

Musings of a Carolina Print Curmudgeon

## Didn't Make It to Drupa? Missed the Technological Avalanche? Read All About It!

*by William C. Lamparter, PrintCom Consulting Group*

If you didn't make it across the pond to Düsseldorf and Drupa '08, you can read all about it in any or all of the graphic arts trade magazines. Virtually every vendor's website will tell you about that company's Drupa introduction along with their standard fare.

It's important stuff to know about because Drupa showcases the latest products and is a technology incubator and concept testing ground. It's knowledge that you can use. But for the reading stay-at-home printer, it is difficult to separate the hype from reality as the information is spewed out in the industry's print and e-sources. For the unvarnished facts (okay, opinion) the two sources are --- here and on PICA's website where I'll provide a curmudgeon's Drupa technology review for the next several weeks and on the web at [whattheythink.com](http://whattheythink.com). WTT does publish vendor press releases (take them with a grain of salt) but more usefully they publish the opinions of the industry's leading consultants. You can start your post-Drupa education by going to [whattheythink.com](http://whattheythink.com)'s archives and pulling up the Drupa articles and videos.

Drupa introduced technology and products from the concept stage set the industry's trends for the next four years. Drupa provides an avalanche of technology and products. If you haven't been there it is hard to vision; 19 buildings housing almost 2,000 exhibitors from 52 countries that are traipsed through by almost 400,000 printers from around the world.

Advanced technologies and their new product implementations shown at Drupa most often first become available in North America at the following Graph Expo --- this fall in October --- and sometimes not until a year and a half later at the U.S. globally oriented “Print” show. We were at Drupa with a staff of PrintCom Consulting Group consultants and will report to PICA members our impressions of the technology and product changes that we think will be most important to commercial printers over the next four years.

Journalists and analysts like to describe Drupa and the changes likely to come to the industry with a technology label. In the recent past we have had the “Digital Drupa” and the “JDF Drupa”.

Pre-Drupa hype and analysts’ forecasts predicted that the 14<sup>th</sup> Drupa would be the “Ink Jet Drupa”.

And in many ways it was.

But it was more – much more.

Drupa ’08 was the ...

“Technologically diverse Drupa”

Drupa technology included virtually all of the printing processes used to globally communicate ideas, educate, promote, instruct, and to colorfully clothe packages as well as to entertain.

New prepress software abounded. Offset lithography surprised many with new press platforms, more automation, and an integrated approach to manufacturing. Likewise, postpress equipment kept pace with faster speeds, more automation and an increasing creep to integration. Twenty-seven companies brought ink jet technology to Drupa. Drupa '08 was an avalanche of technological diversity.

On the PICA website I'll detail PrintCom's Drupa technological diversity observations, preview new products expected to debut in North America at Graph Expo, and review the educational opportunities available at the U.S.'s big show. In true curmudgeon, we'll separate the hype from reality.

Bill Lamparter is principal of the PrintCom Consulting Group with an international clientele of printers and industry suppliers. He is well-known for 'telling it like it is' which is how he comes by the curmudgeon moniker. He often asks provocative questions. PrintCom's offices are located in Waxhaw, NC. He can be contacted at (704) 843-5350 or by e-mail at [printcom@aol.com](mailto:printcom@aol.com). Comments and questions about his observations are welcome