Mapper to quickly build ICC profiles adapted to a specific lighting situation. All the images captured at the same session can then be adjusted using this profile.

Fujifilm recommends that the photographer creates a Digital Master in RGB and then prints the image on a calibrated proofer for reference. Fujifilm has a kind of Artificial Intelligence for image analysis built into all its image processing software to provide the basis for automatic image adjustment. Based on the content and composition of the image, specifics such as faces in a scene can be recognised and skintones preserved or enhanced, with grey balance and contrast adjusted at the same time. When converting images from RGB to CMYK, Fujifilm has added a hybrid rendering intent to the standard ICC rendering intents. Called C-Fit the idea is to preserve the perceptual characteristics of the image while slightly boosting the saturated colours.

The concept of automatically adjusting and enhancing images is not exclusive to Fujifilm however. Agfa has its Intellitune and Screen has a similar solution in its Color Genius AI software. Screen uses this same technology in its new Rite Polisher software, which can adjust all the images inside a PDF file. Extensis has released a new version of its Intellihance Pro, a plug-in to Photoshop for manual or batch driven correction of images.

Heidelberg has stopped manufacturing scanners but continues to enhance and extend its colour management products. With the newly name Prinect Profile Toolbox the Print Open profiling suite is paired with the Quality Monitor version 1.1 quality assurance module. In the press room the Prinect Image Control works in tandem with spectrophotometers to measure and evaluate the print.

**When converting images from RGB to CMYK, Fujifilm has added a hybrid rendering intent to the standard ICC rendering intents. Called C-Fit the idea is to preserve the perceptual characteristics of the image while slightly boosting the saturated colours.**



Monitors that reach the Adobe RGB 1998 colour gamut are likely to do a good job proofing a normal offset printing colour gamut (the inner area).

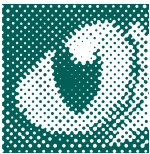
▼  
Colour management and proofing are closely related, and validation of the proofs is another trend among the vendors. CGS for example presented the Oris Certified Proof where a Fogra measuring strip by default is read and the result printed on a label to be placed on the proof.

Inline control of the print is on the rise as well, and X-Rite is contributing to these developments with the launch of Intelli-Trax. X-Rite cooperates with, among others, AVT to offer inline process control for both sheet fed and web offset presses, as well as for packaging applications. X-Rite also showed the new spectrophotometer DTP-70 Slingshot that can read an IT8 in less than three minutes. Also new is the Pulse ColorElite, which X-Rite hopes will challenge the highly successful Eye One device from Gretag Macbeth.

Gretag Macbeth showed Profile Maker 5 profiling software now rewritten to provide full support of version 4 of the ICC standard. To the Eye One series has been added the Eye One IO scanning table for automation.

Process control and validation seem to be the path more and more printers take to meet the challenge from other media and competing colleagues. Quality print is after all a strong selling point, and a growing number of printers are embracing digital colour management to further leverage their production expertise and competitive edge.

– **Paul Lindström**



# From file delivery to global media management

## Quickcut cuts to the core

**Since the last time we looked, Quickcut has become established as global company with local divisions and licensees, operating at a range of international locations. The company has metamorphosed from a developer of seriously clever file management tools for specific markets, into a worldwide organisation developing holistic workflow technologies for distributed file and data management.**

A partnership with a major workflow technology company operating in broadcast markets is in the offing, as Quickcut takes a further step away from its early file delivery model to provide robust file and workflow management services. The company has a unique advantage in its ability to extend file management from straight delivery to remote servers, moving it much further upstream into the publishing workflow. Workflow management, rather than file delivery, underlies most of Quickcut's current development efforts.

The new partner will be identified within the next few weeks, but this major Australian company provides the equivalent of Quickcut's services for television and radio advertising management. The idea is that ultimately all forms of advertising will be managed with Quickcut's technology. The merged company is working towards a single, unified desktop solution and user interface with the intelligence behind it to manage global ad campaigns. Currently the first stab at this user interface has been made, and Quickcut is working with one of the world's top advertising agencies to start putting things together for live deployment in the client's worldwide locations. Server farms in Australia and the UK and on the US east coast will support the required file interchanges worldwide.

Currently Quickcut's technology processes 1.5 million files per annum, a big jump from 1.2 million in 2003. Even in the UK where Adfast, a free albeit rudimentary file delivery technology developed by the UK's Newspaper Society, has been heavily promoted, Quickcut's monthly traffic is over 30,000 ad files. All major UK national newspapers, apart from the Mirror are to some extent Quickcut users. They have largely followed in the steps of the Guardian, the UK's first national newspaper to break with the repro gatekeepers traditionally used to manage ad file preproduction and delivery. The Guardian now receives all classified and display ads both black and white and colour, plus all magazine ads bar one title, via Quickcut technology.

Recently Quickcut has started working with News International and this too has given the company added momentum within a highly competitive sector. It seems that not only national newspapers are choosing the Quickcut route. The Quickcut technology is completely compatible with the Adfast ad delivery system and an increasing number of UK regional newspapers are using Quickcut. This is largely due to pressure from large advertisers such as Ryanair. Ryanair has stipulated their preference for Quickcut because of its more comprehensive workflow management model and the control Quickcut technology provides Ryanair over internal workflows. Quickcut is seeing a growing use of its technology in UK regionals, mainly because of this type of client pressure. ▶

**The idea of working first with national and regional newspapers, and then magazines, has given Quickcut a sophisticated awareness, bordering on intuitive, for the who, what, when, where, why and how of file management.**

▼ Advertising clients are apparently seeing substantial production cost savings, with one recruitment company slashing €50,000 from file delivery costs in the first month of using Quickcut for colour ad delivery. The cost reductions are attributed primarily to savings in gatekeeper/repro house colour management expenses. Publishers are seeing a reduced need for internal colour management quality control. Quickcut's latest version of its technology supports ICC profiles, so publishers do not need to check that files use the specified ICC proofing profiles. Publishers supply these profiles and the ad delivery system has to implement them correctly if the file is to reach the publisher's server without faulting.

### **Beyond British Borders**

The idea of working first with national and regional newspapers, and then magazines, has given Quickcut a sophisticated awareness, bordering on intuitive, for the who, what, when, where, why and how of file management. Even though local organisations such as the UK's Newspaper Society or the Periodical Publishers' Association work hard to develop industry standards, these efforts are inevitably limited in scope. Based as they are on domestic experience, clients advertising in a range of international media will inevitably prefer to rely on technology based on wider experiences. Both the PPA's Pass4press and more recently Pass4proof for example, may adequately reflect the requirements of the UK market, but they cannot absolutely reflect the needs of the wider media market. Because of this, clients often encourage titles operating on a wider scale to work with Quickcut technology. Quickcut has a fairly comprehensive database of production specifications with constant improvements based on empiric worldwide experience. For those preferring to use provincial standards, the Quickcut technology can be implemented as one of many choices with complete compatibility.

Fortunately file delivery and management is not about religion. Consequently, Quickcut is a founding member of AdsML contributing to the group's XML schema design to ensure that the standard matches its customer requirements. And Quickcut is finally applying for partner membership in CIP4 – better late than never! In all of its efforts, Quickcut's goal is to facilitate the model of information management from a single data repository cognisant of local preferences including such mechanisms as AdFast and similar domestic standards.

A rather more ambitious project is the GRADS (Global Rate Ad Delivery System – see volume 1, issue 2) technology that is now a reality with two UK clients using it. Although not commercially available yet, Quickcut has established a call centre building the GRADS database and ultimately incorporating specifications for all forms of media advertising including worldwide television, radio and films. An XML dump from GRADS can theoretically be used in any MIS system, so this technology could have immense potential.

Quickcut has additionally been working with an unnamed developer specialised in RIP and proofing technologies. This is a nonexclusive arrangement so Quickcut will also be looking at ways of working with other RIP and proofing developers. The concept is to produce a hard copy proof with an appropriate colour bar or control strip attached. This can be analysed and compared with the destination output device's ICC profile data, providing the originator with some indication of the proof's accuracy. As well as generating a proof based on press ICC requirements, it also verifies if the proofer hardware is performing ►

**It's not about file delivery anymore. Quickcut is poised to turn distributed workflow management concepts on their digital heads.**

▼ within the device's specification. The Delta E values are also embedded into the PDF and transmitted to the destination, giving the recipient confidence that the proof created is accurate and achievable. This effectively eliminates the need to transport the hard copy proof to the destination.

### **Quickening quality controls**

Quickcut has developed some new quality control modules. Quickprint PDF + is designed to accommodate both PC users and people with uncommon applications such as 3B2 or Corel. It offers the same functionality as the Mac based Quickprint, plus a secondary as well as primary database. This stores specific design criteria such as white over text, knockout black, and so on, for setting up magazine specific design criteria as well as the publishers' production specifications. Quickcut has developed its own PDF renderer with improved rendering speed and what Quickcut describes as "benefits above those of other rendering applications". The technology picks up design issues as well as mechanical ones, operating independently and with a suite of plug-ins.

Q-Automate is a single tool that works on both Quickcut and non-Quickcut (i.e. Acrobat) PDF files to manage server based data flows. It specifies task sequences, processing applications to use, post processing actions and individual file settings. Applications function as modules of Q-Automate, which has all the behavioural and settings information to initiate how the applications should behave for a particular workflow's automation and control. It is designed primarily for ad delivery, but this model supports any type of collaborative production management including production, creative and publisher communities.

This kind of sophisticated hot folder based processing for media operations management is not unique to Quickcut. It underlies some of Agfa's Delano project management ideas as well as those of Dalim's Mistral and Esko-Graphics Web Center. This is a model of data management for workflow automation that combines a generic hot folder model with automatic implementation of highly application specific data management concepts. These are single applications for defining specific workflow paths based on source and target specifics. Quickcut is working on convergence and compliance as the first step, and the second is for users to be able to work with PDF + to identify and collate faults using natural language. JDF of course is a logical addition to all of this.

In conjunction with a major UK national newspaper Quickcut is working on an automatic tool for correcting images with the incorrect colour profile, applying the correct one instead. The newspaper concerned is taking this further embracing PDF + as well in order to accept or decline images based on the colour management. This currently monolinear workflow is being developed to support multiple output channels.

With the same newspaper Quickcut is working on a template driven ad building technology based on a standard set of presets, designed for recruitment, vehicles and property ads. Log-on controlled access to templates depends on user level. The templates are predefined by the publication for web based ad creation. Quickcut's superfast PDF renderer builds the ad previews and the ad list holds ads for nine days so people can re-run them with slight changes. ►



Clearly with so many new technologies and the increasing emphasis on integrated workflows, Quickcut has to rethink its traditional business model. Whilst maintaining a substantial portion of income from fees based on the square centimetre of files validated and printed, various new business models are emerging. There are several permutations of this business model, reflecting new variables such as workflow efficiency and productivity gains, solution customisation, automated file handling and colour management, on and offsite support and maintenance. The company might move to subscription based fee structures in parallel with or as an alternative to the existing transaction based model. The idea is to give clients a range of choices, and to build technologies that make sure the risk of digital chaos is never too high. It is not about file delivery anymore, Quickcut is poised to turn distributed workflow management concepts on their digital heads.

– **Laurel Brunner**



## Heidelberg Climbing Its Mountain

**It's amazing how a short, sharp drop off the edge of a fiscal cliff can turn even the most stubborn of business heads. Over the last couple of years, Heidelberg has gradually slithered out of a seemingly golden position to one close to ignominy. Heidelberg once held in its hands the possibility to weave quite wondrous magic in the graphic arts, but ... Well the whys and wherefores of Heidelberg's comeuppance have been well aired throughout the graphic arts press. It all boils down to the fact that the terms "arrogant", "out of touch", and "misguided" were easily applied to Heidelberg, but not any more. The company has struggled to metamorphose its corporate ethic into a digital one, struggled to meet the expectations of RWE, its erstwhile major shareholder and, possibly most significant of all, struggled to move on from the failure of its relationship with Creo. Those struggles have not been in vain.**

At Drupa Heidelberg's huge presence created an inevitable sense of mass and given its dire financials and inept advance PR, we expected this to produce an atmosphere of moribund fatalism on the stand, rather than the energetic sense of momentum that characterised most of its areas. The energy and enthusiasm seem to derive from three very excellent technological directions. The first is the new Speedmaster press, sales of which began virtually as soon as the press was announced. The second is the fact that Heidelberg's workflow technologies, particularly as regards JDF, look solid. And the third is the new Suprasetter, not so much a platesetter as a declaration of intent.

The Suprasetter has an interesting lineage in that it has no lineage at all, apart from the brains and innovations of the Heidelberg engineers who designed and built it. Development started in 2000 just after Drupa, a Drupa at which a line of new platesetters co-developed by Creo and Heidelberg was to have been introduced. Everything was apparently ready, from engines and plates, to demonstration procedures and sales training. And then came the Creo/Heidelberg ruckus and the end of a relationship that really should have gone so much better.

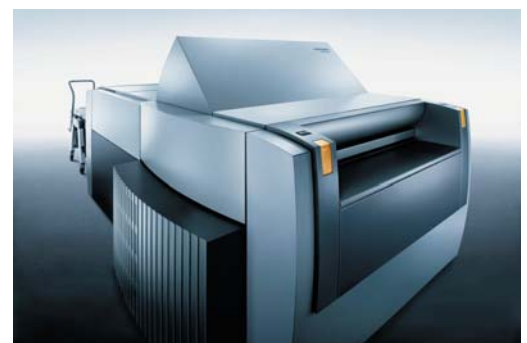
The new Suprasetter benefits from this experience, not least in engineering terms. The passion of its product development engineers and management is intense and runs deep. It's been a long time since we saw a platesetter presented with such obvious excitement and pride! Passion aside, the Suprasetter is indeed rather more than a platesetter for Heidelberg. Its imaging technology is the foundation for a range of platesetters, direct imaging presses and who knows what more. Initially it is to be used in the new 4-up and 8-up platesetters and the new direct imaging Speedmaster. This head may also replace the Creo heads used in the existing Speedmaster DI presses. In Q2 2005 the Speedmaster 74 DI will be available with a two module version of the Suprasetter's imaging system.

The Suprasetter thermal platesetter is due for release in Q4 2004, with pricing around that of the Topsetter. It has a modular design, from plate loading and internal punching through to the imaging system, for long-term upgrade flexibility. The device is field upgradeable with minimal downtime at customer sites of less than a day.

Upgradeability is a key characteristic of the Suprasetter which has a wide range of plate handling options, using the same plate loader as ▶



**Heidelberg's new Suprasetter is more than just a platesetter. It represents rebirth, revival and a renewed self-confidence for the company.**



the Prosetter. It has a small gripper margin and so is suitable for use with web presses.

Heidelberg has developed a very tidy slip sheet removal system whereby grippers lift each sheet off of its plate, placing it neatly onto a stack of papers in a box that holds up to 400 sheets, all flat and neat with no space wasted. Heidelberg doesn't use ionised air to remove static on the interleave sheets for easier handling, but may implement this idea in the future. At the moment the system is exclusively mechanical.

Plates are loaded and unloaded via a dual level swivel table, manually or automatically, and it is possible to manually load an interrupt plate, while a long job is running from the autoloader. The plate cylinder's clamping bar is designed to minimise the clamping area, so maximising the imaging area. The device has a very small footprint, with plates going in and coming out on the same side in the manual model, so the platesetter could go against the wall – very Fengshui.

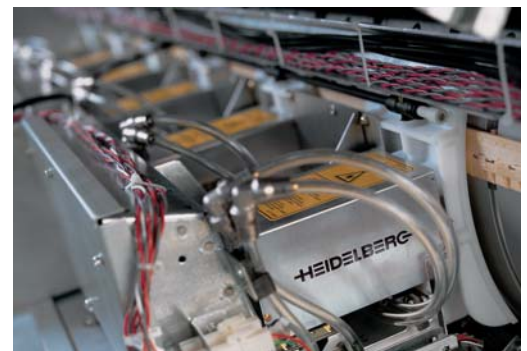
Plates can be unloaded while a plate is imaging and the semi-manual model needs no conveyer, because the loader plugs into the back of the imaging unit. The fully automated model's loader unit loads, unloads and conveys the plate direct to the processor at a rate determined by its speed. The multi cassette loader has a capacity of up to 600 plates 0.15 mm thick and up to 400 0.3 mm thick, up to four different formats from 370 x 323 to 680 x 750 mm in the Suprasetter 74 and 370 x 323 to 930 x 1140 mm in the 105. The module for plate loading and cassette is to be used in all Heidelberg platesetters in the future.

This external drum engine has a special cooling system which maintains the drum, register pins and laser modules at a constant temperature, to ensure consistent imaging on plate. It doesn't matter if ambient conditions change within the range of 17 to 30 degrees centigrade. The laser modules and register system are cooled with the same fluid as the drum, all in a closed cooling circuit like that of a car.

Depending on the required productivity, the Suprasetter can be fitted with three to six laser modules, each of which has 64 channels. If a diode fails, the emitters to the left or right of the failed one are switched off depending on whether there are fewer to the left or the right. This means that the performance loss is minimised to a maximum of 50 per cent. Because Heidelberg's design is based on a symmetrical laser concept, with the modules operating in pairs, if an entire module fails, both it and its partner are switched off. Heidelberg state that in a six module device, the Suprasetter takes about one minute to image a B1 plate for productivity of 30 pph at maximum format and 2540 dpi. Plates can be ordered from the press hall if required, via the CP2000 press control system, which accesses job queues direct. Although this interface could be JDF compliant, it is not yet. At Drupa this machine was imaging KPG Electra plates, but Heidelberg will be selling the Agfa Azura plate, branded as the Saphira, specifically for this engine.

Within the Suprasetter's two format classes there are several configurations depending on productivity needs. Single and multiple cassette loaders are available for all models, and Heidelberg plans to extend its punching format options. The internal post imaging punching system saves punching time by doing it when another plate is imaging, maintaining register accuracy by using the same pins. The punching system is included in the same the temperature compensation system as the

**It's been a long time since we saw a platesetter presented with such obvious excitement and pride! Passion aside, the Suprasetter is indeed rather more than a platesetter for Heidelberg. Its imaging technology is the foundation for a range of platesetters, direct imaging presses and who knows what more.**



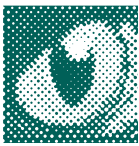
The Suprasetter Modular Imaging Head



▼  
imaging system and Heidelberg has found that the punching remains accurate to within less than 20 microns.

Besides Suprasetter there are other reasons to hope for a return to long term health for Heidelberg. The company booked orders of over €800 million during the show, taking its Q1 04/05 revenues to more than €1 billion and the worst of its problems (the Nexpress and web sagas) seem to be behind it. Heidelberg's new Suprasetter is more than just a plate-setter. It represents rebirth, revival and a renewed self-confidence for the company. Hopefully Heidelberg will be able to stay in touch with its market and keep its balance, steering a line where customer interests and grass roots market changes remain its driving imperative.

– **Laurel Brunner**



## A Special Message

We hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of Spindrift.

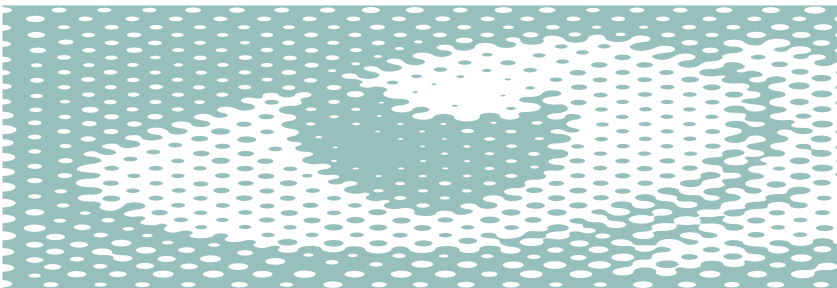
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