



## Curious about Wide Format Inkjet Printers at SGIA 2005?





Caption for front cover:  
Gerber Elan XL

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## Introduction

SGIA is a trade show; DPI is a set of lectures. They tend to be held together.

Since SGIA+DPI was scheduled to be held in New Orleans at the end of September, it had to be cancelled for several reasons, one being that the trade show center was trashed.

SGIA and DPI have done the best they can to resurrect the event for December 2005 in Phoenix. The following comments are based on the original exhibitor list for the New Orleans version. We will update this when it becomes clear which of these will still exhibit in Phoenix. The main difference between the original SGIA and the rescheduled SGIA is probably that screen printing companies may not be as heavily represented; the new show is probably more oriented to wide format inkjet printers, especially solvent and UV technologies.

This free report is to assist you

- To decide whether to attend SGIA or some other trade show.
- If you decide to attend SGIA, then to plan what booths to visit.

If you wish to compare SGIA to other trade shows in the US or Europe, then get your hands on our FLAAR Reports on trade shows in general.

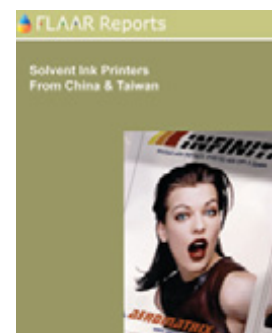
## Especially Conspicuous by their Absence

Why is Canon is not present? Although signage is not their forte they need the exposure since their market share for wide format hovers at between 2% and 4%. Of course the real reason Canon won't be present is because they do not intend to introduce their new printers until 2006 through 2007.

I did not notice either Kodak or Encad<sup>1</sup>. Their market share is low, and probably falling (not as low as Canon, but getting close). Probably some dealers will be showing Encad printers. With their Lexmark printheads, Encad can't compete easily. And Kodak media fails to excite people when any print shop can get adequate media almost anywhere nowadays. Kodak ink is only usable in Encad printers, so a declining market there too. Too bad, since Encad started wide format inkjet printing back in the 1990's. Our first printer was an Encad NovaJet Pro 36. But how times have changed.

## Chinese printer companies are backing off dramatically.

At SGIA 2003, there were Chinese printers everywhere. By SGIA 2005 even former heavyweights such as Orasign and Yaselan are not listed in the pre-show list (nor is Redhill, the short-lived distributor of Yaselan). The "disappearance" of Redhill from trade shows is but one example of the rocky road for Chinese printers to establish a foothold in the US market. Even if a company still exists, if they don't have a strong presence at the leading trade shows (ISA and SGIA), they effectively don't exist as far as most buyers are concerned.



<sup>1</sup> But the SGIA list is hopeless; it is neither alphabetical nor by booth number. This is the worst trade show exhibit list concept that I have seen this decade. The website tries too hard to be trendy, with the result that it does not easily provide what people really want to start with, a simple old-fashioned A to Z index. I finally landed on the index by pure accident (from a search engine). Nowhere on the SGIA site nor SGIA 2005 trade show area was it intuitive to find it.

And where are

- Liyu (Lyric)
- JHF
- Skyjet?
- Wit-Color?

Curiously Yishan tends to sell primarily through distributors in Turkey; we cover their printers in our FLAAR Reports on trade shows in Italy and Germany. The exception may be Poli-Jet, shown at Graphics of the Americas (a trade show only in Miami and selling primarily to print shops in Latin America).

Infiniti (Fei Yeung Union, abbreviated FY Union or just FY) will be represented by their US distributor, Aeromatrix. Teckwin and Flora are about the only ones making it from Mainland China, or Taiwan for that matter (Eastech has not exhibited in the US since 2004). Teckwin will be present three times:

- Teckwin itself
- Teckwin printers via Matan
- Teckwin printer via Gerber

Those Chinese manufacturers who seriously intend to capture market share in the US appear to be concentrating on attending Graphics of the Americas (GoA) and/or ISA trade shows. The reason for being at GoA is because several US distributors of Chinese printers are already in Miami, so shipping & delivery costs for the GoA show are more realistic. Second, it is print shops in Latin America that are willing to blindly buy a printer if it is cheap enough. US sign shops do not tend to accept Chinese lack of Americanized tech support. Latin American visitors tend to go to Miami, Las Vegas, or Orlando for their trade shows. SGIA has been held in Minneapolis, and now Phoenix, not precisely the preferred travel destinations for Latin Americans.

Azero Creon seems to have disappeared last year: they had one printer (but effectively no booth) at SGIA 2004; then missed ISA 2005. That leaves only Dilli (D.G.I.) and Keundo as Korean exhibitors at SGIA. It is unsure whether S.I.M. is still the US distributor for Dilli/D.G.I.

Taiwan is not very active in printer manufacturing. Eastech is exhibiting primarily in Germany (FESPA, VisCom Düsseldorf), but I did not see an Eastech printer in Visual Communications Milan sign trade show 2005.

Of course SGIA is several weeks away, and pre-show exhibitor lists are notoriously unreliable. I would expect more Chinese printers to appear at the show itself.

## **Eco-Solvent Printers**

### **Agfa**

At SGIA 2004 the Agfa wide format printer booth consisted primarily of one giant poster of a woman in a bikini. Not even a very alluring photo or model. It was a shame they had nothing else to use to attract people besides such an image. The Agfa-Europe booth at FESPA in Germany was more professional, and actually exhibited some interesting printers. But then Agfa was totally absent at VisCom Düsseldorf and VisCom Milan.

## Charrette

Be careful with printers that may not be fully proven to successfully function in real-world situations. We would need to evaluate the Mutoh Toucan LT and have it certified by site-visit case studies in order to overcome what we have been told about two beta-stage installations that we know of. Both could not get their Toucan LT to function adequately, in part due to inadequate local tech support (in South America). If the problems with the beta units have been overcome, this will show up as soon as we find a Toucan LT near our university in Ohio so that we can do a site-visit case study.

## Gerber

If Gerber is still offering their Elan XL, this is the Mutoh Falcon II Outdoor. In Europe Gerber is offering what appears to be a Mutoh Spitfire.

## Mimaki

Mimaki was the only printer manufacturer to avoid the get-rich-quick scheme of pseudo-solvent ink fiasco of 2002-2004. Mimaki USA deserves honorable mention for not foisting eco-solvent inks on print shop owners in those years. Now that the newer generation of mild-solvent inks are available, Mimaki offers these as better alternatives. Overall, Mimaki has the most modest advertising, and thus each year wins our approval for corporate honesty, as you would expect for a Japanese company (and an honorable American distributor as well). Mimaki managers at trade show booths and at their corporate headquarters have provided honest answers to our questions about the performance, both pros and cons of their printers.

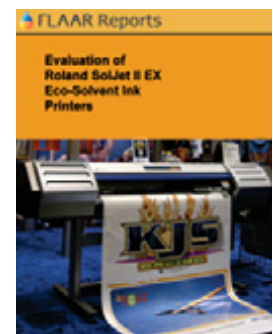
## Roland

As the demand for water-based printers continues to collapse, Roland offers primarily eco-solvent models (and smaller thermal transfer units). Since the original eco-solvent inks were inadequate, and were inappropriately advertised with unrealistic claims, evaluations reported these facts. Now, by late 2005, there is a third generation ink. Of course it is no longer ecological, and is dramatically stronger than the first generation, but once we can find site-visit locations to undertake case studies, we will consider lifting a buyer advisory if the new inks work as advertised. We expect that they will.

## Mild Solvent Printers

Seiko is the company that cleverly decided not to enter the eco-solvent debacle. So Seiko did not tarnish their reputation. To some degree Mimaki also avoided the first three years of eco-solvent problems. As a result Mimaki had record sales worldwide. Then came Seiko; they had record sales as well.

It is worth pointing out that both the Mimaki JV3 and the Seiko ColorPainter, got high marks in all FLAAR Reports, both on quality, and especially on honesty in advertising. So yes, it is a good idea to be honest about what your inks can do, and especially what your inks are incapable of doing (such as



sticking on most materials, holding up to cleaning or holding up to abrasion).

And Seiko got the grand prize, partnership with the international giant, HP.

### **Solvent Printers: Manufactured in US, Europe, Japan**

ColorSpan  
Gandinovations  
Mimaki  
Mutoh  
NUR  
Oce  
Roland  
Scitex Vision  
Splash of Color  
Vutek

### **Solvent Printers: China**

DuPont (rebrands Flora solvent ink printers)  
Eastsign (DingTec)  
Flora  
Gerber (rebrands Teckwin)  
Infiniti / Aeromatrix  
Matan (rebrands Teckwin)  
Teckwin (Shanghai Teckwin Development Company)

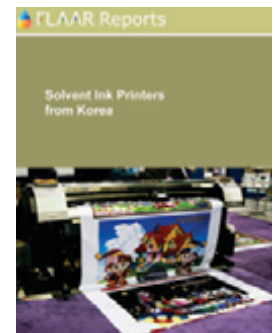
### **Solvent Printers: Korea**

Dilli, but they will probably show primarily their UV-cured flatbeds, not as much their solvent printers any more. Dilli appears to be the manufacturer; D.G.I. is their distributing arm.

Keundo, there is no evidence that their UV printer is finished, so they will probably show primarily their solvent printer and liquid laminators.

### **Solvent Printers: Taiwan**

Since Eastech no longer exhibits at trade shows in the US, I am not familiar with any other Taiwan companies that will be at SGIA. However sometimes it is hard to know what is the actual origin of each exhibiting company.



## Solvent Printer Accessories

Blackbody, BBC Industries

Offers good after-market heaters/dryers for solvent and eco-solvent printers.

Island Clean Air

Will show air purifiers for using with solvent ink printers.

Xaar

makes piezo printheads; their main competitors are Spectra, Hitachi/Ricoh, etc.

## Flatbeds that are not UV

Graphtec (see Western Graphtec)

Mimaki manufactures several flatbed printers that do not use UV ink, but they do not show all models at every trade show.

Sprin USA markets a small desk-top sized flatbed printer.

Tampoprint may finally show a flatbed inkjet printer in the US. But at FESPA 05 in Germany they showed only a flatbed solvent; not a UV.

Western Graphtec has shed its HP printer-cutter; Graphtec stopped selling its rebranded Canon printers (no market for dye-based inks that fade in weeks). So they sort of eliminated themselves from the world of inkjet printers. At ISA 2005 they showed an unfinished prototype of an eco-solvent flatbed. At FESPA 2005 they showed the same printer, still not finished. During those months their website had no info on this printer whatsoever. The question also remains: is there really a market for any eco-solvent printer anyway, much less a flatbed eco-solvent? Even full-solvent flatbed printers have not done so well. Since all the buzz nowadays is about UV flatbeds, a solvent ink or eco-solvent flatbed is a hard sell.

## UV-cured Ink Printers (mostly flatbeds)

Aellora

Agfa-Mutoh (will probably not be shown, unless it is past alpha stage)

Agfa-Thieme (too large, so will probably not be shown)

Dilli Precision Industrial Co. Ltd. (D.G.I.)

DuPont (rebranded from Flora, a Chinese printer).

Durst

Gandinovations

Gerber (US debut of their Solara UV2, now with flatbed tables).

Leggett & Platt Digital

Neolt (sometimes they exhibit only their non-printer products in the US)

NUR

Oce

Raster Printers

Sericol (distributor of Inca flatbed printers)

Teckwin

Scitex Vision

Aellora

Aellora is related to Spectra (same company owns both?). Aellora makes very high quality narrow-width UV-curable printers. Aellora also makes a printer that can print UV-curable ink onto bottles. So you can have a custom designed label on your home-brew.

Great for customizing holiday gifts.

Durst

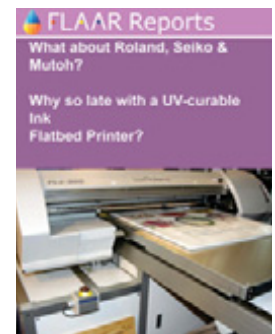
Durst will introduce their Rho 350R to the American audience. FLAAR already inspected this printer in Italy a few days ago. When possible, we try to be first with crucial information.

Oce

Their Arizona T220 UV is reportedly phased out, so unless their next generation UV-curable ink printer is ready for debut, they won't have any Oce-developed UV printers at this show.

Roland

Roland had a prototype solvent ink flatbed at DRUPA 2004. Nothing at ISA 2005, and nothing visible to the public at FESPA 2005. But naturally we have our sources and resources, and have been keeping track behind the scenes with Rolands slow progress towards a UV-flatbed. We just hope it is not stuck with Epson printheads. Zünd tried that and it failed. We hope the Roland model is not narrow format (like the Mimaki models). That is not wide enough for serious production of signage.



Scitex Vision

This venerable Israeli company was bought by HP, as was the hot rumor at ISA 2005. It was finally consummated on August 11<sup>th</sup>. Will be curious how this will affect their market share. In packaging the impressive CORjet or Scitex Vision is facing a new challenger with Durst Rhopac (the SunJet seems moribund at present).

In solvent printers Scitex Vision is challenged by Vutek and Gandinnovations at the high end; stretch-model 100" Mimaki "baby-grand", Mutoh Phoenix and Osprey, and Roland; and Chinese and Korean printers at mid-range and entry level.

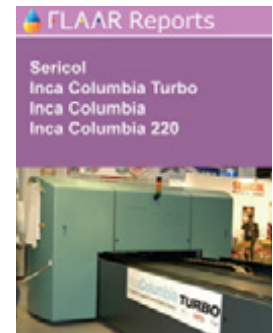
The Scitex Vision UV-cured flatbed printer is the oldest technology around, based on concepts from Sias Digital at the turn of the century (DRUPA 2000, so that means the printer was under development in the previous millennium).

The advantage for HP is that sales of Scitex Vision can only go up.

Normally Scitex Vision does not show its UV printer due to its size.

### Sericol / Inca

Inca (the manufacturer) and Sericol (the ink company and also the distributor) have all their technology fully on dedicated flatbed style. Yet NUR and now Durst are offering dedicated roll-to-roll UV printers. The Durst Rho 350R shows that the surveys of screenprinting companies reveals that they desire roll-to-roll UV printers. Yet Inca and Sericol have enviable sales records, in part because a true dedicated flatbed (such as theirs) can handle flat material better than a hybrid.



### Zünd

The main company booth tends not always to show its UV printers; Zünd itself tends to show its cutter. The Zünd 250 has been in the Sericol booth; because it fared poorly in beta-test sites earlier this year, the Zünd 250 will probably not be present. But reportedly Zünd will resurrect this printer for after the first half of 2006. The Zünd 215 will probably be somewhere at the show though the appearance of the Gerber Solara UV2 is one more competitor that is taking away the entry-level sales. ColorSpan is now the fastest selling UV printer in the world, a title that Zünd held in 2001, 2002, 2003, and into 2004.



#### UV Related:

- Phoseon Technology, Manufacturers of UV-Curing Lamps
- Xaar, manufacturers of printheads for UV and solvent inks

## Thermal Dye Transfer (Wax Ribbon)

### Matan??

We have a question mark since thermal dye transfer technology has been stagnant for the last several years. Matan was once a leader in the wide format version of this technology. Nowadays Matan tends to show its rebranded Teckwin printers, solvent ink printers made in China. For thermal dye transfer Matan tends to show only their narrow-format label printers.

## Water-Based Inkjet Printers

### ColorSpan

Encad, if perchance may be shown by a distributor?

Epson

HP

Mimaki

Mutoh and Roland also still offer water-based printers but their market has clearly switched to eco-solvent (for Roland) and mild-solvent and full-solvent for Mutoh. Same with ColorSpan; they will probably exhibit only their solvent and their UV printers at ISA. Mimaki is the only company using Epson piezo heads that still seriously develops and sells water-based printers, such as their JV4 and JV22.

### Inkjet Printers: Direct to Textiles

DuPont ??

Mimaki ??

When compared with FESPA trade show in early June (in Munich), there are few textile printers in the pre-show exhibitor list. For example, where is Kimoto? One reason is that most inkjet textiles are digitally printed in Italy and Turkey (or China). Those buyers shop at European trade shows, not in the US. So you see more printers for textiles at trade shows in Europe, Turkey, Korea, and China.



When DuPont lists itself at a trade show it is not always clear what part of DuPont will show up: DuPont textile printers or DuPont UV printers or DuPont solvent ink printers. I assume it will be at least the UV printers at SGIA.

Mimaki makes several printers that handle textile inks: JV4 and JV22. Mimaki also makes printers that handle un-backed textiles (textiles with no paper backing; the paper backing is needed on other printers in order to feed woven fabrics through a system (such as an HP) that was made exclusively for paper or inkjet media.

### Materials to use with UV flatbed printers

Alcan Composites

#### Inkjet Substrates: Solvent

3M Commercial Graphics Division

3P Inkjet Textiles

Avery-Dennison

Fischer Textiles

Glen Raven

Lintec of America

MACtac

Oracal

Signage Materials

Alcan Composites

Bainbridge

Lintec of America (wallcovering material)

Hartman Plastics



**Inkjet Media: Water-Based**

Intelicoat  
Magnum Magnetics  
Sihl  
Tara Materials

**Inkjet Media: Textiles**

3P, their contact is info@3P-Inktextiles.com  
DigiFab  
Fischer Textiles  
Glen Raven

**Inks for Solvent Printers**

Lyson USA

**Finishing Equipment: Trimmers, Cutters**

Keencut

**Laminating Equipment**

Clearstar Coatings  
GBC  
Keundo (liquid laminators)  
Seal

**Dye Sublimation Textile Printers**

Gandinovations (direct dye sub)  
Mimaki (dye sub via heat transfer press)

**Heat Presses**

Hix Corporation  
Practix

**Dye Sub Paper**

Beaver Paper ?

**Dye Sub Inks**

Sawgrass Technologies

**Dye Sublimation on Aluminum, Tiles & Other Materials**

Mimaki

**Dye-Sublimation: General Vendors**

Conde

**Variable Data Presses**

HP Indigo  
Xeikon America

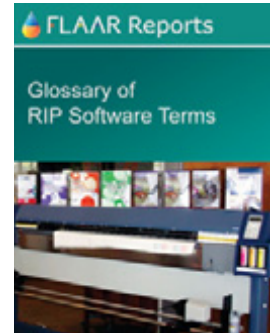
Since Xerox presented at Print '05, it is doubtful they will have their iGen3 at SGIA. Same with Kodak; they were at Print '05, but unlikely to be at SGIA.

### **Laser Printers (Dry Toner)**

We are guessing that Konica Minolta and possible Xerox will be showing some form of copier and/or laser (toner) printers.

### **RIP Software**

CADlink  
DigiFab  
ErgoSoft  
Onyx Graphics  
Scanvec Amiable  
Wasatch  
Laser Engravers  
Epilog Laser  
Universal Laser Systems



### **Trade Magazines**

Digital Output  
Digital Teknik Magazine  
Images Magazine  
National Business Media  
SM Media Group  
Wide Format Imaging

### **Universities**

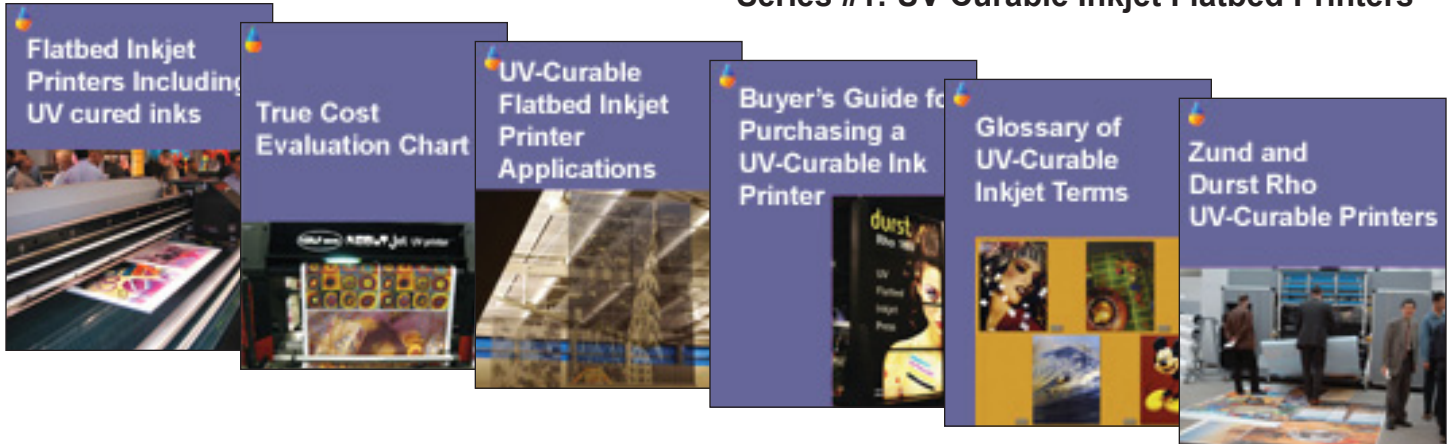
Eastern Illinois School of Technology

### **Overall List of Recommended Booths to Visit**

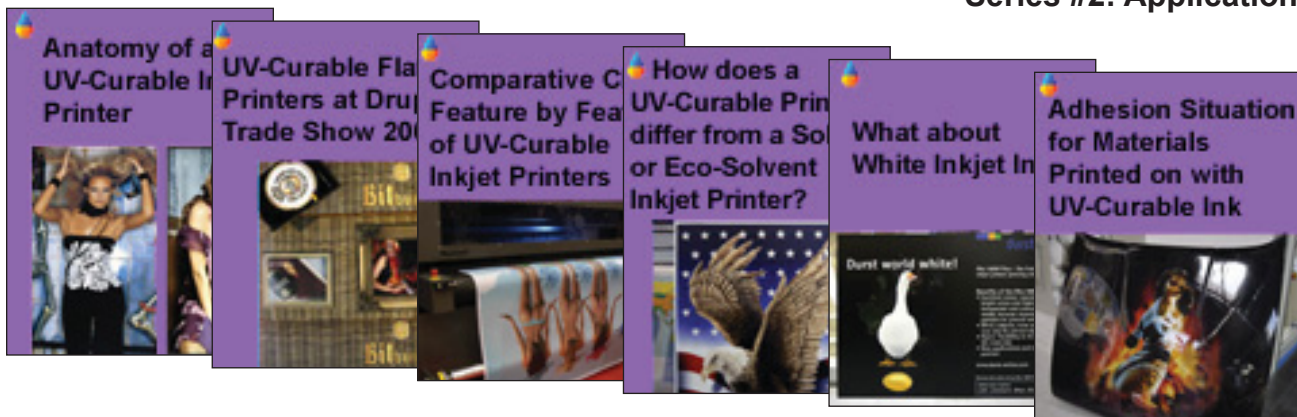
The following list includes the booths that we recommend for wide format inkjet printers and related products. Because SGIA does not provide an alphabetical list, and because the list they do provide is awkward to access on their website, our list of recommended booths to visit is probably not complete.

# FLAAR Reports of UV Curable Series

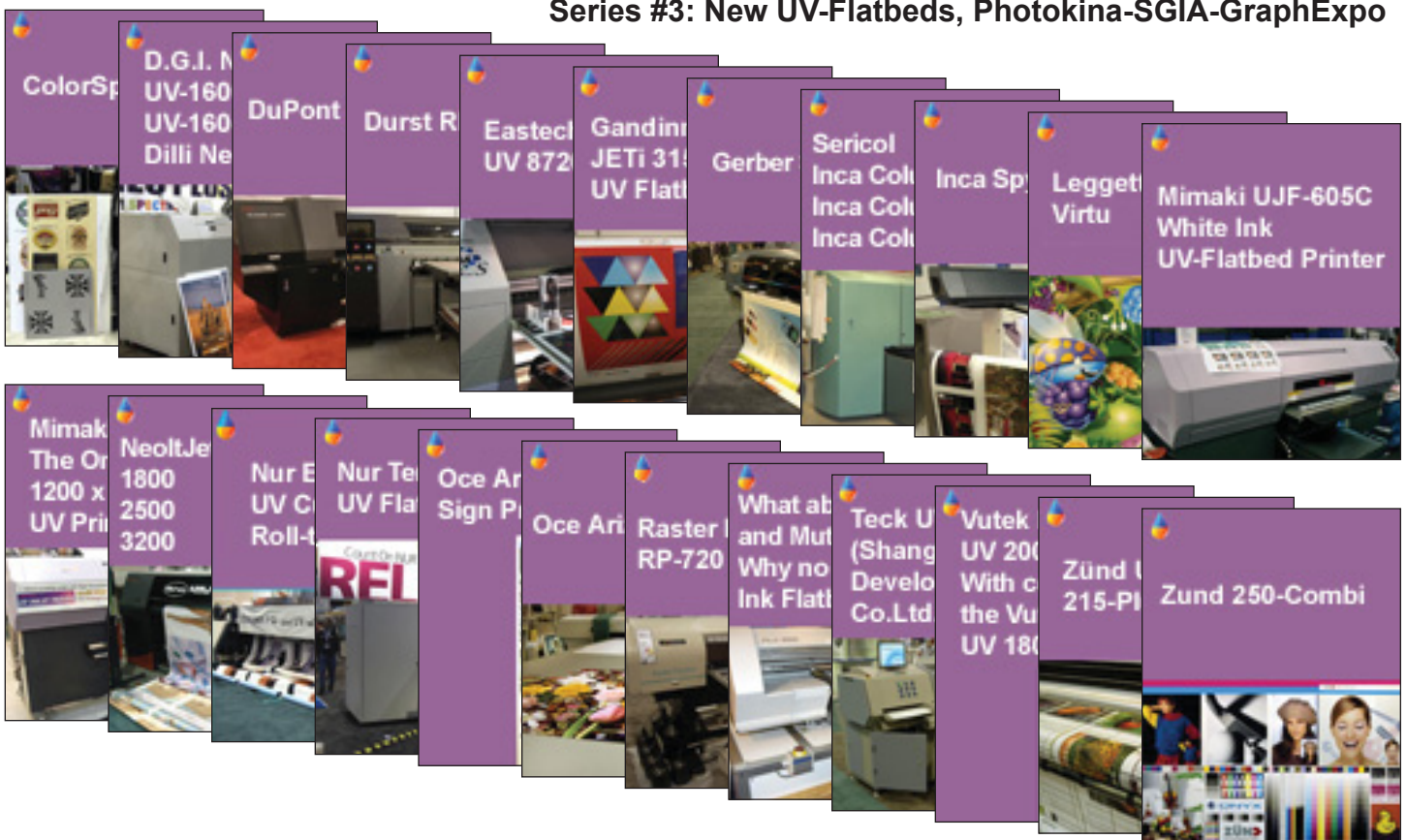
## Series #1: UV-Curable Inkjet Flatbed Printers



## Series #2: Applications & Tips



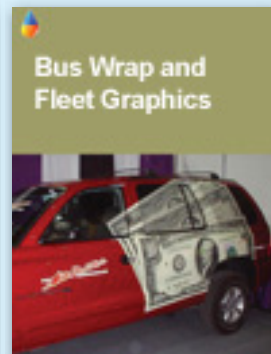
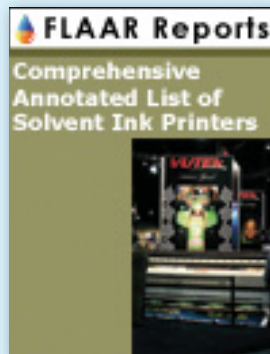
## Series #3: New UV-Flatbeds, Photokina-SGIA-GraphExpo



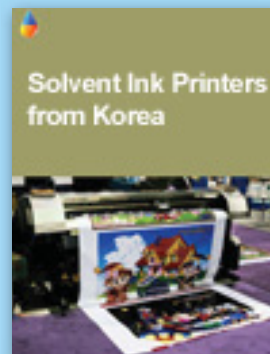
# Acquire these reports at:

[www.wide-format-printers.net](http://www.wide-format-printers.net)

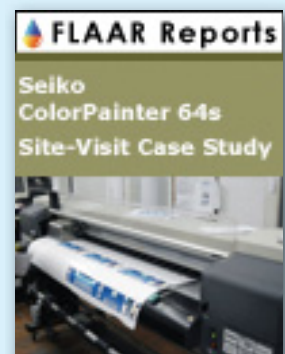
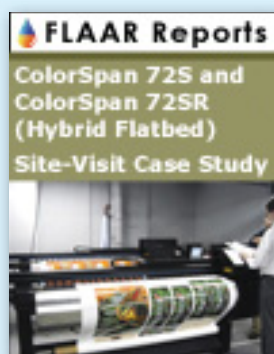
## General Introduction to Solvent Ink Printers



## Solvent Printers from China, Korea and Taiwan



## Site Visit, new Popular Solvent Ink Printers, 2005



## Evaluations and Reviews

