

Wide Format Printers Inks, media & sustrates, laminators and coaters



ISA Orlando 2012



FLAAR Trade Show Reports

Nicholas Hellmuth

Introduction to ISA

The ISA Sign expo exhibitor list offers everything for signage. Our interest is everything related to the wide-format inkjet printing aspects: including signage but also interior décor, photo exhibits, fine art giclee, etc.

The following pages are a photo essay to introduce you to the successful 2012 expo and also to suggest what you can expect for the ISA international sign expo exhibitor list for 2012 in Las Vegas.

For this year 2012 we have initiated a new graphic design style for our free publications, namely a double-page spread. We hope you like the new style. We offer this in two formats: PDF and also as a separate flip-page style (Adobe Flash animation). You can select either style from our www.large-format-printers.org web site.

Great expo

For us at FLAAR this was one of the most busy expos we have had in many years. For a normal printer exposition just me or at most me plus one assistant handle it. For ISA 2012 there were six of us, and we could have used two more people to expand coverage to all the eco-solvent printers and display systems (banner stands, backlit systems, etc). Plus many people came to ISA asking for consultation. So for us it was a great expo.





YOUTH
SOFT LANE
→ South Concourse
→ Parking





ISA Orlando **2012**



Pre-show floor plan by product category

We were already working weeks before the expo started. This is our second year of preparing a pre-show “product category map” and “FAQs check-off sheet.” We have copyrighted these concepts since we have not seen this style used elsewhere with the same philosophy: show only actual products in booths which exhibit or focus on these products. However we look forward to making this service available to other trade shows.

What we also noticed were the people who appreciated this FLAAR style of product listing in the official pre-expo floor plan arranged by theme product: every booth, every brand, every model that we could recognize all equally. Because water-based printers are rather obviously in the Epson, Canon, or HP booth, there is no need to list them model-by-model. Same with solvent printers, the budget this year covered only the categories that we show. So we identify booths with solvent printers, but do not list every single model.

Also due to budget reality, we did not yet include laminators and coaters in the pre-show list, but we hope to include them for 2013. And gradually we are considering adding lists of display systems: backlit boxes, banner stands, etc. But we do cover laminators and coaters in the Level 1 of FLAAR Reports (to see levels, look at www.FLAAR-Reports.org).



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FLAAR Reports UV-cured wide-format printer location at ISA 2012

This FLAAR Reports ISA International Sign Expo product guide will help printshop owners and managers ask the crucial questions when shopping for a UV-cured printer. This guide will allow you to compare the specifications of the models in the ISA Sign Expo exhibit hall in order to make appropriate buying decisions that meet your precise needs. This list will be updated to reflect any changes from the first day of show and can be accessed on Friday, March 23rd by visiting the FLAAR booth #1381.

FLAAR Classification of UV Printers according their Feeding Mechanism

- 1 Dedicated Flatbed** A dedicated flatbed printer prints only on rigid boards, unless it has a roll-to-roll mechanism at the front.
- 2 Dual Structure: R-R over top** This feed at the back and take-up at front.
- 3 Dual Structure: R-R across front** A dual structure is a flatbed printer with a roll-to-roll mechanism at the front.
- 4 Combo** A combo printer moves media with a conveyor belt. It can print both rigid and flexible materials.
- 5 Hybrid** A hybrid printer moves rigid and roll-fed media with pinch-rollers and gripper rollers. But rigid media is usually not too thick (less than 1").
- 6 Dedicated roll-to-roll** A dedicated roll-to-roll printer will handle only flexible media. The widest printers reach the 3 m. long.



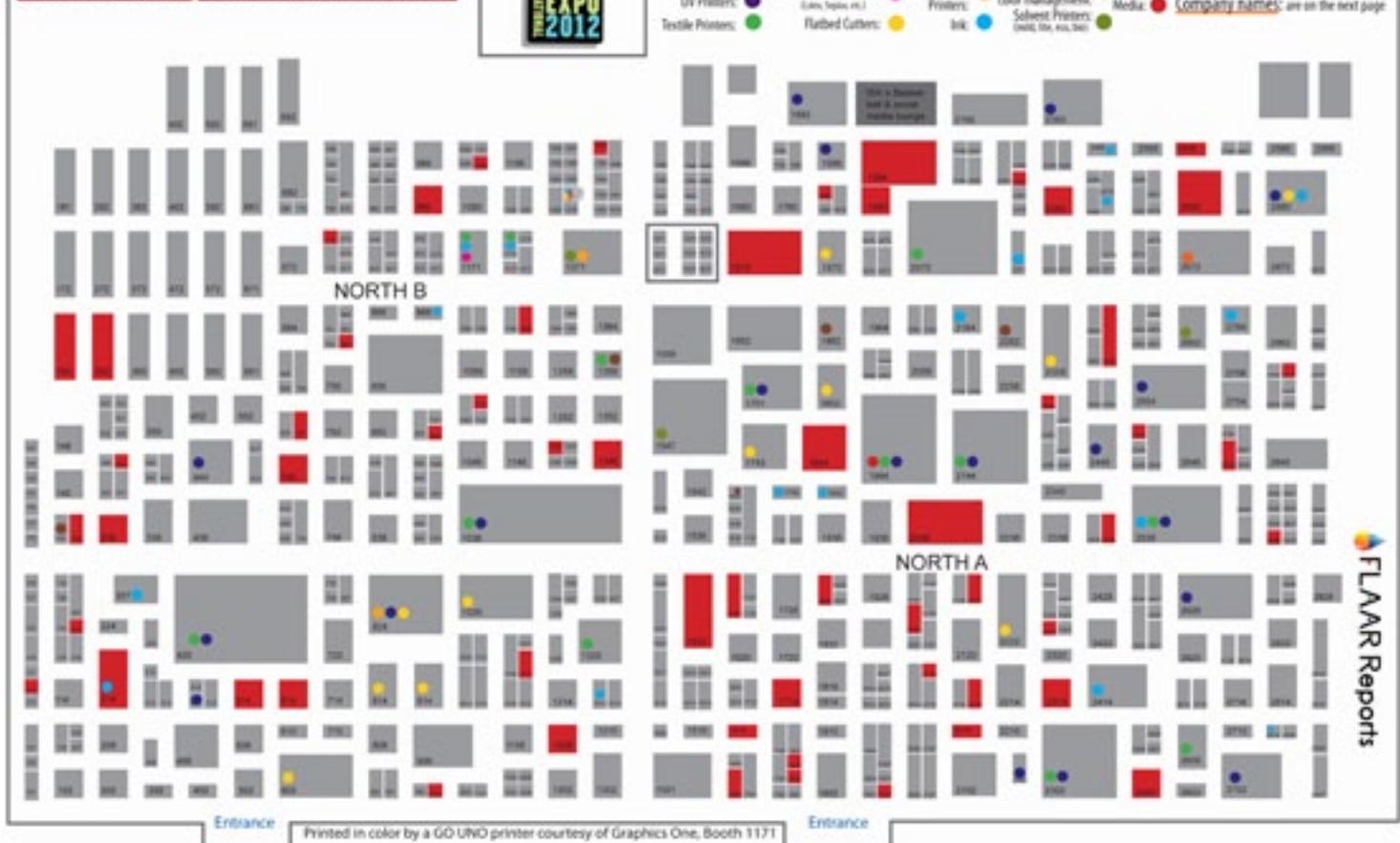
Company names:

Agfa	1026
CET	1892
Dixi	2446
Durst	2144
et VUTEch	2302
EIS	390
Floca	1886
Fujifilm	2136
Gandy Digital	444
HP	420
JPF	986
Arbort	2579
Munsie	1944
MTL PRINT	682
Novus Imaging	2392
Noxle	413
Oce	824
Polytype	2354
Roland	2072
SID	2626
Skylin-Ship	2303
Signajet	856
Tockwin	2702
Tubelite	1501, 1186

Color Nomenclature:

- UV Printers
- Textile Printers
- Alternative Ink Printers (UV, latex, etc.)
- Cutting/Equipment
- Toner Based Printers
- ink
- RP = workflow + color management
- Solvent Printers (UV, UV, etc.)
- Media

Media & Substrates, booth locations at ISA 2012



Color Nomenclature:

- UV Printers
- Textile Printers
- Alternative Ink Printers (UV, latex, etc.)
- Flatbed Cutters
- Toner Based Printers
- ink
- RP = workflow + color management
- Solvent Printers (UV, UV, etc.)
- Media

Company names: are on the next page

What does FLAAR do at a printer exposition

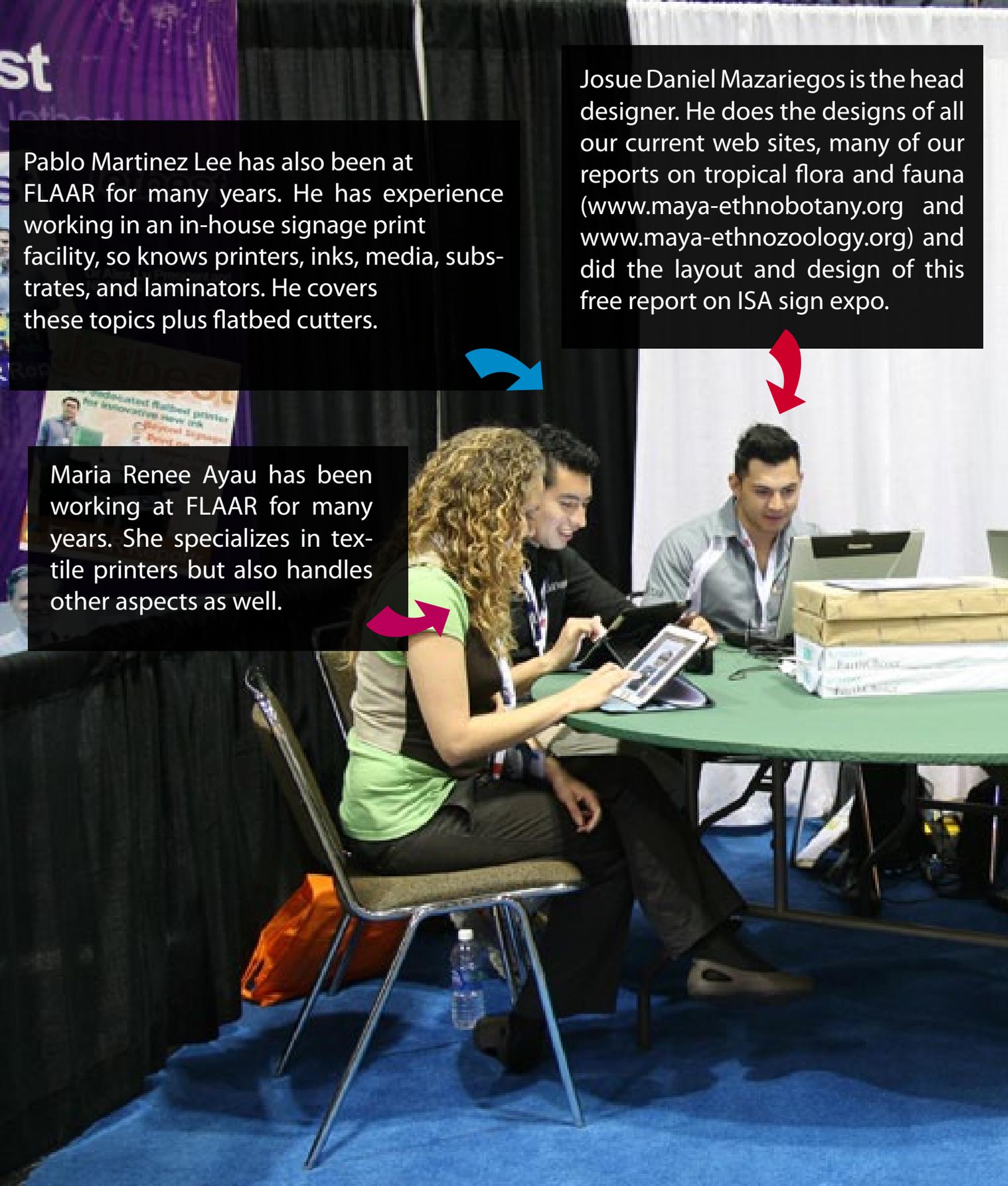
In the 1990's we began our research and evaluations on digital imaging equipment, specifically with digitalization and printing. So from the beginning we had an interest in more than just printers. Within several years we had advanced to evaluating RIP software. Today, for the last several years, we have expanded to cover

- Inks
- Media & substrates
- Laminators and coaters
- XY-flatbed cutters
- Workflow software

We are now beginning to do research on exhibit display products, since we are preparing a photo exhibit for a botanical garden later this year.

The growing FLAAR staff who attend the trade show work at providing a total coverage of the workflow to our readers.





Pablo Martinez Lee has also been at FLAAR for many years. He has experience working in an in-house signage print facility, so knows printers, inks, media, substrates, and laminators. He covers these topics plus flatbed cutters.

Josue Daniel Mazariegos is the head designer. He does the designs of all our current web sites, many of our reports on tropical flora and fauna (www.maya-ethnobotany.org and www.maya-ethnozoology.org) and did the layout and design of this free report on ISA sign expo.

Maria Renee Ayau has been working at FLAAR for many years. She specializes in textile printers but also handles other aspects as well.



Jose Melgar has been covering UV-cured printers for years. He has experience in printer demo rooms and factories in Korea, China, USA, and Europe.

Nicholas assists clients who fly in from across the USA (and from other continents). These are clients whose companies need complex industrial printing solutions, or decoration for glass, plus distributors who wish to know the reliability of one brand compared with other brands. 90% of his time at a printer trade show is in meetings (often impromptu in the aisle). Ten years ago he did all the photography himself, but now we wish to cover more topics so it is not realistic for him to help clients and simultaneously do photography. Though he did photograph the Hexis booth, the KIP booth, and the Mark Bric booths, plus a few others. Since his background is architecture, he did much of the architectural photography of the convention center (the day before the expo opened).

Ximena Jop: At every large expo it is essential to provide good images, so one staff person does photography six to eight hours a day, every day.

There are many photographers on the FLAAR staff and since Ximena Jop was doing our photography at the two giant expos in Guangzhou, we flew her to Orlando to assist us at ISA.

Introduction to the Wide format workflow

Perhaps it's because I was a professor of digital imaging technology for many years. Perhaps it's because I actually like the challenge of learning all the (ink) chemistry and (printer) technology. But we at FLAAR have our goal to provide help, tips, information. In other words, we enjoy sharing our knowledge. And the crucial foundation of wide-format printing is to be aware of the complete workflow.

Your printer is only one link in the chain. To produce a finished product it takes a lot more than just a printer. For example, it is essential to understand the diverse kinds of inks. Once you have selected your ink, there are dozens of different kinds of media and substrates.

It helps to understand RIP software and color management, though many printers simply use the firmware to handle this. So for a basic Epson printer you don't need a RIP; but for any serious printer, a RIP would be essential.

If you are a large printshop you would want workflow software. Efi, EskoArtwork, Caldera and others offer workflow software.

Once your image is printed, the next step is finishing:

- Cutting
- Lamination or coating

To handle the complete workflow for FLAAR Reports would take one researcher/photographer per subject. Our budget generally allows for only four people, but since we are expanding coverage and since ISA provided a helpful stipendium we flew in six people.

The following pages are a photo essay on the different aspects of the workflow. The actual brand names, models are in separate FLAAR Reports. All the commentary and discussion is in the TRENDS report.

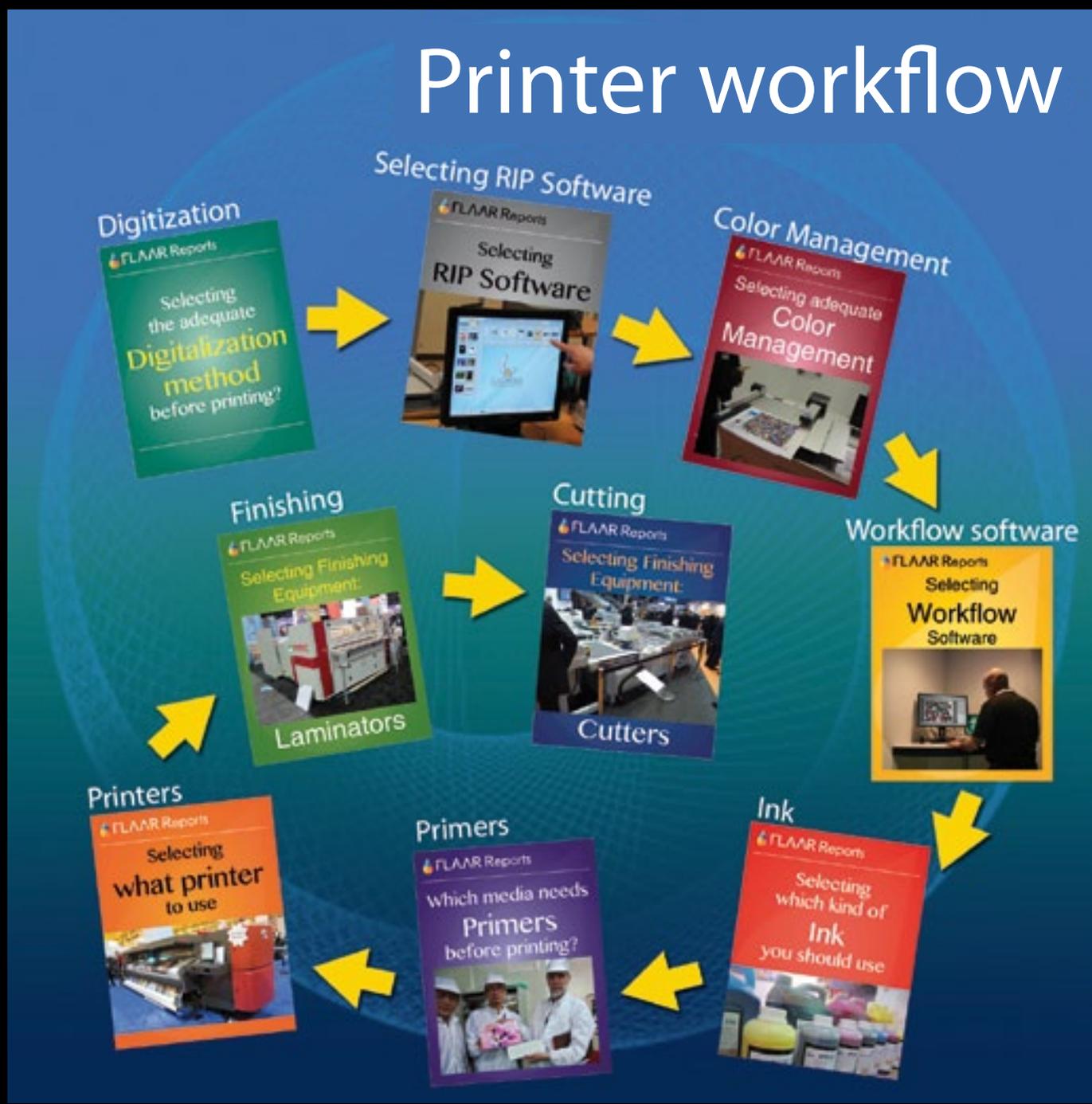
So let's arrange this introductory level report on ISA as much more than just one expo; let's use ISA as an introduction to the world of wide-format inkjet printing (and we will also diverge a bit into wide-format toner printing).

First step in signage, or décor, is the graphic design: the layout of the eventual sign or message.

And for graphic design you probably will use a photograph. And this photograph will tend to involve either a digital camera, or scanning of a legacy 35mm slide, negative or large-format chrome.

Ten years ago the digitization step of wide-format imaging was included in even sign-age shows. And photo expos such as Photokina used to have lots of printers: indeed the first UV-cured printers were also exhibited at Photokina 2000 (over a decade ago). But today digitization tends to be woefully missing from 90% of printer expos. And Photokina hardly has any printer exhibit booths any more.

The following parts of the workflow (RIP software, color management, selection of inks, printer, etc) we show in a flow diagram. Indeed this is the diagram we used to decorate the back of our booth.





**IGN
EXPO
2012**

**INDUSTRY'S
SIGNATURE EVENT**

EXHIBITS







When there are crowds of people this creates blurs in the photograph. So we took the architectural photographs the day before the expo opened. This is why you don't see all the thousands of attendees waiting for the opening bell to sound.

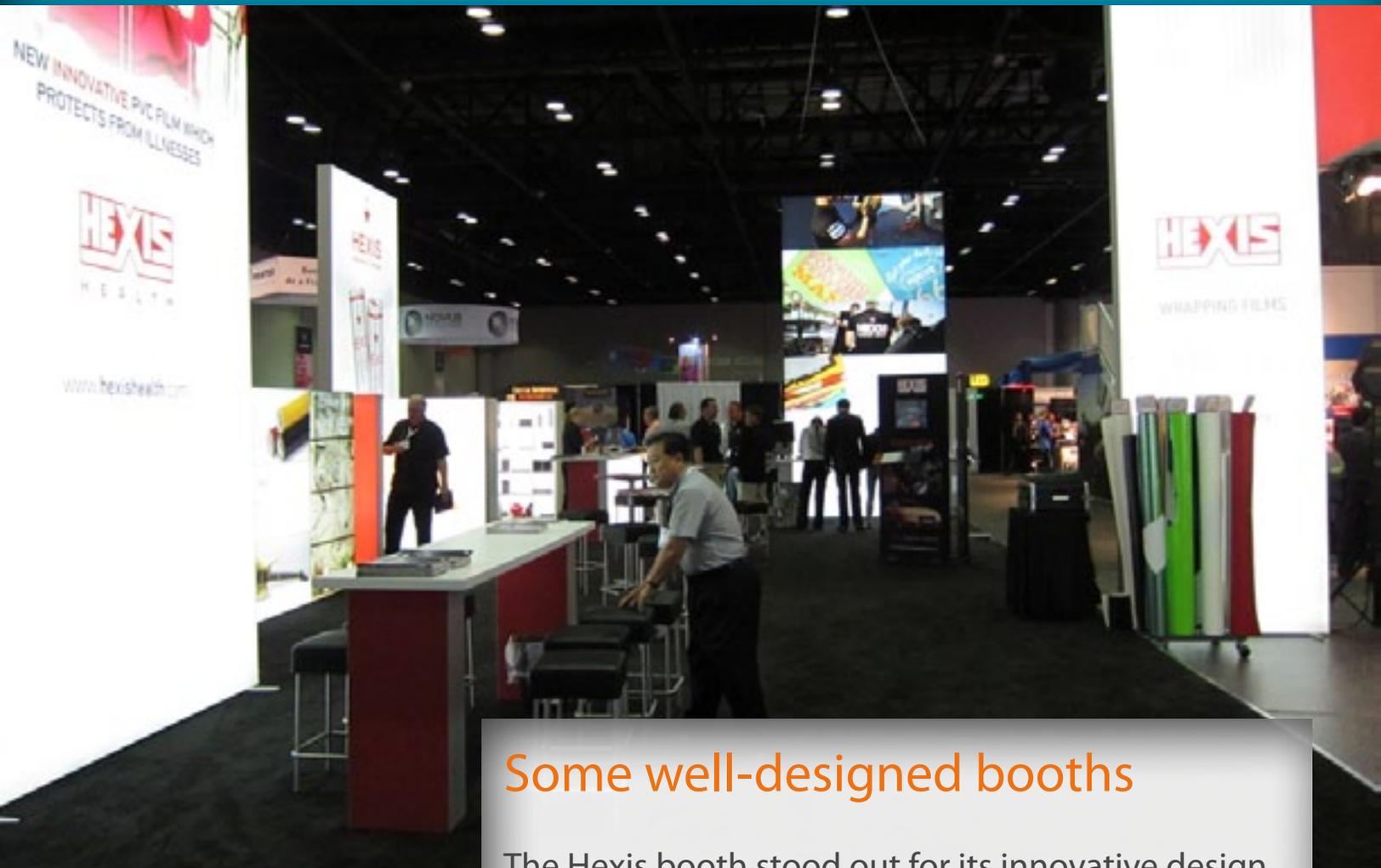


HEXIS

HEXIS



HEXIS USA LLC
from California to Florida



Some well-designed booths

The Hexis booth stood out for its innovative design.

The KIP booth is refreshing for being wide-open space. Too many booths are enclosed (a polite way of saying too closed off).







Here you can see what we mean by the wide-open concept; the deliberate absence of walls means that everyone is welcome to come on in. If your booth has a wall along one or more sides, that shuts off your potential audience on those sides.

PITMAN

An **AGFA**  Company



AGFA

Home Decor

Inkjet Applications

AGFA 

TAXI

AGFA

for sale

Most informative booth for Applications

Agfa had their four niches of applications. Since we had so many clients flying in for us to take them around in-person, I did not get inside, but I know from previous expos the range of applications.





ISA Sign expo offered a full range of wide format options, we look forward to returning to see and experience the ISA exhibitor list 2013 in Las Vegas.





UV-cured printers

Since UV-cured printers are the major component of our research we have four levels of FLAAR Reports on UV-cured printers:

- The present photo essay
- A list of every printer and model (with lots of photographs)
- A basic spec sheet of most of the UV-cured printers (with more photographs)
- TRENDS: mostly UV-cured printers but also comments on others (with more photos)





Hybrids vs Combo vs Dedicated Flatbed vs Dual Platforms

Every manufacturer has their preferences on how to attempt to push thick and rigid media through the printer. Ten years ago ColorSpan and others used grit-rollers under pinch rollers to move thick material. These were essentially retrofitted solvent printers.

In the last four years HP and even almost all Chinese manufacturers realized that pinch rollers atop grit rollers are not adequate for moving many sizes or weights or kinds of thick material. So most manufacturers have moved to combo transport belt or to dedicated flatbed printers.

Another reason why grit-roller/pinch-roller “pseudo flatbeds” are not viable for much market share is because latex and resin ink printers are taking over the market share for 1.6m and 1.8 meter roll-fed signage. Not really as much need for the added expense of UV-curing (or the potential issue of LED lamps not fully curing the inks) for roll-to-roll material at 1.6 or 1.8 meter widths.

We discuss all this in the TRENDS reports (which kinds of inks will lose market share in 2012 and 2013, and which kinds of inks will gain market share in 2012 and 2013).

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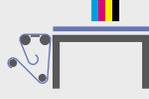
2 Dual Structure: R-t-R over top

You load at the back and take-up at front.



3 Dual Structure: R-t-R across front

A dual structure is a flatbed printer with a roll-to-roll mechanism at the front.



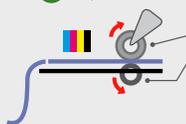
4 Combo

A combo printer moves media with a conveyor belt. It can print both rigid and flexible materials.



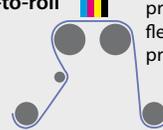
5 Hybrid

A hybrid printer moves rigid and roll-fed media with
• pinch rollers and
• grit rollers
But rigid media is usually not too thick (less than 1")

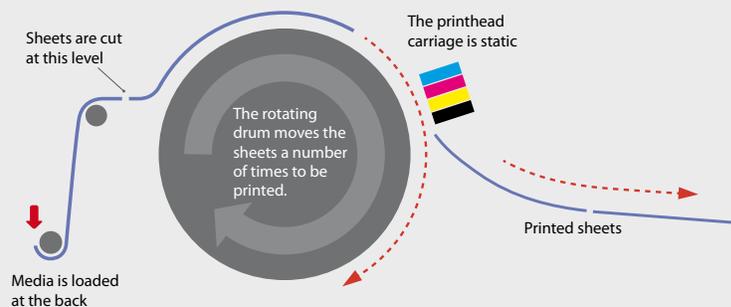


6 Dedicated roll-to-roll

A dedicated roll-to-roll printer will handle only flexible media. The widest printers reach the 5 m. long.



Media Feeding Mechanism of the HP Scitex TJ printers



Now that Mimaki also offers latex ink, what is the future for any roll-to-roll UV-cured printer at 1.6 or 1.8 meter widths?

For years full-solvent was king at grand format sizes and also at some normal widths (1.6 and 1.8 meters). Then people realized did not want the health hazards of full-solvent ink, so most printshops in North America and Western Europe jumped to eco-solvent or at least mild-solvent. Then from 2004 onward, some printshops moved to UV-curing for roll-to-roll, especially at grand format widths.

During the last two years, a few companies tried to claim that UV-ink was “eco-friendly” but most ink chemists smile when they hear this. Most chemists would consider an eco-friendly claim for UV-curing as potentially Greenwashing. Nonetheless (as long as you don’t try to label UV-cured ink as GREEN) it has been a trend now for over ten years that more and more manufacturers have moved away from solvent and now focus on UV-curing for roll-to-roll.

Then at DRUPA 2008 HP came out with latex ink. And now you could get outdoor signage and vehicle wrap with less solvents than full-sovent ink, and without the cost of UV-curing components (latex ink is definitely not acceptable to call a “water-based ink” since it has more solvents than “water-based” and water-based already has more solvents than you want to know or hear about!). But irrespective of the ingredients, latex ink printers have taken market share. Latex inks clearly will have a continued growth of market share.

Now that Mimaki also offers latex ink, we are researching the potential impact on market share for what is left of solvent inks and also for UV-cured as roll-to-roll. You can obtain this information by requesting a session, in-person, at your offices or at the next expo, directly with the FLAAR Reports team. Plus you can Subscribe (via www.FLAAR-Reports.org).

In our TRENDS reports we also discuss the “SUV” (solvent UV) ink of Mimaki, which was by far the most innovative wide-format product at FESPA 2012 and at ISA 2012.

Predictions on TRENDS for roll-to-roll UV-cured

I can still remember the first grand-format UV-cured roll-to-roll printer: NUR, at DRUPA 2004. Prior to that, almost all UV-cured printers had a combo transport belt, pinch-rollers over grit-rollers (the least inspired manner), or dedicated flatbed. So I assumed the NUR was simply another grand-format solvent printer.

Eco-solvent and mild-solvent printers

Plenty of eco-solvent and mild-solvent printers.

- Mutoh has their popular ValueJet on display.
- Roland seems to have launched additional models (I have seen VH series)
- Mimaki also has lots of new models.
- Seiko II is a leader in mild-solvent (also called lite-solvent). The images from the ColorPainter printers were bright. Their booth had innovative style as well. There were also plenty of other brands and models of eco-solvent printers. We show and discuss the Epson in our separate reports specifically on this class of printers. But the four brands above are the traditional brands with many years of experience in the world of lite-, mild-, eco-, and bio-solvent inks.





Seiko Instruments USA

Seiko

PROFESSIONAL OUTDOOR GRAPHICS

PROFESSIONAL OUTDOOR GRAPHICS

PROFESSIONAL OUTDOOR GRAPHICS

Print Speed Up to 1.5X with
Accuracy with Color & Black
Unmatched Runtime Reliability
Precision Engineering & Reliability



ColorPrint H2-74s
ColorPrint H2-104s

SII
Seiko Instruments USA



MUTOH

MUTOH



MUTOH

MUTOH



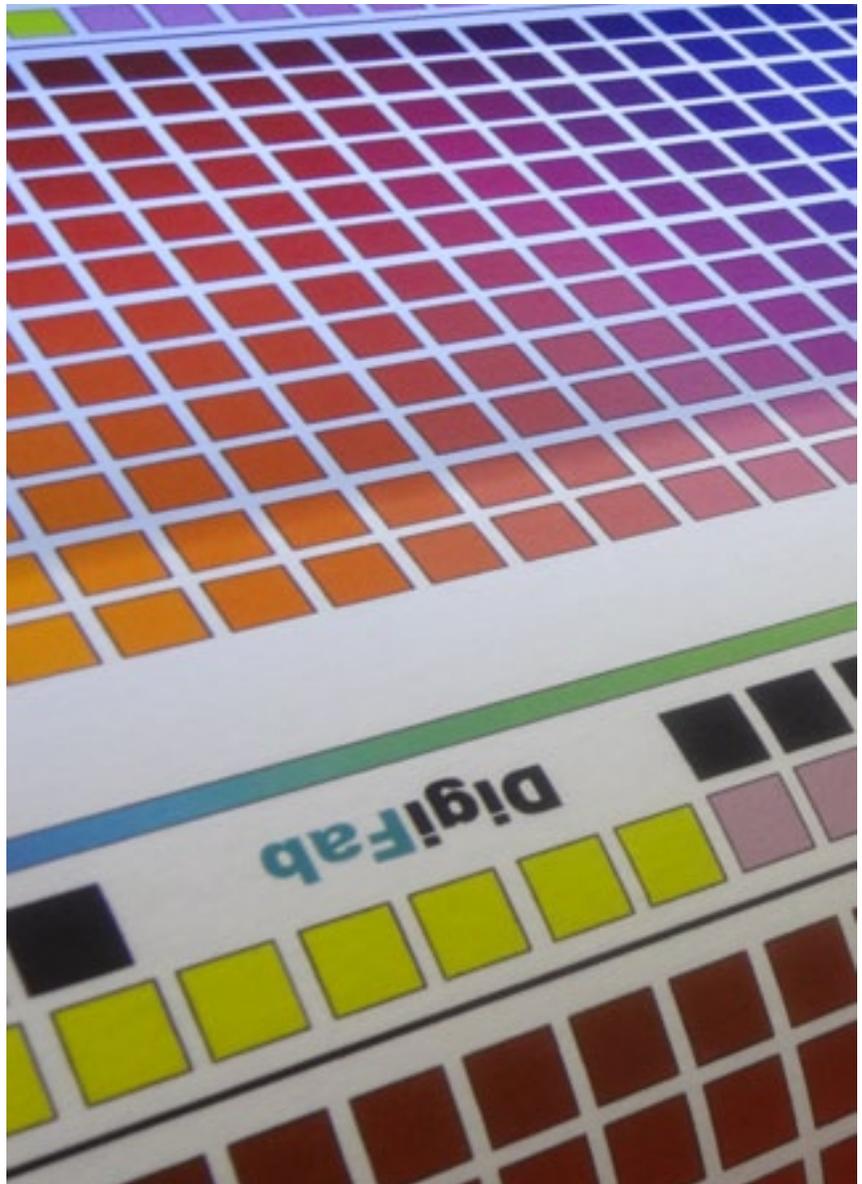


Textile printers

For soft signage, and for interior decoration (curtains, etc) textile printers are increasingly popular. So we will have a separate FLAAR Report dedicated to all the textile printers exhibited at ISA.



www.large-format-printers.org



Textile printers





Alternative ink printers (Latex and Resin Inks)

It is more helpful to classify “latex” ink as an alternative, than to try to package it as a “water-based ink.” Latex has been growing in popularity. In fact we met the owners of a printshop who bought an early HP latex printer based on our FLAAR Report and they said that they were content with the printer and they complimented us on our report because they said their main issue was with the red color, and that our report had mentioned red ink as an issue on early generation of latex ink.

We appreciate the compliment and it documents that an evaluation of a printer which actually dares to identify issues and downsides is recognized as better by printshop owners. This way they have a better idea of what to overcome once they have the printer (since no machine is perfect in all situations, it is not realistic to not-buy a printer just because it has an issue; the question is whether your needs, your applications, and what your clients expect can be met by this printer even with the one or two shortcomings.

Where printshop owners get irritated with a brand, model, or manufacturer, is when the PR releases, the “Success Stories” and articles do nothing but praise everything about a printer (and blissfully neglect to mention the downsides).





Wide-format other than inkjet: Toner printers

Toner technology (and other wide-format other than inkjet) is alive and well. Seiko, KIP, and Oce make toner or other non-inkjet printers (obviously Oce also makes UV-cured printers). Whereas non-inkjet is used for reprographics, including CAD and related renderings (for architects and engineers), there are also “poster printers” available which utilize toner chemistry and technology.

The brand (of non-inkjet) that is present with the most visibility in the expo hall is that of KIP. One other CAD toner printer manufacturer is almost never present at any signage expo. And other manufacturers, who are present, limit their toner display to one nice machine on one side of the booth. KIP dedicates an entire booth to toner technology.

Here is a wide-angle display of the concept of poster printing with toner. Since MemJet technology is not yet finished and was totally absent from ISA, the industry leaders (for non-traditional chemistry) are KIP and Oce. Since we have samples from KIP (of our test images) we show the KIP booth. ISA sign expo was so busy that even with six people flown here to handle all the research and writing, we could not get test images to everyone.





Inks

During the expo you run into printshop owners and other users of inks who occasionally relate the significant issues with one or other Fortune 500 brand of ink. So if an official ink, of a Fortune 500 company, is having unresolved issues in a printer, this kind of suggests that having an occasional bad batch is not limited to small after-market ink manufacturers.

So why pay 300% more for the official OEM ink when it may also have occasional issues (plus, this ink from the Fortune 500 company is probably made in an offshore factory anyway). Might as well get ink from an ink company in Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, or China where you know clearly and precisely where your ink is really made.

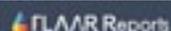
Ten years ago trade magazines rarely mentioned after-market inks; ten years ago FLAAR never wrote about them. Today, with more experience gained in these ten years, we are more cognizant of the real-world situation with inks. For example, I can think of three Fortune 500 companies whose inks had issues serious enough to cause recalls and/or switching to a new or different brand or formula.

Official inks are obviously normally excellent. And yes, printer manufacturers tend to select good inks. The point is that even a good brand has an occasional bad batch. And, there are several well known instances in the industry of an official ink having issues for enough months that the printer manufacturer finally dropped that ink totally (yet thousands of end-users suffered the issues during the years before the ink was finally replaced).



We list and identified the booth numbers of every after-market ink company which was noticeable from the pre-show exhibitor list. Once the expo opened we found several more ink companies which were not noticeable from the exhibitor list. All of these companies will be listed, and when it was possible to photograph them, we also include photographs of every booth (if there were a lot of people walking past any booth, that causes blurs, so that booth may not have been photographable).



 Mild-Solvent Inks HP Designjet 8000s, 9000s, 10000s  from Sam-Ink	 After-Market Inks for HP Designjet 5000, HP 5500, HP Z6100  HP 1050 and HP 4500
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www.large-format-printers.org





ISA Orlando 2012

Media & Substrates

Plenty of media and substrates at ISA Sign Expo. So we will have a separate FLAAR Report on everything we saw.





3D effects via software, media, or laminate

I especially like pseudo-3D media. I would estimate that Mireco has patents or patents pending on their remarkable technology. There are a few companies trying to provide a different solution, via lamination, but frankly the Mireco effect is by far superior. However I did see one Chinese brand, at Shanghai or Guangzhou 2011, which was quite remarkable. But I did not notice that precise same result at any of the three Chinese printer expos that I have attended already in 2012.

What we at FLAAR would be interested in doing is testing, evaluating, and then writing a FLAAR Report on creating the awesome results in 3D with our photographs of sacred flowers of the Maya civilization, sacred animals and insects, monumental temple-pyramid and palace architecture, and artifacts. As soon as we decide which of the new media technologies is of interest, we will focus on that.

Most people say that lenticular effects leave them nauseated. And ironically, the least eye-strain of all the brands of lenticular are the more simple products from Asia, including China. But the one lenticular in front of one booth, I heard the person walking by indicate this kind of scene made her sick. If I see more than one in a row, it makes me feel dizzy. So I am not yet convinced I would want these in my exhibit. But I am open to reconsidering if I find a lenticular which is not causing viewers to complain.





Flatbed cutters

Since this is a sign expo there are many excellent CNC routers for producing signage from wood and plastics. Since our institute is focused on wide-format inkjet, we do not (yet) cover CNC routers per-se. What we do cover, however, are flatbed cutters which are focused on printed signage. So we include one of the models of MultiCam but not their other models.

We include Aristo, especially because they are allied for North America with SigmaJet. AXYZ is a brand which also comes from the traditional era of flatbed cutters but is often enough associated with wide-format signage so that we cover them.

Zund and EskoArtwork Kongsberg are the two brands of XY flatbed cutters we know the best: having been a guest at Zund world headquarters and factory and having been a guest at the EskoArtwork demo room in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, plus having visited several printshops which have Kongsberg cutters (in Australia, and USA).





FLAAR Reports

Architecture with recyclable Materials



that are cuttable with digital X-Y Cutter-Routers

FLAAR Reports

Digital Flatbed Cutters to pair with a UV Flatbed Printer



Kongsberg XL
Series Cutter-Routers

FLAAR Reports

EskoArtwork Kongsberg XP



Series Cutter-Routers

RIP Software & Color Management

During the years that FLAAR was testing RIP software at our two university research centers, we got to know the main brands of RIPs. Since then we have visited the world headquarters of Wasatch in Salt Lake City, and Caldera in France. Plus we have experience with efi RIP software.

At the university we tended to use Wasatch since the students learned this easily (though they could learn other brands also).

The brand leader ten years ago, and the brand leader today has changed. Other brands which were really popular a decade ago, did not even have a booth at ISA and almost no presence in North America. In fact the first FLAAR Report on RIP software listed about 70+ brands of RIP software. Today there are only about five viable brands of RIP software that you tend to find at most international expos.

Some RIP brands are immensely popular in certain parts of the world (different brand in each part of the world). We notice this as we travel to printer expos around the world.

Gradually we will be updating our reports on RIP software. This involves having projects whereby a RIP company provides scholarships for hosting our students for training. This way the student interns can experience the RIP software and can thereby prepare a report.

For color management, there was an X-Rite booth. The product of this company that I like the most are their MacBeth color checkers for digital photography.





ISA Orlando **2012**

Laminators & Coaters

A UV-curing coater from Drytac was exhibited in the booth of a UV-cured printer distributor, since if you have a flatbed printer you can really profit from having a flatbed coater. We visited one printshop and they said their Drytac coater was “their secret weapon” to get print jobs that their competitors could not win (because the competitors did not have a coater).

We did test prints on another coater (different brand, in the booth of a different UV-cured flatbed printer) and were disappointed to see banding and random laydown patterns. I do not understand how this texture would be desired.

So be very careful before you decide which brand and which technology of coater you wish, since if the texture is iffy the finished result will not make your clients happy.

The standard brands of laminators were in other booths. We list all the brands, and show photos of all the brands in our separate FLAAR Report on laminators & coaters at ISA sign expo.



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Exhibit Display Options

Once you have your image printed, you face a decision of how it will be mounted:

- Billboard
- Building wrap
- Truck-side
- Vehicle wrap
- Light box
- Banner stand
- Wall covering
- Window display
- Etc.

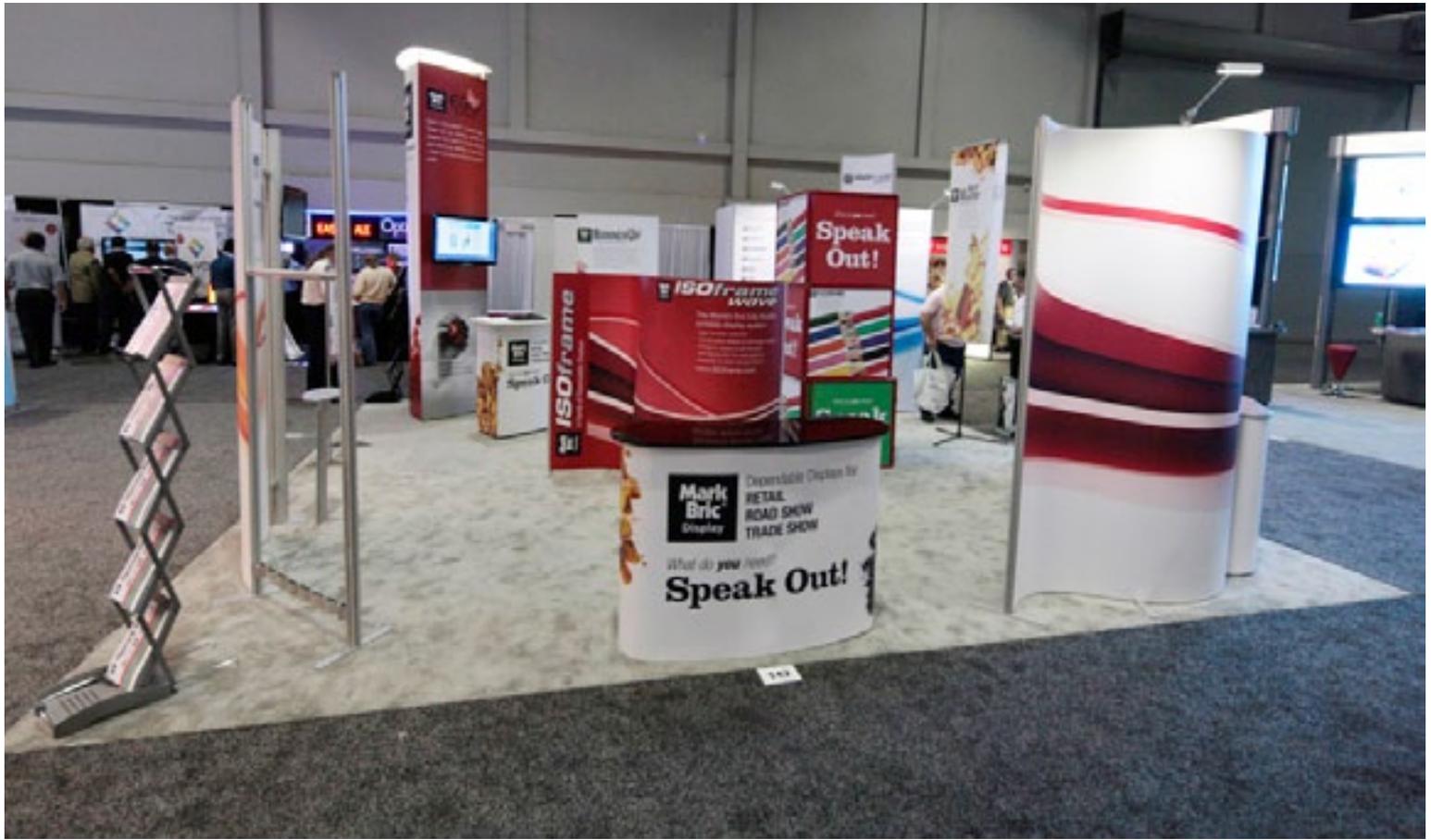


Earlier this year the third largest research and educational botanical garden in the world asked FLAAR for a display of our photographs of sacred Maya flowers and trees to celebrate the Maya prediction of the catastrophic end of the world circa late December 2012. The exhibit will open in September. So we have been busy researching all the different ways we can display our photographs of sacred Maya flowers and sacred trees.

We wish to have the exhibit innovative: more than just a framed fine art photo on the wall.

National Geographic has published my photographs as have Japanese coffee table art books. So the photographs are high resolution and of remarkable quality. At FESPA 2012 Barcelona it was possible to see new media, innovative substrates, and very clever ways to display photographs.

At ISA sign expo we had so many projects that even with a staff of six it was a challenge to cover everything. But the folks in the nice booth of Mark Bric display systems brought me into their booth where I could see some of their newly launched products. So we will consider launching an evaluation project of Mark Bric display products later this year.



Trade Magazines

We at FLAAR Reports support trade magazines. We write articles for trade magazines around the world. Precisely because trade magazines do a good job at listing new products via PR releases sent out by the manufacturers, we do not use PR releases ourselves (they are already all available in four different nicely produced trade magazines).

We assume that everyone attending ISA sign expo knows the main brands of trade magazines. With so much to photograph at a large expo such as ISA, we don't get to every single booth, but here are some of the trade magazine booths whose size made them rather tough to miss!



Looking forward to exhibitor list for ISA sign expo 2013 in Las Vegas

This is a DRUPA year (May 2012 is DRUPA). This means that most printer manufacturers are putting most of their budget into their over-priced booth at DRUPA, and into the over-priced hotels that gouge visitors to DRUPA in Duesseldorf.

So several companies pulled out at the last minute, and other companies did not book much elsewhere in the world other than DRUPA.

For 2013, we hope the 2013 exhibitor list for ISA international sign expo will be larger, especially since Las Vegas is a popular travel destination. You know the motto, "What happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas."

So far I have not had time to be sinful in Las Vegas, because preparing a series of FLAAR Reports on a trade show is a full time job.

Interviews with exhibitors

I asked several exhibitors how their sales were. Every single one was content. Each booth manager that I asked said they sold well. Even the 10x10 booth across from ours said he was pleased with the results.

I spoke with another person in the aisle who said she had spoken with one of our booth person who said their sales had been weak. But I wonder how much it was their attitude in the booth that contributed to low sales. Or perhaps their products were not innovative? Or perhaps their size, shape, and features of their UV-cured printer was outmoded (grit-roller under pinch roller UV printers were popular in the days of ColorSpan but fell from favor in recent years. Today not even Chinese companies try to convince people that pinch rollers over grit rollers can really move thick or rigid materials. Perhaps by featuring such an old-fashioned printer in their booth, maybe this contributed to low sales. I would imagine their other products did well; their other products are more modern technology).

I would fully understand that some products had weak sales. And it would be expected that a few booths had low sales. But in some cases the question would be: are their products competitive to begin with? The company that complained of low sales, with latex printers now available also from Mimaki, there is not very much market potential for a 1.6 meter UV-cured roll-to-roll printer. Even Mimaki skipped exhibiting their roll-to-roll 1.6m roll-to-roll (the one that attempts also to be a flatbed...by adding roller tables). Market research documents that some kinds of printers simply are not adequate for everything they claim to be.

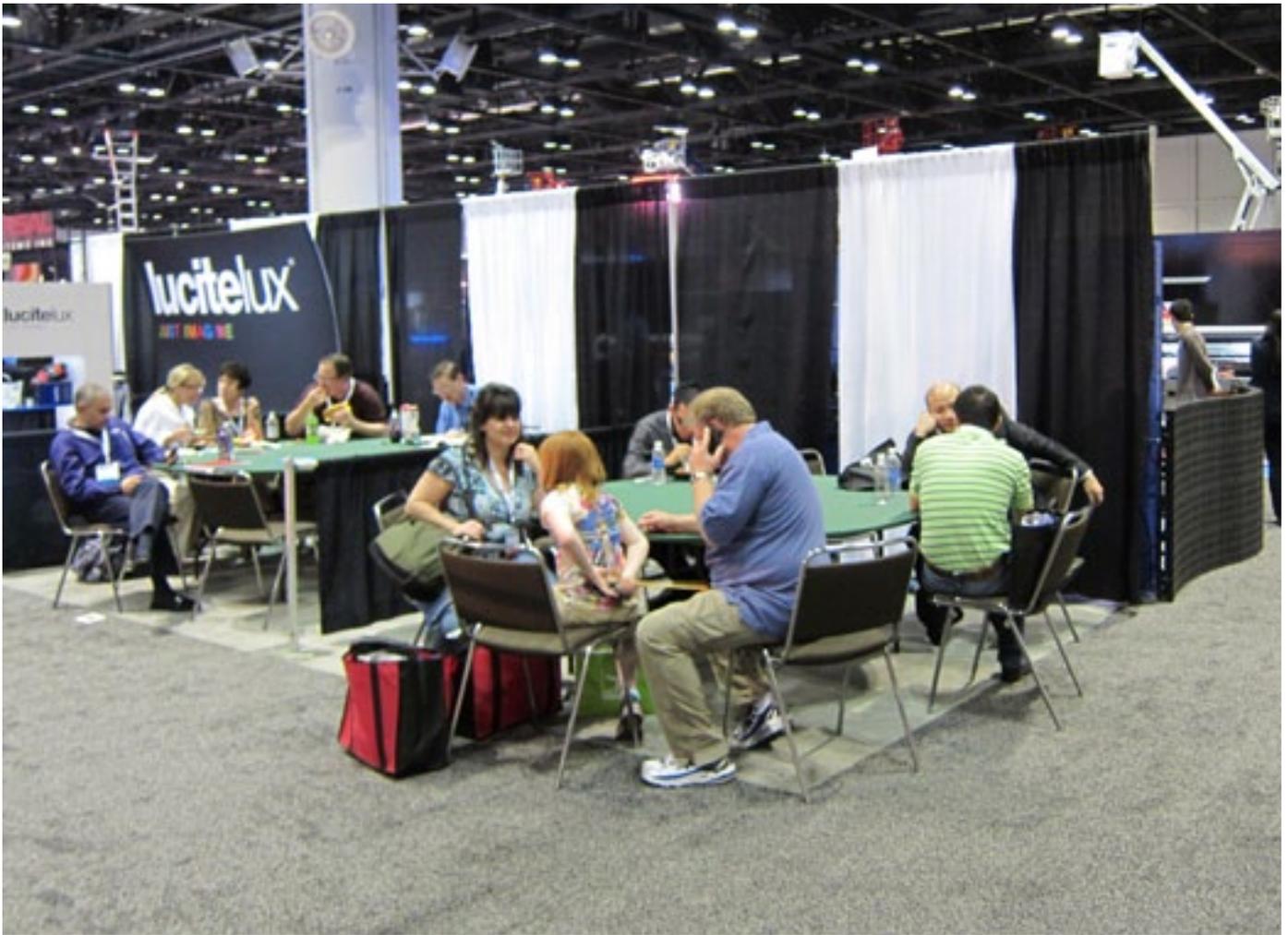
Despite the one documented weak market share, my overall impression is that companies that exhibited did well. Companies who skipped ISA to concentrate on DRUPA lost sales they could have had if they had been present at ISA.



It was a great idea to occupy the unused booth spaces with big meeting tables, which were immediately filled by people in need for a space to sit down and make business. We have attended trade shows all over the world, and rarely have we seen an actual business area so well organized within the main exhibition hall.









Nicholas Hellmuth meeting clients

Acknowledgements

We thank the team at Printer Evolution for printing the booth backdrop for our FLAAR booth in the handsome colors that they were able to produce.

We have enjoyed working with ISA sign expo organization to do the pre-show map. We will be adding laminators for next year and now with the current year's product list, we will be able to get the exhibitor list out earlier for sign expo in 2013. Our computer programmers are at present working on an iPad and iPhone app. These require 2-weeks for Apple to approve them, and there was no way to finish the product list two weeks before the expo, so we opted to produce the app after the show.

Since I like chocolate (I raise my own cacao in Guatemala), I appreciate the chocolate candy that was available in several booths such as Sign in China, Sam Ink, and Island Clean Air.



Appendix A

Lots of hard work and planning go into a trade show

This section is a tribute to all the individuals and companies who work hard behind the scenes to be sure the expo is a success. In addition to months of planning and designing a booth, most trade show exhibitors then have all the work of constructing their booth.

You, as a visitor, don't have the opportunity to see all the work that goes into getting the equipment out of the crates and into the booth. So we wish to document on these pages examples of long hours in setting up the booths.







Next level up, FLAAR Reports at Levels 1 through 5

You have on your monitor now the general introduction. This is a free report. But in order to cover the hotel, meal, airfare, and work-time costs, we also need to have higher level reports which can be purchased by PayPal, credit card, or wire transfer.

Here are the front covers of the additional reports which you can order (from FrontDesk@FLAAR.org). Please indicate whether you wish to pay by check in US dollars, or wire transfer, PayPal or credit card.

Subscription Levels

(may include Consulting if desired; the decision is yours)

Level 1: Keeping track of which brands and models of printers and which kinds of inks, are exhibited and launched when and where...

List Price = If bought individually, **Subscription** = If all bought at once

Benefits, Coverage, Contents	List Price	Subscription
Level 1A: (USA: Graphics of the Americas, ISA, GraphExpo, SGIA) Includes lists and documentation not in any other source on these printer expos	\$140	\$62
Level 1B: (All USA + Brazil + FESPA Mexico)	\$262	\$120
Level 1C: (China: D-Pes + Guangzhou + Shanghai APPPEXPO)	\$340	\$210
Level 1D: (DRUPA) 4 days of printers of every size and shape; inks and media; we don't use lullaby illusions if that is the style of the PR releases; instead we provide a reality check	\$570	\$420
Level 1E: (All mayor printer trade shows: North & South America, Europe [FESPA + Viscom + Reklama Moscow], Middle East, Africa)	\$566	\$420
Level 1C+E: (North & South America + Europe [FESPA, Viscom, DRUPA, Reklama Moscow] + Middle East + Africa + China [D-PES, Guangzhou, Shanghai APPPEXPO])	\$1476	\$1000

If you prefer to skip this Subscription, it is easy for you simply to attend all these printer expos yourself, or send your staff: Total travel distance: only about 200,000 miles, which is about XYZ, 000 kilometers. Your wife and family will never forget you being gone this often.

The airfare cost, hotels and meals: roughly \$48,000 (economy class and economical hotels). If you need Crowne Plaza or above quality, and comparable dining level, your expenses to visit the same printer expos will be around \$60,000: or, you can have all basic trade show printer lists + distributor lists for each pertinent country for a mere \$3500. Or, trade show info with no distributor lists for only \$1000 (covers an entire year, world wide international expos).



All the above FLAAR Reports, covering the whole globe and an entire year, list price \$1476 if bought one by one, by Subscription lower price, \$1000

Level 2: Introductory printer lists for pertinent UV, solvent, latex printer trade shows, **plus** lists of distributors for wide-format inkjet workflow products (Printers, laminators, inks, and substrates)...

Benefits, Coverage, Contents	List Price	Subscription
Level 2A: (North and South America UV trade shows printer lists and distributors)	\$1120	\$620
Level 2B: (North & South America, Europe, Middle East, Africa printer lists and distributors)	\$3032	\$1500
Level 2C: (China: UV-cured printers in China: D-Pes, Guangzhou, Shanghai APPP-EXPO + worldwide)	\$4092	\$2100
Level 2Da: (DRUPA + Distributors of mayor countries worldwide)	\$3930	\$1200
Level 2Db: (DRUPA + FESPA Barcelona + Distributors worldwide)	\$4790	\$2200
Level 2Dc: (DRUPA + FESPA Barcelona + CHINA + Distributors worldwide)	\$6090	\$3100
Level 2D+: (DRUPA + FESPA Barcelona + China + Mexico + USA + Brazil + Europe + Middle East + Africa + Distributors)	\$6426	\$3500



Level 3: Tabulation of Specifications Level, plus trade show reports....

Benefits, Coverage, Contents	List Price	Subscription
Level 3UVA: (Korea + Taiwan UV Manufacturers and models)	\$840	\$420
Level 3I: (ink North & South America, Europe, Middle East, Africa)	\$2178	\$1200
Level 3UVA+: (All China UV printers + Korea UV printers + Taiwan UV printers)	\$2560	\$1300
Level 3CP+I+M: (All Chinese UV printers + all Chinese inks and substrates)	\$2854	\$1400
Level 3CP: (China Textile + China DX5,DX6,DX7 printers + China UV printers)	\$3180	\$1500
Level 3M: (media & substrates North & South America, Europe, Middle East, Africa)	\$3236	\$1500
Level 3UV: (world wide USA + Europe; All UV printers outside Asia)	\$4738	\$2200
Level 3CE: (All inks + all substrates + all printers: UV, Textile, DX Epson printheaded; manufactured in China)	\$5124	\$2500
Level 3Ia+M: (All inks + media & substrates worldwide)	\$5414	\$2500
Level 3Ib+M: (inks + media & substrates + China: D-Pes + Guangzhou + Shanghai APPEXPO)	\$8454	\$4100
Level 3T: (Textile printers worldwide: USA + Europe + China)	\$8094	\$4100
Level 3UV + Level 3T: (world wide USA + Europe; All UV outside Asia + Textile printers worldwide: USA + Europe + China)	\$12,832	\$6000
Level 3E: (Everything at list and tabulation level, including all China, plus all MEMS and all MemJet wide format printers)	\$21,286	\$14,000



Level 4: Tabulation of Specifications Level, plus trade show reports + distributors around the world...

Benefits, Coverage, Contents	List Price	Subscription
Level 4I: (ink North & South America, Europe, Middle East, Africa + ink distributors)	\$3248	\$1500
Level 4M: (media & substrates North & South America, Europe, Middle East, Africa + media distributors)	\$3476	\$1500
Level 4CP+I+M: (All Chinese printers + all Chinese inks and substrates)	\$4164	\$3200
Level 4Ia+M: (inks + media & substrates; North & South America, Europe [FESPA + Viscom], Middle East, Africa)	\$9494	\$6000
Level 4UV: (world wide USA + Europe; All UV printers outside Asia)	\$7508	\$4100
Level 4CE: (All ink + all substrate + all printers:UV, Textile, DX Epson printheaded manufactured in China)	\$7894	\$4200
Level 4Ib+M: (inks + media & substrates worldwide + China: D-Pes + Guangzhou + Shanghai APPPEXPO)	\$13,534	\$8000
Level 4T: (Textile printers worldwide: USA + Europe + China)	\$10,864	\$6200
Level 4UV + Level 3T, (world wide USA + Europe; All UV outside Asia + Textile printers worldwide: USA + Europe + China)	\$15,602	\$9600
Level 4E: (Everything at list and tabulation level, including China, ALL DRUPA, Graphics of the Americas, FESPA Barcelona, Viscom, ME & Africa, ISA, SGIA, etc.)	\$24,056	\$16,000



Level 5: TRENDS Level, plus Tabulation of Specifications + all listed trade show reports (so EVERYTHING, but for those who do not need Distributor lists)...

Benefits, Coverage, Contents	List Price	Subscription
Level 5A: (Wide-format inkjet printer, inks, media TRENDS in USA: Graphics of the Americas, ISA, SGIA, GraphExpo)	\$11,702	\$5100
Level 5C: (TRENDS level; every UV, DX, Textile, new latex-clone printers for China: D-Pes, Guangzhou, Shanghai APPPEXPO)	\$30,428	\$18,000
Level 5EU: (TRENDS for all UV and related printers at all major European trade shows: FESPA, Viscom, Reklama, + all wide-format DRUPA, +MemJet)	\$18,964	\$12,000
Level 5E: (Everything worldwide: UV + textiles + DX-printheaded + new latex-clones + MemJet + all ink chemistries + Media/Substrates + TRENDS)	\$38,678	\$24,000

If you order a Subscription at Level 5E, we will include all TRENDS reports for the entire world market areas from 2011 at no extra cost

ISA Orlando 2012

Wide Format Printers

Inks, media & sustrates,
laminators and coaters

 FLAAR Trade Show
Reports