



What is standardisation, and how to achieve it?

Asia Color Alliance, a colour management consultancy firm, in conjunction with EFI, held a seminar cum workshop on standardisation at EFI's very new Colour Lab in its regional office in Singapore.



Attendees at the new EFI Colour Lab learnt what standardisation is and how to achieve it.

“The new Colour Lab marks EFI's continuous commitment and growth in Asia Pacific,” says Bernard Sun, regional sales manager, Asia Pacific, EFI.

Frits Beurskens, director & owner, Printmedia Consulting International, and CEO, Printmedia Global Solutions, was invited down to Singapore to speak on ‘What is standardisation and how to achieve it?’

Beurskens first determined what is colour, and then identified certain issues involving the designer, the start of the process, and the printer, the end of the process.

He defines colour as a perception, of which everyone's is different, and which is difficult to reproduce. Often, the customer is not satisfied with the end-result and the printer is blamed for it. Printers are forced to bear the costs for reprinting or squeezed to give discounts. They may even lose customers.

The dichotomy is that the designer has the freedom to be creative with colours and might not take into account the limitations of the production process, especially the capability of the printer. One causal factor is that everything has its own separate

and limited colour space, whether computer monitor, proofer, newspaper print, or offset print on coated paper, for instance.

One way to address this is, make colour perception objective by giving colours a value. By doing so, we can discuss colours objectively, put limitations to colour differences, and create colours which can be reproduced in all production stages. Output devices will still have to be calibrated, of course.

The ideal ΔE , or amount of deviation between the desired target colour and the realised result, would be ≤ 1 , which is not visible to the human eye. Nonetheless, the commercially acceptable deviation for printed matter with process colours is ≤ 4 .

Colour Management adjusts the different production steps in accordance to one another, to make colour production predictable. Beurskens says colour management first starts with standardising the print process. He says, different parts of the production process such as platemaking, publishing, reproduction, advertising, printing and finishing, all have to work together and standardise to-

gether so as to realise a controllable production process with predictability, repeatability and comparability of the print product.

Standardisation has to be realised, first of all, through the determination of procedures and working methods in the organisation. Next, standards are set according to the organisation's particular situation. Within the press room, standardisation encompasses the basic settings of the press such as the impressions and the fountain solution, as well as the colour densities and values, dot gain, and procedures.

Standards developed by independent institutes and organisations also need to be implemented, such as ISO 12647. Why ISO? ISO standards are international, widely accepted, regularly evaluated, and are a basis for further developments.

With standardisation, you can have a consistent and predictable result, using only one profile per paper type. Moreover, proofs shown to customers will have colours definitely achievable on the press. This translates to less downtime, compensation claims and re-prints.

In closing, Beurskens reiterated that for standardisation to be achieved, the design needs to work within the limits of production, colours need to be attributed specific values, colour management needs to be implemented, standardisation should start with the press department, and independent standards such as ISO need to be implemented.

The seminar was followed by an open forum, a workshop, and individual meetings. Attendees included Major Wong, immediate past president of the Institute of Printing, Singapore, and other prominent people from the region's graphic arts industry. ■



The organising team: Wilsenn Legaspi, technical manager, and Juanito Tamayo, president, Globis Inc; Frits Beurskens (standing), director & owner, Printmedia Consulting International, and CEO, Printmedia Global Solutions; Jonathan Lim, sales & marketing director, Asia Color Alliance; Bernard Sun (standing), regional sales manager, and Limmy Lin, regional support specialist, Asia Pacific, EFI.