

ECI Meeting on 21.01.2000

Location: Public P3, Frankfurt

Those Present:

Allzeit, A.; Heinrich Bauer Produktions-KG
Batrick, G.; ERA
Böhm, O.; Mohn Media
Bestmann, G., Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG
Diekjobst, J.; Broschek Druck
Dolezal, D.; Werner Hirte GmbH & Co.
Drümmer, O.; Callas Software
Dufner, W.; Burda Advertising
Euler, J.; Public P3
Groch, H.-J.; Public P3
Hecht, T.; FOGRA
Jacobsen, J.; Broschek Druck
Koch, K.; Color Solutions Consulting
Langenhagen, A.; Reproduktion Onnen & Klein
Luft, O.; Scholz & Friends
Otto, K.-H.; Albert Bauer KG
Rewer, R.; Laudert
Rieckmann, W.; Heinrich Bauer Produktions-KG
Romberg, O.; Spiegel-Verlag
Schmidt, M.; Repro 68
Schmidt, B.; SKU Repro
Schmidt, H.; Springer & Jacoby Digital
Stender, G.; Lintas
Süßl, F., MetaServices
Thomsen; Das Studio
v. Seggern, D.; ZMG

Meeting opened by Florian Süßl at 10.25 a.m.

Words of welcome by the managing director of Public P3.

A. Organizational Matters

Our Chairman, Stefan Brues, was unable to attend for personal reasons. The procedure was therefore fairly improvised, in which context the present agenda was worked through step by step.

Since we forgot, during the meeting, to welcome our newly-admitted members, Dr. Bestmann of Heidelberg Prepress and Mr Koch of Color Solutions, we will first take this opportunity to greet them belatedly. We are certain that both colleagues represent a win for our circle. Thanks also to George Batrick (ERA) for finding the time to work on behalf ECI.

Oliver Luft proposes, at the end of the discussion, that we behave in a manner appropriate to the E in ECI.

The presentation was to be undertaken by Henrik Schmidt and Florian Süßl.

The circle decided to first work through the task list and to make a brief status record on each of the task areas considered.

Discussion of the tasks in hand:

a.) Web Site

On 31.01.2000 the Web site is to go live. The start page and the press releases are essentially missing, as are the personal profiles.

The copy deadline is Monday, 24.01.2000.

Mr Jacobsen suggested introducing the personal descriptions as links.

Mr Drümmer saw this suggestion as involving too much effort and expenditure (back links, etc.), but gave assurances that the structure would be more comfortably designed.

Hendrik Schmidt suggested creating a "Submissions" area in which submissions and presentations by ECI members could be made available as PDF files. No dissenting vote: adopted.

Mr Drümmer also proposed that the area "Events" be included. No dissenting vote: adopted.

Mr Luft asked whether one might not also be able to make the minutes available for all of the members. Henrik Schmidt: minutes are open to the public.

There followed a short discussion on the contents and structure that will be referred to here in keywords only:

Start page: 3 main topics intended to encourage the user to stay on the page:

New Presentation - White Paper - Events (Print and Media, Wuppertal). Person responsible for these "Intros": Oliver Luft.

On-Air Time: 01.02.2000. Brief discussion on sufficient time to inform the press about the launch. A4 press text has to be prepared. Person responsible: Oliver Luft.

b.) The Area Press Coordination

Question:

What press announcements from us for others exist at present?

Answer: None!

Activities:

Over the next few days Mr. Luft will contact persons in the ECI involved in the individual disciplines and will ask them for information with which to prepare the basic press releases.

Procedure:

Press publications are first to be sent to the advisory committee and are then to be listed for a week for discussion purposes.

Statement: References to the ECI as an organization and to the White Paper may be made at any time.

c.) The Field of Translations

Question as to the status of the White Paper.

White Paper not yet translated. Translation coordinators will give this top priority!

d.) Annual Meeting

At the last meeting it was decided that Burda would organize an event for customers, but no further steps have been taken in this direction. Reason(s):

Mr. Duftner took the view, after consultation with colleagues, that no workflow results likely to give rise to an "aha" effect are currently available. Postponed.

Mr. Allzeit expressed political reservations about the fact that Burda alone should be arranging this event. Mr. Schmidt pointed out that Burda was only to be responsible for the organization and for providing the premises.

There followed an interesting discussion on this point:

Mr. Dufner repeated that, at present, there is nothing tangible for customers to grasp and that the workflows weren't functioning. One couldn't present anything to the customers until the reference-colour area for gravure was ready.

Mr. Allzeit suggested that Burda and Bauer should have a brainstorming session.

Mr. Dufner took the view that most publishers still had no interest in ICC-WFs.

Henrik Schmidt countered: It is better to take a forward step and engage in instructional measures. In his view the "driving force" in the past was not always the publishing company or reproduction service, but in particular the large-scale industrial customer. And it was exactly this type of customer that the ECI wanted to reach via the Burda event and to interest in this theme.

Mr. Dufner again repeated that one could not, at present, prove that the ICC-WF worked, since there was no reference-colour area for gravure, and that there was no point in presenting a half-baked procedure. Mr. Luft said that, from his experience, the customers were highly interested in technological and quality-enhancing developments.

Henrik Schmidt added that results were available. It wasn't important which of the ECI-WFs were shown, but that one could demonstrate that these worked. Mr. Koch agreed.

Mr. Langenhagen suggested that, given the contact-shyness of the publishing companies, the customer contacts should be undertaken by the agency.

Mr. Dufner proposed that the agencies prepare a presentation, which should then be checked by the publishing company representatives and that the decision should then be made as to whether it should be presented by the publishers to the customers during the publishing company event.

Henrik Schmidt found this approach insufficiently target-oriented and again emphasized the importance of informing the customer. He came to the conclusion: if it wasn't possible via the publishers, then one could approach the customers via the agencies.

Mr. Langenhagen: Publishing companies have never acted, but only ever reacted.

Mr. Romberg reported that a reproducible WF via ICC at Spiegel didn't work.

This assertion wasn't accepted by Henrik Schmidt, Mr. Hecht and Karl Koch:

Henrik Schmidt: Anyone who nowadays says that the results from conventional procedures are better than ICC-WFs should provide examples! He, at any rate, had no knowledge that the workflows from the White Paper failed to produce proper results in practice.

Mr. Koch: The message has to be that there are concrete examples and it should be shown that these work.

Karl Koch also made reference to the examples given by Mr. Otto: One can see that the approach works, but if mistakes are made in the workflow then nothing works.

Henrik Schmidt had the final word on this point: The publishers should state by the next meeting whether they want to organize an event for the customers. If this doesn't lead to anything, the agencies should organize it. Mr. Allzeit is to coordinate the talks on the part of the publishers.

e.) Profiles and Series of Tests

The second round has been completed. There are new Burda and Gruner profiles; from others only measured values. These will be used to compute new profiles. From these, in turn, a new reference for gravure will be standardized.

The proofs are available, the publishers have received PDF and have examined this with their own colour adaptations.

Result: For some publishers, higher quality! (new black-and-white versions)

The results were examined during the lunch break. The material was available and could be distributed.

Statement by Mr. Otto: The situation has improved; one can work better with the new profiles.

Question addressed to George Battrick on what is happening internationally: He took the view that there was little momentum in Europe, at present, for those involved in gravure to agree on a common standard.

An attempt has been made within the ERA: Two non-German members are already working in the same direction. George Battrick will establish contact with the working group Adverts/Gravure and will also distribute the German results within the ERA.

Mr. Battrick needs results before the beginning of March. Mr. Otto has these at his disposal and will forward the proofs to Mr. Battrick.

Henrik Schmidt suggested distributing the material to interested printers via the association's representatives.

Mr. Bestmann pointed out that a standardized profile had disadvantages, compared with the standardized measured values, and that it would be better in future to make these measured values available. Mr. Battrick requested this input, since the ISO was also waiting for such data and this would be the most favourable time. He also requested results in connection with heavyweight coated paper.

Mr. Hecht requested the measuring of a test form as a means of documenting the discrepancies between measuring devices.

f.) Media Wedge

No information at present. Henrik Schmidt will pass on information subsequently.

g.) Daily Newspaper Working Group

Together with the IFRA, the ZMG will attempt to swear the TZ printers to the ISO standard. A working group on quality with 20 members was brought into being. A project week is scheduled for APRIL. This will identify procedures and ways of standardizing production. The members of this quality offensive will then establish these procedures in their own firms (a reference-colour area is to be generated for the most popular procedure [negative-plate print]).

B. Statements And Reports From ISO Committees (Mr. Drümmer)

PDF-X1: The ANSI standard is to be introduced to the ISO, but there is a commentary (the extension of PDF-X1 to PDF-X1a) that prohibits the introduction of OPI files via external references. Hopefully enough of those entitled to vote will vote for PDF-X1a.

Mr. Dolezalek will include this extension in the voting process. Over the next few weeks a commentary

will be approved. Then this commentary will be voted on and, if approved, it will be appended to the PDF-X1 standard.

PDF-X2: is still under discussion. Virtual CMYK has been broached with the ECI as a question.
V-CMYK: media-neutral files can be used, but PROFIL must be named (single intended printing condition) and also employed. The result is therefore predictable from the production standpoint, and media-neutral files can nevertheless be used; something that is not possible with X1.
Is, as a rule, positively evaluated.

C. Information On Publications

So far nothing has taken place. The White Paper will be distributed as was decided last time: by associations, GWA, mouth-to-mouth propaganda, the trade press and as a link on our own home page to the White Paper.

Mr. Drümmer also proposed distribution via mailing lists.

D. Information And Events

The Print & Media Congress: there is mail from Mr. Meinicke. The event will take place from 16.-17.03.2000. Anyone who needs copies of the programme can request these from him. Mr. Meinicke will agree on the submissions with the speakers. Questions and comments via the list.

The ECI Workshop: 1 day of the trade fair Practical Training with the three WFs presented in the WP. Oliver Luft will speak with Mr. Brues and will issue press releases. (ASAP)

The GWA Convention: presentation of objectives and WP, WFLs and solution concepts. Under certain circumstances a technically "defused" version on topics taken from the ECI workshop. 3 hours are available at the GWA Convention.

E. Offset Activities

Florian Süßl reported on the Mohndruck meeting:

As was previously the case, there is still a wide spectrum of print failures, so that no consensus can be reached. For details, refer to the minutes of the ECI-Offset Meeting.

Regarding the analysis of the printouts: There is at present no statement from FOGRA. Mr. Hecht will ask Dr. Dolezalek about the results.

Tendency: somewhat slower growth, rather less-peaked copying. However, not all of the printers involved can agree with this or can print like this.

Henrik Schmidt raised the point that there was a "strategically logical defect" in the evaluation: proof of the reproduction in accordance with BVD and of the print in accordance with the tolerances are not in agreement (cannot be in agreement).

The standards according to which the pre-stages and printers work must be specified in advance.

Result: few results.

Necessary: rules of play such that the pre-stages and the printers employ the same profile.

Necessary: a defined interface in which the pre-stage colour area is worked out. The printer is then responsible for deciding exactly how this is put into practice.

Discussion of the standardization of the so-called interface. In other words, printers are needed that can agree on the use of this interface.

The question arises: What does the ECI conceive under standards?

Clarification of this question is postponed until the next meeting. What do the offset printers think of this standard interface and how should it look?

F. Workgroup Gravure

Mr. Diekjobst would like to bring into being a gravure workgroup that would concern itself with the problems of creating black and with cmyk2cmyk problems.

The following statement was made: In converting from the current Ref_TD_v4 to a printer-adapted profile, no satisfactory black build-up is achieved.

The problem can be made clear by the following example: Broschek is awarded an order from which one sheet is to be handled elsewhere. The problem: The adaptation of the Broschek data in the other printer's data, or in converting from gravure to offset - especially in the fields of GCR/UCR, which undergo part-reversal during the backwards conversion.

George Battrick remarked that this problem was not a gravure problem but a cymk2cmyk problem.

Dr. Bestmann explained that the problem appeared during subject-adapted correction of black and for black-and-white illustrations.

One possible solution would be a device-link-profile (cmyk-cmyk without LAB) and, where necessary, a loosening of the black build-up in the CMM.

One is working on a special solution. But it is not capable of being standardized.

The problem is not really solvable with present-day ICC tools. But the manufacturers are asked to come up with something - question relating to supplementary tools.

Mr. Koch remarked that this was not an ICC problem, but one relating to the line of approach: At the moment in which an image (particularly one in K) is retouched, this image is no longer correctly described by the ICC profile. If cmyk2cmyk is then converted, the input colour area (image) does NOT match up with that of the input profile, leading to unpredictable results.

Conclusion: No real ICC problem, but a date for the Gravure workgroup will be announced by Broschek (via the list).

G. Workgroup Advertisements

More or less dealt with already (see above). In February all of the results will be compared in order to see whether the above-mentioned RefTD is suitable for the various advertising motifs.

H. Job Ticket

Waiting on the availability of job-ticket implementation. The features have been fixed. Distribution is scheduled for CeBIT. Mr. Drümmer will send an e-mail requesting comments.

Mr. Drümmer would like to implement a pilot phase and is looking for partners (publishers, agencies) prepared to engage in a test. Communication via the mailing lists.

I. Colorsync 3 As A Reference CMM

Question: Have any negative effects been experienced with ColorSync3.0 & and the various CMMs?
Problems:

AGFA has no AbsolutCol RenderingIntent.

In the case of Kodak, not all changes are dynamically updated (insecure).

Heidelberg and Apple employ different conversions, but have no problems.

There are technical differences between Apple and Heidelberg in the interpolation procedures employed, which in turn can create problems for profiles with fewer support points.

Dr. Bestmann pointed out that the CMM from Heidelberg showed no differences to that delivered with CS 2.6.

ColorSync 3.0 should be the technology employed, since only Heidelberg has CMM available on all of its platforms.

A statement will be sent to Apple explaining that, for reasons of availability of the APPLE CMM on other platforms, Apple CMM cannot be recommended (Mr. Drümmer).

J. Sundry Matters

Statements relating to ICC-Savvy Applications, i.e. what problems there are with applications:
Photoshop 5.5: Tagged images cannot be opened again.
Helios: eps files with more than 9xxx lines cannot be layouted.

Wanted: A switch-off option for tagging should be available in all applications.

Also wanted: Tagging should function in all applications and should be implemented by the manufacturers in accordance with the ICC specifications.

Another matter relates to the active distribution of new profiles via the ECI server. Henrik Schmidt views this critically, since this responsibility should continue to lie with the production businesses. Mr. Luft and Mr. Drümmer can imagine implementing a sort of non-obligatory service on the ECI home page.

Mr. Battrick asked about the experience with advertisement deliveries (data versus film).

Burda: 82% data, 16% film, 2% masters. Data transmission via ISDN is very much on the increase, but the handling is problematic since many suppliers do not identify the advertisements.

Bauer: Higher percentage for data delivery, but specified data only 5%.

Spiegel: Some digital transfer, but a large share is still analogue.

v.Seggern: In the field of gravure there are similar problems with digital supply via remote data transmission, but a program is available from the ZMG (RegioConnect).

Henrik Schmidt addressed the matter of delivery by remote data transmission: We need a tool that can structure and standardize digital delivery employing remote data transmission, and RegioConnect offers some of these functions.

Discussion on the type of delivery:

To what extent the publishers push ECI-conform delivery (process-conform data) and show preference for this type of delivery in terms of advertisement prices.

K. The E In ECI

The crucial question is:

Are we a European ECI or a Northern German one?

Is it even possible to organize a still larger circle?

A statement: We will not close our doors to any applicant for membership.

Mr. Battrick suggested that the ECI should have various so-called "Liaison Officers" who should participate in other interest groups and thereby help to establish closer communication and, in certain circumstances, even joint representation in matters of central interest.

At the end of the discussion, cordial thanks again expressed to the host, Public P3.

Next meeting:

Friday, 14th April, at the firm of Laudert in Vreden.