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QPP is an independent publication and not affiliated with any manufacturers or suppliers. QPP celebrates publishing the professional print trade's favourite magazine, formerly known as Copy Shop News (CSN), since May 1998.

Sharing best practice through both print and digital media, QPP magazine is in front of 36,000 quick print pros each month.

Each day the live web version is updated with the hottest stories in frontline printing, including news, views, new products and suppliers information.

Avid readers include Digital Printers, Commercial Printers, Copy Shops, On-Street Instant Printers, In-House Print Room Managers, FM and Conventional printers specialising in On-Demand, Short Run, Variable Printing, CRDs (Corporate Reprographic Departments), PSPs (Print Service Providers), Graphic Arts Businesses, Sign Suppliers and CAD Bureaus.

Welcome 2025 Showtime Season – two exhibitions, one location



Calling all quick print pros, digital printers, seasoned sign makers, promotional gift suppliers and budding garment decorators. There is only one place to be this month and that's the NEC in Birmingham.

Sign & Digital UK and Printwear & Promotion LIVE! return to the NEC in Birmingham from Sunday, February 23 to Tuesday, February 25, for another three days of innovation, inspiration and interaction.

Visitors can expect to see an abundance of new equipment launched at both exhibitions, as exhibitors from across the quick print, printed garment decoration and sign making sectors use the shows as the place to launch their cutting-edge kit into the marketplace.

Peter, It's Showtime, Foulkes



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Cooking the Books

The historic Stationers' Company is kick starting its 2025 events calendar with a bang, announcing a stellar line up of events for the publications and communications industries.

Top amongst them is 'Cooking the Books', a panel event being hosted on 18th March 2025 chaired by award winning food writer, cook and TV presenter Angela Clutton. The cookbook has long occupied an important cultural position in British society. As an early printed book, it was a prized heirloom treasured across generations, and in more recent times it has appeared in diverse forms to accommodate a range of eating preferences and cultural interests. The contents of a recipe book have been moulded to significant historical events, including as frugal cookbooks in wartime, and compiled to celebrate important events in the cultural calendar. Cookbook writers have recorded social change,



most notably during the 19th Century, and some cookbook writers have, through extensive media exposure, become modern day celebrities.

Increasingly, however, with the turn to

the online world, we question whether this traditional collection of recipes is in danger of being replaced by easily available single recipe internet searches. But with sales of cookbooks continuing to rise, why do cookbooks remain such a publishing boom and does it even matter if we don't even cook from them anymore?

Joining Angela Clutton on the panel to discuss this and more will be Diane Purkiss, Professor of English at the University of Oxford, and a fellow of Keble College; internationally renowned publisher, Stephanie Jackson, Publishing Director at DK and writer, editor, publisher and food historian, Mark Riddaway.

Tickets for the event will include drinks and canapes, themed to the evening. For tickets visit www.stationers.org/events/detail/6281

www.stationers.org

'Marilyn – The Exhibition'

Global place maker Moss has brought a touch of glamour to one of London's leading exhibition venues, creating a space worthy of the 250 artefacts, many belonging to Marilyn Monroe, that tell the story of her life. With Moss's extensive range of sustainable graphics, 'MARILYN – The Exhibition' at Arches London Bridge unveils the mystique of this prolific icon for the first time in the UK.

Working with Kilimanjaro Live, Moss began to transform the venue a month ahead of the opening to ensure Marilyn was seamlessly welcomed into the venue. A wide array of graphics and materials were used to match the exhibit's exploration of Marilyn's life. Intricately cut vinyls and large tension fabric graphics framed the displays and external windows, while a series of bollard covers were used to promote the show outside.

Sustainability was a key consideration for this project. Moss worked with Studioshaw, designer of the exhibition, and Mitre and Mondays, who installed the innovative Honext board, to best represent the artwork and memorabilia whilst also bringing a sustainable edge. To ensure the best results with this fully recycled and distinctively textured material, a careful sampling process was undertaken. High-tack heat adhesive vinyl, tensioned fabric and heritage boards were applied to the Honext board to show the intricate designs and achieve the best results with this carbon negative product.

Adding to the glamour, a 'walk of fame' was created for visitors using an anti-slip laminate, while a large tension fabric graphic helps welcome visitors as they enter the enigmatic world of Marilyn.



Installation took place over several days and required close collaboration between the teams. Scaffolding was needed to install the panels across the venue and had to be quickly moved to allow the individual displays to be put in place by the curators. Six installers ensured they met the tight timescales and provided the perfect finish required for this remarkable show.

"Working with a range of materials and collaborating with partners across London's newest exhibition, performance and culture destination made this an unforgettable project," said Rob Kershaw, Business Development Manager at Moss UK. "From our initial sampling and testing through to the complexities of the final installation, this has been an iconic project for us and we are delighted to have played our part."

Liz Koravos, Managing Director at Arches London Bridge, commented: "The attention to detail Moss provides came across in every step.



Their expertise was invaluable in transforming our amazing venue and providing our guests with a glimpse into the life of the one and only Marilyn Monroe."

MARILYN – The Exhibition is open until Spring 2025 at Arches London Bridge with full details available online at

www.marilynlondonbridge.co.uk
www.mossinc.co.uk

WPG Enhances Finishing With Horizon CRF-362

Welshpool Printing Group (WPG) has elevated its finishing capabilities and eliminated some manual processes with investment in a Horizon CRF-362 folder creaser from IFS.

The mid-Wales general commercial printer produces a wide range of applications on two eight-colour B2 Komori Lithrone presses and various Konica Minolta presses including an AccurioPress C12000.

Paul Jones, Managing Director: "It was time to update the folding and creasing capabilities we had. After looking around at what was on the market, we chose the Horizon because we liked its build, ease of use and affordability. We also liked its ability to manage a wide range of substrates. We finish some jobs by hand and the new system can now complete those for us. We knew it could do everything that we wanted it to do.

"There was a particular regular job that we wanted to maintain the quality for and the Horizon CRF-362 folder creaser will ensure that. It will also allow us to complete our other folding and perforation work, particularly for the jobs from our digital press."

The Horizon CRF-362 creases and folds in one pass a wide range of light and heavy weight stocks, coated or uncoated. Capable of up to ten crease lines on a sheet, it uses an impact matrix creasing technology that eliminates or minimizes cracking of the stock or printed image. Set-up and changeovers – including fold pattern, creasing number, and up/down crease selection – are completed on the high resolution intuitive color touch screen.



Welshpool Printing Group Operator Reece Thomas with the Horizon CRF-362 folder creaser from IFS.

Paul concludes: "It is proving to do everything we need it to and more. There will be a very fast return on our investment."

www.ifsl.uk.com

Blackwell Print expands In-House Book Binding

Blackwell Print has enhanced its inhouse perfect binding and trade service offering following investment in a Horizon BQ-270V single clamp perfect binder from Intelligent Finishing Systems (IFS).

The Norfolk full service printer that was founded in 1870, produces litho print on a Heidelberg XL75 four colour press and digital print on two Xerox Versants 4100s.

Managing Director Tom Davidson explains the investment decision: "We had a table top binder for short runs and were sending out longer runs. It was time to invest in a system that could complete more work inhouse. Horizon is a go to name and when we had a look around lots of businesses were running the Horizon BQ-270V. It is a robust machine and very easy to get to grips with for anyone who is not experienced in operating it."

As for the impact it has made on the business Tom states: "I don't like sending jobs out. We have experienced some losses in the past. Paper doesn't travel well and there are costs involved with outsourcing. I prefer to keep as much as we can in-house and this allows us to do that. In fact, where 20% of our perfect binding used to be completed in-house, now 80% is."

The Horizon BQ-270V single clamp perfect



binder offers high quality perfect binding and on demand production of variable thickness books. It includes an automated, sensor activated digital caliper system which measures the book block thickness and automatically transfers this data to the binder for quick, automated set-up for books of different thicknesses. It features a large 10.4" intelligent colour touchscreen, job programming, and a compact configuration.

The new addition has settled in well and already opened doors to new opportunities: "In the few

weeks it has been running we have already completed 10,000 to 12,000 books. It has also enabled us to offer a trade service, which is something we hadn't considered until a local business came to us asking for our trade prices. As a result, we expect it to achieve return on investment in six to eight months."

Tom adds: "It is top drawer. It runs really well and is a great machine. It is exactly what we hoped it would be."

www.ifsl.uk.com

Safeguarding Innovation – Vivid’s Commitment to its Patented VeloTaper

In September 2022, Vivid introduced the innovative VeloTaper system, a key component of its VeloBlade lineup of digital die-cutting solutions. This fully in-house designed and manufactured automatic flatbed taping system applies double sided tape with remarkable precision across various media, offering significant time and cost savings for print service providers. To protect this groundbreaking technology, Vivid filed for a UK patent in early 2021 and has implemented an international patent strategy.

The VeloTaper has transformed efficiency in print finishing. By automating the previously manual task of applying double sided tape, it not only boosts productivity but also ensures exceptional accuracy, minimising waste and allowing operators to concentrate on other important tasks. It can place and cut a range of double sided tapes up to 22mm in width precisely along both the X and Y axis. The system integrates flawlessly with the VeloBlade Volta+ models, enabling users to cut, crease, and tape in a

single operation.

This innovation has garnered significant recognition, winning several prestigious awards, including:

- The Pinnacle InterTech Award in 2022 for Best Technology from the PRINTING United Alliance
- The IPIA Innovation Masterclass Award in 2022
- The title of Print Finishing Equipment Company of the Year at the Corporate LiveWire Global Awards 2022/23
- The EDP Award in 2024

Gavin Ward, Vivid's Technical Director, shares the motivation behind the VeloTaper: "We saw a substantial gap in the market. While our systems were capable of cutting and creasing packaging, the application of double sided tape remained a manual process. This realisation drove us to develop a fully automated solution that eliminates inconsistencies and further enhances speed and efficiency."

The VeloTaper has achieved remarkable success, with many units sold worldwide. However, with success often comes the risk of imitation. Aware of this, Vivid has



proactively sought patent protection to defend its technology against potential copycats. Recently, the company took successful action against a dealer attempting to import counterfeit products, underscoring its commitment to safeguarding its imaginative innovations.

Martin Evans, Managing Director, emphasises, "All of our technology is developed in-house, and protecting our intellectual property is a top priority for us. Patents are not just about safeguarding our ideas; they ensure our customers receive the quality, reliability and superiority that only Vivid can provide."

Looking ahead, Vivid plans to

broaden the VeloTaper's application by adapting it for their larger Nexus range, set to launch in 2025. As the company continues to innovate, its dedication to protecting intellectual property remains steadfast.

With over 20 patents already in its portfolio, Vivid stands as a leader in print finishing technology and a strong advocate for innovation protection. The VeloTaper exemplifies the company's commitment to delivering cutting-edge solutions while helping its customers maintain a significant competitive edge in the market with their investment from Vivid.

www.vivid-online.com

LIYU UK APPOINTS PERFECT COLOURS AND ATECH

Liyu UK has announced the appointment of Perfect Colours and Atech as premium resellers of the Platinum and XLINE range of printers and cutters. This strategic move expands Liyu's reach within the UK market, with Perfect Colours showcasing the XLINE range in their demo centre in Sheffield.

Liyu UK will continue to offer direct sales and support of the Platinum range of hybrids, flatbeds and cutters.

Eddie Tucker, Managing Director of Liyu UK, expressed his enthusiasm about the appointment, stating, "This is a great appointment for Liyu UK and confirms the industry's growing respect and acceptance of our fantastic products. Having two of the top resellers in the country is a huge boost for us and ensures our machines are available to help even more businesses."

Jason Burroughs, Managing Director of Perfect Colours, added, "The Liyu range has become a solid competitor to the established brands in its area. There is no doubt that these printers



and cutters provide fantastic quality, speed, and reliability at a hugely competitive price. Their products fit well into our overall portfolio, giving our customers even more options to grow their business."

Wes Small, Liyu UK's national sales manager, concluded, "Expanding our reseller network with such well-known and respected companies is a positive move for Liyu UK. We are delighted to welcome them and look forward to a positive future for us and our customers."

www.liyu-uk.com
www.perfectcolours.com
www.atech.com

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Pantone Colour of the Year 2025

PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse: A mellow brown infused with a sensorial and comforting warmth.

PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse, an evocative soft brown that transports our senses into the pleasure and deliciousness it inspires as the Pantone Colour of the Year selection for 2025. A warming rich brown hue, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse nurtures with its suggestion of the delectable quality of cacao, chocolate and coffee, appealing to our desire for comfort.

“Underpinned by our desire for everyday pleasures, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse expresses a level of thoughtful indulgence,” says Leatrice Eiseman, Executive Director Pantone Color Institute. “Sophisticated and lush, yet at the same time an unpretentious classic, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse extends our perceptions of the browns from being humble and grounded to embrace the aspirational and luxe. Infused with subtle elegance and earthy refinement, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse presents a discrete and tasteful touch of glamour. A flavourful brown shade, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse envelops us with its sensorial warmth.”

There is a growing movement to align ourselves more closely with the natural world. Characterised by its organic nature, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse honours and embraces the sustenance of our physical environment. Imbued with authenticity PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse finds harmony and balance between the demands of modernity and the timeless beauty of artful creation.

“The everlasting search for harmony filters



through into every aspect of our lives including our relationships, the work we do, our social connections and the natural environment that surrounds us. Harmony brings feelings of contentment, inspiring a positive state of inner peace, calm, and balance as well as being tuned in with the world around us. Harmony embraces a culture of connection and unity as well as the synthesis of our mental, spiritual and physical well-being,” added Laurie Pressman, Vice President of the Pantone Color Institute. “With that in mind, for Pantone Colour of the Year 2025, we look to a colour that reaches into our desire for comfort and wellness, and the indulgence of simple pleasures that we can gift and share with others.”

In celebration of the 26th anniversary of Pantone Colour of the Year, Pantone will also for

the first time highlight the colour in events and experiences all over the world. From New York and London to Shanghai and Mumbai, Pantone will be sharing public spaces and colour events that will make Pantone colour of Year 2025 accessible for all.

Pantone’s first stop on its international tour will be with its official unveil partner - the lastminute.com London Eye. In a world-first for Pantone, the iconic attraction will unveil Pantone Color of the Year 2025 by lighting up the London skyline in PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse. The Pantone Color of the Year light show will be live for the public to view at 6pm GMT on Thursday December 5th and will shine bright throughout the evening for everyone to enjoy.

www.pantone.com/uk/en/color-of-the-year/2025

Inkcups showcase award-winning nano pin curing

Inkcups Europe demonstrated its specialist digital printing solutions at Promotional Product Service Institute (PSI) 2025, the European trade show for the promotional products industry. The event took place last month at the Messe Düsseldorf trade fairgrounds in Düsseldorf, Germany.

At PSI 2025, Inkcups showcased cylindrical and flatbed UV digital printing solutions including patent pending Nano Pin Curing technology and its newly launched compliant digital UV ink series for tote bags.

First showcased at PRINTING United Expo 2024, Inkcups’ award-winning Nano Pin Curing technology made its European debut at PSI. Nano Pin Curing enables printing on transparent cylindrical vessels such as Tritan bottles, wine and spirit

bottles, candle holders, and assorted glassware without the need for a UV-blocking substance.

PRODUCT LINEUP

- The Double Helix digital cylinder printer, featuring two print fixtures for double the production volume of high quality full colour (CMYKWW + varnish) images on cylindrical vessels, featuring award winning Nano Pin Curing technology
- The Helix ONE benchtop cylindrical printer, encompassing patented Helix technology in a more compact benchtop design
- The X5-T flatbed UV digital printer, a high performance flatbed designed for heavy duty industrial printing on a variety of promotional products
- The XJET Switch flatbed UV printer, designed for full colour direct to

reusable tote bag applications, featuring new REACH compliant and TPO free TB UV inks designed specifically for printing on a variety of tote bag materials

Hendrik Koemans, European Sales Director, Inkcups, comments: “PSI is always a successful event for us and is a great way to kick off the year, connect with colleagues and customers, and keep up to date with what’s happening in the exciting and fast evolving promotional space. It’s also a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate how our solutions can elevate promotional items.

“This year, we were excited to showcase our new TB inks with the XJET Switch and demonstrating our award winning Nano Pin Curing technology with the Double Helix”.

www.inkcups.com/europe



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PRINTWEEK COMPANY OF THE YEAR

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New Mimaki PICT cloud Software

Compatible with the Japanese manufacturer's latest printers, Mimaki's Printer Information Cloud Technology (PICT) software has been designed to transform print fleet management. A powerful, cloud based platform, PICT provides print professionals with real time insights and unprecedented control over their Mimaki printers.

PICT delivers a host of features, including Remote Monitoring, Grouped Management, Data Precision, and Ink Efficiency and Maintenance tools, all tailored to meet the needs of modern print operations. This revolutionary software enables operators to



monitor key parameters such as ink levels, maintenance schedules, and operational performance across multiple printers, empowering them to streamline workflows,

reduce downtime, and make informed decisions.

The technology integrates seamlessly with Mimaki's extensive range of printers and is accessible via Windows, iOS, and Android platforms. Through the intuitive PICT interface, users can view detailed analytics, track historical data, and even set up proactive alerts for events like print completion or low ink levels.

"With PICT, we're giving businesses the tools they need to stay ahead in a competitive market," states Chris Adams, Technical Manager at Mimaki's distributor for the UK and Ireland, Hybrid Services. "PICT isn't

simply about monitoring printers – it's about creating a smarter, more efficient way to manage print production."

The platform's cost control and analysis tools further enhance its appeal, offering detailed breakdowns of ink consumption and usage patterns, helping businesses optimise budgets and reduce waste. Combined with the ability to project future ink usage and ensure consistent supply levels, PICT offers a solution for organisations seeking to maintain uninterrupted production.

Further details on the software can be found by visiting www.hybridservices.co.uk/pict

swissQprint launches new flatbed generation



swissQprint is taking its flatbed range to a new level of productivity, precision and application diversity based off a totally reworked platform. The new models are 23% faster than their predecessors and all come with 10 freely configurable colour channels.

"Our flatbed Generation 5 is based on the same robust platform as the successful high-end Kudu model, which has proven itself worldwide over the past two years," says Carmen Eicher, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer at swissQprint.

Over 100 satisfied customers have already experienced the platform's performance, profitability and reliability. "With the new range and the performance spread between the respective models, we are appealing to an even broader customer base," adds Carmen Eicher.

23% MORE OUTPUT

Kudu along with the Nyala 5 and the Impala 5 form a line-up that is 23% faster than the previous generation, offering a top speed of 341 m²/h

(3670 ft²/h). Carmen Eicher points out: "We have always pursued a combination of performance with high output quality and the new printers are exemplary of that."

With efficiency enhancing features also in the mix, users benefit from short throughput times and consistent high quality.

NEW PLATFORM

The Generation 5 flatbeds are based on a completely reworked machine concept, electronics and software included. An essential element here is the new printer base. Its extreme robustness establishes the foundation for benchmark precision. Moreover, the printers come equipped with linear motors that help to make printing performance not only more precise still, but faster too.

HIGH RESOLUTION AND EVEN GREATER VERSATILITY

"With the latest print heads and a resolution of

1350 dpi, the new generation delivers outstanding print quality," states Carmen Eicher. These flatbed printers also offer limitless versatility with their ten freely configurable colour channels. In addition to light colours and white, there are spot colours such as neon or orange as well as effect varnish and primer to extend the range of applications.

36 MONTHS WARRANTY

swissQprint develops and produces its large format printers 100% at the company's headquarters in Switzerland, giving end-to-end control over the whole system. Users appreciate the reliable and durable printers, which come with swissQprint's three year factory warranty.

The new models are available starting now. The Generation 5 printers will also be on show at these upcoming trade shows: Graphics Canada, Toronto, April 09 – 11, 2025, booth 5340, and ISA International Sign Expo, Las Vegas, April 23 – 25, 2025, booth 825.

www.swissqprint.com

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Model shown, Mimaki CJV200-160. Prices exclude VAT, delivery, install and training. Ink pack required. Offers subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time. See website for all offer T&Cs. E&OE.

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New Ricoh High Caliber Media Customisation

Digital print production versatility has been enhanced with Ricoh's new High Caliber Media Customisation service. The latest technology upgrade for the Ricoh Pro C9500 digital colour sheetfed press enables printing on a range of Ricoh approved paper thicknesses of up to 800 microns.

The High Caliber Media Customisation service will enable Print Service Providers (PSPs) to target growth with exciting market opportunities ranging from loyalty and gift cards to thick media brochures, bespoke luxury packaging, compostable food cartons, high impact direct mail inserts, and eye catching point of purchase applications.

The versatile and responsive production of crisp, vibrant, and sharp print, with inline personalisation and coding capabilities, on heavier substrates, supports the cost effective provision of profitable short runs, customised offers, and localised promotion.

Simon Isaacs, National Director at Ricoh UK Graphic Communications, comments: "In the UK, the Pro C9000 has been our best selling engine since 2017 and the technology of choice for many successful print companies including most recently Mount Street Printers, Poplar Services Printers and Bakergoodchild. This latest enhancement will provide commercial printers with additional benefits that will open new market opportunities and revenue streams, whilst promoting sustainable practices



particularly in the gift and loyalty card industries." Simon Isaacs continues: "Launch of the High Caliber Media Customisation service is the latest example of how we continue to deliver on our commitment to sustainable innovation."

Erwin Busselot, Director Business Innovation & Solutions, Ricoh Graphic Communications, says: "The High Caliber Media Customisation service is the latest enhancement for the Pro C9500, and it demonstrates our continuing commitment to developing the production versatility of our digital systems as part of our Co-innovation strategy. This new enhancement

supports a wider range of exciting application possibilities, enabling our clients to grow their businesses. This includes the production of loyalty and gift cards and co-innovative collaborations such as the recently announced partnership with Green Gift Cards. It also presents fresh opportunities in high margin areas such as luxury business cards, swing tags, and gift card packaging."

Ricoh's High Caliber Media Customisation service is available now in Europe on new Pro C9500 presses. It is also retrofittable.

www.ricoh.com

Antalis launches Priplak R30 sustainable plastic

Antalis has introduced Priplak R30, a new addition to its sustainable product range, offering enhanced environmental benefits for the visual communications sector. Made from polypropylene and containing 30% post-industrial recycled content, Priplak R30 strengthens its credentials as a sustainable and versatile material for applications such as POS displays, signage, packaging, and more.

THE SUSTAINABLE CHOICE: POLYPROPYLENE

Priplak is crafted from polypropylene, recognised as one of the most sustainable plastics available. Its ecological nature and responsible manufacturing practices make it a top choice for environmentally conscious professionals. Compared to other plastics, polypropylene offers key environmental advantages that align



with modern sustainability goals.

KEY FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF PRIPLAK R30

Priplak R30 delivers exceptional performance while minimising environmental impact. Its standout features include:

- Chemically Inert: Safe and non-reactive, reducing potential harm to the environment or health.

- Halogen-Free: Free from chlorine, which is harmful to wildlife, plants, and human health.
- Phthalate-Free: Avoids plasticisers, which can negatively affect public health and ecosystems.
- Safe Disposal: Can be burned without releasing toxic emissions.
- Lightweight: 35% lighter than PVC, reducing raw material usage.
- Durable: Tear-resistant, long-lasting, and reusable.
- Fully Recyclable: 100% recyclable and capable of being recycled multiple times without loss of quality or strength.
- Closed-Loop Content: Made with 30% post-industrial recycled polypropylene for a more sustainable lifecycle.

VERSATILE APPLICATIONS

Available in a white finish in 450 and 750 mic thicknesses, with a sheet size of 650 x 1100mm, Priplak

R30 is suitable for a wide range of uses, including:

- POS displays
- Signage
- Packaging
- Tags and labelling
- Folders and stationery

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS

Paul Neale, Product Manager at Antalis, highlights the growing significance of sustainable materials like Priplak R30: "The versatility and sustainable benefits of products like Priplak made of polypropylene have resulted in it being one of the most rapidly growing sustainable polymers produced worldwide in recent years, with this trend set to continue. Introducing superior sustainable products such as the new Priplak R30 will increase its popularity."

www.antalis.co.uk

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The Price of Progress

Martin Christie explores the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to revolutionise the printing industry, while also cautioning against the risks of automated decision-making. He argues for a balanced approach that prioritises both innovation and accuracy.

We always take a little break from the magazine over Christmas and New Year — on the basis that not much is happening. However, while we've been resting, plenty has been going on in the world outside. As regular readers will know, I often like to stray away from the subject title of this column to talk about other things that affect us to some degree or another.

I seem to have been writing about Artificial Intelligence for some time and using it in some parts for much longer. Still, more recently, the newly elected leaders of our western part of the world have started talking about it like they've known about it all along.

Once upon a time, you only had to put the word digital in front of something to make it sound modern and progressive, and anything without it would seem antique and outdated. The flaw was that not everything that wasn't digital was redundant, nor was everything the perfect answer to all our problems. You have to know the pros and cons to make a choice.

You also have to know if the choice is being made for you. The insidious feature of AI and its induction in many parts of public exchange is that we may not be aware that decisions are being made by a calculating machine rather than by human judgment or being able to question its authority.

Of course, since the advent of computers, this pattern has been increasing, and there is no question that it has been a source of great progress in so many areas, improving the quality of life in real terms. However, the speed of this innovation will increase massively and in many unpredictable ways with AI. We know from so many customers at the counter that lots of people often struggle to cope with quite basic tasks.

Indeed, when septuagenarian President Trump introduced his own multi-billion initiative, his grasp of the subject was underlined when he suggested that everyone should write it down in their notepads so they don't forget the name.

There is a certain logic to the computers we have been working with up to now, even if it's not always obvious. The computers that are to come will be faster and smarter. But that doesn't mean they will be plotting against us; they will, in fact, be trying to learn from us, and the decisions they come to will be based on our actions. We will, in effect, be our own crash test dummies.

We humans generally learn more from our mistakes than our successes. And while in theory, AI should do the same, it remains to be seen whether this will be so in practice, especially in the longer term, as small errors may become larger ones, compounded because they have previously been passed as correct.



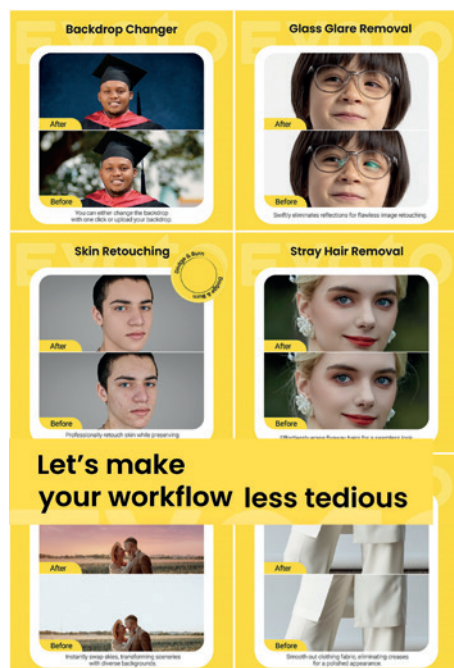
So much for the global view. How will AI impact the print on demand world? If applied, with some imagination, it could be a massive aid in preparing digital images for actual print — being able to examine content in minute detail instantly and automatically correct not just size and shape, but colour and density in order to produce a perfect output saving time and resources as well as often frustration and wastage.

To achieve this, however, may require a much greater investment from print suppliers than they are prepared to expend as we are not seen as a priority industry compared to other high profile ones, which are also more profitable. The frustration is that the technical possibilities already exist, it's just the effort required to apply them to print workflow.

We have had automatic exposure in digital cameras for years; it even exists to one degree or another in your ordinary copier or scanner, even if it has to be prompted to work properly. Essentially, it judges the brightest and the darkest parts of an image and tries to balance out the two to produce an average. It's not rocket science, but even phone cameras can now be programmed to recognise people, landscapes and the like and adjust to know they are shooting at night.

In comparison, printing software has hardly changed over the decades, but improving it requires more thought than just adding a few basic filters. It needs to overcome some of the regular error-strewn actions that cause so many problems. Automated pre-flight checks are all very well, but we have had them for years. It needs something more intelligent, and in keeping with the second quarter of the twenty-first century, but whether our industry can embrace it, or afford it, is another question. Driven by demand, we tend to be obsessed with speed rather than accuracy, but it surely must be possible to have both rather than accept that mistakes are just part of the process. It will be very much down to how we — and AI — learn.

We have editing software that can identify individual persons from groups and features as small as teeth and eyes, as well as remove blemishes, and other unwanted marks. But who or what decides what is an unsightly spot and not a cute freckle? I keep seeing promotions for magic software that will transform any portrait into a work of art at the press of a button, but to me, they all look so much like the early days of Photoshop clones when, for a short while, some people did think that plastic skin was attractive.



Surely, processors can be taught to be smarter than that.

There are green shoots of promise amid the acres of popular gimmicks, which are always present when the market is guided more by commercial interest than intelligence, but we shall see whether they survive and prosper.

BACK TO THE SHOW FLOOR

I'll be an interested visitor at next month's Photography and Video Show at London's Excel Centre (8-11 March) to take stock of the current state of the image market. When I first visited the original version of the exhibition, film was still dominant, and, over the years, I witnessed the transition to digital, which mirrored my own progression with camera and kit.

Having not been since before lockdown, it will be fascinating to see where the industry is now as being primarily a consumer show; it reflects more what customers are asking for, rather than a trade print event, which is much more biased towards what the manufacturers want to sell you.

A few years ago photobooks were meant to be the next big thing, but apart from weddings they have failed to reach the targets the hype promised as they have been dismissed by people who prepare to share things at a distance via social media, rather than gather round a tabletop publication however lavish and well presented.

Another one-shot wonder was a phone company that famously claimed that it had re-invented photography and that the camera was dead and buried — including some graphic images of its graveside demise in its advertising.

Camera technology, however, is very much at the cutting edge, ironically partly because of the decline of sales of big bulky bodies and lenses and the need to produce high-quality output from increasingly small devices, including drones. I expect a lot of them buzzing around the exhibition hall.

In fact, I think the photography market may well have found a bit of balance, where there is still a place for 'proper' cameras for more professional use rather than being a fashion accessory for the gadget-hungry collector.

I do expect more than a few new companies promising to take my photography to a whole new level with their revolutionary software at supposedly reasonable prices, but I will be equally surprised if they can show me something I don't already know how to do.

I often find that at exhibitions, it's the little unexpected things that you find much more useful, so fingers crossed there will be some hidden treasure somewhere to make it a worthwhile journey.

I will be surprised if there is anything new in the scanning department — even if there are any scanners there at all, they are likely to be just revamped older models.

COULD AI SAVE THE SCANNER?

Scanning is very much a poor relation of digital printing but still an important part as we know and continue to resist the desire of manufacturers who would prefer to make a machine without a more expensive piece of glass on top.

Originally, everything was done by casting an electric eye over an original item and producing a hard copy. Nowadays, though most things are done directly to print, there is still a need to capture an exact image of an actual object in order to reproduce it.

There is a misconception that a scanner is just an enormous camera, represented by the size of the glass, but that is far from the truth. The size of the scanning area simply reflects the size of the copy that can be scanned. Quite literally, it merely indicates the width of a mirror that moves across the platen area and projects the complete image into a comparatively small optical lens.

The scanner is basically a digital camera. The difference is that in the last twenty years, camera technology has developed massively, but the basic flatbed copier has not.

The scanner works much like a camera in that it passes an electronic eye across of image and registers it dot by dot. How detailed this capture becomes is largely



determined by the speed of the pass — but not entirely. The slower the mirror moves, the more dots can be filled in, meaning a higher resolution. But this doesn't necessarily equate to greater clarity, as detail, colour and the like are also dictated by the processor and its ability to turn that binary information into an accurate image file.

A modern camera, even one in a phone, can take an extremely clear picture and it does it in the blink of an eye.

For some years, I have been using digital photography to capture large or delicate originals, including artworks, maps and three-dimensional objects.

I have the advantage of a high-resolution DSLR, professional studio lighting and accessories and a gaming-spec PC to handle the editing of very large files. That and, of course, many decades of experience behind the lens understanding how light falls on surfaces and how that related colour can be reproduced on paper. Not the resources of your average print shop, but it has made me realise how far the poor scanner has fallen behind.

In theory, AI introduced into a scanner should be able to better understand and reproduce the original, rather than having to do it post-capture in software like Photoshop and Lightroom, which are years ahead in terms of pixel information. Whatever file type you choose, a scan comes effectively pre-processed by the scanner, so you have to manually adjust and correct any exposure deviations. Top-end cameras can shoot in a RAW format that comes virtually untouched, so it has a much greater window for colour and clarity, for example.

Scanners also scan in a single pass, producing a directional shadow on anything with a relief or texture, and while editing software can work magic to stitch together several parts of a larger image with merging technology, unless you can scan those parts in the same plane any irregular cast will completely ruin it.

All in all, Artificial Intelligence still has plenty to learn, so it will be an interesting adventure.

www.photographyshow.com

Compass appoints Katie Dowse



Compass Business Finance has announced the appointment of Katie Dowse as a Finance Specialist for the print sector. Katie joins the well established, growing team to provide enhanced support to suppliers and customers within the industry.

With more than 35 years' experience, Katie joins Compass from Asset Advantage, prior to which she also ran her own general asset finance

business for 11 years.

This latest hire follows a wave of new appointments and promotions announced by Compass just weeks ago. All are designed to enhance the business' offering and to continue to ensure that customers receive the highest levels of service.

Mark Nelson, Director at Compass, which was recently announced as IPIA Associate of the Year, said: "Katie is a fantastic addition to our team. Her extensive expertise and deep understanding of the print sector will be invaluable as we continue to deliver exceptional service and support across all of our business areas, including print, a sector at the heart of our offering."

Katie has expressed her enthusiasm about joining Compass: "I'm thrilled to be going back to my roots to join Compass Business Finance, a truly entrepreneurial, independent company with an innovative and relational approach to the market. Attending a recent awards ceremony and networking with everyone, reminded of how good it is to be back to my print roots and the joy of human interaction. I have missed the buzz of being part of such a fantastic industry of people."

In addition to her professional achievements, Katie is an avid badminton player, having played at the same club for over 30 years. She is also a keen walker and proud owner of three dogs.

www.compassbusinessfinance.co.uk

SOYANG EUROPE ANNOUNCES TWO NEW DIRECTORS

Soyang Europe announce the appointment of Oliver Mashiter as Sales Director (Media) and Simon Mashiter as Operations Director (Media).

Both appointments represent internal moves, with Oliver and Simon stepping into more senior roles after each spending more than 12 years with Soyang Europe.

Oliver Mashiter – Sales Director (Media): Oliver has served as a Sales Manager at Soyang Europe since joining the company in September 2011. In his new role as Sales Director, he will be responsible for the entire media sales team continuing on from the excellent work undertaken by the soon to retire Andrew Simmons.



His key objectives will be planning how to achieve sales targets, developing and implementing new systems that will help both customers and the sales team, and researching new markets and products. Alongside implementing some fresh new ideas, he will continue to build and maintain strong, long lasting

customer relationships and assist the Soyang Sales Managers with account visits.

Simon Mashiter – Operations Director (Media): Simon is also among the longest serving members of the Soyang Europe team, having worked at the company since May 2012. He started out as a Sales Executive

before becoming General Manager for Works. In his new role as Operations Director for Media, he is working alongside Operations Director of Hardware, Jon Spencer, and will be responsible for the entire operations across the media team at Soyang Europe.

His key objectives will include evaluating how the business operates and identifying any areas that can be improved in order to achieve optimum efficiency. With responsibility for the entire Altham site, Simon will oversee staffing, maintenance, deliveries, in-coming goods – and more – alongside the management of company assets including the vehicle fleet.

www.soyang.co.uk

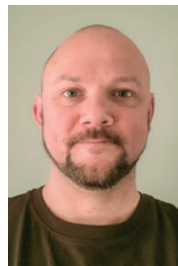
DRYTAC INTRODUCES PRODUCT SPECIALISTS

Drytac, has announced the appointment of Steve Payne and Anthony Shelmerdine as its Product Specialists in the UK and Ireland.

The customer focused and knowledge led Product Specialist position highlights Drytac's commitment to delivering exceptional service and expertise. Drytac Product Specialists will work closely with Drytac's exclusive UK stockist and partner Premier to promote Drytac's suite of products through dynamic presentations and expert training sessions.

As a major supplier, Premier boasts a nationwide network, with facilities spanning from Glasgow in Scotland to Newton Abbot in Devon. This extensive reach positions Premier to drive Drytac sales and ensure the swift delivery of Drytac products to customers across the UK. The new appointments of Steve and Anthony will play a

pivotal role in offering expert product knowledge and support, as well as promoting Drytac's innovative adhesive solutions nationwide.



Steve Payne: Steve joined the industry in 2016 and has worked as a Production Manager for several companies. Prior to his time in the graphics sector, he served in management and supervisory roles across the events and

publishing markets.

"Steve has years of hands-on experience in the print sector and huge knowledge of the market as a whole," Kieran said. "He is a great fit for the Product Specialist role and our customers will greatly benefit from working with him."



Anthony Shelmerdine:

Anthony brings several years of experience as a Sales Executive at a sign and display solution provider, where he developed a strong understanding of the graphics sector. Before this,

he held a management role at a PVC-U products specialist, gaining extensive technical knowledge of these materials.

"Anthony's industry experience and technical expertise make him a valuable addition to the Drytac team," said Kieran Blacknall. "Like Steve, he will share this knowledge with our customers, helping them make informed decisions when selecting materials from Drytac."

www.drytac.com

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SDUK & P&P LIVE!

Two exhibitions, one location

Calling all quick print pros, digital printers, seasoned sign makers, promotional gift suppliers and budding garment decorators. There is only one place to be in 2025 and that's the NEC in Birmingham.



Printwear LIVE!
& promotion HALL 20, NEC, BIRMINGHAM, 23-25 FEBRUARY 2025

SIGN & DIGITAL UK
HALL 19, NEC, BIRMINGHAM, 23-25 FEBRUARY 2025

Sign & Digital UK and Printwear & Promotion LIVE! return to the NEC in Birmingham from Sunday, February 23 to Tuesday, February 25, for another three days of innovation, inspiration and interaction.

Visitors can expect to see an abundance of new equipment launched at both exhibitions, as exhibitors from across the printed garment decoration and sign making sectors use the shows as the place to launch their cutting-edge kit into the marketplace.

New equipment launches include:

- The new **Mimaki JFX200-1213EX** flatbed printer will be making its UK and Ireland debut on the Hybrid Services stand. Also featured will be the all-new **Mimaki CJV200** solvent printer/ cutter and **UCJV330-160 UV** printer/ cutter.
- InkTec will be unveiling the new **JETRIX XAR320** hybrid printer with a special live demonstration taking place at 11am on Monday, February 24. Visitors will also be able to explore the new **JETRIX LXa8 LED UV** true flatbed printer and **UV6090** flatbed printer.
- First time exhibitor China Print Supplies will be carrying out live demonstrations of the **SinoColor FB-0906s A1+** mini UV flatbed printer and **SinoColor FB-2513s** 2.5x1.3m UV flatbed printer. This will be the first UK outing for these machines.

- Epson's stand will feature the launch of the eco-solvent **SureColor S9100** printer, the long-anticipated replacement for the **SureColor S80600**. Also on stand will be the odourless and water-based ink 64in resin printer, the **SureColor R5000** and the Epson range of UV printers.
- R.A. Smart has recently been appointed as the UK distributor for Hanrun's range of DTF printers, and as such will use P&P LIVE! as the place showcase these products to the UK market for the first time. On stand will be the new **Hanrun Evo-A450** 45cm wide printer.
- Leading the line-up on the Roland DG stand is the **TrueVIS XP-640**, the latest addition to Roland's large format printer series. Another highlight on stand will be the **VersaOBJECT CO-300iF2** flatbed UV printer. Roland is also introducing the **TY-300 DTF** production transfer printer.
- Several direct to film options will be found on the YES Group stand, including the **Prestige R2 Pro Max Bundle** and the **DTF Station Prestige R1**.

EXHIBITIONS CO-LOCATE FOR THE SECOND TIME

2024 saw Sign & Digital UK and Printwear & Promotion LIVE! co-locate at the NEC, in what was a successful first for both the visual communications sector and

the garment decoration industry. The co-location attracted record visitor numbers with more than 8,000 attendees taking the time out of their busy working schedules to discover all that the two exhibitions had to offer. Visitor numbers for SDUK alone were up by more than 2,000 when compared to 2023.

With the two exhibitions moving into Halls 19 and 20, they will be immediately adjacent, so once inside it will look and feel like one big event, rather than separate shows. Registering for one event automatically grants you access to the other, without the need to register twice.

VIEW THE LATEST CUTTING-EDGE PRINTERS

Suppliers and manufacturers from all corners of the sign and digital print are all set to launch their latest innovations into the market when the exhibition throws open its doors next month.

Whether you're on the lookout for a new wide format printer to add to your line-up or just after some advice from those in the know, SDUK is the only event you need to attend in 2025.

Exhibitors will be demonstrating the latest showstopping equipment live and the only way you can see firsthand what will be on display is by attending the UK's longest running exhibition for the visual communications sector.

Rob Goleniowski, head of sales for the UK & Ireland at Roland DG, explains why Roland exhibits year on year: "Sign & Digital UK has always been a cornerstone event for Roland DG, and we're thrilled to be back. This event is not just about unveiling innovations — it's about engaging with our customers, understanding their needs, and supporting their growth. These conversations help ensure our solutions continue to meet the industry's evolving demands."

THE SHORTLIST FOR THE SIGN INDUSTRY AWARDS 2025 IS HERE!



The votes are in, counted, and verified! After an incredible response from across the industry, we can unveil the shortlist for The Sign Industry Awards 2025.

This year's exceptional finalists represent the very best of the industry, from manufacturers, to suppliers, sign makers, fitters, and printers. All have demonstrated remarkable creativity, innovation, and excellence in their craft.

Alissia Clifton, event manager, shared her excitement about the overwhelming engagement for this launch event:

"The response has been absolutely incredible. The number of votes we received was beyond our expectations, and it just goes to show how much talent, passion, and dedication exists in our industry. We are so grateful to everyone who took the time to look at the entries and vote for their peers. It's an honour to be hosting this event and shining a spotlight on the outstanding work being done in the signage sector."

CELEBRATE AT THE SIGN INDUSTRY AWARDS 2025

It's time to take things to the next level and celebrate the best in the business! Mark your calendars for Monday, 24th February 2025, as the sign industry gathers for The Sign Industry Awards, held in the evening at the NCC in Birmingham, following the second day of Sign & Digital UK at the NEC.

Don't miss the sign industry's biggest night of the year — a spectacular evening where finalists will be honoured, winners crowned, and achievements celebrated in style.

What's in store?

This is your chance to be part of an unforgettable night, featuring:

- **Bubbles Reception** — Kick off the evening with a glass of fizz and mingle with the industry's top professionals.
- **Three-Course Gourmet Dinner** — Indulge in a premium dining experience, complete with fine wine.
- **Celebrity Host** — Enjoy the evening with a star guest guiding you through the celebrations.
- **Entertainment** — Laugh, cheer, and dance the night away with incredible performances.
- **Networking Opportunities** — Connect



with leading professionals, innovators, and influencers in the industry.

- **After-Party Extravaganza** — Keep the celebrations going with an after-party to remember!

LEARN FROM THOSE IN THE KNOW

Running for over 35 years, Sign & Digital UK has grown to become a central part of the industry's calendar.

At this year's exhibition, countless opportunities are available to visitors for them to learn from those in the know, to gather new ideas to enhance and drive their businesses forward in 2025.

THE EXPLAINS LOUNGE

The Explains Lounge, in partnership with the British Sign & Graphics Association, returns with yet another exciting programme of business and technical advice sessions. Experts from across the sign and digital sector will tackle a whole manner of topics from recruitment to vehicle wrapping to marketing.

WHAT'S IN STORE?

On Sunday morning, you can learn more about adding branded apparel to your offerings with Andy Rogers of Stahls' UK, and how to profit with Instagram in 2025 with Instagram expert Estelle Keeber. These dynamic sessions are sure to be crowd pleasers.

Board members of the British Sign & Graphics Association will take to the stage in the afternoon to answer your questions, on anything from technical, installation, business, training and marketing issues. If you've got a question, you need answering make sure you attend!

Taking to the stage on Monday are Evie Fitzpatrick from Very Displays and Lewis Evans from Vivid Laminating Technologies. In two separate interviews, we delve behind the scenes of these leading companies in the industry.

You won't want to miss the 1pm session! There is a yet to be announced special guest appearing on stage. This star from

within the vehicle wrapping world will be interviewed live on stage, as we learn more about their experience and achievements. Watch this space!

And finally on Tuesday, sessions will cover topics such as recruitment and sustainability.

In addition, three experts from three of the world's leading large format printer manufacturers will come together once again to discuss new technology and trends. Join Andy Gregory from Hybrid Services, Phil McMullin from Epson UK and Rob Goleniowski from Roland DG EMEA, for what promises to be an eye-opening panel discussion.

THE SIGN MAKERS' WORKSHOP

Experienced sign maker Paul Hughes returns to Sign & Digital UK to provide practical help for sign makers in The Sign Makers' Workshop.

It doesn't matter if you are a vinyl veteran or taking your first steps into vinyl application, Paul will be on hand throughout the three day exhibition with a series of live demonstrations and practical workshops.

Paul will host three sessions covering all aspects of vinyl application, including basic application of vinyls, vehicle livery and applying large areas of vinyl. Paul will give clear and practical demonstrations, as well as offer hints and tips for which products and techniques you should use and when.

Visitors can also try their hand at applying some vinyl in the Application Challenge. Paul will be on hand to offer advice and guidance to make sure visitors gain vital experience in vinyl application.

There will be a gift for everyone who enters. There will also be prizes for the best job each day as well as an overall winner.

Register today — To avoid missing out on these fantastic opportunities, visitors can register in advance of their attendance to save time on the day. Once online there is just a quick registration form to complete. www.signuk.com

HYBRID TO SHOWCASE MIMAKI'S LATEST INNOVATIONS

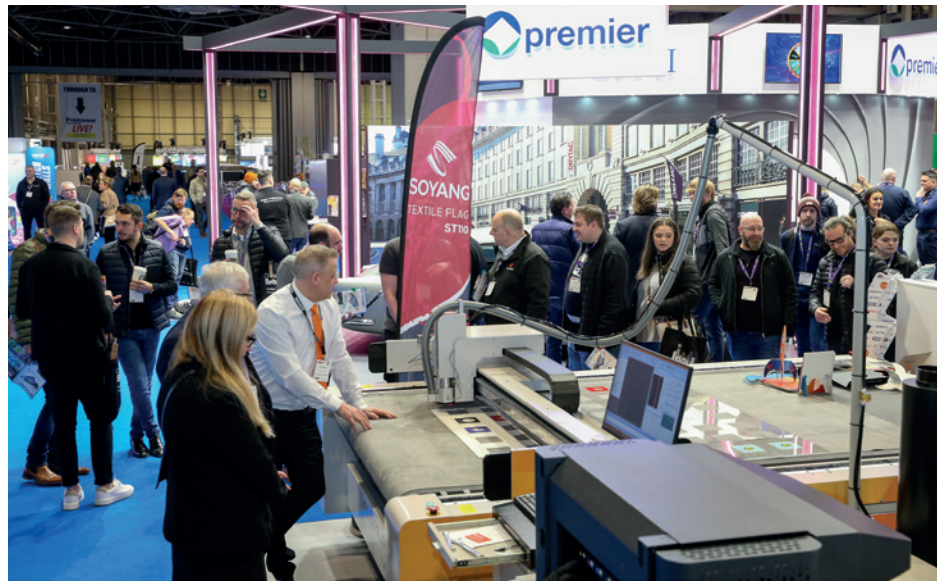
Hybrid Services is, bringing an impressive showcase of the latest advancements in Mimaki technology. Hybrid will be introducing new and cutting edge printing solutions designed to deliver productivity, creativity, and versatility across a wide sector of the print industry.

At the heart of Hybrid's stand will be the UK and Ireland debut of the Mimaki JFX200-1213EX flatbed printer, an innovative solution that blends compact dimensions with impressive performance. Combining exceptional space efficiency with Mimaki's renowned print quality, the JFX200-1213EX delivers best in class productivity and highly creative output capabilities. Thanks to its midsize bed, the new printer is ideal for companies stepping up promotional item printing production from small format UV flatbeds, or businesses looking to produce signage, retail displays and rigid graphics who need its compact footprint. The JFX200-1213EX's launch at Sign & Digital UK will provide visitors with a first hand look at how this printer addresses space constraints without compromising on throughput, creativity or quality.

Another star of the stand will be the all new Mimaki CJV200 solvent printer/cutter, which was launched in late 2024. Designed for sign makers, vehicle wrappers, and print service providers, the CJV200 offers unmatched versatility with its integrated printing and cutting functionality. Available with a choice of ink configurations, including Mimaki's new SS22 sustainable solvent and BS4 budget solvent options, the CJV200 meets the diverse needs of today's businesses, combining vibrant colour reproduction with exceptional productivity.

Also on display will be the Mimaki UCJV330-160 UV printer/cutter that has been designed to deliver a wide range of applications, including backlit displays, banners, window and floor graphics. the opportunity to see how the UCJV330 pushes the boundaries of creative printing.

For textile print professionals, the co-location of Printwear & Promotion LIVE! alongside Sign & Digital UK makes Hybrid's display of the Mimaki TxF300-75 direct to film (DTF) printer particularly appropriate. As an ideal solution for garment decoration, the TxF300-75 delivers superior results for custom clothing and promotional items. With its two year warranty, visitors from the apparel and printwear industries will discover how the TxF300-75 offers



reliability, speed and ease of use, thanks to its advanced ink circulation system and Mimaki's commitment to consistent performance.

Hybrid's team of experts will be on hand throughout the event, providing live demonstrations, in-depth product insights, and advice tailored to the needs of visitors. With a focus on helping customers unlock new possibilities in printing, Hybrid is committed to showcasing Mimaki's latest innovations that deliver measurable business benefits.

Andy Gregory, Hybrid's Sales Director, commented on the company's continued presence at the show: "Sign & Digital UK has always been an important event for Hybrid, providing a platform to engage directly with the sign and graphics industry. We're excited to exhibit again in 2025 to present Mimaki's newest technologies to visitors, from the high performance JFX200-1213EX to the versatile TxF300-75 and everything in between. Our stand will demonstrate how Mimaki continues to lead the way in delivering innovative solutions for the evolving needs of print professionals." www.hybridservices.co.uk

THEMAGIC TOUCH AT PRINTWEAR 2025

With over 30 years of trading experience and four key digital technologies available (DTF, toner based, sublimation, HTV) TheMagicTouch accommodate most needs and expectations.

Featuring the latest Direct-to-Film (DTF) printers and finishing options for different production capabilities and pricing to suit all demands. These include four head, two head and a new single head entry level option. All available with an array of quality certified DTF consumables including inks, films,

papers and adhesive powders together with outstanding professional technical and sales support.

TheMagicTouch also offer the lowest ever maintenance, desktop, powderless, DTF transfer solution for single and full colour transfers for garment and textile decoration. All made possible using the latest CMYK + white toner transfers (WTT) printed with selected LED/laser digital desktop printers featuring white toner. This solution is perfect for the ad-hoc user for transfers up to A3 and supported with a three year onsite warranty including the LED print heads.

New additions to the extensive range of Magicut (HTV) products include Reflective, Puff and Rainbow Spectrum Flex. The durable 3D Puff transfer creates a raised textured effect on the surface of the garment. These join a comprehensive range of existing 123Flex, Flock, Glitter, Glow in the Dark, Soft Metallic and Holographic flex options. Plus, an improved "All-in-One" printable PU vinyl for solvent, eco-solvent, and latex printers together with the ultimate sublimation "Blockout" solution.

The latest in Sawgrass desktop sublimation printers will be available for evaluation alongside some new and innovative heat press equipment. www.themagictouch.co.uk

SEE YOU THERE!

As the UK's longest-running exhibition dedicated to the visual communications sector and the UK's only exhibition for the garment decoration industry come together once again, there is no better place to visit to keep your finger on the pulse of what's new in the industry, and to speak to those in the know.

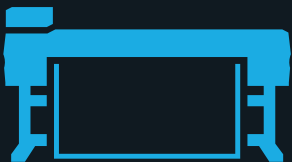
We hope to see you at the end of February at what promises to be another showstopping event! ■

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SIGN & DIGITAL ^{UK}

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The launch of Love Paper Week: 3-7 February

Love Paper, a global campaign promoting the attractiveness and sustainability of print, paper and paper packaging, is launching a brand new initiative for the industry to collectively champion paper and sustainability to consumers and businesses

Even in today's digital world, paper remains unique in its ability to touch our lives. Paper is renewable, recyclable and the natural support of new ideas and creativity. There are many misconceptions relating to paper, print and paper packaging. 37% of European consumers believe that paper and paper packaging are bad for the environment. (1) Whilst only 18% believe the paper recycling rate exceeds 60%(1) when in fact it's 79%(2), the highest of any material in Europe.

"Running from the 3rd-7th February, we encourage all printers, paper merchants, packaging manufacturers and all those who operate within the sector to support Love Paper week and use the materials available to inform their clients, customers and consumers more widely, why paper is such a sustainable, effective and attractive medium.", says Josh Birch, Campaign Manager for Two Sides UK.

"Whilst the 1st year will have modest activity, the goal is to grow it year on year to be a truly



recognised week amongst the industry, businesses and consumers alike. We want to mobilise everyone in the world of paper, from direct mail and print publishers, to sack paper and corrugated card, to celebrate Love Paper Week."

How To Support Love Paper Week: To promote the launch of Love Paper Week there will be simple assets and resources, communicated widely, for the industry to use through social media and other individual company communications. This includes: **Social media messages, graphics/videos, and profile frames; Email footers; Virtual backgrounds; and Love Paper Week branding**

To find out more about Love Paper Week and download the resources to help champion paper, visit www.lovepaper.org/lovepaperweek

Sources: 1. Two Sides Trend Tracker Survey, 2023; 2. Cepi, Key Statistics, 2023; To find out more about the Love Paper campaign: www.lovepaper.org

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Hunkeler Innovationdays

Innovative end to end Ricoh automation to power productivity

Highly automated end to end processes enhancing print operations' productivity will be demonstrated by Ricoh in Hall 2, stand P6, at Hunkeler Innovationdays 2025, February 24 to 27, Lucerne Exhibition Centre, Switzerland.

Ricoh's expansive high speed inkjet and sheetfed production portfolio, represented by RICOH Pro™ VC80000, Ricoh Pro™ VC40000, and RICOH Pro™ C9500 technologies, as well as an interactive presentation of the RICOH Pro™ Z75 B2 inkjet press, will demonstrate how everyday capabilities can be elevated to create a highly productive concept to completion environment.

Efficient and profitable end to end production begins with software solutions including RICOH TotalFlow BatchBuilder, that simplifies and automates many steps in short run digital production, and RICOH Process Director, that captures, transforms and manages production information and print processes with precise tracking. RICOH Predictive Insight, first introduced on the Pro VC80000 high speed inkjet press, provides data driven insights into device utilisation and operator productivity. By using Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning capabilities, processes and

operations are monitored to help optimise hardware uptime and throughput while minimising maintenance interruptions.

Completing the highly connected approach is a new automation protocol called Print Line and Finishing Interface (PLF-I). This open source interface enables a step change in communication between web fed printers such as the Pro VC80000 and pre and post processing equipment, resulting in enhanced automation.

Elevating print production automation further, the Ricoh Auto Color Adjuster provides easy, fast and accurate colour management capabilities, and ensures consistency from system to system and job to job.

The successful combination of hardware and software can provide creative commercial printers with the freedom to innovate. It can also support visionary endeavours such as Green Gift Cards' creation of fully recyclable gift and loyalty cards. Visitors will be able to see how the successful collaboration has resulted in the development of cards that have an

associated carbon emission impact of just 4.28gCO₂e each when digitally printed on a paper based substrate compared to 46.97gCO₂e each when digitally printed on non-recyclable PVC.

Eef de Ridder, Vice President, Ricoh Europe Graphic Communications, says: "Automation has the power to positively enhance every stage of the print production process. The increased role of AI and Machine Learning provide levels of understanding, operational improvements and touchless workflows that help reduce pressures and increase productivity. Building on the 'Connect' theme of Hunkeler Innovationdays 2025, Ricoh will demonstrate how automation also continues to elevate hardware and software capabilities and allows commercial, transactional, and enterprise printers greater freedom to competently and confidently expand their service offering."

Ricoh is a Hunkeler Innovationdays 2025 Premium Partner. ■
www.ricoh.com
www.innovationdays.com





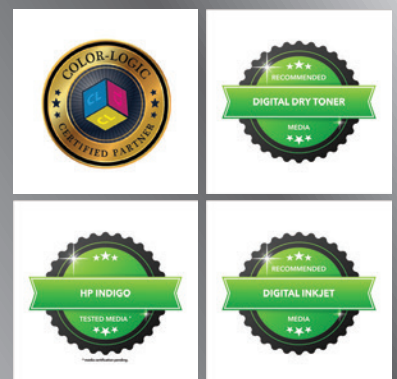
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Premier celebrates £2 million environmental milestone

Premier has announced that its flagship environmental programme, Carbon Capture, has achieved a remarkable milestone, with £2 million donated to the Woodland Trust. This support has funded the planting of 519,132 trees across the UK, which has the potential to capture an estimated 119,869 tonnes of CO₂ over the trees' lifetime. Through this partnership, Premier champions its customers to make meaningful contributions to carbon reduction, certifying them as Carbon Capture companies while supporting the creation, restoration, and protection of native UK woodlands.

Premier's Carbon Capture initiative provides customers with a practical way to mitigate the environmental impact of their activities. By calculating their CO₂ emissions from product purchases, customers can reduce their environmental impact by supporting tree planting projects under the UK Woodland Carbon Code, a government accredited programme that ensures measurable and long term carbon mitigation.

The Carbon Capture programme began in 2011 to help businesses mitigate the CO₂ emissions from their paper purchases. Since then, it has grown to become the market's leading environmental initiative, surpassing £1 million in contributions by 2019, with all funds directed solely to the Woodland Trust to fuel reforestation efforts across the UK. This latest milestone reflects the impact of Premier's collaboration with its customers to achieve real environmental results.

"We're incredibly proud of reaching this £2



million milestone," said Dave Jones, Group Marketing Director at Premier. "Through our partnership with the Woodland Trust, we're supporting businesses to expand their environmental efforts in ways that are meaningful, accountable, and beneficial to the broader environment."

Premier's rapid climb from £1 million in 2019 to over £2 million today shows the growing commitment that businesses place on responsible environmental action. As companies increasingly seek effective ways to mitigate carbon emissions, the expansion of the Carbon Capture programme highlights both the relevance and importance of tangible environmental initiatives. This achievement not only reflects the programme's growth but also underlines the vital role that business led action plays in environmental stewardship.

Reflecting on the programme's evolution, Dave Jones, founder of Carbon Capture, shared his pride

in its progress: "What started as a simple idea in 2011—to give companies the means to mitigate the CO₂ from their paper purchases—has truly evolved. Knowing that it has helped both businesses and our woodlands is incredibly rewarding. We're grateful to work alongside our customers who share our dedication to sustainability, and we look forward to the impact we will continue to make together."

"We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Premier and its customers for their enormous generosity in donating £2 million to our tree planting efforts. This milestone, achieved through their Carbon Capture programme, will make a lasting impact to our vision of a world where woods and trees thrive for people and nature. We are truly grateful for Premier Paper's dedication and support in working with us to create greener, healthier woodlands for future generations."
— Sam Tarrant, Head of Partnerships at the Woodland Trust.

By supporting Carbon Capture, Premier and its customers are contributing to a low carbon future while enhancing biodiversity and supporting ecosystems through native woodland creation. Premier remains committed to corporate environmental responsibility, offering businesses a transparent and impactful programme to create measurable, lasting environmental change.

In addition to environmental benefits, certified Carbon Capture companies gain the use of the Trust's Woodland Carbon logo and certificates, whilst also having opportunities to take part in tree planting events with the Woodland Trust, providing a visible, meaningful expression of their commitment to a sustainable future.

To learn how you can begin your carbon reduction journey with us, reach out to your local Premier branch today.

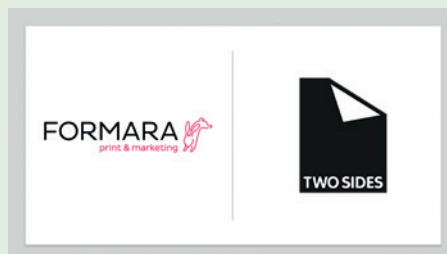
www.paper.co.uk

Formara join Two Sides to promote sustainable print and marketing

The print and paper advocacy group, Two Sides, has announced its newest member — Formara, the UK-based print and marketing communications company.

Since 1971 Formara has successfully operated as a print company. Now, in addition to printing services, they offer clients sophisticated integrated marketing and communications campaigns across print and digital platforms.

"Formara are delighted to become a member of Two Sides. In 2006, we were one of the first printing companies in the UK to gain the accreditation 'Environmental Standard ISO14001'. This early commitment to responsible environmental management set objectives that paved the way for



continual improvements to reduce our impact on the world we live in. Through Carbon Offsetting we balanced our CO₂ emissions. However, we are now more interested in avoidance measures and renewable energy generation to help combat climate change and sustain our environment for future generations." says Russell Turner, Marketing

Executive for Formara.

Formara's paper is sourced from sustainable suppliers who themselves conform to ISO14001 and the UK Timber Regulations. Formara is also reducing their reliance on single use plastics, aiming to reduce the use of plastics in all their packaging within two years. This requires an ongoing investigation of the replacement products available as technology catches up with the world's demand to reduce plastic with viable alternatives.

By joining Two Sides, Formara has access to a large library of co-brandable communications tools, consumer research, industry leading information, sustainability advice, and events.

www.twosides.info/why-join-two-sides

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Liquid Lens Adds Roland BN2-20 Printer/Cutter

Liquid Lens, a provider of doming manufacturing solutions, has introduced the Roland BN2-20 eco-solvent printer/cutter to its domed resin printing lineup. This compact and versatile machine is designed to enhance precision and efficiency for businesses in the doming and graphics production industries.

"The BN2-20's cut before print technology allows you to print and cut without having to wait for the ink to dry," explained Andy Huxley, technical manager of Liquid Lens. "Precision is vitally important for doming applications, and the Roland BN2-20 has been carefully selected and rigorously tested by Liquid Lens for its high quality output and cutting accuracy."

The BN2-20 comes in two models to suit different needs: the BN2-20A, which features CMYK printing, and the BN2-20, which offers



CMYK + white capabilities for an additional cost of approximately £600.

Rob Goleniowski, Head of Sales, UK and Ireland, for Roland DG UK, says, "The BN2-20 is a fantastic example of Roland's commitment to providing versatile and innovative solutions for a wide range of applications. Liquid Lens has identified that the BN2-20's cut before print technology and support for white ink make it a perfect fit for doming applications. We're confident that Liquid Lens' customers will appreciate the precision and efficiency this

machine brings to the process."

"The BN2-20's ability to handle a range of media makes it a solid choice for businesses seeking to enhance their capabilities," added Andy. "We recommend this machine with our Premium Self-Adhesive Polyester media and our complete doming systems. We're happy to provide demos and samples if required."

Liquid Lens' doming solutions deliver a glossy, 3D effect, creating standout labels and graphics that resist scratches and fading. These applications are supported by a range of hardware, including starter kits for beginners, applicator guns essential for all manually operated cartridges, and the Opal Semi-Automatic Doming Machine for businesses handling higher production volumes.

andy@liquid-lens.com • www.rolanddg.com

Mimaki 3D printing is moulding education and academic research

Educational institutions are among the fastest growing adopters of 3D printing, with an impressive 5.4% to 11.6% jump in the market share between 2011 and 2021* overtaking other traditional applications, such as cosmetic models and jigs and fixtures. Across the medical, art, design and architectural field, students and researchers increasingly use this technology to create models and prototypes to assist with their academic endeavours. Material jetting 3D printing technology is making a name for itself within the sector, known for its ability to produce highly detailed prototypes, models and figures.

MATERIAL JETTING: MORE COLOURS, MORE DETAIL

While material jetting makes up a small share of 3D printer sales when compared to technologies like material extrusion (FDM) and powder bed fusion (MJF or other laser based processes), it isn't a technology to be overlooked. Producing incredible accuracy and detail in the final product, material jetting has become a go-to solution for prototyping, art, architectural and educational models.

Mimaki's 3D printers, the 3DUJ-2207 and the 3DUJ-553, both utilise the material jetting method. A piezoelectric printhead travels over the build platform, depositing hundreds of tiny droplets of photopolymer to the desired locations. The material is then cured by a UV LED light, which allows less material warping and more control for complex designs over traditional UV bulbs. The process repeats until the whole part is complete, which is then submerged in water to remove any support material.

As the only 3D printers with the ability to

accurately print in 10 million colours, including transparent, up to 1,200 dpi, the 3DUJ series can create highly detailed prints. All these abilities alongside its office friendly size and low noise level have made these machines perfect high performing models in the 3D printing market.

THE EDUCATED CHOICE

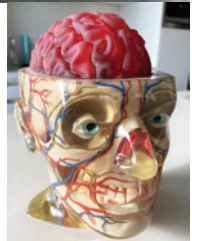
Mimaki's 3D printers' accuracy and colours are already being used to full effect in universities around the world. The collaboration between Monash University and Erler Zimmer led to the development of anatomically accurate 3D printed medical models to address the limitations of cadavers in education. Initially facing challenges with the fragility and colour reproduction of medical models, the 3D printing industry saw a significant breakthrough with the Mimaki 3DUJ-553. This printer revolutionised the process by accurately creating realistic models with transparent parts to see internal structures.

Reliance on cadavers in universities significantly restricts hands-on, interactive teaching opportunities, particularly when it comes to rare pathologies. The ability for universities to produce the desired 3D models as needed, opening significant learning opportunities for students and medical professionals alike.

The printer's capabilities have also attracted the attention of a team of doctors and researchers from the University of Florence. Facilitating cost effective solutions and enhancing surgical training and simulation, the technology was also used for a range of anatomical models, reaching a previously unattainable degree of colour fidelity. Meanwhile Canadian company, Biologic



Models, has carved out a niche in creating precise and vibrant 3D models of proteins for research facilities and collectors, using the 3DUJ-553 in conjunction with clinical research and x-ray crystallography protein data.



Taking 3D printing beyond the medical sector, the University of Auckland's Creative Design and Additive Manufacturing Lab (CDAML) uses the Mimaki 3DUJ-553 for vibrant, accurate colour printing in projects ranging from cultural preservation to surgical aids. Initially exploring powder based printers, the lab shifted to the 3DUJ-553 due to its superior colour reproduction and durability. This printer has helped to transform how students engage with history, engineering, art, and medicine.

THE PERFECT TOOL FOR THE MODEL STUDENT

In the educational field, 3D printing can equip the professionals of today and tomorrow with the tools they need to better enhance their skills. Mimaki's 3D printers are helping students craft realistic anatomical models, bring historical artifacts back to their former glory, and architecturally design the cities of the world.

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* Wohlers Report, '3D Printing Applications 2011 Wohlers Report' and '3D Printing Applications 2021 Wohlers Report'

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Solent Design Studio expands



Solent Design Studio, a family owned commercial printing company has recently invested in Canon's imagePRESS V1350, varioPRINT 6180 TITAN



and Colorado M3W. This new investment has enabled the business to break into the wide format market and unlock further growth, while saving costs.

Solent Design has been providing print solutions to UK businesses and global brands, across many sectors for over forty years.

Since partnering with Canon in 2016, Solent Design has doubled the size of its business and has expanded its capabilities across all aspects of print. Now offering services in both litho and digital print, as well as wide format production, the company takes pride in delivering an end to end service for its customers.

Looking for ways to unlock further growth, Solent Design has trusted Canon to help diversify

its offering. By upgrading to Canon's imagePRESS V1350 and varioPRINT 6180 TITAN, they're now able to offer new services on a more diverse range of media, which has tripled their click rate and brought in new demand;

unlocking ROI as a result.

Looking to generate new streams of revenue, Solent Design has also invested in Canon's Colorado M3W. This has enabled the business to enter the wide format market, opening entirely new opportunities in sectors such as labelling and packaging. By producing stunning solid colours without banding on wide format applications, the Colorado M3W was the ideal machine to upgrade its offering for roadside banners and signage. With functional roll change capabilities, they can switch easily between jobs on the Colorado M3W and increase productivity.

Taking the next step in their digital transformation journey, Solent Design is leveraging Canon's expertise in Management

Information Systems. Streamlining the back end of their business and bringing together functions such as order processing and estimating, Solent Design is migrating to the Print Smith Vision MIS software. By reducing touchpoints and increasing efficiency, this new system will provide Solent Design with further cost saving capabilities and capacity.

Wayne Kershaw, National Sales Manager, Production Print at Canon UK and Ireland, adds: "It's a privilege to support customers like Solent Design which has built a reputation in the industry for delivering a quality focused, diverse service. As Solent Design continues to build on their investment with Canon, it is inspiring to see them turn this investment into further growth, having already doubled the size of their businesses since the partnership began eight years ago. Working in close collaboration with Martin and the team, we are excited to see what's next for Solent Design."

Martin Reynolds, Managing Director at Solent Design Studio, comments: "We hold our relationship with Canon in high regard, not only for the cutting edge equipment they provide, but for their strong sense of community, made up of industry leaders who are passionate about providing the best possible service and support. As a family run business, we at Solent Design are proud to be part of the extended Canon family."

www.solentdesignstudio.co.uk
www.canon.co.uk

EUROLASER AT C! PRINT 2025

From 4 to 6 February 2025, eurolaser GmbH, will be exhibiting at C! Print in Lyon, France. The focus will be on innovative technologies that have been specially developed for the requirements of the printing and advertising industry. Visitors to the trade fair will have the opportunity to find out all about the versatile applications and advantages of this precision technology.

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The demands on the printing industry are constantly increasing – be it due to larger formats, individualised products or the desire for sustainable production solutions. This is precisely where eurolaser laser systems offer decisive advantages. With non-contact processing and maximum precision, printed materials such as textiles, foils, acrylic and wood can be processed efficiently.

Particularly interesting is the new POSITIONplus professional camera system, which will be presented live at C! Print. This system enables even more precise processing of printed materials and significantly increases efficiency thanks to fast surface scans and automated cutting processes.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES THROUGH INNOVATIVE LASER TECHNOLOGY

The thermal cutting processes from eurolaser ensure smooth, clean cut edges that often require no post-processing. At the same time, the systems reduce material waste thanks to intelligent nesting functions. For users, this means less resource consumption and lower production costs –



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Something to share?

CANVASSING

Can't believe I just lost my job as a security systems salesman. I go door to door and if no-one's in, I leave a brochure on their kitchen table.

SHOWTIME SALES SPEAK

We've all been there – struggling to come up with the perfect pun that's both ink-redible and toner-ally hilarious.

What's a printer's favourite font for a romantic evening? Times New Roman-tic!

The first time I used variable data printing I realised, this changes everything.

Do you hate it when a person answers their own questions? I certainly do.

Why are penguins so awkward? They find it difficult to break the ice.

It is hard to explain puns to kleptomaniacs. They take things so literally.

What do you call a meeting for the Knights of the Round Table? A sir conference.

My dream job is to start a hot air balloon business. However, I cannot seem to get it off the ground.

If this job does not work out, then I could really see myself being a mirror inspector.

Does refusing to go to the gym count as resistance training?

My first job was working for a paper company. I lost my job when the company folded

How do seismologists close a business deal? They shake on it.

People have told me I am condescending. That means I talk down to people.

With the rise in popularity of self-driving cars, it is only a matter of time before someone sings a country song about a salesman's car leaving him, too.

Before attending the show I was discussing my task with my wife and she said to me:

Don't try to be too charming, too witty, or too intellectual. Just be yourself.

A new proposal for online meetings... they cannot last longer than the battery, or a bladder.

My sales manager seems like a great guy. He told me to think of him not as a boss, but as a friend who is never wrong.

A bison, a cow, and a swordfish all attended a business conference. They were steak-holders.

My boss is a big fan of meetings. But he could never figure out why his targets were not being met. He decided we would keep having meetings every day until we increased our activity.

I told my wife she was drawing her eyebrows too high. She looked surprised.

I'm on a seafood diet. Every time I see food, I eat it!

PRODUCT SPECIALISTS

There were four engineers driving in a car. It spluttered and died, so they pulled over. At first, the electrical engineer said, "the coil is bad, we should replace the core." Then, the chemical engineer said, "no! It is the fuel. We should drain it then replace it." Next, the mechanical engineer said, "It is the valve. We need to get in there and take it apart." After a moment, the computer engineer says, "maybe we should all get out then get back in."

YOUR ROUND

The CEO of each beer company are at a bar together. The CEO of Budweiser orders a Bud Light, the CEO of Miller orders a Miller Light, the CEO of Coors orders a Coors Light. This continues until the bartender finally asks the CEO of Guinness what he would like. This CEO orders a coke. All the other CEOs ask him why he did not get a Guinness. He replied, "If none of you are drinking beer then why should I?"

COCKTAILS 4U

What do you call it when you mix alcohol and American Literature? Tequila Mockingbird.

TEAM MEETING

An employee found a genie in a bottle. The genie told the employee he would grant three

wishes. The man replied he loved visiting Hawaii, but he hated flying and did not want to take a boat. So, his wish was for a highway to go to the islands so he could drive. This shocked the genie. The genie started rubbing his head. He mentioned sinking pilings in the Pacific and the sheer number of supplies. It would be nearly impossible. So, the employee changed his tactic. He asked the genie to attend a sales meeting for his company and get everyone on board. The genie replied, "Were you picturing a one bridge or two?"

NEC AFTER SHOW PARTY

I only drink cocktails on two occasions: When I'm thirsty, and when I'm not!

A grasshopper walks into a bar and orders a drink. The bartender asks, "Hey, we have a drink named after you!" The grasshopper replies, "Really? You have a drink called a Steve?"

Why don't they serve cocktails at banks? Because they're trying to avoid a run on the mojitos!

What's James Bond's favourite cocktail ingredient? The element of surprise.

A neutron walks into a bar and orders a cocktail. "Hey, how much is that?" he asks the bartender. The bartender smiles and says, "For you? No charge!"

I'm writing a dissertation on the history of cocktails. It's intoxicating research!

Warning: Side effects of this cocktail may include uncontrollable laughter and excessive use of emojis.

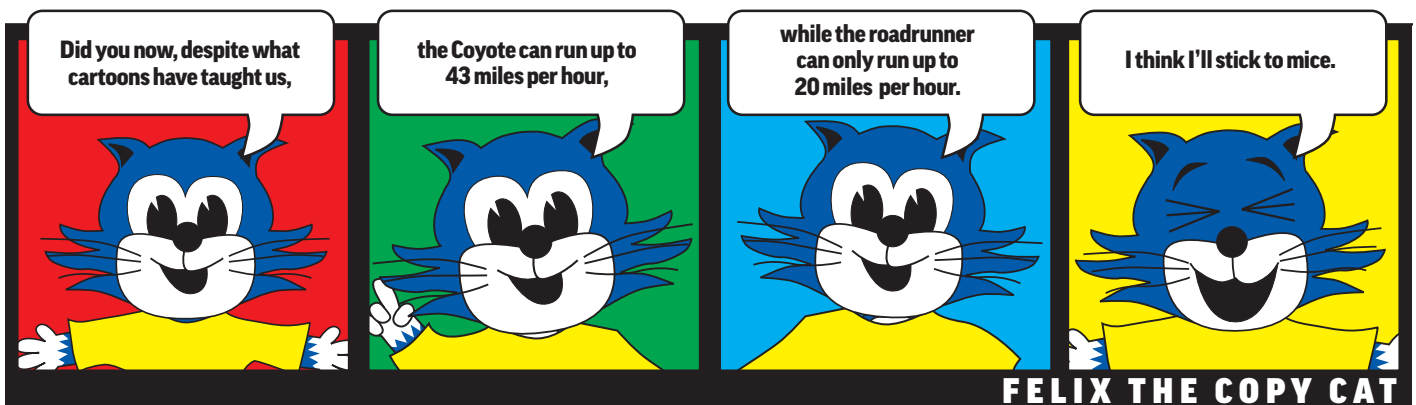
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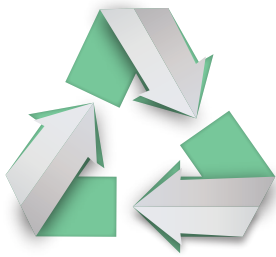
What did the printer say when it ran out of paper? "Oh sheet!"

What did the empty cyan toner printer cartridge say to a full one? "Cyanara!"

My HP printer died today. It was like a Brother to me!

What do a printer and a prostrate have in common? Control-P.





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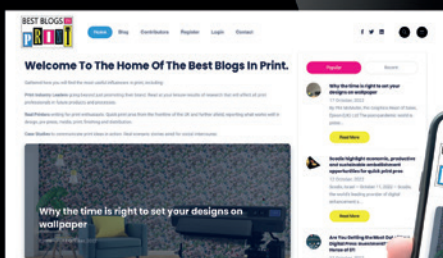
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