Digital Technology Trends
by Howie Fenton, GATF

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⤷ ICC Releases 2001 Report

The International Color Consortium (ICC) has published a Report covering it's accomplishments during 2001. The Report contains complete information on the activities of each working group of the ICC including their objectives and an assessment of their progress toward improving the ICC specification.

The new version was released late in the year for a period of comment and review ending in February, 2002. Using Version 4, vendors will find it easier to develop color management profiles for their products that are unambiguous, so that when used they will inter-operate more successfully with those of other vendors and also be used in a more consistent manner by different CMMs. This trouble-free inter-operability has been a prime goal of the entire ICC specification development process.

Version 4 addresses specific problems such as:
• Improved definition of the PCS for the perceptual rendering intent;
• Improved specification of Chromatic Adaptation;
• Clarification of the relationship of CIELAB and CIEXYZ to the PCS;
• A better explanation of the Profile Connection Space;
• New lookup table types which provide a common structure for color
 transformations in all profiles;
• Better definition of the encoding used with monochrome profiles;
• Improved naming and other conventions;

This link downloads the 6.7 Mb pdf report:
http://www.color.org/NPES_ICC_Report.pdf

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⇥ Changes at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

As an instructor at RIT, I have had to remain silent until the official announcement was made about changes at RIT. The former School of Printing Management and Sciences has been reborn as the School of Print Media (SPM). There have been some staff changes and enhancements such as new-media publishing and graphic-media curricula at undergraduate and graduate levels. Also, Frank Romano, current chair of SPM, will vacate the role to assume responsibility as RIT's Roger K. Fawcett Distinguished Professor of Digital Publishing. Barb Pellow, a Frank E. Gannett Professor of Integrated Publishing Sciences, will assume the administrative chair position on July 1.

http://industryclick.com/magnewsarticle.asp?newsarticleid=318728&magazineid=22&SiteID=22

⇥ Service Winners: Heidelberg, HP, Epson, Xerox and Agfa

WhatTheyThink.com and CAP Ventures have released results from a survey taken in February with 198 U.S. printing firms. They asked printers about the brands of equipment they have and also asked them to rate those brands in terms of service and after-sale support.

Heidelberg, Hewlett-Packard, Epson, Xerox and Agfa round out the top five brand share leaders. Heidelberg had the largest brand share with 55.2% of companies indicating they currently have or have used this brand in the last two years. HP's high brand share among commercial printers is from its dominant position in black & white office laser printers, color desktop printers (inkjet and laser), and wide format digital printers. Epson has done well with its high-resolution ink jet printers (both narrow and wide format) in the prepress, design and commercial printing industry. Xerox has had a focused effort on the graphic arts industry for over 10 years with its production digital printing systems and Agfa has been a perennial leader in prepress systems and supplies.

CAP Ventures asked respondents to rate on a 1 to 5 scale (5 = outstanding) the service and support capabilities of the brands they currently have or have used in the last two years. Several prepress equipment vendors were among the top 5 in service and support: Heidelberg had a mean rating of 3.88, Fuji Film (3.63), Screen USA (3.60) and Kodak Polychrome Graphics (3.48).

http://www.Heidelbergusa.com/02_new/index.htm

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⨠ Fast-drying, broader gamut inkjet printer

Epson has announced a photo printer for picky digital picture-takers. The Stylus Photo 2200 uses seven-color UltraChrome inks that will reproduce a broader color range and resist fading better. It will print with a top resolution of 2,880-by-1,440 dpi. With the help of the fast-drying ink, the printer can produce an 8-by-10 photo in about 4 minutes, which is three times faster than the previous model, the Stylus Photo 2000P. The new printer is scheduled to be in stores in July and will cost just under $700. It connects to Windows and Macintosh computers via parallel, USB 2.0 and IEEE-1394 (FireWire) ports.

http://data.detnews.com/technology/gadgets/previous.hbs?insdate=20020514

⨠ Global Graphics Sells Hardware Division To Management Team

Global Graphics has completed the sale of its Hardware Division to a management buyout team led by former board director and Chief Operating Officer of the Hardware Division, Gary Jones. The sale includes the Cirrus 2 platesetters, ICG scanners, as well as a host of plate processors, ovens, exposure frames, and dryers. They will continue to sell the Harlequin RIP product line, Jaws Rip and PDf products, the MaxWorkFlow digital workflow solution (PostScript® Language Level 3 RIP, the GlobalColor color management products.

http://www1.globalgraphics.com/news/ggpress.nsf/PressReleasesPublishedCurrent/80D8718E42A4593E80256BAB003EBD0D

⨠ Epson Launches Seven New Wide Format Papers

One of the interesting results at the GATF Tech Alert was the widely different color accuracies and repeatabilities of similar inkjet engines. One of the reasons was the quality of the paper.

Epson America Inc., is introducing seven new inkjet papers. Each is designed for use with the EPSON Stylus Pro line of printers to give photographers a broader choice of artistic and commercial media to express their work. The new wide format products include: Somerset Velvet for Epson, Premium Semi-matte Photo Paper, Premium Glossy Photo Paper, EPSON Proofing Paper Commercial Semi-matte, Premium Luster Photo Paper and EPSON ColorLife Photo Paper.

http://ep.pennnet.com/Articles/Article_Display.cfm?Section=OnlineArticles&SubSection=Display&PUBLICATION_ID=29&ARTICLE_ID=143729

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⤻ Apple introduces OS X server hardware

Unhappy with your existing server platform, or perhaps you are a small company using Macs looking to standardize on one computer platform? You might want to consider the Apple Xserve, server hardware the UNIX-based OS X server software. It can hold nearly half a terabyte of data per machine, and more than 20 terabytes per 42U rack. The server's 1U rack-optimized design enables users to stack up to 42 units--or up 84 PowerPC G4 processors--in an eight-ft.-tall rack, with up to 630 gigaflops of processing. Xserve also features Server Monitor, a remote-monitoring application that lets users administer servers on a machine-by-machine basis or hundreds at a time. The server starts at $2,999.

http://www.apple.com/xserve/

⤻ AOL to switch from IE to Netscape

America Online (AOL) is set to discontinue Microsofts Internet Explorer in favor of its own Netscape browser in the next version of its software. AOL beta testers have received mail inviting them to test Java compatibility in the new browser.

AOL's 34 million users has been using IE for six years, since it signed a deal with Microsoft to use the software in exchange for AOL icons being placed on the Windows desktop. That deal expired in January 2001, and the companies decided not to renew it after disagreeing on terms such as the Quicktime media player. AOL's ties with Apple are growing. The companies last week revealed Apple's new iChat instant messaging application will be the first IM client from a major vendor to be able to interoperate with AOL's Instant Messenger.

http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/39/25324.html

⤻ Special Offer for QuarkXPress Users

Quark Inc. has announced a special upgrade offer for users of QuarkXPress version 3 and QuarkXPress version 4. Quark customers who upgrade to QuarkXPress 5.0 before June 30, 2002 will receive a free, three-volume set of QuarkXPress 5.0 reference guides.

http://ep.pennnet.com/Articles/Article_Display.cfm?Section=OnlineArticles&SubSection=Display&PUBLICATION_ID=29&ARTICLE_ID=144129

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⇥ Platemaking vs Imagesetting: Issues and Answers

The decision to purchase either a large format imagesetter or a large format platesetter remains a controversial issue. This has become painfully obvious to me in recent months. For example, at the Presidents conference earlier this year, I made a presentation about ways to increase productivity in tough economic times which meant using less expensive "color mananegment procedures" (process control) or less less expensive equipment meaning instead of $300,000 platesetter a $150,000 8-up imagesetter.

Ron Pool from Dome Printing told my in no uncertain terms that I was crazy to even talk about 8-up imagesetter. That no one in California uses imagesetters. Meanwhile, last week in Omaha Nebraska, I spent two days comparing and contrasting a $220,000 8-up platesetter and a $120,000 8-up imagesetter. Both included a Rip Once Output Many (ROOM) workflow. As I walked out the door they were leaning toward the 8-up imagesetter.

There is also market research from different companies that points in different directions. Vantage Strategic Marketing, a UK-based company published a report recently showing that imagesetters are outselling platesellers. CAP Ventures and WhatTheyThink.com have released results suggesting that computer to plate has become the dominant process.

One possible answer to this controversy is company size. Many smaller printers cannot afford computer to plate systems. This is consistent with the data from CAP Ventures and WhatTheyThink.com. Their results show that smaller companies (under 20 employees) are more likely to have an imagesetter (about 80%) than a CTP system (about 35%).

What is the price point required for CTP to become widely adopted? That's a good question, which is being asked by many. Here is a hint. Prices have already declined, what used to cost $350 can now be bought at $250. But that is still higher then a comparable imagesetting system for $150.

http://www.gain.org/servlet/gateway/redirect.html?url=http://205.128.3.23/newslink.cfm?vendorid=211%26id=6109

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⏩ () Point () Counterpoint –The Future of Cymbolic Sciences platesetters

On a recent CTP assignment the question of the future of Cymbolic Sciences platesetters came up. This is a tough question, which no one has tackled: not the company, not the press, not even the consultants. On one hand there is an installed base of Cymbolic Sciences platesetter users who absolutely love their machines. I have several clients that say it's half the price and offers the same quality and speed.

On the other hand there are signs of trouble. There have been numerous changes in distribution strategies (dealers, direct sales, lost dealers, etc) and two acquisitions of the company. To answer the question of where it is going, we need to know where Cymbolic Sciences came from.

Cymbolic Sciences was created in 1986 and originally sold a line of automated optical inspection instruments for the printed circuit board industry. In May 1999, Cymbolic Sciences became a member of the Gretag Imaging Group. In November 2001, Océ agreed to acquire Gretag Imaging's Professional Unit with several product lines in the graphics arts including:
- ❖ Raster Graphics, makers of the Arizona line of wide-format ink-jet printers;
- ❖ Onyx Graphics, makers of the PosterShop software RIP for wide-format printing; and
- ❖ Cymbolic Sciences, makers of the PlateJet, Sapphire and Emerald CTP systems.

Clearly the acquisition was designed to boost the Océ position in the large format market. Océ has a strong position among blueprinters, print shops and in-house printing facilities. The global market for the Mid- and High-Volume Display Graphics segments has an expected annual growth rate of 15%.

But Océ also acquired one of the largest installed bases of CTP systems in the industry, the platesetter line. According to my estimates Gretag Imaging has about 600 platesetters installed worldwide, about 60 percent in the U.S.

The question on many people's minds is what is the future of the Cymbolic Sciences platesetters. The company has not made any direct statements about the future of the Cymbolic Sciences platesetters.

However, it is clear that this is a different product and market and that Océ is a market leader. Although the significance is unclear, it is interesting that in the first major show since the acquisition (IPEX 2002) there are no planned announcements about the Cymbolic Sciences platesetters.

http://cymbolic.com/index.html

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http://www.oce.co.uk/Press/Default.htm

⇥ ⟨⟩ Counterpoint

I contact Oce' and discussed the rumors and concerns from customers. Shortly after the IPEX show Corey Meitcthik, the VP World-wide Sales and Marketing for Oce' Display Graphics Systems addressed these concerns. "I am the VP of Sales/Marketing for the former Gretag Professional Imaging Division, now the Oce' Display Graphics Systems. I have responsibility over all of the products from a sales/marketing standpoint, and I want to dispell those rumors.", Meitcthik replied

 "The reason Oce' bought this division was the same reason Gretag bought the division to expand into new markets. The only reason Gretag sold this division was to raise capital for losses in other areas.

"The bottom line on our CTP systems is that we continue to offer the technology in both visible and 830nm thermal 8 up platesetters. We will also continue to support all of our installed base. The only change that we have made is how we distribute products. We were distributing through OEM partners and then switched to a direct channel. After a trial period we decided to return to our original OEM strategy. Originally we had Fuji and Agfa dealers. Although we have lost some dealers, we have retained some and added some others."

⇥ Heidelberg Eliminates Scanner and low end imagesetters

In a press release on April 19, 2002 Heidelberg anounced that the "scanner development and production operations will be discontinued and its range of filmsetters will be limited to high-end units". Bernhard Schreier, CEO of Heidelberg, says "We will be focusing our prepress business on workflow software and plate imaging. We will also be expanding our digital printing business in Kiel" Kiel is to become a key center of operations for the development and production of the NexPress digital color press.

The market for scanners in all quality classes has experienced a downturn in recent years of 20% in 2001 alone. According to Heidelberg this downturn was even more pronounced for imagesetters with falls of up to 30% in some cases – since this technology is being replaced increasingly by computer-to-plate. The scanner products set to disappear from the Heidelberg portfolio include all DTP scanners (the entire Linoscan range), the Nexscan and the Primescan. The Duosetter, Quicksetter 460 and Quicksetter 46 imagesetters will all be discontinued.

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📁📁 **In the Works** 📁📁

- ➢ **⟨⟩ 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**
- ➢ **IKON's guidebook to office productivity**

⇉ Schedule

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

Date	City	Purpose
6/10	Hilton Head, NC	PIA South Annual Meeting
6/18-19	Ashville, NC	Process Control Audit (Private)
6/25-27	Guadalajara, Mexico	Prepress Audit (Private)

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

- ❖ **custom training: PDF boot camp, File Prep, Orientation to Digital prepress & offset production**
- ❖ **feasibility, implementation, management, or the productivity / quality issues of digital technologies**
- ❖ **drop me a note: HowieAtPre@aol.com**