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24 November 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

New European UV Ink Jet Conference

The 1st IMI UV Ink Jet Conference to be held in Europe attracted a large crowd to Lisbon earlier this month. The event provided a comprehensive overview of the basic capabilities of UV technology for ink jet printing applications. Not surprisingly the focus was primarily on UV ink jet flatbed printers with major industry players including Sericol, Avecia, Integration Technology, Sartomer & Inca Digital discussing UV chemistry, ink components, ink formulation issues, hardware development criteria and architecture. The event also included presentations from Canon and SunJet regarding future UV ink jet technologies.

Stewart Partridge of Web Consulting kicked off the conference with a look at the widespread adoption of UV ink jet printing today and future potential markets. According to research from Web Consulting, almost 50% of all output from flatbed printers is POP display boards and 3-D displays, but Stewart emphasised that speciality non-graphic applications are growing rapidly. With 35 vendors in the market he predicts strong growth in new machine placements worldwide, reaching over 1,000 units in 2005.

But will UV ink jet technology continue to focus almost exclusively on conventional screen printing applications? Two presentations suggested that its scope in the future could be much more far reaching.

Today we associate UV ink jet with high end printers using industrial piezo printheads, not desktop machines - but Mr Noguchi, General Manager of Canon's Inkjet Supply Material Development Centre gave an insight into their current R&D work using Canon's Bubblejet thermal printheads. This included a review of the properties of hydrophobic monomers used in 100% reactive UV ink versus the hydrophilic oligomers in aqueous UV ink and also investigated the advantages of aqueous UV for printing onto non-absorbing substrates. Print samples from desktop printers showed that UV ink jet inks can be used in Canon's inexpensive microfine thermal printheads to produce robust and photo quality images.

At the other end of the scale, moving beyond screen to high volume flexo applications, Nigel Caiger, Technical Manager of SunJet discussed UV ink jet for food packaging applications – particularly for indirect food packaging, where the advantages of faster processing would be a significant advantage over conventional solvent printing. Migration issues were covered in depth together with innovative photoinitiator chemistry. As the growth of conventional UV flexo inks continues at rates of about 15% per annum in packaging it is envisaged that UV ink jet will also penetrate similar markets in the future once single pass web configurations become proven and reliable.

IMI's next UV Ink Jet Symposium will take place in the Scottsdale, Arizona, USA from 2-3 February 2004. See www.imiconf.com for further details.

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Photo

High-resolution photographs (300 dpi RGB JPEGs) to accompany this news release are available for download on the IMI web site www.imieurope.com



Dr Noguchi, Canon, holding sample printed with aqueous UV inks from a bubble jet printhead

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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