

UPDATE

capture process print display trends

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Print 05 Offers Up Some Gems

New faces, old faces, and unique products on the show floor.

Technology is important these days, but new ways of applying that technology may be even more so. The recent Print 05 show, held September 9-15 in Chicago, had a bit of both.

Dubbed the "American Drupa" by some, the quadrennial show showcased products and technologies from 950 exhibitors around the world. More than 60,000 attendees showed up this year to check out the latest and greatest, including 7200 international attendees.

"This show exceeded many of our expectations," says Regis J. Delmontagne, president of the Graphic Arts Show Company, which produces this show as well as several others in the graphic-arts marketplace. "The positive response to our initiative to significantly enter the package-printing sector...the increase in international attendance, and the continued success of the educational program all contributed to a very successful event overall for everyone involved."

The Update pages that follow hit on many of the technologies and products that made their debut at Print 05. In addition, however, we address here some particularly intriguing innovations we came across as we surveyed the show floor with an eye toward uncovering some real gems. We weren't focused only on new technology; in fact, one of the gems we turned up is using some very old technology in a very creative way. Several of the companies we visited—and the individuals steering them—have been able to take an existing technology and tweak it or find innovative applica-



tions to do some exciting things. New opportunities for innovation can still be found in abundance—sometimes, you just have to dig a little.

Simplified color editing

You might remember the first Scitex color-retouching workstations with their million-dollar price tags. Today, you can do most of what those behemoths could do simply by double clicking an image file in Photoshop on your PC. We often forget the amount of very sophisticated technology that went into making image editing so easy to do.

One of the people that made that possible was Scitex's chief color scientist, Moshe Keydar. Keydar, who is now director of research and development for a company named KlearVision Digital (www.klearvision.com), is helping make color editing even simpler. Though its product was orig-

inally geared to the photography market, there has been a huge interest by many printing and publishing operations.

What KlearVision Photo-D does, is simplicity itself: It takes digital images and automatically color corrects them. Simply drag a couple or a couple hundred (or even a couple thousand) images into the program and it will use artificial intelligence to make the image the best it can be. There are, to be sure, custom settings that can be used if you want your images to be "brighter" or "sharper," but the software analyzes the overall color, saturation, and even complexity of the image to get the best color out of it.

Of course, no software can get it right 100% of the time since there are so many variables involved. But just about the only way to find an image that KlearVision does not improve is to start with a perfect image to begin with. But KlearVision is smart enough to leave those images alone.



KlearVision Photo-D
KLEARVISION DIGITAL

People who are involved in color correction may find it intimidating to find software that does their job in a small fraction of the time and at a very low cost, but that is exactly what it does. KlearVision's chief programmer, Asaf Golan, tells us his next challenge is to create an automatic red-eye removal component that knows a human eye from some other source of red lighting in an image. In the meantime, users will have to settle for the couple of seconds the program takes to manually remove red eye.

What's an Apago?

No one likes to be known as one of the industry's best-kept secrets, but Dwight Kelly has been dealing with that for the past 15 years since he started up his company as Essential Technical Services back in 1991. The company has been busy creating OEM products for the likes of OneVision, Dupont, Fuji, and a host of others, and has quietly earned a reputation for excellence and innovation.

In 2001, Kelly thought it was time to get his own branding out to the print community, and he changed the name of the company to Apago (www.apago.com). Since then, the company has been selling its PDF-related product line, and has been gradually adding to that line over the years. The current product offerings include PDFspy, PDF Enhancer, PDF-

shrink, PDFmerge, PSServices, Piktor, PDF/X Checkup, Pheon, and Box Editor. Kelly and Leonard Rosenthol, Apago's chief innovation officer, combine to form an impressive team of PDF gurus.

Can 'faster, cheaper, better' make a dent?

How can anyone make a dent in an industry dominated by EFI's Fiery controllers? Erich Krauss and Jason Bletz, along with an unnamed "angel" investor, are betting they can with a new, full-featured controller—the J-Bek. Kraus and Bletz cut their teeth as Fiery Direct distributors who also provide Fiery RIP repair services. They are now releasing their own controllers, and had two models on display in a small booth at Print 05.

LANgrafix (www.langrafix.com) is leveraging the duo's experience with Fiery devices and intimate knowledge of what makes a good RIP controller—as well as what makes a good controller go bad in the field. Their machine is not only fast and carries a low price tag, but it also features built-in scanner controller features and software so that end-users can turn the copiers they control into high-speed document capture devices. The controllers come complete with document feeder controllers and OCR software.

"We have simulated the capabilities of a \$12,000 Bell and Howell batch scanner. Most copier document feeders available today are pretty good, and as long as the IPU can access the document feeder, our unit can control it. We even have a font downloader so the J-Bek can recognize the fonts and replace the scanned images with the correct fonts, keeping bold bold and italic italic. So we can capture a pile of documents very quickly."

Whether they can compete with the big boys like EFI is hard to say, but Krauss says they received some "significant" queries from potential partners



J-Bek
LANGRAFIX

and distributors. The J-Bek is currently geared toward copiers, but Bletz says that the company is also expanding its product line to include wide-format software RIPs. "Our mission is to provide graphics houses with the ability to control all their printing needs via one easy-to-use and affordable interface," he says.

Not everything high-tech

The most common response to Horizontal USA's new Clipper machine is, "Why hasn't anyone done this before?" This is a case of a product inspired by necessity. Inventor Fred Nilsson had a friend approach him about his need for a round-corner cutter that was easy to use, and rugged. The machines on the market just weren't what he wanted.

The first thing Nilsson saw was that he needed to make gravity work for him. All of the machines he researched cut vertically, and he figured if he designed a machine that would cut horizontally, he would have won half the battle. After a year of development, Nilsson felt as though he had not only built a cutter that did the intended job smoothly and quickly, but he also had built something he figures is virtually indestructible. "This thing will last forever," he says.

He brought his machine, with an aircraft aluminum body and solid brass locking mechanisms, to Print 05. "The reception," he says, "was way beyond our expectations." Not only did he sell out of the machines he had in stock, he