

ECI Meeting, 02.03.2001

Location: FOGRA Forschungsgesellschaft Druck, Munich

Participants:

Lothar	Albaum	Axel Springer Verlag AG
George	Batrick	ERA
Thomas	Behmueller	Das Studio, Torsten Hegner GmbH
Robert	Bierfreund	Eurohueco
Stefan	Brues	University Wuppertal
Joerg	Diekjobst	Broschek Tiefdruck, Hamburg
Dieter	Dolezal	Hirte Medien-Service
Friedrich	Dolezalek	FOGRA
Olaf	Druemmer	Callas Software GmbH
Joachim	Euler	Public P3
Thomas	Hecht	FOGRA
Henrik	Holmegaard	Tech Write
Monika	Kenzler	Gruner & Jahr
Karl	Koch	Color Solutions
Alexander	Langenhagen	Reproduktion Onnen + Klein
Oliver	Luft	Scholz & Friends Hamburg
Liane	May	Gretag Macbeth
Karl-Michael	Meinecke	BvDM
Klaus-Herrmann	Otto	Albert Bauer KG
Jens	Rann	Appel Grafik
Renate	Rewer	Laudert
Wolfgang	Rieckmann	Verlagsgruppe Bauer, Hamburg
Ronald	Schaul	Hochschule fuer Druck und Medien, Stuttgart
Maren	Schmidt	Repro 68
Joerg	Schober	Hochschule fuer Druck und Medien, Stuttgart
Rainer	Schoeppy	Neckermann Versand, Frankfurt
Gabi	Stender	Pepperzak Brand GmbH

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1. Welcome

Dr. Friedrich Dolezalek welcomes the participants.
Welcome by Stefan Brues, brief introduction of the participants.

Dr. Dolezalek briefly reports on FOGRA's „color-relevant“ projects:
Consequences of errors in color-managed systems,
Large-format printers replacing for silk-screen printing,
Differences between monitor-based and hard-copy proofing,
Acceptance of CTP systems.

Dr. Stefan Brues welcomes those participating for the first time:
Ronald Schaul
Henrik Holmegaard

Henrik Holmegaard briefly introduces himself: He is a technical writer for several publications. He lives in Astrup, Denmark, and was invited by Joachim Euler (Public P3).

Ronald Schaul is a professor at Hochschule fuer Druck und Medien in Stuttgart.

2. Organizational matters

2.1. Frequency of Meetings:

There has been the idea of decreasing the number of meetings of the technical committee to two annual meetings because the task forces have overtaken most of the work.

Question: How shall the future work and structure be organized?

After a thorough discussion there remain two proposals: Either to keep the committee and its frequency of meetings unchanged or to hand the workload over to the task forces.

Voting and decision: The committee unanimously decides not to change the former frequency and structure.

2.2. Sorting of the Mailing Lists:

Jens Rann reports on the Internet statistics: There are 30 members introduced on the web page while the mailing list contains 100 members. Jens Rann and Stefan Brues propose a revision. Karl Koch proposes to contact all members via email (two mails within three weeks) and to cancel the subscriptions of all members not responding. Decision (the „negative list“ will be double-checked by Jens Rann and Stefan Brues).

Small technical change: All replies to mails from the open list will automatically go to the list itself. Formerly all replies went to the original sender.

Oliver Luft asks for the proper procedure of inviting to the task forces. Stefan Brues refers to a decision from the last meeting saying that the respective task force's coordinator invites to the meetings and asks the technical committee when inviting a new colleague.

2.3. Web Site:

Jens Rann reports on an increasing number of inquiries for an English version of the web site. Thomas Behmueller offers his help (ACTION).

3. PDF/X-3

3.1. Task Force on PDF/X-3:

Olaf Druemmer apologizes for not yet inviting to the PDF/X-3 task force due to workload reasons. However he will do this shortly.

He briefly reports on the tasks: Testing of workflows, specifying useful tools, testing those tools' functionalities.

The final goal is to develop a "Cookbook on PDF/X-3".

Liane May proposes to develop this cookbook in a way that it can be included as an appendix to the white paper.

3.2. Status of the PDF/X-3 Tools Project

The tools will probably be finished on time (until end of May); they will most likely be released in June.

The beta test will start mid-April, 2001, the necessary communications will be held over the inner list.

3.3. Status of PDF/X-3 Standardization

Karl-Michael Meinecke explains that at this time PDF/X-3 is in a "working draft" state and that the next state will be the one of a "final draft". In his opinion it will last another year until the standard will finally be approved. As soon as a German version exists it will be proposed as a DIN standard. This will probably take place late July.

Olaf Druemmer and Stephan Jaeggi will advertise the standardization during the upcoming Seybold Conference in Boston, MA, to minimize the American colleagues' reserves against PDF/X-3 that has mainly been developed in Europe.

After that, the standards have to be realized. Olaf Druemmer reports that the whole graphic industry has been watching PDF/X-3 very closely, and that the major manufacturers don't have any problems using this file format. In his opinion the primary advantages are the easy creation and the existence of checking tools which support the distribution of PDF/X-3.

Further activities will include a financed follow-up project, training classrooms, and the extension of the white paper by a section on PDF/X-3.

3.4. White paper:

Discussion on the formulation: Will PDF/X-3 be the only format ECI recommends and mentions in the white paper?

Stefan Brues sees the first mention of PDF/X-3 in section 7 of the white paper.

Additionally he sees the necessity of some kind of cookbook that should become one of the appendices.

He still wonders when these changes shall be incorporated into a revision of the white paper and when this revision shall be made available to the public.

Karl Koch propagates a parallel development: The white paper should be updated the same time the tools are programmed. The presentations of the white paper and the tools then can take place simultaneously. Liane May will be responsible for the white paper update (ACTION).

Henrik Holmegaard notes that the white paper lacks a graphic visualization of the gamut transformations taking place in the workflows described. In his opinion there have to be three lines of text and two illustrations pointing out the problem: Color informations are being lost, and the user has to decide where and when he wants to lose them.

Henrik Holmegaard will write this text and will try to create the illustrations visualizing the loss of gamut (ACTION).

3.5. Presentation of PDF/X-3, Tools, and White Paper

Karl-Michael Meinecke thinks that DigiMedia conference will be a good time for a presentation as the BvDM who placed the order for the tools would introduce them at this time and place anyway. The presentation can take place on June 20th or 21st. Stefan Brues suggests having one single session introducing the white paper as well as the PDF/X-3 tools. Karl-Michael Meinecke will be responsible for the temporal coordination (ACTION).

3.6. General Issues on PDF/X-3

George Battrick asks what strategic developments of PDF/X-3 are planned regarding the underlying versions of PDF (Ver. 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4).

Olaf Druemmer explains the major extensions of PDF 1.4:

Those will primarily be the handling of transparencies, and according to Olaf Druemmer the handling of these new functions will be a major problem. The existing PostScript-3 RIPs don't comprise any functions for handling transparencies, so they have to be computed by the generating applications. Especially with complex page descriptions (e.g. transparencies in spot color gradations) this may lead to aggravating errors.

Olaf Druemmer is sure that we do not really want to have transparencies in pre-print due to the lacking support by RIPs and that we will (or, will have to) exclude the application of these functions in the PDF/X-3 specifications.

Regarding the new file format, PDF/X-3, PDF 1.4 is not necessary for ECI-compliant workflows as the "output intent" functionality can also be allowed for PDF-1.3 files by a tech note.

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Maybe after the release of Acrobat 5.0 PDF-1.4 files will be created and transmitted. There should be tools available reading in PDF-1.4 files, checking them for PDF/X-3 compliance and saving them as PDF-1.3 files.

Lunch break.

4. White Paper

Liane May presents appendix 9, the structure of an ISO 12642 (IT 8.7/3) measurement file.

The header has to include the following informations:
Measurement device's specifications and measurement geometry
Specification of the CMYK reference values

Discussion on how a correct ISO measurement file has to look like. Joerg Diekjobst remarks that it would be desirable if all manufacturers committed to one unique file format.

Friedrich Dolezalek remarks that the actual proposal would already be conforming to the standard.

Ronald Schaul wishes to have additional informations on the measurement conditions stored in the file (paper, backing, polarization).

Furthermore the CMYK reference values would have to be interpreted by the profile generating software.

Background:

When two characterizing data sets are required (e.g. for positive and negative processes), they have to be artificially generated because of the printing process's instability by editing the CMYK reference values the way FOGRA did when creating their data for offset printing.

Stefan Brues and others think of such a proceeding as extremely dangerous because the ISO-conformity would be broken by editing such a file which seems to be an IT 8.7/3-compliant file. Furthermore such a file might be interpreted by the user as an IT 8.7/3 file because of its layout—an alarming idea. In the following Friedrich Dolezalek checks whether the CMYK values may be modified. According to the standard the CMYK reference values **MUST NOT** be modified, however the file must include them.

Karl Koch will set up a text regulating the use and the designation of such a non-standardized measurement file (ACTION).

This text will be distributed via the mailing list.

4.1. The Future of Digital Proofing

There should be a new Task Force on Proofing dealing with emerging problems related to the use of ICC-based workflows such as optical brighteners, measuring with different instruments, etc.

There should be a one-day event, and the manufacturers of RIPs, software and proofers should be invited to participate.

The task force Gravure printing will take care for the event and the invitations that will take place after the task force's next meeting, probably in June 2001 (ACTION).

Stefan Brues suggests designating this as an open event. E.g. the ERA may invite, and the HDM Stuttgart may provide the location. Another idea mentioned was to have an English-speaking session. Joerg Diekjobst points out the necessity of critically confronting the manufacturers and briefing them in advance to be able to realize the ECI members' ideas.

5. Task Force on Gravure Printing

At the moment UGRA has been busy evaluating the second test series. After that the average primaries will be found out and the Ringier test sheet will be press proofed again. There will be a European standard for gravure printing which will be independent of an ISO standard, but the results will influence this ISO standardization.

Stefan Brues once more points out that the new reference color space for gravure printing will represent an artificial color space for data interchange which shall provide the transformations into the various printing houses' gamuts.

The members agree that the advertisement reference color space shall be replaced by the upcoming European standard for gravure printing in order to have to deal with only one common standard.

On the other hand the new standard will not be introduced before critical examinations by the publishers will be finished. The publishers must be given time, and they must have the opportunity to implement the new standard into their workflows. As different parties participate in this process (agencies, customers, prepress houses, publishers, printing houses) all participants have to be convinced of the advantages of the new European reference for gravure printing (especially the agencies by a visualization) and that there will not be a loss in quality. It seems to be desirable if this took place the same way as it had been done with the advertising reference.

A Hamburg-based team (Gabi Stender, Maren Schmidt, Klaus-Hermann Otto) will be responsible for the preparation of the visualization (ACTION).

The location for the meeting still has to be determined; it will take place on March 20th, 2001.

PR: Press release indicating that the task force is to pass a European standard for gravure printing in a short while. Pre-release on the web site. Press release by Oliver Luft (ACTION).

The standard should be introduced during DigiMedia conference; there should be a separate event to avoid a confusion or mixture with PDF/X-3.

6. ICC Activities

Stefan Brues briefly reports on the last ICC meeting in Ft Lauderdale, FL.

He proposed a closer relation of the ICC to the users. There was a decision to elaborate a proposal within the next three months comprising wishes of the international users' community to the ICC.

This however assumes the users' input. Stefan Brues will act as the coordinator for this initiative.

He suggests the European input to come from the ECI.

Suggestion:

a) A liaison between the ECI and the ICC. There has to be one contact person to the ICC. Until further notice this will be Stefan Brues.

b) A European group provides users' input. This input will be collected and filtered by a technical group and forwarded to the ICC.

The group will probably consist of Friedrich Dolezalek, Karl Koch, Henrik Holmegaard, Olaf Druemmer, and Mauro Boscarol. Stefan Brues will assemble a list and announce it in the mailing list (ACTION).

Henrik Holmegaard suggests the ICC to elaborate User Interface Guidelines in order to have the ICC-related functions initiating the same effects implemented in the same locations of the various applications.

7. Public Relations and Press Work

One article has already been published in Deutscher Drucker.

Another series is being planned, consisting of the following three subjects:

- a.) Liaison with the ICC
- b.) PDF/X-3 (Olaf Druemmer asks to be constantly reminded by the press coordinator (ACTION))
- c.) European Standard for Gravure Printing

Oliver Luft proposes to improve the web presence:

There should be a description of the task forces; a contact possibility for interested parties for the task forces should be implemented.

Karl Koch interjects that no invitations should be announced on the web site because rejections have to be commented every time. Furthermore Renate Rewer sees the danger that too many people would like to volunteer out of which the least ones could and would deliver substantial inputs.

The members agree that while the task forces have to be more present they shall not be organized as larger events. Joerg Diekjobst considers the open mailing list to be an appropriate place for calls on task forces.

Decision: The coordinator decides where to invite new members to her/his task force.

8. Events

Oliver Luft asks whether any activities are planned for or may be conducted during the GWA conference. There may be a remark to the DigiMedia conference.

8.1. Seminars:

Joerg Diekjobst and Gabi Stender will offer practical training workshops:

- a) ICC-based workflows for advertisement productions
- b) Quality improvement by using ICC profiles for newsprint
- c) Reference color space for gravure printing in catalog productions.

These seminars will take place during the second half of 2001 and will be announced by the PR coordinator (Oliver Luft (ACTION)).

Inquiry of Olaf Druemmer about seminars on PDF/X-3?

On June 14th there will be a seminar with Olaf Druemmer and BvDM. Employees of Callas can conduct other seminars. However Olaf Druemmer does not see any problems providing material in order to qualify others to conduct such seminars.

Decision: All seminars have to be announced (including dates) at the web site.

8.2. Major Events:

DigiMedia Conference including the subjects already mentioned in 3.4: PDF/X-3 and European standard for Gravure Printing. The event will take place June 20th to 23rd in Duesseldorf.

Seminars by FOGRA: Friedrich Dolezalek briefly reports on FOGRA's seminars and their good success.

Stefan Brues asks for links to those seminars at the web site.

9. Other Matters

9.1. Measurement and Control Strips

Alexander Langenhagen will coordinate a new task force elaborating a suggestion for a measurement strip and investigating the usefulness of the existing control strips.

He will ask for participants at the web site and the mailing list (ACTION).

Friedrich Dolezalek briefly reports on the possibilities of the FOGRA control strips in different situations.

Olaf Druemmer complements that a measurement strip that the sender and the receiver can visually compare to a reference would especially be very useful regarding a "blind exchange". This would also ensure a judgement without having to have expensive measurement devices.

Furthermore it is of importance to be able to provide these control media free of charge.

9.2. Trapping

Dieter Dolezal briefly reports on the activities of the Task Force on Trapping who recently had its first meeting. The goal was to investigate the different available trapping softwares regarding the upcoming interchange format of the ECI, PDF/X-3. A brief report will be made available at the web site (ACTION).

Discussion on the way of publishing; extreme caution is necessary when mentioning manufacturers.

Joachim Euler pleads for informing the manufacturers about the planned publication.

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10. Next Meeting:

In Berlin after the summer holidays, September 14th, 2001.

Final word by Stefan Brues: Thanks to the host, FOGRA.