



FFEI managing director Andy Cook

New Year predictions - FFEI's Andy Cook

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Andy Cook, managing director, FFEI

What do you think will be the greatest opportunity for and threat to the print industry next year?

In 2011 the world has clearly faced a very challenging period of economic turmoil and without doubt the repercussions of this will continue to reverberate into 2012. For the print industry this will mean reduced consumption and challenges to financing capital investments, a subject that has already been well reported.

On a more positive note, we see continued growth opportunity for print solutions in the markets of China, India and South America driven largely by the increases in literacy rates – good quality British products that are competitively priced should continue to do well in these markets.

As customers' run lengths continue to drop and lead times shorten we see increasing opportunities for businesses that provide and adopt new technologies to meet those needs. Digital printing and new workflow technologies should continue to flourish as businesses drive out costs with disruptive approaches and investments.

What do you believe is the most under-recognised aspect in printing that is likely to gain more prominence in 2012?

Having recently bought a beautifully printed book of old car pictures, I think quality print jobs like this that are like a work of art could become more prominent in the future. As vinyl records have now become a niche marketplace I would see a growth in commercial printing of inspirational printed products for the recipients to keep. The quick and low quality, disposable print market will be consumed by the digital communication methods but desire will grow for specific high quality print.

What do you hope to get out of Drupa 2012?

At FFEI we hope for new business, new customers and fresh joint venture opportunities with our advanced print technologies. For us, Drupa is all about the future of the print industry and we hope we'll not only show our own new ideas and approaches, but also find new partners who have fresh approaches and ideas with which we can work. High speed and quality inkjet printing, new workflow technologies and of course CTP will be our main focus at the show.

What new technology do you expect to see at Drupa 2012 in your sector?

We expect the advances in industrial inkjet single pass printing to become much more widely adopted. The technology has come a long way in the past few years driven by the advances in head and ink technology and the industry can expect to see suppliers with next generation web and sheetfed printing applications.

In the areas of workflow software we are expecting to see new functionality to help drive new business models such as software as a service (SaaS) and pay per usage. The online and cloud computing revolution also brings new dimensions to what will be possible in the future and we expect to see these presented as new applications and ways of working.

It's clear that 3D print simulations and collaboration technology will also continue to advance and we expect to see and show new ideas that help shorten design to manufacture cycle times and reduce overall production costs.

What new technology do you expect to see at Drupa 2012 in other sectors?

With the big developments in digital printing we expect to see announcements in the areas of finishing technology especially in the fields of packaging and labelling where laser cutting and novel ideas for creasing are beginning to be developed. These are one of the areas that need to be addressed to help the overall adoption of digital printing in packaging and labelling.

What do you think the main trends will be at Drupa 2012 in your sector?

FFEI started life in the commercial print markets, but in recent years has developed businesses in the broader markets of labelling, packaging and

even décor. In all of these segments we expect Drupa to see the adoption of digital printing especially utilising inkjet technology. At Drupa 2008 people got to see the 'art of the possible' with inkjet technology – they didn't see the 'here and now'.

At Drupa 2012 it will be more about the 'art of reality' and seeing actual inkjet applications that are working today and demonstrating profitable solutions. Specifically we expect to see momentum growing in label printing where inkjet printing has brought huge advantages to the whole process and the early adopters have demonstrated that the technology works in production. Along with this we expect to see many new software tools for the workflow to aid collaboration, cross-media functionality and integration of new mobile devices and operating systems.

What trends do you think will emerge at Drupa 2012 in any other sectors?

Difficult question, although with the weakening Euro I suspect the Irish bar in the Altstadt will be very busy at night during in the early days of Drupa and this trend might extend across all of the hostelrys by the end of the show!

What can the industry do to increase its profile next year?

I have two main themes here. Firstly with the lack of young people joining the industry we should improve the way printing is presented to the younger generation. There are many exciting changes going on with technology and media and we need to push this out to the schools and colleges to drive excitement and interest in the younger generations. The industry needs fresh people and ideas to be able to progress and grow.

Secondly and on a related subject, the industry needs to be more open to the adoption of new technologies and approaches to business that allow printing to remain relevant to the economy and society. After all it's one of the few areas of the UK economy that actually make and manufacturer products and without the right investments and drive for change we face the prospect of a bleak outlook.

What will you do differently next year?

Attend Drupa – we haven't done that for nearly 4 years!

<http://www.printweek.com/news/1110596/New-Year-predictions---FFElS-Andy-Cook/?DCMP=ILC-SEARCH>