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Meeting Notes, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October – Digital Solutions  
Thanks to the show organisers for providing the room!

Attendees (apologies to anyone not listed):

Adrian Davies, Quickcut	Andrew Wilson, Unity
Andy Eakins	Andy Psarianos, FE Burman
Andy Myles, Vio	Anthony Kay, ACCA
Antony Newson, Alphagraphics	Bill Greenwood, Gilchrist
Bob Marchant, Colour Therapy	Bryan Sunderland, QCCI
Bruce Finn, Headley Brothers	Chris Batson, FT
Chris Bunnett	Chris Reed, William Reed
Chris Smith, Studio One	Craig Santus, Emcee
Chris Gonta, Colour Therapy	Colin Price, TPT
Damaris Kuzminski, Lowe	Darren Parker, Admagic
David Dilling, Markzware	Dominic Hughes, ICP
Darren Murray, Seven	Elizabeth Odonno, AppleCart
Gio Canterella, Lowe Broadway	Gareth Perry, Eagle Moss
Gee Ranasinha, TPT	Hannah Newberry, DAL
Iain Bell, F1 Colour	Iain Boyle, OneVision
James Lewis, Pro2col	Jay Cousins, RivCom
Jim Duggan, Headley Brothers	Jocelyn Lomer, isdn datacom
John Charnock, St Ives	Marcus Kirby, TFG
Maria Machera, Creo	Mark Maguire, TAG
Mark Stone, RivCom	Matt Spencer, httpprint
Michael Mann, Economist	Niall Coady, Target Colour Group
Nick Martin, Quark	Richard Lack, Vio
Rob Brack, RBI	Robert Tipping, AT Graphics
Roy Saunders, Economist	Roy Topp, APPA
Sharon Hodgson, PrintCafe	Stephen Douglas, FEP-1
Steve Davies	Steve Helsby, Adtec
Stuart Macer, AppleCart	Tim Cox, ROI Distribution
Tome Habashi, Manson Group	Will Pollard, Acrobat User Forum
Roland Martin, Seven	Stephen Grange, Independent
Jonathan Levy, PMM	Neil Argent, PMM

## Welcome and Introduction - Gio Cantarella

- **5 min sponsor update – Creo, Maria Machera**

- **DAL Website - Gio Cantarella**

The new site will be going live in November, DAL members will be notified of the URL once live. The site will be purely for the UK Digital Ad Lab and will contain meeting details, notes and so on. Attendees were shown some screengrabs from the new site.

- **BRIDGs Books - Gio Cantarella**

This is progressing and we now have a rough draft of the BRIDGs booklets with added DAL introductions and further information sections. There is also a glossary page, resources section and contribution from Bob Marchant on his photography work. The DAL Steering Committee has worked very hard at getting this document to this stage and we are hoping to have the final document in production early 2004.

- **The state of the data communications market – Chris Bunnett**

When looking into the demise of the companies we had heard from over the last few years, notably WAM!Net and VIO, what struck me was the relatively poor adoption of the two systems. Upon further examination, the most common answer to the question, “Why didn’t you change over?” was, “ISDN works and all of our clients still have/use it”.

Undeniably, the failure to successfully replace ISDN as a transfer mechanism has had tremendous impact on our industry. In a recent survey, 70% of the company surveyed still used ISDN to transfer files and thought that it was a viable system for the next 5 years. Nonetheless, over 80% used CD and courier as an alternative method and almost everyone used email!!! This last process was/ is the most apparent heir to the ISDN mantle.

In discussing the future with Jocelyn Lomer of isdndatacom, he stressed the importance of ISDN in situations where ADSL was not available yet and its advantage in not having the contention issues associated with DSL exchanges. They have also focused on the VIO environment, acting as a gateway onto the system where people need to access it but do not have the whole package.

(Quote from Jocelyn’s email – *“An access method is an equivalent of a feeder e.g. a B road to access an A Road and then to a motorway, in the same way can ISDN can let us access the futuristic broader bandwidth platforms such as VIO. ISDN signalling provides and end to end nailed up bandwidth nationally and internationally with a guaranteed throughput unlike DSL Access, whose quality of service is determined by the number of users and the variability of the core Internet”.*)

The situation is as it is because as an industry we did not approach our communications as corporately as we should have. We preferred to maintain our individual connections rather than outsourcing it and moving on to a more structured network. To be fair, the two contenders did little to encourage us to drop our ISDN systems – I feel they should have made more attempt to replace them, offering almost anything to get the lines out of buildings. On the other hand, they suffered by having to subsidise the costs of the 2Mbit lines in far out places. It was just handled badly; what should have been a breakthrough in communications has just fizzled out at all but the top end. Everyone now talks of ADSL and FTP.

The good news is that both companies are still as committed to our industry as ever, the ISDN market is not growing and there are new transfer companies coming along.

As I was writing my notes, I noticed the announcement of 'Tokens' by Creo. It set out to work like a blend of email and FTP. Also in the frame is 'Mass Transit' who are making big waves in the USA.

Maria gave a thumbnail update on Tokens and invited the group to the stand at 3 PM. Also subsequent writeup in Print Week

- **Remote proofing/flat planning – Marcus Kirby**

Marcus talked about the current trends in flatplanning solutions - such as being browser-based for greater collaboration, integrating up and down the chain (up into links with Quark and InDesign, and down into imposition software and CTP solutions), integrating with MIS systems - providing on-the-fly costings, linking to accounts systems, advertising sales systems etc. Also discussed with other members such things as how best to drive the adoption of such systems within the industry in order to provide benefits to all.

Marcus also talked about remote proofing and highlighted the requirements of a soft proofing solution if it is to be used for colour proofing (those being good colour management, well and frequently calibrated monitors, and a viable mechanism for transmitting the data - either a compress/decompress solution or a streaming solution). Also discussed hard proofing and gave his list of practical criteria for a satisfactory hard proofing solution (whilst stating that different workflows will put different emphasis on each of these criteria): such things as consistency and stability of proof, ease of calibration (preferably self calibrating), flexibility of paper stocks and paper sizes, solid, robust RIPs, simplicity of handling printers (changing toner or ink, etc.), size of printer, suitability to an office-environment, cost of device, cost per proof, remote feedback (so sending site can see if printer is on-line, has sufficient ink/toner, and has paper in the tray) and ability to provide remote output without human intervention at remote site.

It is likely that we will re-address some of the discussion items at a subsequent meeting. Feedback required from members as to this.

- **Quark/InDesign debate – Stephen Douglas**

This was a lively debate and one that we will need to re-address at a subsequent meeting! Quark was represented by Nick Martin (Stephen offered some input as a 6 user), Adobe were represented by Tim Cole (Indesign Product Specialist) and Nick Passmore (Guardian Head of Editorial System Development)

Adobe drew attention to the new InDesign Creative Suite that has recently been launched. This is a technological advancement with added features such as file separation on screen, flattening, support for pdf x1 & i. More information about specific features and functionality can be found on [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

Quark Xpress 6 shipped in July and there are already several hundred users, more information can be found at [www.quark.co.uk](http://www.quark.co.uk). This latest version is fully OS X compatible with additional productivity enhancements. Quark admitted that they were slow in developing Quark for OS X, but it is here now.

A feeling of poor returns on investment in Quark products was voiced by all with little or no great functionality benefits from upgrading hence the mass of older versions being used today.

Quark were asked about backward compatibility, but they do not recommend it as the document will take on its most simplest form if you wish to share it in an open format. Adobe echo the same thoughts and do not recommend saving down unless totally necessary.

There was some discussion about the relevance of Quark 5, as people who are still using 4 have to purchase 5 in order to move on to 6. It was felt that Quark 5 did not incorporate significant enough changes to be worth upgrading to, so the majority remained on 3 or 4. These people therefore feel that there should be an appropriate upgrade path in place where they can jump from 4 to 6 without going via 5. Members urged quark to give an amnesty on upgrades - i.e. purchasers of 6 get licensing to all older versions to ensure they can downgrade file to versions usable in older products. The group would like feedback from Quark on this.

The issue of language was brought up. With Quark you have to purchase passports, with InDesign you get specific versions that cover parts of the world.

"Transparency is not to be feared" according to Adobe - however members still seem very wary of it.

Quark was asked what requests they are receiving for the next stage of development, especially as InDesign is currently getting a lot of attention. InDesign is a serious competitor to Quark and is getting everyone's attention - especially its interaction with other Adobe products in the workflow. Quark pointed out that they are working very closely with customers to get interaction for future development that goes back to the product team.

In summary, the key requests are:

- More web functionality as people no longer just require page layout for print.
- XML development.
- Unicode and ability to bring in native files.
- More creative features, so users don't have to rely on Xtensions.

Compatibility with Panther was brought up. InDesign will work with Panther straight away and no new release will be needed. Quark 6 is likely to need some tweaks, but they are fully committed to development. Open font discussion was broached and must be revisited at subsequent meetings

• **5 min sponsor update – isdn datacom, Jocelyn Lomer**

• **Future Meetings**

The next meeting will take place towards the end of January in London. The main agenda item is likely to be OS X, with particular reference to font management.

If anyone has further feedback or would like to put forward a topic for discussion, please email [hannah@leafagency.com](mailto:hannah@leafagency.com).

*Disclaimer: Please note that this document is merely an interpretation of what took place at the meeting. It is intended to be non-vendor specific and does not quote any individual directly.*