

Previously [Comment1.pdf](#) [Comment2.pdf](#) [Comment3.pdf](#) and also [2004.pdf](#) (more detail on Comment3)

Time Travel

There is some mystery about why the quality project started by the DTI and others in the early '90s seems to have lost momentum, at least as far as ISO 9000 and UK printing are concerned. Maybe it is just a personal view that this is a mystery. Many people feel that ISO 9000 is not the best approach to quality. Still, a search of the PIRA and BPIF websites could not find very much on any formal approach to quality as of Feb 2002.

Looking at recent issues of Printweek a possible explanation occurs which is that the print industry expects change to happen very slowly, given the long history of printing in the UK. A survey of IPEX over 122 years shows offset presses from the 1920s so letterpress survived for many more shows. The first March issue suggests that letterpress is still doing well in certain situations.

Lawrence Wallis has suggested that the 2002 IPEX may have few surprises given the trends since 1985, probably a reference to the Apple Mac, laser printers and Postscript.

However, the record as shown IPEX by IPEX suggests that Postscript took longer to be accepted. The first mention in the Printweek chronicle is for the Agfa Viper RIP in 1993.

Changes in quality procedures in recent years have related to the use of digital technology such as Postscript and PDF. The report on Greenshires (8 Feb) shows that customer training can save costs. "With PDF work is simplified" says MD Tom Hewitt. "The guys on the workstations who used to act as a repair shop aren't needed." The downside of this is the three redundancies

but there are is still potential employment in related areas for those who keep up with the technology.

Unfortunately the timescales assumed within the printing industry may not be appropriate. At the Papyrus Digital Matters seminar, Kevin Belcher is reported as saying (15 Feb) "In five years time I think PDF will have won the battle." The people who use PDF on the web cannot imagine five years as a unit of time over which to get used to a technology. If it can be viewed on screen, and prints on an inkjet then it is here now.

Postscript Level Three is still not implemented on all print sites though there is some progress when combined with computer to plate. A Printweek guide to jargon in late 2001 suggested that Level Three is still an excuse for marketing hype rather than being immediately practical, even though it was introduced in 1998.

Adobe presentations on their own future as part of Network Publishing suggest that sales from Postscript licences are expected to fall. At the IPEX Cross Media Theatre they may well find space for web design, video editing, animation etc. etc. This will get a variety of responses depending on how relevant this seems to people from the print industry. It may be that the difficulty of working with quality systems is that the scope of change has been greater than a formal system can cope with. However 'Network Publishing' is a concept that helps thinking about how individuals and companies can change. The technologies that emerged in the mid '80s are now moving beyond hard copy.

Andrew Tribute (Printweek 1 March) seems not to expect sudden technical change for print although he refers to an 'internet IPEX'. The reality of the 'network publishing' concept is shown by the situation that the internet aspects of print will be on show through web access rather than as stands.

Adobe has chosen to concentrate on the Cross Media Theatre. Macromedia and Corel never appeared on any floor plans. Microsoft and Oracle are somewhere in the background.

At Seybold New York the Adobe keynote was shared with the Internal Revenue Service who described their project with PDF and online forms. Details are on the sites shown below. The IRS is a major Adobe customer and they have had a lot of support. It is not obvious how customer pressure would cause print MIS companies to work with PDF as a format to store Job Definition Format information. It is easy to get confused with standards from CIP3 and CIP4 and the original Adobe intention for a portable job ticket format. However the IRS clearly can store data in a PDF so the approach is possible. Jim King's Seybold presentation was too technical for some but included a useful comment on the intention with the design of PDF-

- One file contains everything
- A collection of files and other material but glued together to form a complete document

A PDF can be the digital equivalent of film and also contain all the data for instructions.

At the PIRA MIS show in February, John Birkenshaw did not refer to Network Publishing as such but did describe how MIS has evolved to 'an 'integrated production and communication environment'. This builds on current buzz words such as customer relations and digital asset management. The diagrams may be published somewhere around the time of IPEX and show possible integration with CIP4 standards such as JDF. At the time it was stated that the cost savings from such an approach have yet to be demonstrated. Maybe quality ideas could help to demonstrate the benefits. A supply chain could involve print customers in specifying

requirements. A single PDF file could help avoid problems through improved traceability.

It may be that 'traceability' will never come back as a buzz word and that Adobe will find other topics more interesting than the design of file formats for storing data. Probably the Cross Media theatre will concentrate on streaming video for the mobile phone. So people attending IPEX should probably check some web sites well in advance.

By the way, Heidelberg will show the NexPress including technology based on Adobe Exetreme. The involvement of just one supplier could make things easier than at Print City where there will be the additional complications from litho. Integration with PDF and the portable job ticket could demonstrate the kind of quality gains possible with improved workflow involving customers. People expecting a five year assessment on PDF acceptance will probably wait and see if there is a similar demonstration at DRUPA 2004.

Will Pollard
will@exetreme.com

www.seyboldseminars.com

www.irs.gov

www.adobe.com

www.planetpdf.com

www.pdfzone.com

Look out for
king_jim_PDFasPackageAnnot.pdf

contact John Birkenshaw at PIRA
Johnb@pira.co.uk