

GET INTO WIDE FORMAT WITH DES AND ROLAND
 "YOU TRUST US WITH YOUR COLOUR
 NOW TRUST US WITH YOUR SIGN & DISPLAY SOLUTION"



Printing news and information for Australia & New Zealand

news

shop

employment

trade services

Print21



Search

Latest News

PRINT

latest news

packaging

labels

wide-format

Supported by

CRON

efi

FUJIFILM
Value from Innovation

des
beyond creation
Roland

EPSON
EXCEED YOUR VISION

Twitter Feed

A pathway to failure – Alan King on OnDemand. There are some intractable problems facing the industry. This is one. <http://t.co/Tjh6xANmqD>

Michael Wu wins the battle for OnDemand – Plenty of disappointed printers in Melbourne over missing out <http://t.co/IXv3PtckzF>

Starleaton expands with Zund agency takeover | Print21 Ben Eaton is on the takeover track. <http://t.co/GRTavWVg6C> via @sharethis

Joan Grace quits Printing Industries & Future Print –



Read the latest issue of Print21 magazine

Subscribe for your print copy



SCREEN

Böttcher
Systems

independent media alliance

Shades of grey over colour standards: James Cryer's commentary

Tuesday, 31 March 2009

By Print21

The industry is abuzz with talk of adopting colour standards, but *Print 21* commentator, James Cryer, questions whether it is being sold as a technological must-have and asks a number of questions that all businesses should consider.

Our industry is putting its jaws into the lion's den as we progress down the path towards increased control of the "content-and-colour management" value chain, and, as we consider stricter compliance with the rest of the world in terms of colour standards.

We have recently been treated to two high-powered, brain-snapping techno-fests (kindly sponsored by DES, and Kayell) both of which were excellent forums. They have "started the engines" in terms of our industry engaging in a robust debate about the impacts this technology may have.

Don't get me wrong, I'm all in favour of implementing standards. In fact, over the years, as an industry, we've probably given customers too many choices. Too many stocks, too many paper sizes. Too many printers? The secret of low-cost manufacture is to standardise as much of the process as possible – and to keep those customised fiddly-bits to the minimum.

My first concern is that the focus seems to be mainly on "colour management" and yet it is claimed other collateral benefits will (or may) accrue to those firms who adopt colour standards – such as, savings in ink, reduced paper usage, faster make-readies and less press-checks (what, no more dolly-birds from the agency!)

Maybe the whole idea should be re-branded as "lean manufacturing", not just the "adoption of AS/ISO-12647-2" as the benefits supposedly go far beyond just better control of colour.

My point is that there is no doubt the whole issue of the adoption of colour-management standards is highly topical – the challenge faced in presenting these seminars is that you're really addressing two different audiences.

In my view there are two separate streams: the "technical" audience, i.e., the operators, supervisors, workflow-coordinators – those people on the ground, who are interested in the technical jargon and processes.

And there are the "business owners" – the proprietors, the operations managers, the owners, and so on – there with their cheque-books, but with a different agenda on their minds (i.e., can I make a buck out of all this?)

The recent seminars did an excellent job at addressing many of the "technical" issues, but they may have left much of the "business" stones still unturned.

Then again, it's early days, but if I was a printing company proprietor, I'd be seeking commercial or business-based responses to questions such as:

- Who should consider adopting colour standards? (all printers or just the big boys?)



Click for SCODIX Options

CMYKhub



- What will the benefits of accreditation bestow on my firm? (as opposed to my competitor without "approval")
- Will it permit better online interaction with my clients? (i.e., facilitate better online-quoting, remote-proofing, etc)
- What if my business has both offset and digital colour production – can I apply it to the latter, or not? (apparently not yet)
- What legal obligations/risks may I inherit if my business adopts colour standards which imply a higher level of colour consistency? (i.e., will it allow some opportunistic clients to seize on this as a means of rejecting stuff they'd otherwise accept?)
- Can I charge clients a two-tiered price structure – one without colour standards and a slightly higher one, with?
- What about the assertion that perhaps this whole "colour standards" issue is just a technological self-indulgence, ie, a lot of money and effort just to obtain an imperceptible "improvement" in quality – when we're already achieving acceptable "commercial" standards? It's a fair point!
- What are the relative roles/merits of the two competing accreditation agencies, Germany's FOGRA and the Swiss UGRA?
- Focussing on colour is great, but there are many other things that can go wrong in printing something. Colour is a critical element, but it's just part of the total process. What happens if you follow the colour standard protocols "to the letter", and the colour is still not right? It could be the paper or the ink, or a hundred other things. I know the advocates claim that all these variables can be "controlled" by standards, but is that realistic?

I'm not suggesting anyone is saying that, but I feel there's an underlying inference that that is "potentially" the outcome we're striving for. In other words it may be a technical dream – but is it a commercial reality?

Full marks to these seminars for starting the ball rolling – let's maintain the debate. But the focus should now turn to whether or not adopting colour standards will suit my particular business model. We've heard the technical case; now it's time for the business case.

The industry can't afford to lose talent such as Joan Grace
[.http://t.co/DuGDpXtwbC](http://t.co/DuGDpXtwbC)

Colin Longbottom heads towards the exit Good man Colin, hope your saddlebags are well loaded for the sunset ride.<http://t.co/d5oamorf2X>

If you enjoyed reading this article [Subscribe to the FREE Print21 news bulletin](#)

Comment on this article

Name

E-Mail (will not be published)

Website

Receive comment notifications?

Comment

To receive notification of comments made to this article, you can also provide your email address below.

Email address