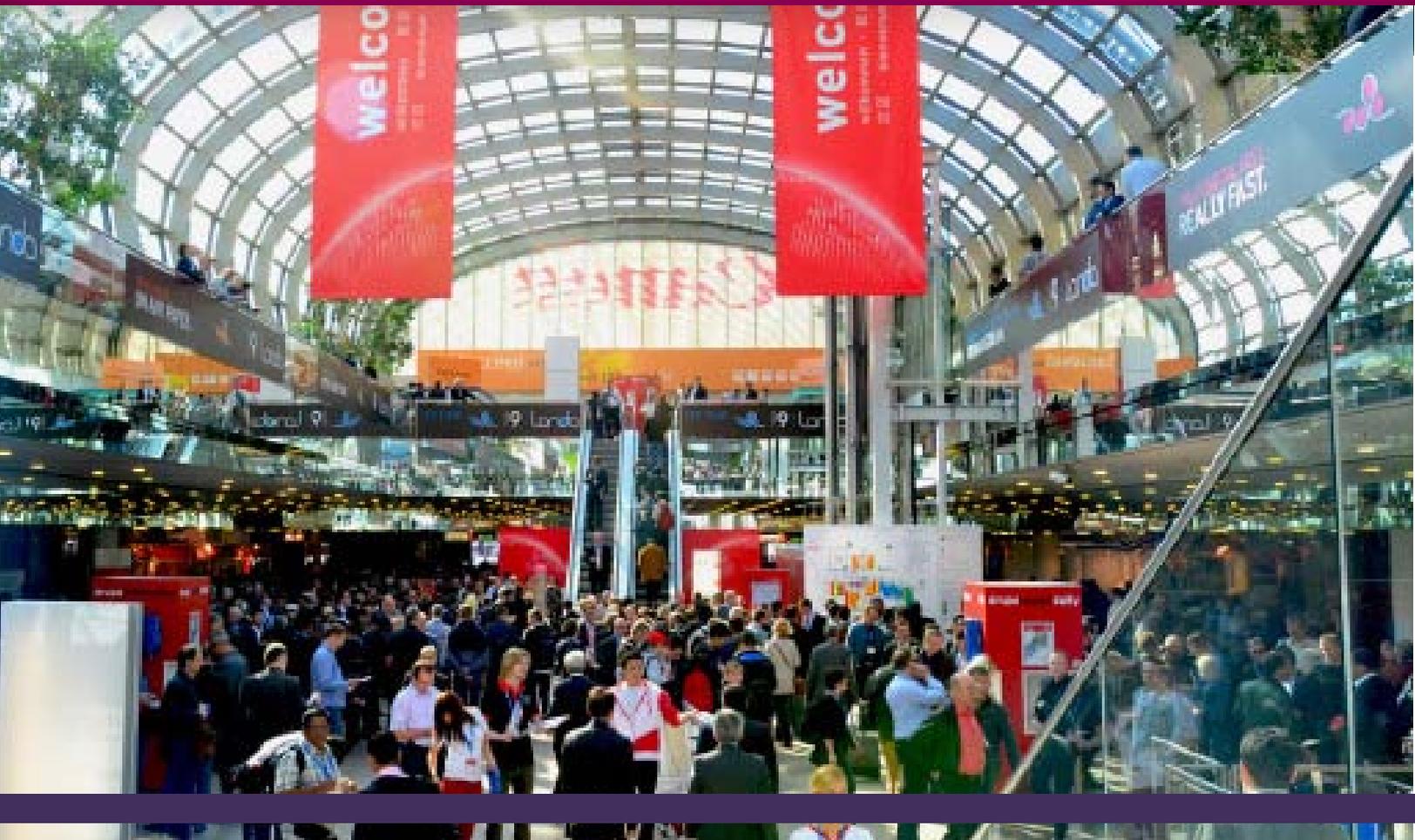
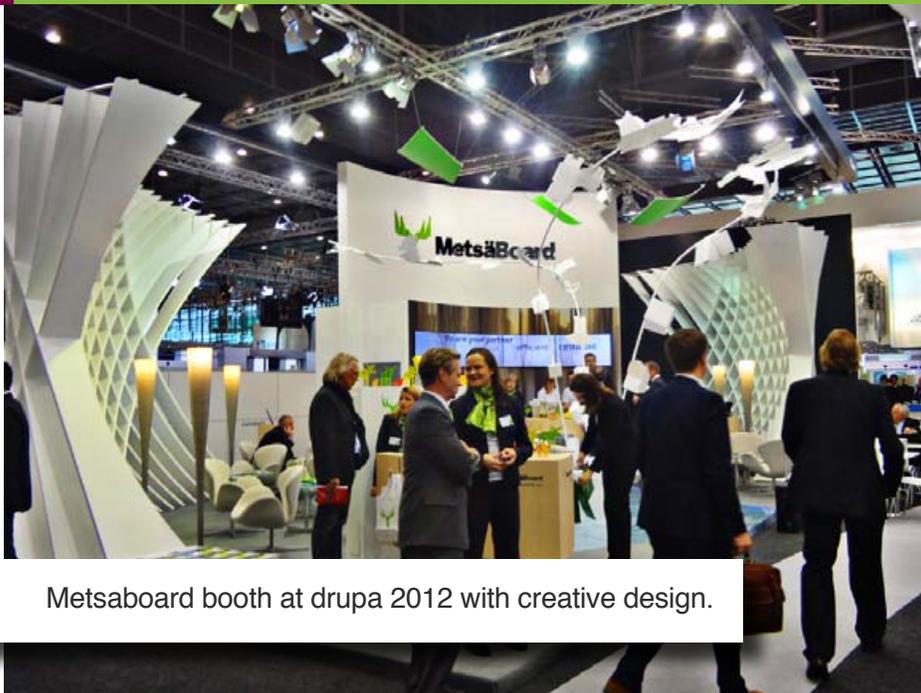


2012 DRUPA

as a Tradeshow

Pros and Cons



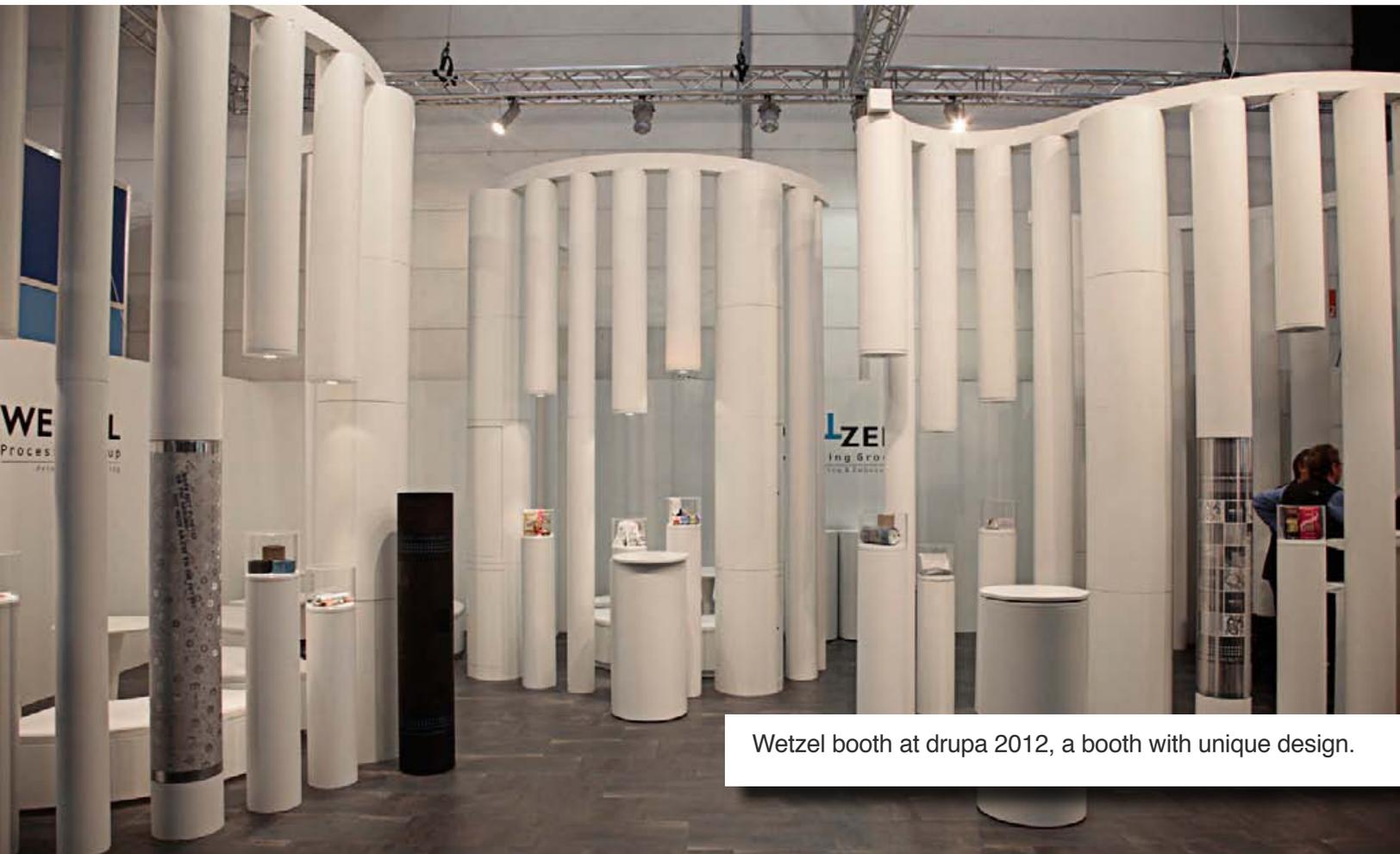


Metsaboard booth at drupa 2012 with creative design.



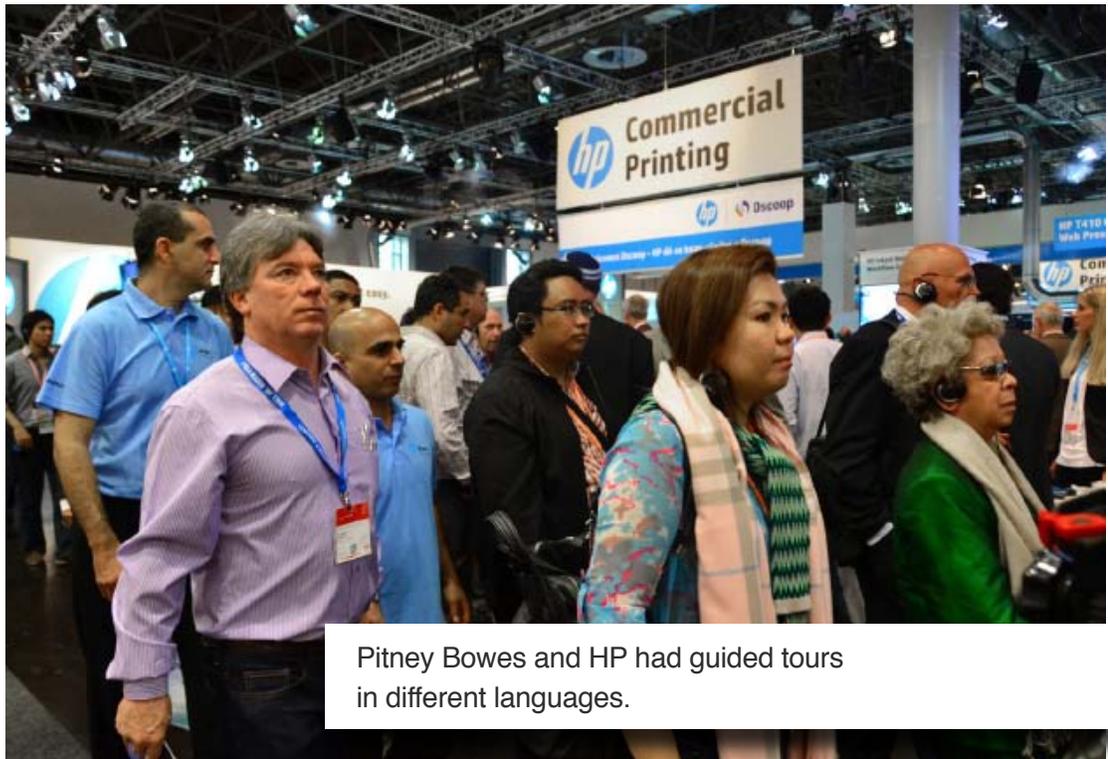
Re-board booth at drupa 2012.

Because its drupa year, most companies decided not to attend other trade shows in the world and focus their energy and budget to drupa, and you could see the results at the trade show, with really innovative and creative booths.



Wetzel booth at drupa 2012, a booth with unique design.

There were booths, that provided different services like tours in different languages (Spanish, French, Chinese, etc), and it's a clever idea for attracting potential costumers by communicating the information in their own language, especially a trade show this size, and that they come from the other side of the world to see what they have to offer.



Pitney Bowes and HP had guided tours in different languages.

Some companies got really invasive with their publicity like Ricoh with advertisement in the electric stairs were you could scan the QR code to get further information.





Nice electronic display at Ricoh booth in drupa 2012.



Nice booth decoration, Hybrid Software booth at drupa 2012.

Main problem that people complained about: no organization of halls by topic

It is increasingly popular for expo organizers to at least try to group similar products in close-by areas. So FESPA tries to have one hall with textile-related products (Hamburg, as one example). You could say it was not fully successful because all the textile printers were in the other halls, but at least FESPA tried.

Yet there was a hint that drupa organizers were fully capable of understanding “theme areas.” There was a theme area of used printers in one of the halls.



Pre-owned Machinery Center
at drupa 2012.

Relationship between the expo and the city

In the airport (albeit one week before expo opened to the public), I saw nothing about drupa (no welcome poster even). Perhaps something was elsewhere in the airport.

But once drupa started you began to notice drupa propaganda throughout the city. Even souvenir shops felt the drupa rush by selling t-shirts, key chains, etc.

And I believe there were people outfitted in “drupa red” at the airport to answer questions.

It is a good first impression if visitors see the trade show logo and see trade show assistants at the airport.

At the Messe, people provided useful guides with information for sight-seeing, restaurants, and activities in the city, so people that visited the expo could get around and enjoy the view of the Rhine River and its surroundings.



drupa brochures in the Information station at Dusseldorf International Airport.



Local souvenir shop with drupa memorabilia.



drupa signage all over the city.



drupa gift shop at messe.

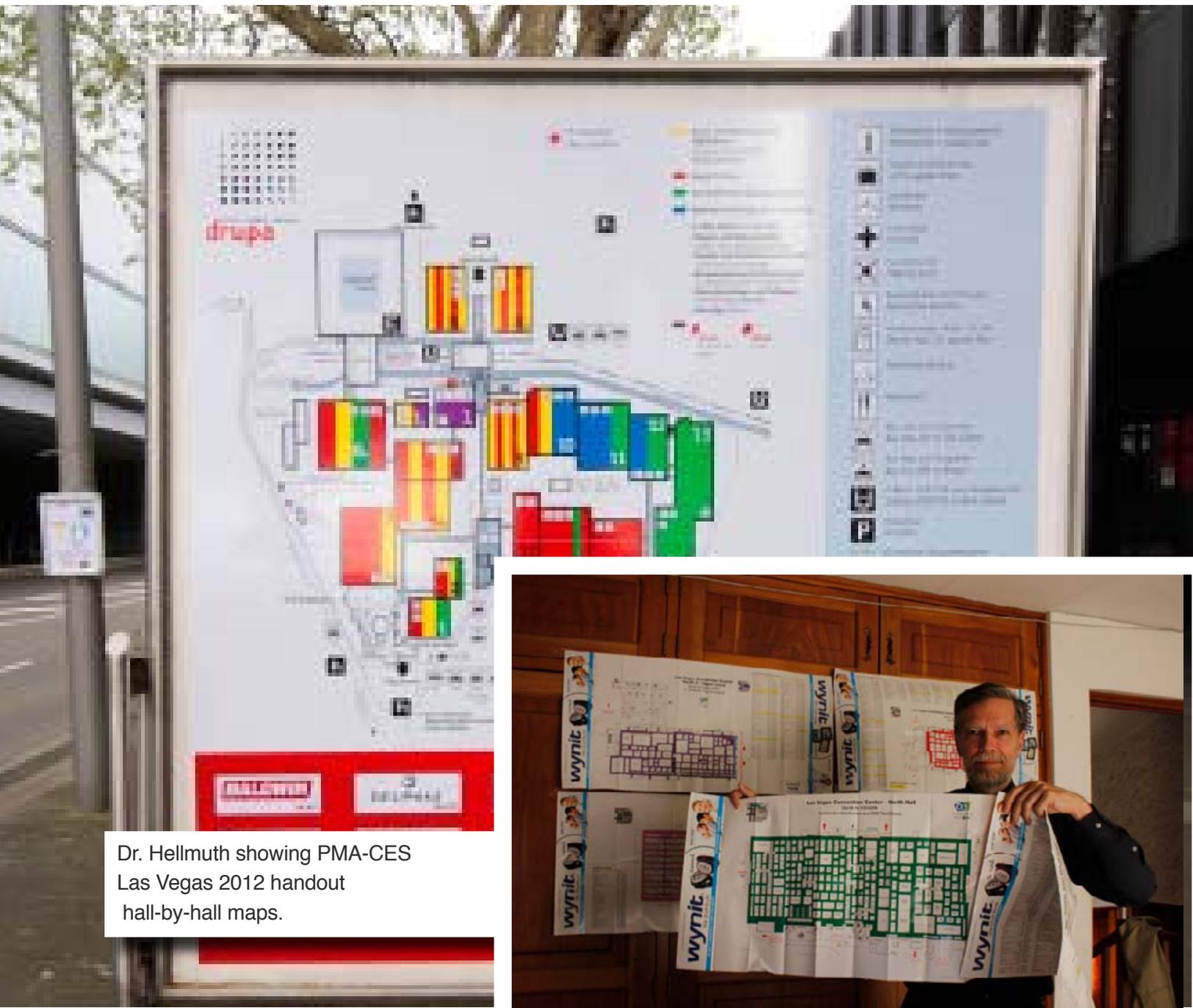


Missing: separate maps, a la CES and PMA@CES

Perhaps drupa assumed that people would use the app. Sorry drupa organizers, an app is great for lots of your audience, but a solution in hard-copy would be a nice gesture. CES had hall-by-hall maps, in paper, readily available.

drupa organizers provided maps of the Messe exhibit hall area in different formats: pocket size, A3, half-letter sized guide book, they had even maps for the restaurants available by hall.

There are hundreds of offset printer companies printing millions of sample pages. Surely a deal could be made with them to print maps at little or no cost for people to pick up at that particular booth.



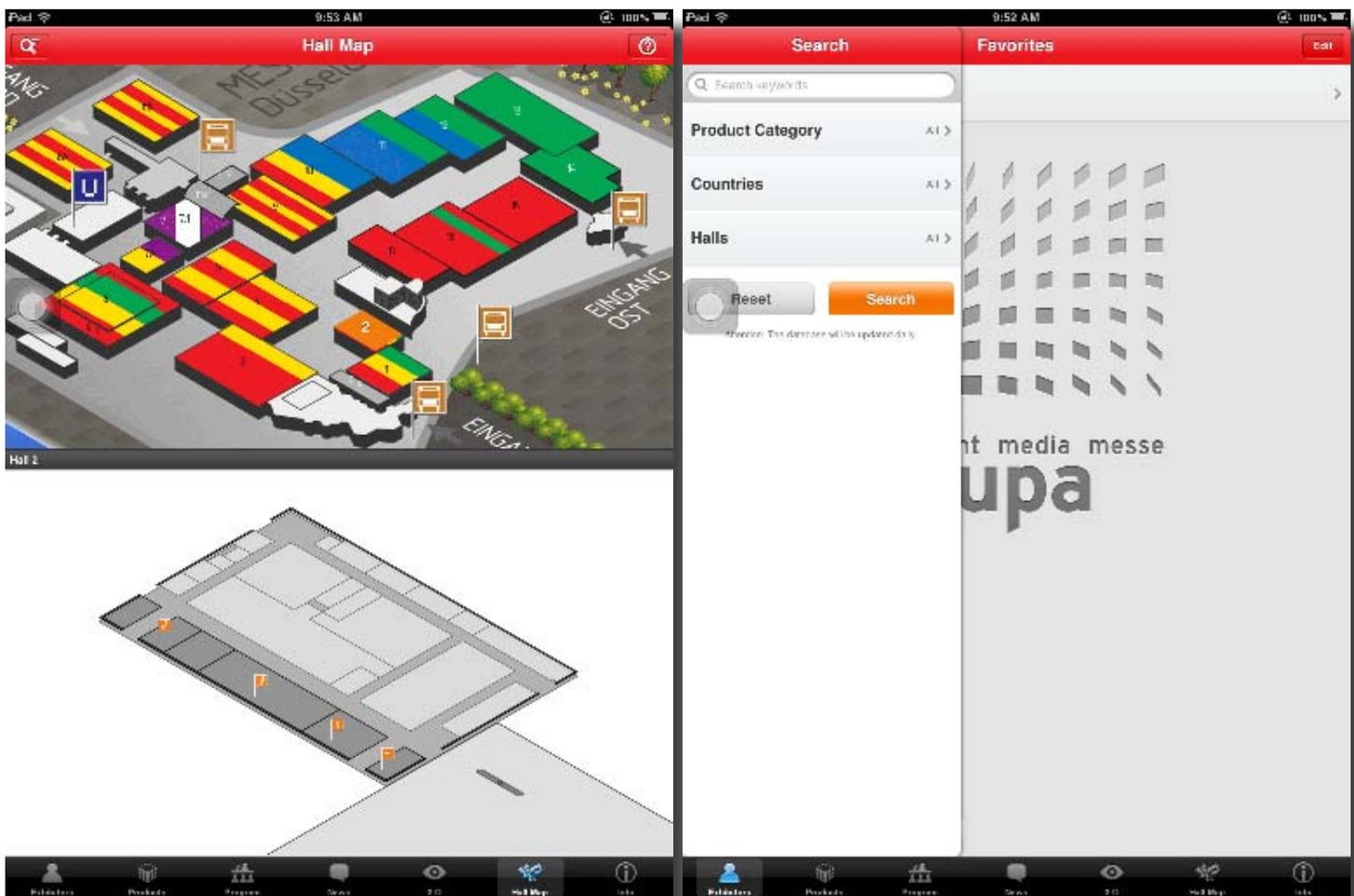
Dr. Hellmuth showing PMA-CES
Las Vegas 2012 handout
hall-by-hall maps.

The drupa app

The complaint I heard the most often was about the drupa app. People said it was useless because there was no Internet in the halls (at least none that was available to visitors at no cost).

Of course the reason there is no Internet in the halls is so that the expo organizers can sell Internet access at high profit rate.

One person said that lack of Internet was not an issue if you had previously downloaded the entire app into your cell phone or iPad. Since I used my own memory, and the exhibitor book, I ignored any issues with the app. My hands are filled with my notebook (paper on a clipboard) and/or my camera and/or the red exhibitor guide



On the bright side, on the app you could create a personalized list by adding your favorite exhibitors and products; and it automatically located them in the 3D hall map. This made it possible to create your walking route and make the most of your time at the expo, instead of going everywhere and nowhere. Too bad it was not available when needed, for example at the halls when people tend to get lost. There was also a daily activity list.

Claiming expo was SOLD OUT

Other members of the press were saying they felt the expo was definitely NOT sold out.

One rumor is that Canon's booth size is so large because no one else rented the space adjacent to them.

Many people said they felt the "drupa cube" was primarily to fill empty space that had not been rented.

I saw one obviously unsold booth in one hall. And several other suspicious rest areas in other booths: a rest area or Internet area is usually only when a booth is not sold.

It is perfectly normal to fill an unsold booth area with tables and/or chairs (or make a café out of the unsold space). No harm in this. The harm is trying to claim that the space is "sold out". If this is not true, then it is inappropriate to make this claim.

Most expos claim they are SOLD OUT. Two goals here: to sound successful, and to make exhibitors desperate to take whatever leftover space is available.

There were several clues to document that drupa 2012 was NOT sold out:
 Empty booth areas (cloaked as Media Area or rest area or whatever other pretense)
 Lack of tent areas outside

If an expo is really sold out, it will make space for tents and trucks and trailers outside.





drupa cube at drupa 2012.



messe Media Lounge at drupa 2012.



Messe Media Lounge at drupa 2012.



empty spaces at drupa 2012.

At least drupa did not use double-width aisles to fake booth size

Viscom Italia spends most of their effort trying to hide the fact that booth attendance collapsed about 35% in 2010 and plunged at least another 10% (or even more) in 2011.

Whether aisles at drupa 2012 are wider than aisles at drupa 2008 would be a challenge to answer. But 2012 aisles looked fine (did not look excessively wide).

Carpet missing from some aisles

One or two halls of Photokina look pathetic because there is no carpet in their aisles. At drupa there were also one or two halls with no carpet in the aisles, but the floor surface was acceptable. These drupa halls did not look pathetic. But trade show organizers need to be aware of visitor perceptions: aisles with no carpets look cheap.

An aisle with a carpet only down the middle (and not one meter on either side) is acceptable if the original floor covering is not raw concrete.

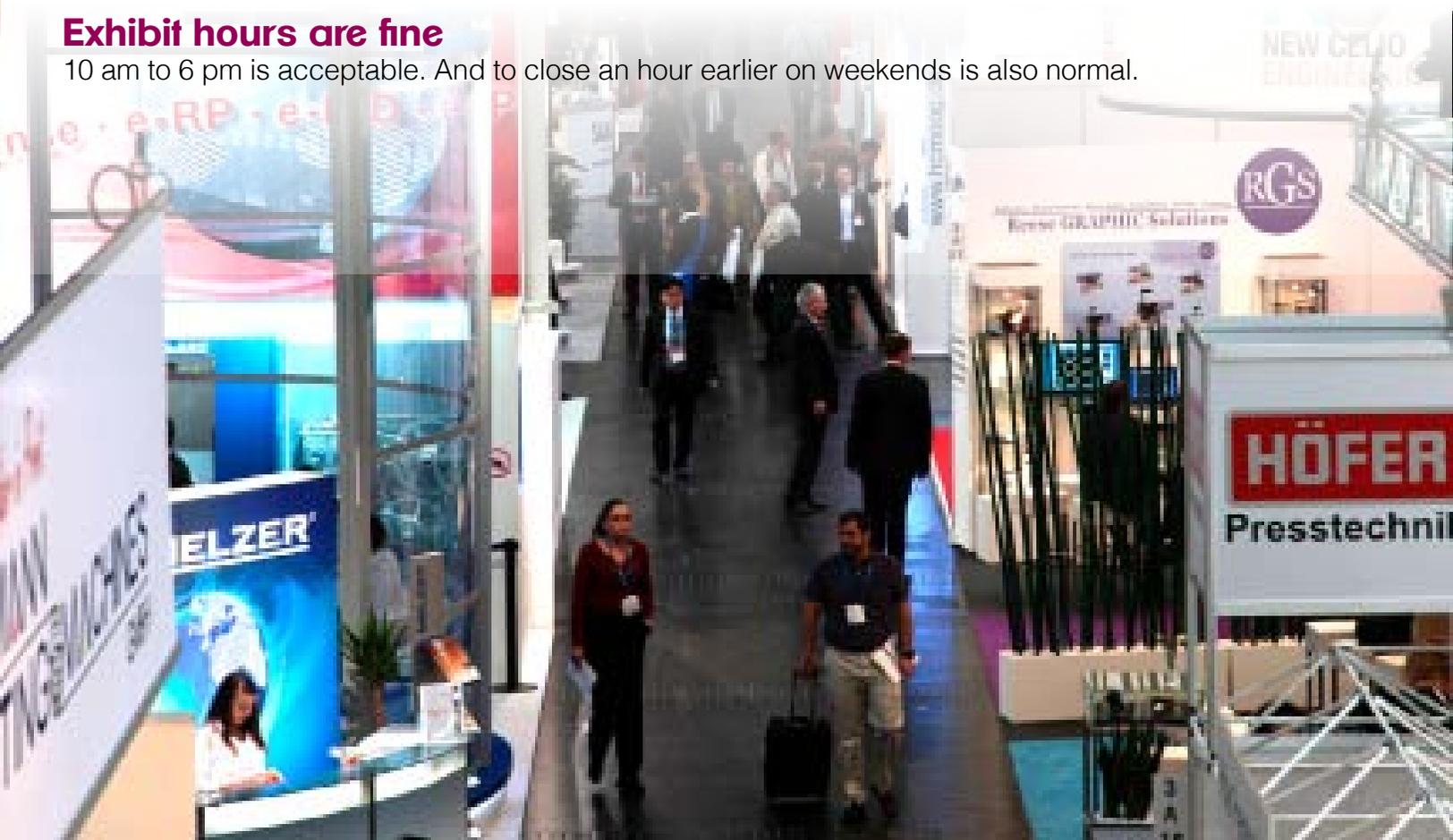
Thieves

Robbers were quite active in the halls. One person I spoke with said he saw a person pick up his brief case and start to walk away. If these thieves are paying the high per-day costs to enter, then they definitely have incentive to steal things!

The natural question would be whether some of the thieves slip on, either inside vehicles, or otherwise. I bet most of the thieves do not pay entrance fees.

Exhibit hours are fine

10 am to 6 pm is acceptable. And to close an hour earlier on weekends is also normal.



At least there were no topless hostesses

One booth did have women who, sorry to be blunt, looked precisely like the women who walk-the-street in any large urban area. Having female booth hostesses with alluring outfits (and alluring bodies is common, especially in expos in Mexico and South America. But at least most of those women do not look like hookers (they simply look healthy). But one booth at drupa the selected style looked tawdry.

But at least there were no topless booth hostesses (you get them at Photokina, and once at Viscom Italy, circa 2010).

One poor organized aspect of most expos is scanning badges at entry

The badge scanners at the main Barcelona expo center are so awful that some expos put people with scanners at the entry.

Most expos in America use manual scanners: a person has to reach out and scan your badge. Of course this causes a pile up at opening hour.

So far I can't think of many expos which have a good record for how to scan badges: it's stressful at most.

The drupa scanners require that you have at least one hand free. Plus the drupa scanners require that you are adept at getting the code precisely under the scanning light. I would rate the scanner system at Messe Dusseldorf as not worthy of a single word of praise. It would be hoped that German technology could do a tad better.

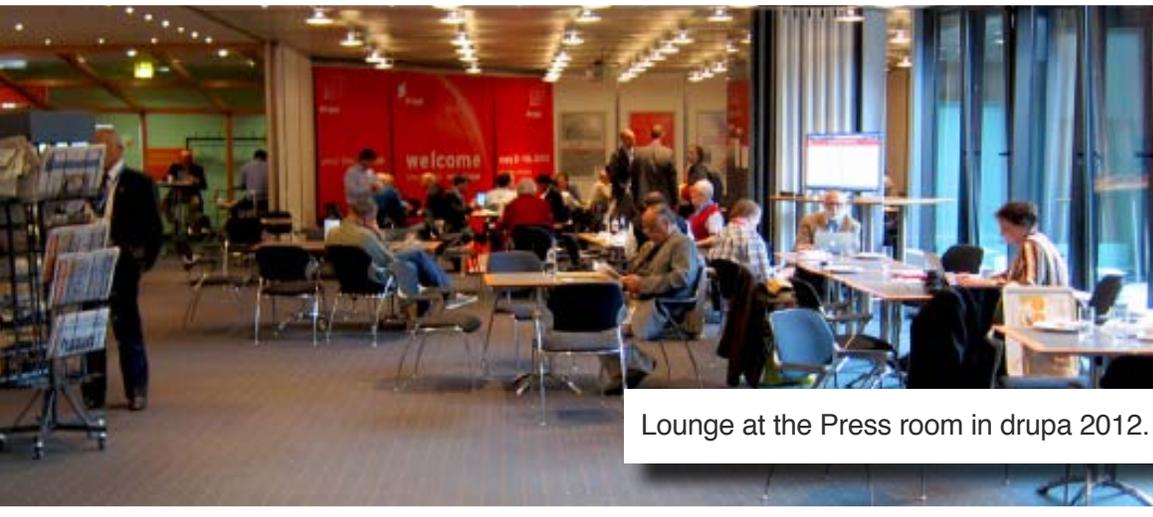
Themes for a trade show are often silly

HP's theme "INVENT" is a good example of a corporate logo concept which is not a good idea, because HP buys technology. HP does not invent the basic products (it does improve what it buys). I think I saw a new logo-word for HP at drupa, but equally unimpressive.

Whatever the drupa logo word was, it was sufficiently unimpressive that I don't even remember what it was. They had two: "One World. One drupa" and "your link to print" according to the books and the advertising publicity.

They can't call it an "inkjet drupa" because their old-fashioned flexo and offset exhibitors would be irritated.





How drupa organizers treat the Press

Considering that the word “journalist” now has the reputation from Rudolph Murdock and his style of “journalism” I fail to understand why drupa organizers demand “Press Credentials”

Is this the 18th century still ? What is a “Press Credential” when one million people read what your write and at every expo total strangers come up to thank us.

Besides, probably 30% of the most prolific writers in our industry are not really “journalists.” They simply write helpful and useful information about the printing industry. They may be a retired professor (from RIT in USA); they may be a former printshop manager who now writes. Considering that the attendance at drupa 2012 was potentially lower than 2008, it might be clever of drupa organizers to be a tad more gentle to the people who publicize their expo.

In the USA, one expo tried to limit the press; this expo (once gigantic) gradually faded from the scene and in the end went bankrupt or otherwise was no longer taken seriously by the industry).

Would be helpful if a Press Center was available near Halls 7 through 9.

The nice Press Center was nice but was a far far far away from the main halls where wide-format printer produces were situated.



drupa 2016

We are excited to see how drupa 2016 will be, because there is a lot going on in between (3 ISAs, 3 SGIAs and 3 FESPAs), so we hope the industry evolves, with all the new technology launched at drupa 2012, and see how they work through the years (because only a 30% of the new technology actually works and is in production).

