

Digital Technology Trends

by Howie Fenton, GATF

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▶▶ **Study Shows Email effective for Customer Retention & Sales**

The State of the E-commerce Industry Report 2001-2002 by the DMA (Direct Marketing Association) and the Association of Interactive Marketing concludes that e-mail is an effective tool for retaining customers and driving additional sales but not useful for attracting new customers. The two groups surveyed 700 companies involved in direct and interactive marketing. E-mail marketing promotions led to an increase in sales for 66% of respondents, and 63% said e-mail was the most effective customer-retention tool. E-mail is less effective for customer acquisition, however, with only 37% of respondents indicating its usefulness in attracting new consumers.

<http://www.adage.com/news.cms?newsId=34366>

▶▶ **Xeikon stops sheet fed press, but not technology**

Last issue, we discussed the acquisition of the Xeikon by Punch. Recently, Xeikon announced that it would cease the development of its sheet fed press, the CSP 320 D. The company will focus its resources on the established web-fed products. The 320 may be over but its technology may live on. Inside the 320 was an intermediate belt technology similar to those found in other 3rd generation toner systems such as the Docucolor 2000 series. According to Jan Van Daele, CEO of Xeikon International "Some unique technological concepts developed for the CSP product line remain valuable parts of our portfolio. These will be secured and further developed, and may be incorporated into future products."

<http://industryclick.com/magnewsarticle.asp?newsarticleid=304682&magazineid=22&SiteID=22>

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» () **Point** () **Counterpoint** ⌘ **New PDF creation strategy** ⌘

One of things keeping us busy lately at GATF is PDF Boot Camp. I just completed training in Philadelphia. This training is targeted at customers, customer service representatives (CSR) and production people. The customer and CSR training focuses on the right and wrong ways to make PDF files. The production training is targeted to production pros (preflight, prepress) and discusses how to create, preflight, and repair PDF files.

The challenge, of course, is keeping up with the latest problems and “work-around solutions”. One of the best ways to keep up is by monitoring the Listservs and attending seminars offered by the pros. Two good Listservs are the comp.text.pdf and usc.list.pdf-l, as well as the list on the Adobe page (<http://www.adobe.com/support/forums/main.html>).

If you spend any time on these forums or go to seminars you will discover one voice offering well-researched and accurate information, in a sea of inaccurate information and propaganda. That person is Dov Isaacs. Although Dov works for Adobe his job per se is not technical support or PDF Evangelist. He considers himself more of a “keep everybody honest” product evangelist. He monitors and contributes to various forums and mailing lists primarily as a means of keeping tabs on end-user needs. In fact, it is not uncommon for questions on the list to say “Help DOV”.

One of the interesting things Dov has started to discuss flies in direct conflict with one of the cardinal rules of PDF preparation. For years the best way to create a PDF file was to first create a PostScript file with the fonts embedded in the file, then run that file through Acrobat Distiller. Dove suggests something quite different. Upon hearing of this strange advice I contacted Dov to discuss this heresy:

According to Dov there are growing reasons to NOT embed fonts in the PostScript file. Some versions of the PostScript driver try to save printer memory and with certain files don't send the font information, even though you thought it did. Some versions of the Mac PostScript printer driver do not successfully convert TrueType fonts into the Type 42 fonts needed to embed in the PostScript file. Some Windows PostScript printer drivers, when not configured correctly, convert TrueType fonts into either Type 3 resolution-dependent bitmap fonts or “unhinted” Type 1 outline fonts, both of which offer degraded quality over TrueType fonts as Type 42 fonts in the PostScript stream. In some cases, inserting pages to a PDF file from within Acrobat created font problems.

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According to Dov, not embedding the fonts in the PostScript file but instead embedding the fonts within Distiller overcomes all of these problems. I have to wonder how often these problems occur in the graphic arts and if, under certain circumstances, this could cause additional problems. (Dov claims that he sees these problems quite often, based upon queries to lists he monitors!)

» () Counterpoint

But...the strategy not to embed fonts in the PostScript file works best when the computer that creates the PS file also creates the PDF file, because the identical fonts are required. However, some companies are using a server strategy, in which the staffs send PostScript files to a hot folder that is monitored by Distiller and converts the PostScript file to a PDF file. In this type of workflow the PostScript files are created by artists and designers in Fortune 500 or publishing companies, often with fonts that were added to their computer only (when no body was looking) that is not part of the standard set resident on the server. In this scenario the PostScript file sent to the server would not “find” and embed the font in the PDF file.

Another fact to consider is that many of the problems the Dov has discovered are on the Windows platform and/or includes TrueType usage (both platforms). In the graphic arts, the dominant platform is the Mac and most service providers have successfully discouraged clients from using TrueType fonts.

In my experience, problems with PDF files are rarely due to font or printer driver technology problems, but rather more to do with what my Dad used to call the “nut behind the steering wheel”. Therefore, I am reluctant to change my recommendation. However, Dov is a hard guy to dismiss. So in my next breath I will say “if you experience problems after embedding fonts, then don’t embed fonts in the PostScript file and instead embed in Acrobat”. Thanks Dov

Interested in the PDF Bootcamp road tour email Howieatpre@aol.com

» PC World’s Best Monitor

Have you been considering replacing some of those old, somewhat dark and dingy monitors in production with something new? If the answer is yes, you may be interested to learn that the ViewSonic 19-inch GS790 monitor for \$329 was recently awarded PC Worlds Best Monitor award. According to the review “the text is razor-sharp, and colors are vibrant and rich. The \$329 unit should delight both graphics professionals and those who work extensively with text.”

This link will list sites selling the monitor and compare pricing.

<http://www.nextag.com/serv/pcmag/buyer/ProductM.jsp?ptitle=3038828&pdir=3>

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▶▶ **Blocking On-Line Ads**

It seems that you can't go anyplace on the web these days without having those obnoxious ads popping up in front of your screen every five minutes. If you try to use the keyboard commands to close the pop-up windows quickly (Mac: command-W) you can easily close the browser window that you actually wanted to view. An alternative is to put the window in a corner of your screen and continuously click on the window you're interested in as the ad "jumps" to the front of the screen.

For privacy experts, the issues extend beyond nuisance to an issue of privacy because they can write, spy or extract information from your hard disk . Advertisers use images with special scripts, called "web bugs," to extract information about visitors to a web page.

<http://www.privacyfoundation.org/resources/webbug.asp#1>
<http://news.com.com/2100-1017-243077.html?legacy=cnet>

In conjunction with small text files called "cookies," some companies compile a list of the pages that you have visited. Imagine the relief if you could visit sites without worrying that you were being watched. There is an emerging group of technical solutions to battle those intrusive online ads and information gathering technologies.

<http://www.macinstruct.com/tutorials/gareth/ads/index.html>

▶▶ **Xaar and Toshiba collaborate for branded printheads**

At Drupa 2000, inkjet devices from Xaar and Aprion created great excitement, with faster and better inkjet printing. Not much had been heard from either – until now. Xaar has signed a collaboration agreement with Toshiba, for manufacturing and supplying Xaar branded inkjet printhead products into commercial and industrial markets. Manufactured at Toshiba plant in Mishima, Japan, these printheads will be marketed as XaarJet branded products.

We expect that the first product will be launched at Ipex, the first product to come from this collaboration is a new, full greyscale, printhead designed for printing in high quality onto plastics such as smart cards, ID cards, CD decoration and other packaging applications, including carton and label printing. First deliveries of manufactured products from the collaboration are due later this year with volume shipments expected during 2003.

http://www.dotprint.com/news/02_04_08.shtml

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► Exclusive Report - 2002 Presidents Conference

Last month I was fortunate enough to present at the 2002 Presidents Conference. My presentation entitled "Practical and Profitable Digital Technologies" discussed less expensive implementations of CTP, color management, preflight, digital printing and PDF workflows. As a first time guest, I was impressed by the networking and comradery. The workshops, breakout sessions, roundtables, and general sessions were filled with Presidents and CEOs of printing companies. According to one hand-written letter of praise, these candid discussions and presentations provided great value.

"I cannot believe the value it was to me, as a small business owner. I have already implemented knowledge that I have gained from the conference... which will make the difference to be more profitable in these tough economic times... I was so impressed with everything PIA/GATF are doing. THANK YOU!"

In addition, there was one seminar by John Kyriotakis that caused me to suffer from presenter envy. Kyriotakis has created a polling pad technology that asks the leaders in the printing industry questions about sales and service, to which they would respond to and the answers were instantly projected.

Although fascinating, what really generated a "wow" was the comparison of the answers made by customers and buyers. This very clearly showed the discrepancy between what service providers think is important and what buyers or customers think. The link below will allow you to download or request several presentations. The Kyriotakis file only contains the survey data from the show, not the customer / buyers responses.

http://www.gain.org/servlet/gateway/PIA_GATF/presconf/info.html

► Recent proofing reviews

Considering an inexpensive professional proofer for your company or an even less inexpensive inkjet proofer for home? You may be interested in two recent review articles. One article in Byte magazine reviews the Epson's Stylus 1280 (13x19), Hewlett-Packard's Designjet 5000PS (42 inch), and Xerox's Phaser 7700 GX (12x18). The PC Magazine article tackles the \$100- \$200 color inkjet market. When reading the PC Magazine article you need to keep in mind that it may not discuss issues such as network connection, AppleTalk functionality, or PostScript interpreters.

<http://www.pcmag.com/article/0,2997,s=1474&a=19131,00.asp>
http://www.byte.com/documents/s=7122/byt1017865590270/0408_em.html

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▶▶ PDF/X-1 and PDF/X-1a Approved

In issue #2 (3/01) we discussed how Time shocked advertisers by demanding PDF/X-1a files. Until recently, publishers requested TIFF/IT files, which requires all graphic objects and text to be converted to raster data before exchange. Now it has become official, the proposed standard, ISO 15930-1:2001, Graphic technology — Prepress digital data exchange — Use of PDF — Part 1: Complete exchange using CMYK data (PDF/X-1 and PDF/X-1a), has been approved.

The standard identifies a limited set of PDF objects from the 1.3 spec. that may be used. It includes two compliance levels, PDF/X-1 and PDF/X-1a, which differ only in their use of OPI (open prepress interface – a high res. Low res swapping strategy) references and encryption (allowed in PDF/X-1 but not in PDF/X-1a).

Copies of the spec are available for \$50 from the NPES, which serves as Secretariat to both the committee for Graphic Arts Technologies Standards and the U.S. Technical Advisory Group for ISO TC 130. To obtain the report, contact the NPES Publications Dept. at (703) 264-7200 or e-mail orders@npes.org.

<http://users.belgacom.net/prepresspanic/pdf/info/pdfx.htm>

▶▶ New version Internet Explorer 5.14 for Mac OS 8.1 to 9.x

Apple has released a new update to Microsoft's Internet Explorer. The new update can be downloaded through the Software Update system preferences pane and click on the Update Now button in Mac OS X or at <http://www.microsoft.com/mac/DOWNLOAD/ie/ie51.asp> for Mac OS 8.1 to 9.x

According to Apple, this new version "resolves all potential security vulnerabilities in previous versions of Internet Explorer 5." It also resolves issues that could cause Internet Explorer to stop responding. A memory problem that could potentially compromise the security of the computer has also been addressed.

Note: The Internet Explorer 5.1 for Mac OS 8.1 to 9.x is not compatible with Mac OS X.

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▶ GATF's 12-Step Plan for Adopting a CTP Workflow

A few years ago Hal Hinderliter and I wrote an implementation plan for CTP (Computer to Plate). For anyone considering the purchase, it is still a good implementation strategy.

1. Identify objectives and set goals. Compare the features and prices of CTP systems and calculate the ROI. Is CTP the appropriate response to your needs? If you have workflow problems that CTP won't fix, address them first!
2. Implement quality control and color management procedures throughout your scanning, color correction, proofing, output, and press areas. Examine the tools in place for measuring and controlling quality, and make any necessary improvements.
3. Become proficient at preflighting all your files to catch mistakes before they are output.
4. Learn to do all your trapping electronically. Acquire trapping software if necessary.
5. Become comfortable with outputting imposed film using imposition software.
6. Acquire an electronic proofing system for full-color page proofs. During the transition, show both photomechanical and digital proofs to your customers to build confidence. Use spectrophotometer and proof-checking software to maintain quality and consistency.
7. Upgrade your network to at least 10BaseT, and preferably to 100BaseTX.
8. Install an image server with queue management and OPI functions. Consider one with color management capabilities.
9. Upgrade your archiving procedures. You should be able to archive terabytes of data.
10. Buy a CTP plate setter and RIP. Start by imaging fully imposed film, and continue to use photomechanical proofing during the steepest part of the learning curve.
11. At the same time, buy a roll-fed wide inkjet plotter for imposed proofs (a digital blue line) unless your CTP plate setter can also generate inexpensive imposition proofs.
12. Analyze the effectiveness of your digital workflow. Identify, monitor, and resolve problems. Then, remove the film and enjoy the savings!

I am in the process of researching an update for this plan. Any suggestions would be appreciated and better yet could result in fame and fortune.

This link will download the original 12-step file as a pdf.

<http://www.gatf.org/12steps.pdf>

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  In the Works  

- [\(\) Point \(\) Counterpoint Future of Cymbolic Sciences platesetters](#)
- [\(\) Point \(\) Counterpoint – Viability of DI Presses](#)
- [\(\) Point \(\) Counterpoint – Success of Remote Proofing](#)
- [New 12-Step Plan for Adopting a CTP Workflow](#)
- [Review Agfa CTP Webinars](#)

▶▶ Schedule

Are there questions or issues you are wrestling with - lets schedule a visit - here is a travel schedule.

Date	City	Purpose
4/23-26	Rochester, NY	Computer to Plate Workshop RIT
5/7-9	Grand Rapids	PDF Bootcamp (Private Training)
5/15-18	Dallas, TX	Southwest Graphics show
6/10	Hilton Head, NC	Practical & Profitable Digital Technologies – PIA South Annual Meeting

To be added to the list simple email the address above and write "add to list" in the subject line

To be removed simple email the address above and write "remove from list" in the subject line

Any questions about the feasibility, implementation, management, or the productivity / quality issues of digital technologies – drop me a note: HowieAtPre@aol.com