

thinkFORWARD

thinkforum.com / Volume 1 / Issue 1

THE BIG PICTURE

Print isn't staid. With the help of the latest digital enhancements, it can become highly interactive.

MEDIA MATTERS

Every major North American mill is fully engaged in developing more paper stocks for inkjet printing.

COUNTDOWN TO think

think2016 is the premier user conference created solely for production inkjet professionals. Here's why.

INKJET REVOLUTION

**Content Critical Solutions and OneTouchPoint
Embrace Inkjet Technology to Drive Productivity**



Victor Bohnert
thINK Executive
Director

I'M EXCITED TO BE
THE FIRST TO WELCOME
YOU TO thINK FORWARD!

Early last year, a group of Canon Solutions America customers gathered to create thINK—a customer-led community of inkjet users sharing best practices, influencing product development and, ultimately, giving members a competitive advantage in this rapidly growing industry.

Less than a year after creating this vision, thINK was launched at the first annual conference. The record-setting event brought more than 350 attendees to New York for one of the highest-rated conferences ever held in our industry. The results are clear: in year one, thINK set a new standard for customer communities, and will profoundly influence the printing industry going forward.

thINK has since launched an online community that gives members unparalleled access to training and education, including every session held during the inaugural event. Check out the latest offerings at www.thinkforum.com

thINK Forward is the first in a number of new offerings being rolled out this year. Whether you prefer to engage online, or in person, thINK will deliver.

Finally, mark your calendars for thINK2016, taking place October 10-12 in sunny Boca Raton, Florida.

Thank you for your support of thINK!

WHAT'S TRENDING

What's trending
in the world of
inkjet printing:

OPTIONS

More media options for production inkjet are in demand, and media companies are quickly developing and bringing them to market.

QUALITY

New developments in inkjet have changed the perception of what a quality print is—inkjet now competes with toner and offset quality, and with the benefit of low running costs.

PRICING

Selling the inkjet value proposition—the combination of solid quality, quick turnaround times, and personalization—shifts the conversation to ROI and away from cost.

TURNAROUND TIMES

They are tight! Printers need to educate customers on what print job times are realistic and achievable.

DIRECT MAIL

Postal commingling of direct mail is one way to reduce costs and keep the postal sorting in-house—saving money and time on the overall process, from creation to the shipment of jobs.



GOING BEYOND THE PAGE

When it comes to omni-channel marketing, one thing is for certain—with the advent of QR codes and augmented reality (AR)—from one platform to the next, the user experience must remain seamless, engaging and user-friendly. The worst thing a marketer could do is ask a consumer to scan a page to find out that the so-called AR does not work as expected, or worse, does not work at all. The most important aspect to make print interactive is the creation of a fluid content experience that feels natural, not distracting.

“Omni-channel anticipates that customers may start in one channel and move to another ... Meaning these complex ‘hand-offs’ between channels must be fluid for the customer,” says John Bowden, senior vice president of customer care at Time Warner Cable, in a Marketo blog by Mike Stocker.

Marketers are capitalizing on digital enhancements to print, seeing the potential value in keeping consumers engaged beyond the page. On “The Digital Nirvana,” Heidi Tolliver-Walker explains that some multi-channel marketers are investing heavily in augmented reality for customers. The reason they’re hedging their bets on AR? It’s not just the experience that’s attractive, it’s that AR “eliminates the interim step of the Web.” There no longer needs to be a call to action, incentivizing the consumer to leave the print experience and access the Internet via mobile, tablet or desktop. The consumer can continue to engage with print while gaining value from a digital overlay. The key is that the AR experience needs to add value and to encourage people to interact further with the brand, not come off as a novelty used once and never again.



InfoTrends released a study last year on the key role that print plays in a multi-channel world. “Direct Marketing Production Printing & Value-Added Services: A Strategy for Growth” noted a resurgence in printed catalogs, even among the illusive Millennial audience. The study also found that marketers are more readily investing in targeted direct mail campaigns to reach consumers, realizing the need to reach consumers on the platforms they frequent, meaning pairing digital with print.

In “Fall in Love with Direct Mail All Over Again,” *Target Marketing* blogger Summer Gould reaffirms this sentiment by explaining that even among digital natives, print resonates as much as it always has, even more so as people prefer print to digital.

Statistics show that direct mail is still a viable option and can be used by marketers to reach consumers directly and efficiently. A digital experience connected with direct mail can enhance the experience, making it even more memorable and effective.

As the digital revolution shifts the way we consume content, print is the glue that holds media together. In an article written for the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Chava Gourarie relates the noted resurgence in print to a desire for nostalgic experiences. However, print has moved beyond the page, allowing us to interact with an immediacy that was unheard of a few short decades ago, showing that print and digital “can co-exist” in a balanced experience.

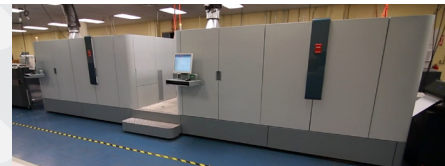
“The new won’t replace the old,” Gourarie says. “The new will hammer the old, deform it, reform it, reconceive, reconfigure, but the old won’t disappear.”

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OneTouchPoint's Chris Illman explains how the Océ VarioPrint i300 meets the flexibility and variability that printing firms need today.

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Content Critical Solutions was searching for a solution to streamline production. It found a Océ ColorStream 3500 to be the perfect answer.



5 FACTS WHAT thINK CAN OFFER YOU

- 1 Access to the largest independent production inkjet user group
- 2 Access to presentations, white papers, and resources that are specific to production inkjet
- 3 Access to Canon Solutions America leadership and the ability to influence inkjet product development
- 4 Ability to have a voice and influence over 25 finishing, substrate, and software companies
- 5 Learn from industry peers to maximize your production inkjet ROI and institute best practices

EMERGING FROM ITS 'SHELL' WITH CUTSHEET

Digital Print Manager Mike Johnson (left) evaluates a job with Steve Henck, vice president of operations at OneTouchPoint.

There is a bit of euphoric overreach often accompanying the subject of production inkjet printing, one that Chris Illman would like to set straight. As amazing as the technology may be, production inkjet isn't a magic pill that will transform your company overnight...nor is it accompanied by "the force" or any other supernatural phenomenon that, by extension, will naturally resonate with a printer's sales team.

By the same token, Illman—president of OneTouchPoint, a digital printing giant headquartered in Hartland, Wisconsin—is a huge proponent of the technology, as it enables both his firm and its customers to be more competitive in the marketplace.

“Every day that goes by, fewer and fewer off-set impressions are going to be printed. It's all about the cost, the flexibility, and the urgency.”

His firm was one of the handful of beta testers for the Océ VarioPrint i300 sheetfed press from Canon Solutions America, and the company has experienced much initial success with the device.

So while Illman offers some caveats to production inkjet newcomers, it is nothing that a little homework and some preparation won't solve.

OneTouchPoint was founded by CEO Tom Simunek in 2007 following a series of acquisitions that included Coakley Tech, CCI, Berman Printing and Jenny's Printing—10 deals in all. The company prides itself as a single-source, marketing execution services provider, addressing a multitude of needs from digital printing output to direct mail and fulfillment. A \$140 million annual performer, OneTouchPoint employs just south of 1,000 people.

The client list for OneTouchPoint (which includes health care, manufacturing, and retail) is a perfect match for the production inkjet environment, as they are markets with a heavy need for personalized customer communications. The need for variable, black-and-white content in tandem with color were easily met by the Océ VarioPrint i300, which provides speed, flexibility, and the ability to offer a lower-cost price point.

“We're living in the 'I want it now' society,” Illman observes. “You have shorter run lengths and more personalized, targeted communications. Every day that goes by, fewer and fewer offset impressions are going to be printed. It's all about the cost, the flexibility, and the urgency. The flexibility of the sheetfed i300 is going to claim a significant amount of offset impressions.”

From an operational standpoint, the greatest challenge facing not just the i300, but any production inkjet device, centers on the current limitations of stocks. Once paper manufacturers catch up with the technology, according to Illman, it will open “an endless amount of possibilities around that unit.”

The ease of use and automation paint a clear picture of the i300's productivity. OneTouchPoint did not endure any learning curve, as the company has already used several pieces of Canon Solutions America gear, including a bevy of Océ VarioPrint 6250s and black-and-white continuous-feed devices, which made the transition to the former “project Niagara” fairly seamless. Adding to that ease is the firm's use of the PRISMA-based front-end workflow.

Production inkjet technology fits well into the wheelhouse of OneTouchPoint's customer base. A large agricultural products and equipment manufacturer relied on the printer to crank out its technical manuals, a production process that entailed offset, and black-and-white work. That required two runs—one for the offset shells, the second for the digital black-and-white printing.

“With the i300, we're able to batch all these technical manuals and run them at very high speeds in one full pass,” Illman notes. “No more shell covers from commercial offset. Our productivity has increased because we're running multiple manuals and shorter versions that are more targeted—all in one pass.”

Another client that benefitted in the same vein was Sportsman's Connection, whose fishing and hunting map guides are sold through major retailers such as Cabela's and Wal-Mart, as well as sporting goods/outdoor enthusiast chains Bass Pro Shops and Dick's Sporting Goods. This customer didn't get left with a cache of unsold product and was able to reduce inventory levels by as much as 70 percent.

“Now they don't have all that inventory sitting there. It's a true books-on-demand model, with the cost point where they need it to be,” he says.

Output quality may not be one of production

inkjet technology's primary selling points, but it has won over some skeptics. Christie Kimbell, vice president of marketing for OneTouchPoint, notes that the company has received favorable comments regarding the printing quality coming off the VarioPrint i300 sheetfed press.

“Customers are surprised at how great it looks and are impressed with the sharpness of the picture quality when compared to offset printing,” she says. “It's very respectable.”

Illman believes that once more optimized stocks are made available, the quality of printing coming off the i300 will improve even more. “In this day that we live in, the quality is what it needs to be,” he says. “It's the other value propositions that deliver. Part of the allure of this machine is going to be the new applications that it can produce. You need to be selling the flexibility, the cost, speed, and the versioning.”

Kimbell explains that in an age of 1:1 personalization and variability, OneTouchPoint will increasingly focus its equipment investments on production inkjet to foster success and growth for both the firm and its customer base. “We are innovators and being the second printer to install this technology is an indication that we put our money where our minds are.”

And while production inkjet won't transform a printing business overnight, it will certainly accomplish the task in due time, especially for those firms that are careful to cultivate a sales force that is keen to the task. “A traditional sales force is not going to be able to sell these applications,” Illman concludes. “You truly need marketing-based, solutions-based, technology-type salespeople. Make sure you have your sales force and sales strategy done first, then look to this type of technology to support that.”



Chris Illman
President

AT A GLANCE ONETOUCHPOINT

Hartland, Wisconsin

Markets Served: Health care, manufacturing, retail, financial services

Capabilities: Commercial sheetfed, digital, wide-format, binding and finishing

Ancillary Services: Kitting, fulfillment, direct mail, marketing, U.Connect print management, digital asset management, digital storefronts



SEARCHING FOR EFFICIENCY GAINS

Jerome Ramsammy, lead operator (left), and Mario Ragusa, vice president of operations at Content Critical Solutions, look over a job.

As the offset printing arena became more and more difficult to compete in, Content Critical Solutions, of Moonachie, New Jersey, began to search for solutions to help it streamline, gain efficiencies, and reduce waste.

Only a few years earlier, the print-and-mail specialist had trimmed back drastically—closing a plant in California and relocating its New York facility in order to become more focused and efficient. Now it was time to direct its energies toward efficiency savings on the shop floor.

It was around this time that Content Critical Solutions began to investigate production inkjet digital printing. The company had been using black-and-white cut-sheet and continuous-feed machines to produce its customer mastheads, either preprinted on rolls or sheets. And when you have 150 to 200 client mastheads, the inventory piles can build up in a hurry.

“Today, you can see the increase in the quality of images coming off our inkjet press. Plus, the color gamuts have expanded.”

Content Critical Solutions had been tracking production inkjet technology for some time before opting for an Océ ColorStream 3500 digital color printing system from Canon Solutions America. The press enabled Content Critical Solutions to eliminate the need for its

cut-sheet machines. Now, instead of having preprinted hardcopy shelf stealers, the mastheads are digitally stored and can be output perfectly to the exacting standards required by the printer’s customer base.

“Customers now no longer have to put half a million mastheads on our shelves; they can pay for what they use in the running rates of the job,” points out John Slaney, chief technology officer for Content Critical Solutions. “That was a major ROI factor. Phase two of this acquisition has been enhancing the document itself with the addition of color. We’re reaching out for new applications that utilize color and expanding the boundaries of the services we can provide.”

The masthead integration reduced the average production and printing time of jobs by about 80 percent. Printing projects that used to take five days for completion can now be hammered out in less than eight hours.

Another vital component in Content Critical Solutions’ toolbelt has been the addition of an Océ PRISMA print workflow and output management system for the transpromo environment. “We’re leveraging PRISMA and integrating it with our front end to our customers and integrating some of the functionality into the back end, creating a component solution that utilizes best-of-breed programs or processes supporting the efforts from behind the scenes,” Slaney says.

Adding the new press was a watershed moment for Content Critical Solutions, which serves the financial, insurance, retail, government, and utility verticals with transactional printing and processing services. On the transactional end, Content Critical Solutions converts back-end mainframe systems into viewable documents.

In addition to its content management, compliance messaging, and reporting solutions, Content Critical Solutions offers ancillary services ranging from customer retention programs, Web marketing portals, inventory management, and digital document archiving.

Content Critical Solutions took a pragmatic approach to its inkjet ramping up process, printing black-only at first. This gave the company time to become more comfortable with the ColorStream 3500—how to fine-tune color and learn more about what paper stocks could be used.

“We met with a number of vendors to learn more about the different papers and systems that could help us leverage this technology and ease some of our pain,” Slaney notes. “Within seven months, we had converted 90 percent of our mastheads and we were operating fully.”

One of the unintended consequences of the efficiency gains was the need to make related gear as fruitful on the production front. Fred Van Alstyne, chief operating officer, notes the company made upgrades in inserting, quality control and camera systems—moves intended to match the efficiency of the ColorStream 3500.

One of the biggest workflow changes was the switch to roll-to-roll production, with off-line/near-line finish-

ing. “It has made a dramatic change in the way we handle paper within our organization,” Van Alstyne says. “It has dramatically increased uptime on the printer and has given us many channels in which we can take our output and feed it directly into the inserter or other off-line systems.”

Paper compatibility proved to be an eye-opening experience for Content Critical Solutions. Van Alstyne points out that certain stocks were not conducive to the ColorStream, and credits paper vendors with providing a wealth of information in this regard. Since the initial ramping-up period, several new inkjet-friendly stocks have been introduced in the marketplace.

As sciences go, Slaney adds, it can be a bit inexact. “We’ve had situations where we were buying a stock from one mill that had a certain treatment to it, and that treatment wouldn’t be in place with the same stock from another mill,” he says. “It affected our scanning equipment, all the way down the line. So [paper] does require a lot of testing and validation.

“Today, you can see the increase in the quality of images coming off our inkjet press. Plus, the color gamuts have expanded.”

Van Alstyne sees opportunities for his firm with prospects in the in-plant space, as he anticipates most of these shops shedding their own internal printing operations. He would like to see Content Critical Solutions become a major supplier under the guise of customer communication management services.

“We will drive the white paper factory to the next level,” Van Alstyne concludes. “We will be looking to start to capture the envelope side as well, driving toward that in the near future.”



Fred Van Alstyne
COO

AT A GLANCE CONTENT CRITICAL SOLUTIONS

Moonachie, N.J.

Markets Served: Financial services, insurance, retail, government, utilities

Capabilities: Web and sheetfed offset, digital printing, wide-format printing, binding and finishing, mailing and fulfillment

Ancillary Services: Content management, compliance messaging, customer retention programs, Web marketing portals, inventory management and digital document archiving

CHANGING THE WORLD OF PRODUCTION INKJET.

HIGH-QUALITY COLOR COMPETITIVELY PRICED OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY TRUSTED PARTNER HIGH PRODUCTIVITY

CANON SOLUTIONS AMERICA VOTED THE NUMBER ONE “COMPANY TO WATCH” AT THE 2015 INKJET SUMMIT.

Recognized as the top “Company to Watch” at the 2015 Inkjet Summit, we are committed to helping customers take their production print operations to the next level. That’s why we’re pleased to present our newest inkjet presses. The Océ ImageStream™ 3500 inkjet press is the first full-color continuous feed Océ inkjet solution to print on standard offset paper providing offset productivity with the variable data print benefits of digital printing. The Océ VarioPrint® i300 sheetfed inkjet press features innovative cutsheet inkjet technology at a savings of up to half the operating costs of traditional toner-based equipment. Discover how these production inkjet presses will revolutionize your inkjet print production workflow.

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TRANSITIONING ‘PAPER TO PIXEL’

Inkjet-customized Google Cardboard makes ‘virtual’ a reality.

Created for a trade show, Trekk’s customized Cardboard gives users a glimpse into virtual reality.



These days you would be hard-pressed to find someone who hasn’t at least heard of augmented or virtual reality (AR/VR), whether they’ve actually experienced it first-hand or not. However, most people are not entirely familiar with Google Cardboard, which is a virtual reality experience set inside of a cardboard viewer and played on a smartphone. After downloading the Google Cardboard app on a smartphone, the user simply places their phone inside the cardboard viewer, launches the app and chooses from a variety of VR experiences. Two eyeholes are fitted with clear lenses and set only a few inches from where the smartphone is placed. Two frames appear on the smartphone screen to create an immersive experience, and head tracking allows the user to dictate the view on their screen while moving through the VR experience, mimicking movement and perspective in real life.

But what can be made of this trend toward AR/VR, and how can digital inkjet printing and marketing services providers take advantage of this new and highly interactive technology?

Trekk, a full-service marketing agency and one of the primary creative agencies for Canon Solutions America, has started to experiment with the idea that Google Cardboard can be enhanced with inkjet digital printing, by either printing directly on the cardboard itself or via an inkjet printed label.

“We see Google Cardboard as a really excellent way to take our clients and their audiences from what we refer to as ‘Paper to Pixel,’” explains Sarah Mannone, vice president of client services at Rockford, Illinois-based Trekk.

In the case of direct mail, hypothetically, a direct marketing services provider could create a direct mail campaign that includes a Google Cardboard viewer. This would enable recipients to enter virtual environments that they wouldn’t ordinarily have access to. For example, a direct mail provider may want to give customers and prospects the ability to explore new equipment it’s recently purchased, or take a tour of its production facility.

Another way to enhance print is with augmented reality, a novel way for companies to get consumers to engage with content. Before AR, direct mail pieces typically were limited to QR codes or personalized URLs to entice consumers to interact with a brand.

The amount of time invested in developing multimedia experiences is continuously increasing, making Google Cardboard a viable option for a company looking to pair a virtual or augmented experience with direct mail. It’s never been more important to show how print can evolve and be adapted for the digital world.

Mannone stresses that it’s important to “continually reinforce the value of print as a springboard to digital engagement.”

MEDIA MATTERS



John Crumbaugh
Media Marketing Manager
Canon Solutions America

Today, more and more mainstream papers are being produced as inkjet, digital, and offset grades, allowing jobs to move between technologies based on the best technology suited to

the job. With the advent of sheetfed inkjet, this commercial focus continues to grow and paper mills are responding.

Inkjet papers are now available in basis weights from 22# text up to 9-pt. card stock. The surfaces of the inkjet sheets are also becoming more commercially oriented. Products with smooth surfaces, shades, and brightness for uncoated and multiple coated product lines are adding diversity to the inkjet offering. Inkjet papers have moved from a one-size-fits-all 20# and 24# bond in 96 bright white to selections in the hundreds of paper types, weights, shades, and textures.

The future holds even more innovation. Every major North American paper mill is fully engaged in developing more paper stocks. The mills realize that inkjet production is past the tipping point and is a fully accepted technology for print. This trend will encourage migrating work from more expensive toner equipment or from traditional offset equipment to inkjet, where customers benefit from personalization and mass customization.

Ultimately, increased media options become another key way that the inkjet market is moving forward.

HIGHER ED MAILINGS USE DATA TO GET PERSONAL

Every year, colleges and universities invest heavily in direct mail, both in terms of volume sent and total budget. With tuitions easily running \$50,000 a year, and the opportunity for decades of fundraising after graduation, these marketers have excellent reason to invest in the most effective marketing possible. On top of that, they often have the kind of data that leads to impactful variables.

Here are two college mailpieces from the Who's Mailing What?! direct mail database that combine VDP, PURLs, and online microsites to make the student the star of their marketing.

Instead of sending recipients to the main website or a general applicant landing page, both of these schools created individualized microsites for each student they're recruiting. Obviously, they're not creating each of those microsites themselves. They're using an integrated marketing partner who can take their list, generate the microsite, generate the individualized URL, and generate the mailpiece that showcases all of that to the student (and hopefully emails and mobile marketing as well). This allows the marketer to leverage any number of variables between the mailpiece, microsite and other messaging to push the buttons most likely to get that candidate to submit an application.

Elon University

The first mailpiece is from Elon University, and it's all about empowerment. The oversized, glossy postcard features an empowering message: "It All Starts Here: Elon will empower you to turn classroom lessons into real world actions." Then it invites the recipient to "See for yourself" and offers a URL personalized with the student's name.

The back plugs four typical university selling points



(travel, campus life, class size, and Division I sports), but across the top of the card, again, it calls on the recipient to visit their personalized landing page. The middle rule goes back to empowerment: "Confirm your information and create the ultimate college experience."

This is a one-two marketing knockout on students a little unsure about their future: Make it personal, then let them take control of the experience and drive themselves right into your sales funnel.

University of Advancing Technology

UAT uses the same trick, but puts on a different show. Here the message isn't as much about empowerment as it is about fitting in. The visual component is also far more emphasized. The name-personalized PURL is the featured image on both the front and back of the mailer, and again on the inside.

This piece is visually dynamic with text running at all angles. The PURL is the dominant graphic, though, and that essential puts the recipient's name in lights. The central message also hits that same note of flattery and belonging: "As a high achiever, you'll feel right at home here."

Like Elon, UAT calls on the recipient to go to their personal landing page in several places. Unlike Elon, the list of majors is right in the mailpiece, and the text focuses heavily on the future: "Excellence Nurtures Excellence." The overall sales pitch is 'you know what you want, come here to get it.'

These mailpieces also show how you can personalize a single part of a marketer's campaign using VDP, but leave the rest in-brand. The messaging for each piece shows no signs of personalization, but with that name-unique PURL, recipients can't help but feel like you've created something just for them.

COUNTDOWN TO think

- 5 / Make your mark on the industry and be part of the generation of printers who lead the inkjet revolution.
- 4 / Expand your solution options by networking with leading software, finishing, and media companies that cater specifically to the production inkjet marketplace.
- 3 / View some of the latest applications produced on inkjet presses and see output quality advances that make inkjet viable for the graphic arts.
- 2 / Network with your printing industry peers and gain valuable insight into best practices that are being deployed across the country.
- 1 / Learn ways to satisfy your customers, improve your ROI, and profit from migrating client pages away from more-costly toner to production inkjet.

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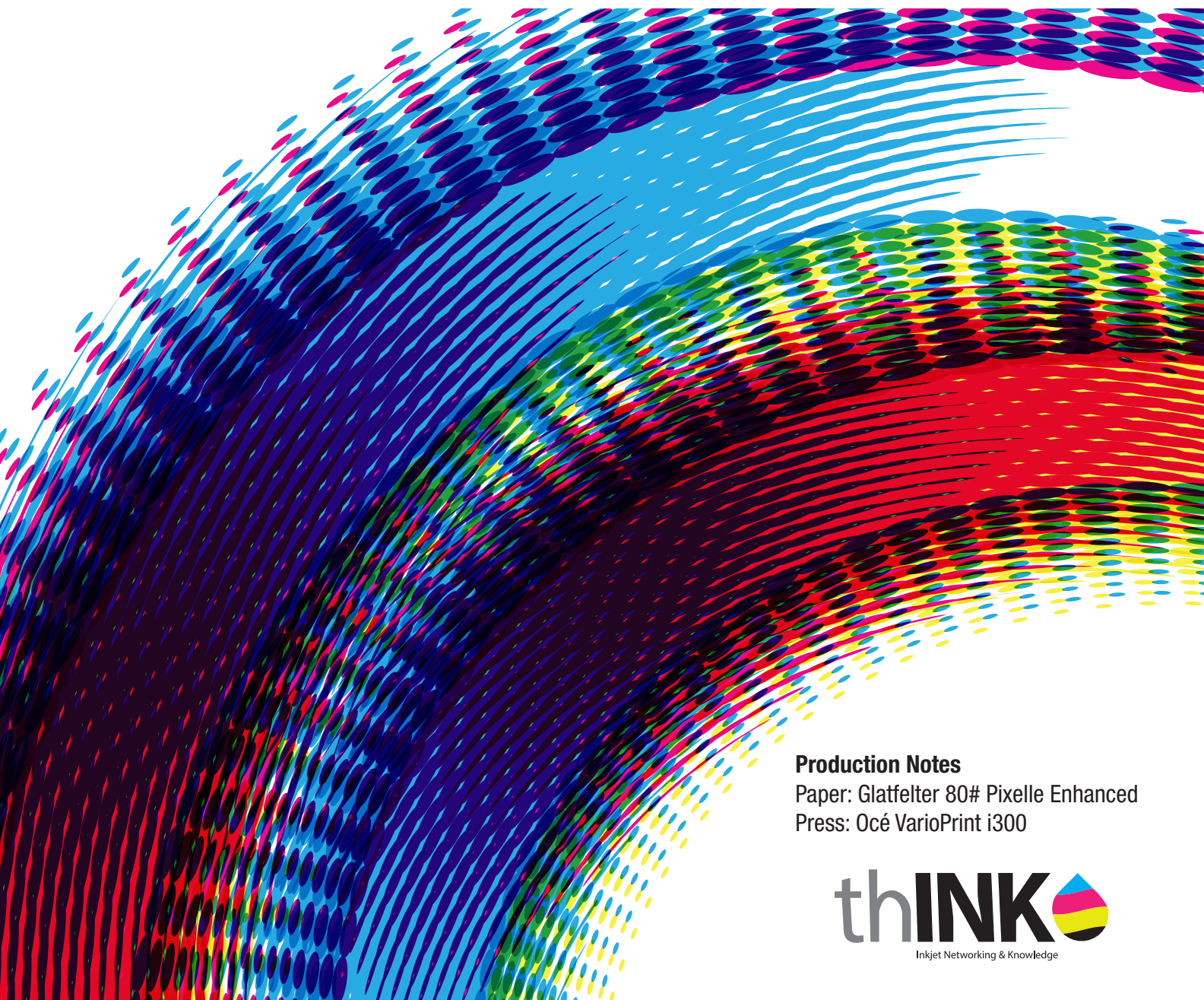


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Production Notes

Paper: Glatfelter 80# Pixelle Enhanced
Press: Océ VarioPrint i300

