

Independent Research: IPA Value on Display

In 2008, IPA conducted the first Digital Print Forum where we reviewed digital production devices from HP, Kodak, Konica-Minolta, Xeikon and Xerox. The results were provided in a 64-page booklet that included print samples from each device in the study.

In 2009, we return with a bigger, more comprehensive offering that covers 10 press systems—eight digital toner based devices and two offset DI type technologies. The study is comprehensive in nature, covering all aspects of digital print production including color management and Pantone® spot colors, physical properties such as rub resistance, cracking and light fastness, and production issues such as variation over 1000 sheets. The study considers the ability to match GRACoL™ and SWOP™ on a digital press, and we evaluate the deinking and recyclability of the various presses.

For the past five years, the IPA Technical Conferences have highlighted a Color Proofing RoundUP to assess and report on the state of color proofing in graphic communications. IPA's independent research of system capabilities promoted and chronicled the maturation of color management and the advances in printing technology that have brought the world of proofing to a state of unprecedented quality.

As IPA transitions from a prepress-centric association to one addressing media in all its many forms of input, production and delivery, it is deemed appropriate to turn our analysis to a related and comparably challenging arena: production digital print. This technology has been advancing steadily over the last decade and now seems poised to achieve expectations such as fast turnaround, variable data, and distributed production.

It is hoped that this forum will educate users and suppliers on the important requirements for success in digital print, and will stimulate a process of continuous

improvement in this developing technology area. As in past Proofing RoundUPs, the intention is not to rank or identify "best" systems, but to explore the state-of-the-art as it relates to production printing. We seek to highlight the relative strengths and weakness of the systems in a constructive manner that contributes to the improvement of key technology areas.

Reviews of this nature improve our technologies and thus grow the opportunities for everybody involved in digital production printing, from content creator to print delivery. Keep in mind when reviewing results, there may be significant differences between laboratory results provided by the suppliers within their clinical R&D environments and the practical usage of an operating, commercial environment. These results are designed to assure your current or prospective digital print system matches your company's unique needs and market conditions while operating at peak performance.

We are extremely grateful to the suppliers that participated and allocated resources and personnel to participate in this study. Their willingness to support this type of independent research provides IPA members and the graphic communication industry an invaluable resource and provides a clear example of the value of independent institutions like IPA.

Go to www.ipa.org/digitalprint for results.



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Portions of this article are excerpted from the "2009 IPA Digital Print Forum" results book, authored by Dr. Abhay Sharma.

(ISSN 1539-137X) • Established 1911
 March/April 2009
 Volume 99, No. 1

THE IPA BULLETIN, published bimonthly, is the journal of the IPA, the Association of Graphic Solutions Providers.

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