



NEWS RELEASE

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GRACoL[®] to Work with ISO Community in Developing a Unified International Characterization Data Set

Publication of the New GRACoL 7 Guidelines Remains on Schedule

Alexandria, VA, May 23, 2006. The International Digital Enterprise Alliance (IDEAlliance) today announced that as a result of the recent ISO (International Standards Organization) TC130 (Technical Committee 130) Working Group 3 meeting in San Diego, CA, the GRACoL Committee will work in a cooperative effort with other members of the ISO TC130 community to propose a unified international characterization data set for commercial offset printing.

Background

Throughout 2004 and 2005, the GRACoL (General Requirements and Applications for Commercial Offset Lithography) Committee of IDEAlliance conducted a series of research press runs and developed a new set of process controls based on principles of digital imaging, spectrophotometry, and computer-to-plate (CtP) technologies with a goal of developing an unambiguous description of how good commercial printing "appears" to the eye on a Number 1 coated sheet. Influenced by its participation in the grassroots Printing Across Borders initiative, the GRACoL Committee incorporated international data sets into their study.

On April 10th, 2006, the GRACoL Committee made the beta version of their new characterization data set available for public review and comment. This data, influenced by results of their press tests and data sets from around the world, has been smoothed and tuned to create the beta neutral print density curve. The data set has been downloaded for evaluation and comment by over 100 individuals throughout the world. Comments from this data are now being received and evaluated before the final GRACoL 7 characterization data set is specified.

Working within ISO

While there have been some misunderstandings, the GRACoL Committee is not and never has been in competition with ISO Standards. According to David Steinhardt, President of IDEAlliance, "GRACoL is not an attempt to create new standards but instead utilizes existing ISO Standards as the basis for good printing. GRACoL7 is an implementation of a legal subset of ISO 12647-2 printing standard with further limiting metrics, methods and characterization data."

At the recent ISO TC130 WG3 meetings in April 2006, a task force headed by Andreas Kraushaar from FOGRA/Germany and assisted by Elie Khoury, Alwan Color/France and Don Hutcheson, IDEAlliance GRACoL/USA was established to develop a unified characterization data set for commercial offset printing. If successful, this work could serve as the worldwide aim for commercial printing on a Number 1 sheet.

According to Larry Warter, Fuji Enovation and a long-time GRACoL Committee member, “Historically GRACoL’s program of printing to the density and dot goals lead to the publication of the Draft Technical Report for commercial sheetfed printing, DTR 004 that was intended to serve as a starting point. The current GRACoL 7 efforts to propose a characterization data set for a #1 coated sheet to replace DTR 004, are based on identifying the best theoretical and practical process to achieve this data set in conjunction with, not in competition with, ISO standards activities. We now look forward to working with the ISO community as part of the new TC130 task force, in the hopes that agreement can be reached and ISO can publish a single, unified, international characterization data set for commercial offset printing. ”

The Impact on the Publication of GRACoL 7

The GRACoL 7 Publication is an industry resource that contains printing guidelines and recommendations. The GRACoL 7 publication, for the first time, will explain the rationale behind the new visual-appearance-based GRACoL press and proofing system, gray balance characterization and calibration methods. In addition, GRACoL 7 will specify a definition for gray balance and recommend characterization data for commercial offset printing on a #1 coated sheet. Current plans are to finalize the GRACoL data set by the end of June. If and when ISO finalizes a unified international data set for commercial printing, this unified ISO data set will become the GRACoL recommended characterization data set at that time.

About GRACoL®

In 1996, a graphics arts task force was formed by the Graphic Communications Association (now IDEAlliance) to develop a document containing general guidelines and recommendations that could be used as a reference source across the industry for quality color printing. Since that time, the GRACoL Committee has developed, maintained and published printing guidelines that have since become de facto standards on many pressrooms. The mission of GRACoL is to improve communications and education in the graphic arts by developing best practices that reflect the influence and impact of new technologies in the workflow of commercial offset lithography. GRACoL is a registered trademark of IDEAlliance. Learn more at <http://www.gracol.org>.

About IDEAlliance

IDEAlliance (International Digital Enterprise Alliance) is a not-for-profit membership organization that has been a leader in information technology and publishing since 1966. IDEAlliance advances core information technology to develop standards and best practices to enhance efficiency and speed information all facets of publishing – creation, production, management, and delivery of knowledge-based content – digitally and in print. IDEAlliance members represent a unique convergence of the leading publishers, printers, and solution providers. IDEAlliance provides a user-driven, cross-industry, and open environment in which its members can strategize, innovate, standardize, and implement solutions to real business challenges in publishing. See <http://www.idealliance.org> for more information.

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