Wide Format Printers, Inkjet Inks, Media & Substrates from China & Korea



at the largest China sign expo

APPPEXPO, Shanghai



Cover Photo: EFI VUTEK GS5000r printer, at APPPEXPO 2010.

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Contents

Introduction	1
Preliminary list of UV-cured printers	2
Sepiax Resin Ink has a booth	5
HP Latex Ink is well represented in the large HP booth	7
Textile printers at APPPEXPO	7
Water-based printers at APPPEXPO	9
Eco-solvent printers at APPEXPO	10
Printer companies in India	10
Chinese-made Solvent Printers at APPPEXPO	10
Chinese-made UV-cured printers at APPPEXPO	11
Taiwan-made UV-cured printers at APPPEXPO	11
Korean-made UV-cured printers at APPPEXPO	12
Media & Substrates at APPPEXPO	12
Ink at APPPEXPO	13
The Venue in Shanghai	16
Catalog, Maps, etc	16
Chinese trade shows	17



Exhibitors at APPPEXPO 2010

Agfa :Anapurna M2 Agfa :Anapurna Mv Agfa :Anapurna MW Agfa 4x8 flatbed

Dilli Neo Titan UV-2506W Dilli Neo Titan UV-2504DW

Docan, dedicated flatbed, carriage across length Docan dedicated flatbed, carriage across narrow width Docan, 3.2 meter combo transport belt.

efi VUTEk GS2000 efi VUTEk GS5000r efi Rastek H650 efi Rastek T1000

Flora F1 250UV, combo Flora PP 2512UV, dedicated flatbed Flora LJ320P, roll to roll

Fortune-Digital FLT-1432B GCC combo transport belt flatbed

HP Scitex (former NUR Expedio)
HP Scitex FB6100 (former NUR Tempo Q)
HP Scitex (former Scitex TurboJet)
HP Scitex FB500

Human Digital Turbo Press Human Digital XUV Jet Human Digital Combo-Jet Human Digital X-jet hybrid

Inwear 220XK-LED-UV, roll-to-roll

JHF Vista, 5 meter roll-to-roll JHF Vista, 3.2 meter combo flatbed JHF Vista, UV printer combo

Kincolor, dedicated flatbed with carriage lengthwise Kincolor, dedicated flatbed with the carriage beam across the narrow width

Liyu (Anhui Liyu), dedicated flatbed

Lukio LEX 1650UV

Mimaki UJV-160 Mimaki UJF-3042 Mimaki UJF-3042 (three) Mimaki UJF-02 Mimaki JFX-1631

MyJet, mid-sized combo

Neolt rebranded as SID UV16SP

Oce dedicated flatbed

Rodin Zoom K250UV Rodin P.d Printer Depot 3.2 m roll-to-roll

Roland LEC-330

Screen, which is a rebranded Mimaki JFX-1631

SkyAir Ship, flatbed with carriage lengthwise and roll-toroll SkyArt Ship, flatbed with carriage across short axis

Sun LLC, LED-curing combo flatbed

Teckwin TeckPro UV3200 flatbed Teckwin Teckstorm XLR TeckStorm TS300, roll to roll

Uranus, hybrid Uranus roll to roll

WER, dedicated flatbed with moving table.

WitColor, dedicated flatbed

Yishan YS2407, dedicated flatbed **Yishan** YS907-GP Yishan roll-to-roll

Zhongye SK Series Zhongye UV-1440 Series



Wide Format Printers, Inkjet Inks, Media & Substrates from China & Korea

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APPPEXPO, Shanghai, July 2010

Introduction

The Shanghai trade show is about twice to three times larger than any other printer trade show in the world (other than DRUPA). The APPPEXPO in Shanghai is held every July. It occupies five large halls in the entire west wing and about the same number of halls in the east wing (so total of about 10 halls).

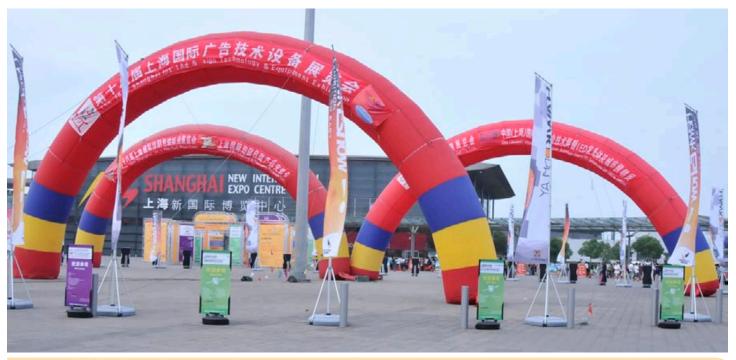
Due to the sheer size I tend to get to Shanghai early to be sure I have recuperated from jet-lag, and also to make sure that flight snafus don't cause an arrival delay. Since I have an exhibitor pass, I can get into the show early. But as a courtesy, I do not photograph a booth until it is fully set up. The snapshots here are only of the logo banners of a few of the hundreds and hundreds of booths.

Halls W1, W2, W3 are the main halls for printers, inks, and media. Hall W4 has more inks and media, but probably not as many printers. Hall W5 is laser cutters and the noise and odor are too much to put up with so I rarely venture in once the machines are melting plastics everywhere.

The East Halls are LED, LCD, and print shops, but probably a few manufacturers of wide-format inkjet too. But rarely is there time to get to that wing. If a company is not clever enough to get into the west halls, then they are not adept enough yet.

The amount of effort that each Chinese company puts into their booth structure is impressive.

FLAAR has a stand within the Signs China booth (Sign-in-China) in Hall W3, near the entrance which is nearest to the outside main street.





Preliminary list of UV-cured printers

Many of the printers are still on the cargo trucks; several booths are nowhere near finished. So this list is about 30% of what will be found once the halls are easier to get around without tons of plywood crates, scaffolding, and forklift trucks blocking everything.

The amount of effort that each Chinese company puts into their booth structure is impressive.

Agfa :Anapurna M2 Agfa :Anapurna Mv Agfa :Anapurna MW Agfa 4x8 flatbed, but still original Gandinnovations flatbed colors

Design DS-H/UV1600 Design DS-W/UV 3200 Design DS-V/UV2500

Dilli Neo Titan UV-2506W, **W3** Dilli Neo Titan UV-2504DW

Docan, dedicated flatbed, carriage across length. **W3** Docan dedicated flatbed, carriage across narrow width Docan, 3.2 meter combo transport belt.

efi VUTEk GS2000 efi VUTEk GS5000r efi Rastek H650 efi Rastek T1000

Flora F1 250UV, combo, **W3** Flora PP 2512UV, dedicated flatbed Flora LJ320P, roll to roll

Fortune-Digital FLT-1432B, the most rudimentary carriage and printheads at the show. **W1**

GCC combo transport belt flatbed. W1



FLAAR was already at APPPEXPO two days before the show started. Here is a typical scene for the last set-up day (the day before the show opened). Here is one of hundreds of printers being delivered.



Agfa Anapurna Mv combo UV printer.



EFI Rastek T1000 printer.



HP Scitex (former NUR Expedio), W1
HP Scitex FB6100 (former NUR Tempo Q)
HP Scitex (former Scitex TurboJet)
a new HP Scitex FB500

Human Digital Turbo Press, 2.x meter combo possibly with LED curing. Functional prototype but unsure whether working with UV curing or not. **W3**

Human Digital XUV Jet, very thin LED curing lamp. Has solvent fans in front of the printer (as you would expect from a company that made solvent printers).

Human Digital Combo-Jet. Despite the name this is a dedicated flatbed.

Human Digital X-jet hybrid in booth of Triangle INX

Inwear 220XK-LED-UV, roll-to-roll, W3

JHF Vista, 5 meter roll-to-roll, W2
JHF Vista, 3.2 meter combo flatbed, with Spectra heads.
Both these printers are new.
JHF Vista, a third UV printer. combo

Kincolor, dedicated flatbed with carriage lengthwise, **W2**

Kincolor, another dedicated flatbed with the carriage beam across the narrow width (more stable, but not as fast).

Liyu (Anhui Liyu), dedicated flatbed

Lukio LEX 1650UV

Mimaki UJV-160 Mimaki UJF-3042, in booth of Fujifilm in East halls (far from main area in West) Mimaki UJF-3042 (three), E5 Mimaki UJF-02, Hall E5 Mimaki JFX-1631 rebranded as Screen

MyJet, mid-sized combo with transport belt flatbed (less than 3 meters), **W3**



Hewlett Packard Scitex FB6100 printer.



JHF RV50S 5 meter roll-to-roll printer.



Mimaki UJV160 UV printer.



Neolt rebranded as **SID** UV16SP, hybrid with grit rollers under pinch rollers.

Oce dedicated flatbed, probably an Arizona 500GT

Rodin Zoom K250UV, hybrid with pinch rollers atop grit rollers.

Rodin P.d Printer Depot 3.2 m roll-to-roll

Roland LEC-330 only in Roland booth, W1

Screen, which is a rebranded Mimaki JFX-1631

SkyAir Ship, flatbed with carriage lengthwise and roll-to-roll

SkyArt Ship, flatbed with carriage across short axis

Sun LLC, LED-curing combo flatbed

Teckwin TeckPro UV3200 flatbed, **W1** Teckwin Teckstorm XLR TeckStorm TS300, roll to roll

Uranus, hybrid, looks like rebranded Rodin (Hi-Jet Digital), **W3**

Uranus roll to roll

WER, dedicated flatbed with moving table. Printer looked like a Zhongye or comparable. WER is unlikely the name of any manufacturer. **W2**

WitColor, dedicated flatbed, W3

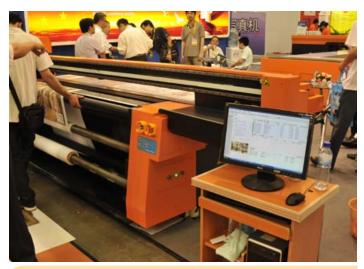
Yishan YS2407, dedicated flatbed, prints across wide access, **W3**

Yishan YS907-GP, small dedicated flatbed. Yishan roll-to-roll

Zhongye SK Series, dedicated flatbed, **W3** Zhongye UV-1440 Series in booth of Ocean, Hall **W2.**



SKY-AIR Digital Printing Equipment booth, air view.



SKYJET printer with flatbed-with-roll-attached.



SKYJET flatbed UV printer.



Yaselan lacks a UV-printer. They made a hybrid (grit rollers under pinch rollers). Hybrid chassis is not effective for most thick or rigid materials.

Mutoh again did not exhibit their Zephyr UV printer. In most trade shows in USA Mutoh America does not exhibit the Zephyr either. A manager said "none of the printshops that tend to favor Mutoh printers in America would want this kind of UV printer at this price and format." His comment is astute (and correct).

Why? (two whys, why did they make this printer that not many people want; and why does almost no one want it). This is a hybrid: pinch rollers atop grit rollers, and it is large and expensive for its speed. Fortunately Mutoh has developed a specialized application for it: using a special ink for traffic signage. But none of this is at the Shanghai exhibit; but we cover the new application in the FLAAR Reports on FESPA 2010.

Sepiax Resin Ink has a booth

Steward Partridge and his team have organized a booth for Sepiax resin ink (W2). It will be very interesting to see if a Chinese manufacturer is innovative enough to be the first to use resin ink. In the past decade Chinese manufacturers wait, and then copy with a cheaper model.



But it would be a breakthrough if a local manufacturer will dare to offer resin ink before manufacturers in the US or Europe, and in a machine that is reasonably priced instead of cheap. Cheap means low-bid components to keep down the purchase price (but then the components wear out quickly once the printer is put to use). I believe that to be successful in Western Europe and North America a better printer needs to be developed, from the ground up, specifically to handle Sepiax ink.



Sepiax Resin Ink Technology booth at APPPEXPO 2010 trade show.





Sepiax Resin Ink Technology booth at APPPEXPO 2010 trade show.

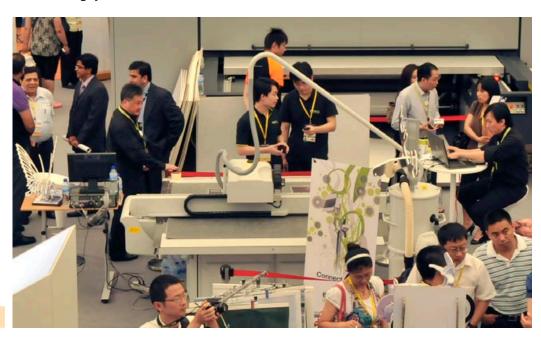




HP Latex Ink is well represented in the large HP booth

In a price conscious market it will be interesting to see how latex ink goes. I saw one of the wide production models (I guess probably an HP Scitex LX800; everything was still partially covered with wrapping from being taken out of the shipping crates) and one entry level HP Designjet L25500.

The HP booth had a nice Kongsberg flatbed cutter.



Kongsberg cutter at HP booth.

Textile printers at APPPEXPO

The booth of Digitex (Hall W3) had a professional looking flatbed. Looked better than many of the rudimentary homemade flatbeds in booths of some larger manufacturers of UV-cured printers in recent years. But the Digitex printer did not seem to have any UV curing lamps. I will check again once the show opens.



Digitex UV flatbed printer at their booth.

I felt there were more textile printers this year than any year in the past. But I would need to fly an additional staff person to Shanghai to photograph them, take notes, and prepare a full inventory.

Design had a textile printer in addition to lots of solvent printers and several UV-cured printers.

Century Star (W2) had their usual booth to exhibit their popular in-line disperse dye sublimation systems (to tack onto a Mutoh, Mimaki, Roland, or Chinese printer on top of the sublimation unit below).

Gongzheng had no UV-cured printers but did offer a textile printer.

Hongsam Digital Science exhibited a

- Mimaki TS5-1600 (rumored to have Ricoh printheads, but I am not absolutely sure). W4.
- Chinese made HJ-4108
- Hong-Jet

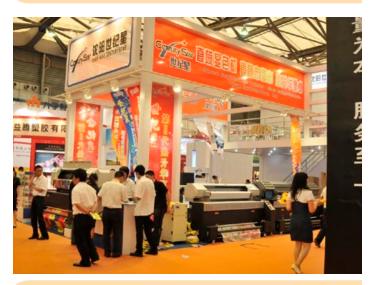
Human Digital displayed a T-Jet, sticky belt transport system; 16 printheads.

Saer Color Digital, Shanghai Color Digital Supplies Co., Ltd, had two textile printers. W3.

Shangdong Longlian, exhibited textile printers in Hall W3.



Design DS-H UV1600 printer at their APPPEXPO booth.



Century Star booth at APPPEXPO 2010 trade show.



Gongzheng booth at APPPEXPO 2010.



Water-based printers at APPPEXPO

Surprisingly Canon has a booth here (W1). So does Epson, though I suspect Epson will be attempting to sell its ecosolvent printers rather than older water-based.

A few traditional water-based printers are also in the HP booth.

This year I saw more and more Chinese printers using Epson printheads. The potential for these printers, such as A-StarJet, is that they could use Sepiax ink if the manufacturers would be innovative. But the tradition in China is to copy something that already exists. Since no Sepiax printers exist yet, they feel there is nothing to copy.

- AStarJet, several models
- Inkwin, formerly from AStarJet but now they say they are manufacturing their own printers.
- Mi Color, miscellaneous water-based printers.
- Wit-Color Ultra 9000 1802, several models with Epson DX5 2H Epson heads.

There are also many Encad clones using "left-over" Lexmark thermal printheads. I would assume these are using Lexmark printheads; there is zero international potential for such printers so we do not evaluate them. The original Encad NovaJet printers consistently failed FLAAR evaluations. If you are going to copy a printer at least copy one that functioned adequately.

Canon exhibited several water-based models, including

- 755
- iPF 6350
- iPF 8010S
- iPF 8310
- iPF9010S

Epson exhibited models

- 11880C
- 9710
- 9910

HP displayed

- The HP Z5200 Postscript
- and a rebirth of the venerable HP 5500 as the HP Designjet 5100.

Plus probably two latex ink printers (hard to tell since the printers were facing backwards!



Canon booth at APPPEXPO 2010 trade show.



Hewlett Packard booth at APPPEXPO 2010.



Eco-solvent printers at APPEXPO

There is a **Mutoh** booth with lots of ValueJet eco-solvent printers.

Roland has a booth. **Mimaki** booth tends to be small at the Shanghai show.

Seiko does not exhibit here.





Mimaki (left) and Roland (right) booths at APPPEXPO, Shanghai 2010.

Printer companies in India

Every year there is some company in India that claims to be manufacturing printers themselves. But they never want to host me to visit their factory. Then a year later I find out they simply are importing from some Chinese factory.

At last I found a company in India that seems to really be designing reliable constructing solvent printers. This company is Lotus.

As soon as I can learn more about Lotus solvent printers I will consider evaluating them.

Chinese-made Solvent Printers at APPPEXPO

By far most of the printers at the show are full-solvent and Chinese-made.

I noticed several new names this year that I have never noticed before; both in Hall W3.

- (China) Shangdong **Longlian Digital**, appears to be new at APPPEXPO 2010.
- Shanghai **Bemajet Digital Tech Co. Ltd.** appears to be new at APPPEXPO 2010.

Whether they are distributors or "manufacturers" is not easy to determine in many cases.

Once the aisles are cleared and we can get in to inspect all the booths we will publish a list of all the brands of Chinese solvent printers.

The exhibitor list catalogs have been almost unusable in past years. There is no easy guide hall-by-hall. The main guides are listed on the wall!

There is no subject list, and no usable alphabetical list.



Chinese-made UV-cured printers at APPPEXPO

There are already major FLAAR Reports on the UV printers of Dongguan and Guangzhou trade shows of earlier this year.

What is new here in Shanghai are the models that were still only prototypes earlier in the year (and thus were talked about to me, but they were not at the Dongguan expo).

For example, MyJet has an unusual looking combo transport belt printer (Hall W3). The outer chassis cover is an unusual and unexpected shape. This is their first entry into UV-cured printers. Looks like about 2.2 meters more or less (there will be brochures in two days when the show opens).

The two UV printers by JHF Vista are brand new.

At Dongguan I was told by Human Digital that they would have two to three new UV printers. But I did not notice any Human Digital booth at FESPA this year. And at ISA sign expo ESS (their US distributer) exhibited only solvent printers: no flatbed UV printer at all.

Yaselan was fading the last several years. Their antiquated UV-cured printer was no longer exhibited at Shangha this year.

Yaselan was fading the last several years. Will be curious if they survive enough to exhibit anything here in Shanghai.

Taiwan-made UV-cured printers at APPPEXPO

Lukio, a Japanese distributor of textile printers and other brands is distributor of a combo transport belt flatbed from Anderson Group in Taiwan: rebranded as Lukio LEX 1650UV.





Korean-made UV-cured printers at APPPEXPO

IP&I no longer exists. Dilli has two of its nice UV-cured printers here at Shanghai, in a booth shared with D.G.I. (solvent printers).





Dilli Neo Titan 1604 UV printer (left) and Dilli Neo Titan 2506W UV printer, at D.G.I. booth.

Media & Substrates at APPPEXPO

Obeikan has a booth, as they did last year. This is an established PVC manufacturer in Saudi Arabia.

There are so many other media, substrates, and materials exhibitors that it is hard to keep track. Many brand names I have never heard of, not even in the list of 90 brand names from FESPA two weeks ago. There is a separate FLAAR Report on the inkjet media that was exhibited at FESPA and another separate report on the media exhibited at Shanghai.



Unfortunately the trade show organizers did not get their official invitation ready soon enough, so the Obeikan managers could not get their visas. Thus there was no one to man their stand. As a courtesy we put up a banner so that people would know that Obeikan was doing fine even though they could not get to the show.



Ink at APPPEXPO

There are more ink manufacturers than you can count. There are more large booths of ink manufacturers of brands and names you have never heard of before.

The only way we keep track is to visit the factory, visit the headquarters, and then inspect how the ink functions out in the real world. So I can evaluate AT Inks, Inkwin, and Sam Ink because I know the owners (their entire families too). I have inspected their factories. And I have interviewed printshops around the world that use their inks.





Nicholas Hellmuth at SAM INK booth beside FLAAR Reports banner.





Inkwin had a substantial structure for their impressive booth on the side row. AT Inks also had a good location (in the front row).



Nicholas Hellmuth at AT Inks booth beside FLAAR Reports banner.









Jetbest is listed on the exhibitor map. I have not yet visited their factory or end-users, but their alcohol-based ink is very interesting. Like Sepiax it prints on all materials. However the Kiian Manoukian alcohol-based ink failed completely between 2008 and 2009. So I need to be convinced that the Jetbest ink is better.

The Venue in Shanghai

Hall W1 was too warm this year; Halls W2, W3, and W4 were okay. At least the show organizers did not turn off the air conditioning at precisely 5pm as they did several years ago.

Taxis are more or less readily available but at the end of the show the line is about 30 minutes long to wait.

At hotels taxis are available immediately if you are at one of the major hotels. There are several hotels within 12 minutes drive. Be careful you do not get stuck in downtown Shanghai: then you face a really long commute.

Hotel prices this year were much higher than previous years because of the world's fair held this year, "Shanghai Expo."

There are not many hotels within walking distance. This makes Dongguan by far the most convenient trade show area of the country: several major hotels are across the street from the Dongguan expo center.

I was asked by the organizers to be in the VIP group at the opening ceremony. I thank Mack Xin, CEO at Human Digital for arranging this honor. He also arranged for me to be at the official APPPEXPO dinner the night before (I saw only three other non-Asian people among the roughly 500 guests, so I also felt honored there). FLAAR is clearly recognized as a growing presence in China.





Nicholas Hellmuth at APPPEXPO inauguration event.

Catalog, Maps, etc

As happens even at VISCOM in Europe, whoever printed the wall maps and the map text in each hall used some cheap printer with low quality. A bit sad considering this is an international inkjet printer event.

As in past years, all maps are in Chinese manner of naming companies, with city first, so it is a challenge to find any name if you don't know the city.

There is no subject index either. In effect, the maps and exhibitor list, as in past years, were not very helpful.

Some halls lacked exhibitor lists at every entry area.

The Exhibition News was 100% Chinese which was not very helpful for buyers from around the world who can't read Chinese characters.



Chinese trade shows

The two really large signage printer, inkjet ink, and wide-format media trade shows have always been APPPEXPO in Shanghai every July and Sign China every Spring in Guangzhou. The nice Beijing China Sign Expo is not as large because most Chinese factories are near Shanghai or near Guangzhou. Note that most of the trade shows have essentially the same name. What distinguishes them is their city, the time of the year, and their size.

But in late 2009 and early 2010, an association of printer manufacturers decided to move their booths out of Guangzhou to a rival city (Dongguan). So China Sign Expo was held from March 2 to 6, 2010. These were approximately the same days as the original show venue in Guangzhou.

China Jet-printing Equipment Industry Union and XuanHua Exhibition Co., Ltd. were the organizers of the Dongguan event. The traditional show in Guangzhou is organized by UBM Trust.

It was confusing, because most printer industry people automatically went to the traditional Guangzhou event. Most did not know about the Dongguan event until they got to Guangzhou and found that over 30 printer manufacturers were not in Guangzhou, but instead were one hour away.

There are FLAAR Reports on both the shows.

To order these **FLAAR Reports**





The 2011 Guangzhou expo is scheduled for March 1st through 4th. There is no notice whatsoever on the Dongguan web site about anything for year 2011. In 2010 I attended the Dongguan show because hotels there were more convenient to that expo center (all the hotels were across the street!). Plus my attendance was hosted by one of the exhibitors (SkyAir Ship).

But I did make the journey to Guangzhou for one day. It was a huge show; even without 30 Chinese printer manufacturers, it had the non-Chinese manufacturers (HP, Mimaki, Mutoh, Roland) plus a few others. But the Guangzhou show had 95% of the ink and media manufacturers and distributors, plus LED, LCD, and everyone else.



Guangzhou Pazhou Complex outside view, 2010 trade show.



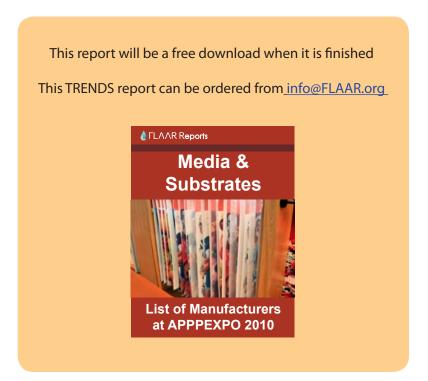
It will be interesting to see if the Dongguan show continues, or whether the printer manufacturers are invited back to Guangzhou.

Several people suggested that the Dongguan China Sign Expo 2011 will take place. Probably a few more ink companies will either move from Guangzhou to there, or will have a smaller booth at both locations.

Whether the media and substrates vendors move to Dongguan China Sign Expo 2011 is not yet known.

If indeed they keep two expos, it would be helpful to everyone if the Guangzhou event would start first, run three or four days, and then if the Dongguan show would start the last day of the Guangzhou show. This way thousands of people who need to attend Guangzhou can then also get to Dongguan.

If the two competing events are precisely the same days; both will suffer and no one will win. A two day overlap is okay; but overlapping three days is not good. People need a full two days at Guangzhou; and then a full three or four days at Dongguan. Or, three days at each.



Updated three times during the expo days. Updated the week after again and again two weeks later.

First posted Monday, July 5, two days before the APPPEXPO opens. This is what FLAAR provides: timely and unique information on how the world of wide-format printing is evolving with new players in our industry: mostly from China.

There will also be a private TRENDS version, available if you Subscribe or specifically order the TRENDS version by asking for pricing via info@FLAAR.org

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