

Bulletin

Idealliance Monthly News

February 16, 2017 • Volume 2, No. 2

U.S. Graphic Arts Industry & Standards: A Brief History

The following is the fifth installment in a six-part series that offers a brief history of the U.S. Graphic Arts Industry's involvement in graphic arts standards activity.

By David Q. McDowell

(Last time, David Q. McDowell of Eastman Kodak Company covered the international expansion of industry standards. In this installment he looks at later and current activities.)

In the 1990s, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-accredited Committee for Graphic Arts Technologies Standards (CGATS) continued to be a vital player in the standards development process. It coordinated graphic arts input into other standards groups and, more importantly, provided an umbrella for moving industry specifications into standards.

A KEY PLAYER

Idealliance is, and has long been, a key player in the development and adoption of standards. As standards move to a global arena, Idealliance is playing an ever increasing role in U.S. and international standards through its active participation in ISO working groups and U.S.-based organizations such as USTAG and CGATS. Recently, Idealliance received ISO "Liaison A" status, which grants the Association a unique role to develop draft specifications within ISO.

In addition, Idealliance international affiliates around the globe have more than 800 members, providing the association with a platform for engaging with international print markets. For more information on the growing international role of Idealliance, contact Timothy Baechle, Idealliance Director of Global Print Media Markets & Technologies, at tbaechle@idealliance.org or (703) 837-1069.



Typical were CGATS.7-1985, Graphic Technology:

Pallet Loading for Printed Material, which was a joint activity with the Research and Engineering Council of the Graphic Arts Industry; and CGATS.6-1995, Graphic Technology: Specifications for Graphic Arts Printing—Type 1, which was a cooperative effort with SWOP (Specifications for Web Offset Publications).

Streamlined Process

In January 1995, the programs of the IT8 Committee were merged into CGATS to streamline the administrative process—many of the same people were involved in both committees. The IT8 designations are being maintained on all the standards developed under IT8, but all new standards are carrying the CGATS designation.

In 1994, in response to a suggestion from Frank Benham, CGATS created the Roland Zavada Standards Award, commonly referred to as the "Rollie." The intent of this award is to recognize the significant contributions of an individual toward the development of U.S. graphic arts standards.

The name was chosen to recognize the contributions made by Rollie in organizing and creating the structure for both the US and international graphic arts standards activities. Tom Dunn was the unanimous choice as first recipient of this award which was presented to him at the IPA Annual Technical Conference in May 1994.

Standards Support Groups

Two industry groups were created in the early 1990s in direct support of the standards activity: OSCA (Open Standards Color Association) and DDAP (Digital Distribution of Advertising for Publications) Association. Tom and Patrice

(Ctd. on following page)

Dunn were strong participants in both these activities and provided much of the creative thinking that enabled them.

The inaugural sponsors of OSCA were Agfa, DuPont, Fuji, Kodak, Radius, and 3M. The goals were to provide support within the graphic arts industry for the testing and implementation of the color related standards that had, and were being, developed within the accredited standards community. The key issue was to encourage the industry to put aside issues of short-term gain in the interest of the long-term growth (and efficiency) of printing and publishing.

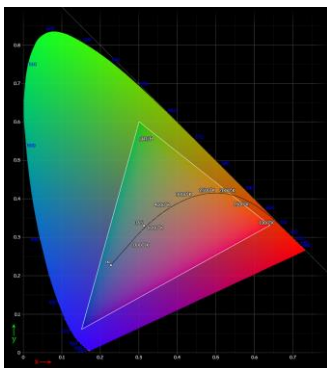
The DDAP Association grew out of discussions at the 1990 Lasers in Graphics/Electronic Design in Print Conference¹ and has been a user-driven organization. It has focused on:

- Developing a consensus set of user requirements for the digital distribution of advertising, primarily from the agency and publisher perspective, and
- Testing the various implementations of standards offered by manufacturers.

It has also played a key role in educating the advertising and publishing communities about the advantages of standards, and in providing a unified voice for this community in dealings with hardware and software manufacturers. CGATS/SC6 was created to provide standards development in response to the requirements defined by the DDAP Association.

Vendor Community

Today, the printing and publishing industry has clearly evidenced its support of both industry specifications and accredited standards by its backing of conference sessions and articles devoted to standards and in response to various surveys. In addition, many trade associations now have standards committees. There is also a new openness in cooperative efforts between industry groups, consortia, and the accredited committees.



The initial support for, and involvement in, accredited standards activities have come from the vendor technical community at both the ANSI and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) levels. Not surprisingly, a very high percentage of these participants have also been members of TAGA (Technical Association of the Graphic Arts). The TAGA Annual

Technical Conference—to be held this year March 19-22 in Houston—has also been the venue of choice for publication of much of the technical background material developed in support of the standards activities.

The growing involvement of the user community has been encouraging. This is an important component, needed to ensure that standards are not only technically correct but also practical, useable, and meet a real need. The International Prepress Association (IPA) and Graphic Arts Association (GAA), in particular, have been strong supporters of these activities.

Those interested in more information on present activities are urged to contact Mary Abbott, Director of Standards, NPES The Association for Suppliers of Printing and Publishing Technologies, Reston, Va., at (703) 264-7200.

(Next month, McDowell will conclude the series with a look at CGATS, ISO, and SWOP standards activities.)

David Q. McDowell, Standards Consultant with Eastman Kodak Company, has been instrumental throughout his career in forming and promoting print standards in the United States and around the world. He was honored with the 2013 Idealliance Leonard Holzinger Award.

¹Dunn, S.T., Dunn, P.M., "Industry Roundtable - Digital Distribution of Advertising for Publications (DDAP)", LIG/EDP90 Conference Proceedings, Vol. 1, September 1990, pp 283-300.

