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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Further developments in ink jet printhead fixed arrays announced at IMI conference

At Drupa 2004, one of the key product and technology developments was the FastJet demonstration from Sun Chemical and Inca Digital showing the throughput achievable with fixed arrays of ink jet printheads.

The IMI European Ink Jet conference, which took place in Lisbon in early November, provided a showcase for further developments in fixed array printhead technology.

New printhead platform from Xaar

Earlier this year, Xaar announced the development of a new printhead platform – the HSS, or Hybrid Side Shooter. Speaking at the IMI conference, Steve Temple, Xaar's Technical Director, explained the principles behind this major new platform technology and described HSS as "a radical new approach to ink jet, creating a new paradigm for single pass printing."

With 1,000 nozzles at 360dpi (two rows) and a print swath of 70mm, the HSS offers the image performance of greyscale technology with added functionality designed for single pass applications, such as self-recovery of jet-outs, easy fill, wide ink and fluid capability and a self-aligning mechanism for stitching heads into wide arrays.

The self-aligning mounting feature is critical to building fixed arrays of printheads and mounting consistency for the HSS has already been proven to better than 5µm.

Temple discussed several different potential print bar configurations, which will open up new single pass printing opportunities in packaging, textile and printed electronics applications.

HSS is not yet commercially available, but test units have been shipped to a number of Xaar customers. Commercial volume production of the first model in the HSS range is scheduled to begin by the end of 2006.

Fixed array development by KonicaMinolta

Akiyoshi Ohno, Managing Director of KonicaMinolta IJ Technologies provided an update on their extensive printhead range and previewed a 108mm wide fixed array of printheads providing 720dpi in a single pass.

New single pass printer development from Olympus

The Riso HC5000 colour printer was one of the key product announcements at Drupa last year and this successful 105ppm device has four single pass ink jet arrays developed by Olympus using Toshiba TEC printheads. Each colour print bar comprises 6 printhead assemblies (two printheads in each assembly) giving a total of 48 heads, stitched into 4 x 316mm arrays. Yoshihiko Masakawa, Division Manager, PS Business Division of Olympus, discussed the development issues of the HC5000 and also hinted at some of Olympus' future products.

The printhead configuration used in the HC5000 gives 300dpi (with 8 grey levels) in a single pass, but Masakawa showed that 600dpi single pass units could be possible and also wider arrays with a print swath of >600mm wide.

Olympus revealed that their next product would be a reel-to-reel digital press capable of printing 24m/min at 300dpi greyscale. A working prototype is scheduled for completion in the next 6 months and Olympus plan to preview this new press at the end of 2006.

HP Scalable Printhead Technology – Fixed array development

Announced earlier this year, HP's SPT printhead offers a "breakthrough in business printing" according to Rob Beeson, R&D Competitive Intelligence Team Leader. The 20mm printhead with 4,424 nozzles provides a new productivity platform for HP printer products. Pitched at HP's higher end products, the new printheads are already used in the HP OfficeJet Pro K550 and the HP Photosmart 3000 series.

These devices use scanning heads, but Beeson showed a prototype of 5 SPT heads on a single substrate, which would give a print swath of 100mm at 1,200dpi in a single pass. No information was given as to whether this configuration would be seen in an HP printer soon, but Beeson advised the IMI conference attendees to "stay tuned!"

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PHOTOS

High-resolution images are available for download from the Press Centre on the IMI web site www.imieurope.com



Yoshihiko Masakawa, Division Manager, PS Business Division - Olympus Corporation



Steve Temple, Technical Director – Xaar plc



Akiyoshi Ohno, Managing Director – KonicaMinolta IJ Technologies holding the prototype 720dpi single pass fixed array.



Rob Beeson, R&D Competitive Intelligence Team Leader of Hewlett-Packard holding the experimental printhead incorporating 5 SPT die on a single substrate, capable of printing a print swath of 100mm at 1,200dpi in a single pass.



About IMI

The Information Management Institute runs the largest and most comprehensive conference and seminar programme in the digital printing industry. Each year over 2,000 industry technical and management personnel from over 600 companies attend around 20 events covering all forms of digital printing.

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