

Another reason printers should be at Digital Solutions 2001

These opinions are offered as a starting point for discussion on 'Network Publishing' at Digital Solutions. There is an emphasis on print though the actual meeting may take any view on a suitable balance of media for publishing, depending on who happens to be there.

Things move quickly in the discussion connecting print and digital technology. Take [Printweek](#) as an indication. One week 'Jargon Busters' is suggesting that Postscript Level 3 may be subject to marketing hype and imply there is no need to rush into it. It seems not very long till a Leader reveals that [Printweek](#) is now printed computer to plate and E.T.Heron give figures on the growth of pages handled as PDF.

However there is also a time warp effect on the web through which possibilities are discussed without having any obvious effect in real life as it appears in the UK. Adobe may have got tired of explaining how PDF should work with Postscript Level 3. They certainly expect sales of Postscript licences to decline. This may explain why they emphasise 'ePaper', sales of Acrobat direct to people who also buy print.

As presented, 'Network Publishing' has very little emphasis on hard copy. This can be seen from the PDFs still on the Adobe [web site](#) from Seybold and the autumn [webcast](#) for financial analysts. The Job Definition Format and software development kits such as Transit are like footnotes to a main text about the web.

One reason for the time-warp effect in the UK is the lack of bandwidth. It may take three to five years to get to the sort of UK web access currently available in California. There may be a benefit from this though if there is a concentration on print rather than a rush into eBooks and a craze view that print is about to disappear.

[IPEX](#) intends to present print companies as a natural partner for all forms of digital communication. This claim will be credible as it is seen that available technology has been integrated into existing print workflows. 'Network Publishing' is intended as a description of a future set of technology of which Adobe will be one of many suppliers.

Somehow print will still be a part of this, along with Postscript even if Adobe cease to promote it.

I may be wrong in thinking that there needs to be a pause or even a backtrack in 'thought leadership'. Some of the issues will come up in print media over future months anyway but it would be good if people from the printing industry comment on Network Publishing at the Digital Solutions meeting or through the related [web site](#). Other forms of media may be discussed but for the UK at least, 'Network Publishing' is likely to start by being based on hard copy.

November 2001 [Will Pollard](#)

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