What's New:

SGIA Recap – New print shop productivity software

Attendance at the SGIA show in Atlanta, GA was down from previous years; however, some booths maintained a steady stream of event-goers interested in previewing new production streamlining technologies.

With the turmoil in the financial markets and challenging economic conditions, print shops and dealers alike sought out vendors at the show that could help them reduce, streamline or otherwise maintain margins known in years past.

According to industry research, print shops indicated that large format file preparation is the largest obstacle to overcome in efficient print production. In response to these findings, ONYX announced PrepEdge Pro, a RIP-independent file preparation tool that works both on Macs and PCs. With PrepEdge Pro, shops are able to save time on a range of processes from sizing, tiling, and placing grommets, to cut marks and cut paths, to color correction and PDF editing. Attendee interest confirmed the research with customers lining up eager to get a glimpse. One customer stated, "Preparing print jobs is stressful, frustrating and time consuming. If this software helps me make fewer mistakes, saves me time and reduces stress, it is something to be happy about". –Paul, Madison, WI

Caldera launched new software for high-end print shops that want a tool capable of managing all information from all company departments. Flow + is designed to work with Caldera Linux based RIP software requiring the entire shop to be on Caldera's system to work effectively.

Cyrious software also showcased their printing workflow solution at SGIA. Cyrious is a sophisticated job-tracking solution that tracks print jobs from sales through accounting. This robust software package requires training and complete integration into a shop for maximum benefit.

EstiMate, a well-suited sign shop job management tool, was also attracting attention at SGIA. This simple quotation tool also offers specific plug-ins for vehicle wraps, wide-format inkjet and customer care. Estimate also allows for individual shop customization.

The impact of the financial market has undoubtedly hit the print market; however, this has created an increased interest in tools that can streamline the printing workflow to ultimately save time and money within print shops. There were a large number of customers looking for these types of tools at SGIA. Shops willing to adapt to the changing market by using the latest technology will ultimately have a leg up on their competition.

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Hooked On ONYX
ONYX Customers Share Their Stories of Success

Reproart Imaging is a full-service digital imaging and printing company. The business began 20 years ago and adopted the digital printing industry in 1995. Indoor and Outdoor banners, Tradeshow Signage, POP Displays, Floor Graphics, Backlit Displays, and Cut-out & Customer Display Graphics are just a few of the services they offer. Reproart recently completed a major upgrade and purchased a family of HP printers. "We carefully combed the marketplace and found HP's drive for visual excellence and environmental initiatives were simply unmatched in our view by any other company in the large format digital market-space," explains Zohrab Tatikian of Reproart Imaging. Along with purchasing the HP printers, Reproart added ONYX RIP software to complete their workflow solution.

The HP fleet of printers consists of an HP Scitex XL1500 (grand-format solvent ink printer), HP Scitex FB910 (flatbed or roll UV-curable ink printer), HP DesignJet 10000, HP DesignJet 5465UV, and an HP DesignJet Z6100. Reproart now has ONYX ProductionHouse installed and running with four printers. In addition the XL1500 is also running ONYX software. "The ONYX software solution was recommended by Toronto-based Access Imaging Inc. (www.access-imaging.com) as a step up from the Colorspan RIP software that we were using previously," says Zohrab Tatikian.

This full-service digital imaging and printing company created signage that appeared on-stage at the 2005 Academy Awards

Since incorporating "the new HP printing technology and ONYX we can now offer faster, and higher quality printing than ever before," says Zohrab Tatikian. "We wanted to migrate our RIP software to be the same for all printers and to provide us with the most advanced & flexible tools for color management and file processing." The HP printers combined with the ONYX software allows Reproart to achieve wider prints, offer longer print runs, and provide more product options while decreasing costs, improving image quality, and creating higher through-put for a faster turnaround.

Reproart found that assembling files with multiple copies and corner crop marks is especially useful when printing direct-to-substrate; this also helps with minimizing trimming labor. "Faster RIP speeds increase productivity; using the same color management across all printers and using the same workflow on all printers

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results in better productivity and more consistent color. This new workflow solution contributes to the success of Reproart," reports Zohrab Tatikian. "With consistent color results and fast turnaround, ONYX has helped us to secure new clients and keep existing clients very pleased. We can feel confident about producing high quality products at all times even within the tightest of timelines."

On November 3, Reproart will be installing the HP Designjet L65500 Printer, "the very first HP printer in North America designed to reduce the impact of printing on the environment," says Zohrab Tatikian. Innovative, new water-based HP Latex Inks provide the benefits of solvent-ink technology such as outdoor durability; without imposing the typical environmental, health, and safety considerations. In the latter part of November Reproart will be installing the first HP FB950 flatbed printer in Canada. "We will be using ONYX with both of these new printers," says Zohrab Tatikian. "We believe in staying current with new and emerging print technologies to meet and exceed our client needs. It is reassuring that ONYX stays at the forefront of technology and proactively writes drivers for new printers."

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Product Feature Focus:

Use Postercolor to achieve amazing color output
Want to get the most eye-popping color out of your printer while maintaining accurate grays and spot color matching? ONYX 7 has a proprietary color rendering technology that does just this. Postercolor® has been helping sign shops for years to produce stunning fully saturated prints on large-format solvent and UV inkjet printers.

As many users already know, applying ICC profiles to signage output can dull down the color compared to printing raw CMYK ink values without color management. But without ICC profiles, it's much harder to match named PANTONE® spot colors and achieve a smooth, balanced gray.

Postercolor® offers you both, and it's easy to use. Just go to your Color Management settings in RIP-Queue, Preflight or Layout applications and select Change Profiles. Next, select your normal ICC input profiles and click the Rendering Intents tab. Then select Postercolor as the rendering intent for vector data. This will use your ICC profiles, but boost the color saturation without changing the color hues in the output. Reds will stay red and blues will stay blue but with more color, while your ICC gray balance stays smooth. If you have automatic spot color matching turned on, this will work as well with the Postercolor rendering intent.

Other RIP manufacturers are beginning to offer features that try to mimic ONYX Postercolor®, but they don't

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produce the same results. That's because the Postercolor rendering intent works together with the award-winning ONYX ICC color profile engine. As an ONYX user, you still have a competitive advantage even if you use the same printers as your competitors do with other RIPs.

The next time you need more color saturated signage, try Postercolor® and see for yourself.

Tech Tips
Helpful Tips From the Experts

Solving PostScript File Errors

Here are some advanced configure RIP options to help you if you are experiencing errors with PostScript files. Most of these options are configured automatically by default to address transparency, spot colors, overprint, etc.

Click here to review a brief description of each of the Configure RIP options. To access and enable these options in RIP-Queue, go to the Setup menu and select PostScript, then Configure RIP....

Note: These settings only work on PostScript files and should only be modified if needed.

Max-imize Your Color
Tips from our Color Scientist Max Derhak

Color Management 101 – Communicating Color

In previous issues of "Max-imize Your Color" some advanced topics of Color Management were covered. This issue covers some basic concepts related to Color Management for those who are just getting started.

When making color reproductions the first question that comes to mind is how the color of something is communicated – and then reproduced.

In general, there are three main methods used to communicate a color:

1. The first method is to have an explicit name for each observable color. Using names for every color requires that everyone agrees on the specific names to use for each observable color from a palette of possible colors.

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Usually this means that physical examples of the colors are somehow produced with names and identifiers associated with each color. With this method, the process of how the color is achieved is not necessary to communicate what the color should look like. Additionally, there doesn't need to be any relationship between the names of various colors.

Communicating a color using this method is as simple as pointing to a color and saying "I want that one."
An example of this method is using PANTONE® color charts to specify colors.
One problem with this method is that you are limited to communicating only the colors that are in the palette. Accurately communicating colors outside the palette requires more than a simple color name.

2. The second method is to use a "recipe" that specifies how to create each color. This requires that everyone agrees on what the ingredients are and how "mixtures" of the ingredients should be put together. This is generally more flexible than the first method. Often colors in the first method are also defined using a recipe of some sort.

Common examples of "recipe" based systems used to communicate colors are systems that define color using either combinations of Red, Green, and Blue phosphor emission intensities, or combinations of Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black inks.

Only rigorous conformance to an agreed upon set of ingredients and the processes of mixing them will ensure that a color is accurately communicated and reproduced.

This leads to some difficulties with this method. Different color reproduction technologies have different "ingredients" and methods of putting them together. If the ingredients or processes of mixing ingredients change in any way the resulting color will most likely be different than expected by the "recipe".

Additionally, problems come up if you want to go from one recipe system to another, or change either the ingredient makeup or mixing method a bit.

3. The third method is to communicate color in terms of how a human observer would perceive it. In 1931 an international standard was developed based upon color matching experiments to define a quantifiable method of describing what a "standard observer" sees. With a definition of a "standard observer," measurement devices can be created that measure quantities of light from an object at various wavelengths to produce a set of XYZ numbers that define what an observer would see under a given light source.

Generally, if the measured XYZ values of two objects are the same, their color will appear the same under the same light source for a standard observer. This is independent of the means (or recipes) used to create the colors of the objects.

Note: In 1976 a transformation of XYZ values to Lab values was defined that allows for the description of color in terms of Lightness, Chroma, and Hue.

Color management is made possible by combining methods two and three for communicating color. A common standardized approach to do this is to use ICC color profiles which establish relationships between color recipes and observable and measurable colors.

By combining ICC color profiles one can "convert" from one recipe, ingredient or mixing system to another. An input profile associates the "recipe" for values in an image to observable colors. An output profile then converts these observable colors into a recipe of the values needed by the output device to produce the color specified by the image.

Note: Some colors may not be reproducible by any recipe of ingredients used by the output device, in which case, some method of picking a "right" wrong color is used. This is referred to as "gamut mapping."

In order for color management to work, the input profile needs to match the recipe used by the image and the output profile needs to match the recipe system provided by the output device. If the recipe, ingredient, mixing systems of the image or output device do not match the recipe, ingredient, or mixing systems defined by the profiles, then the color may not be communicated correctly and the reproduced color may not be correct. Setting up profiles correctly is critical for color management to work.