Finding Ourselves in an Era of Digital Manifest Destiny

Well, look at us. Publishers extraordinaire, digital pioneers who for over a decade have bravely traversed the cyber frontier, fulfilling, as Ted Anthony noted a few years ago, our digital manifest destiny. The end results of so much technical development, application ingenuity, and targeted grant support often dazzle and provoke, as we have all witnessed and practiced. Today, content can be leveraged and its use tracked in ways that would have been hard to imagine at the turn of this century. Our content vehicles are many, our digital tools mighty, and we’re enveloping and collapsing multimedia and interactive components into singular presentations that need to be as much experienced as read.

I say again, look at us. But…where exactly should we be looking? Where are we as publishing individuals in this rapidly transforming, manifestly impelled digital ecosystem? Putting aside the glittery digital

cont. p 3
Welcome to the latest issue of FrontMatter. As the guest editor of #32, I’m pleased to bring you an entire issue devoted to the 2016 Emerging Trends in Scholarly Publishing Seminar, hosted by Allen Press on April 21 in Washington, DC.

The theme of this year’s seminar, “Sea Change: Challenges and Opportunities in the Publishing Ecosystem,” sprang from the idea that—like a community of interacting organisms—publishers, libraries, vendors, editorial offices, and start-ups are integral pieces of a living network. In the spirit of exploration and discovery, we spent the day in DC diving down into the depths and looking around, to see how this ecosystem is evolving before our eyes in real time.

To share what we found, we’ll begin at the end, with a feature article by Gary Dunham, based on his wrap-up talk at this year’s event. Coming from the university press perspective, he speaks poetically of the transformation imminent in integrating the potential of digital technology into content, workflows, and collaborative relationships, telling a familiar story of the publishing life cycle that is both cause for optimism and a cautionary tale.

In addition to the feature piece, we’ve included summaries of the other seminar sessions, which covered a variety of developments in the publishing environment from industry collaboration, identifiers, innovation, and the changing nature of libraries to re-imagining the scholarly journal, the transformational promise of open, linked, and shared data, and efforts to make research widely accessible, discoverable, and reusable.

And, of course our work wouldn’t be complete without some news from Allen Press, as we keep you up to speed on some of our latest developments as well.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter and find it useful in keeping you informed. We’re always interested in your feedback and any ideas you might have for future articles. Please email comments, suggestions, or ideas to frontmatter@allenpress.com.

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toolkits and bold new content vehicles, how does the digital revolution in publishing affect us, as workers and in the workplace? What are the real world ramifications for our purposes as professional individuals and mandates as institutions, our operational relationships with those we work with within and outside the office to create and produce books and journals?

Let’s explore these questions about our future present by visiting one of the most venerable venues for academic and regional publishing in the United States—the university press. We university presses are the grateful beneficiaries of a steady stream of grant funding and campus support for digital publishing collaborative projects and innovative experiments. A number of us are adding robust networked monographs and other digital content vehicles into our product portfolios, and we’re looking at ways that the greater efficiencies and more targeted costs associated with digital publishing can help guarantee the success of campus-based scholarly publishing for years to come.

But, I fear, despite the growing receptivity of university presses to certain aspects of the digital publishing revolution, we run the risk of sidestepping consideration of its necessarily profound effects on, well, ourselves. The revolution is more than additive modifications to our workflows and product lines. We need to consider its sweeping, transformational impact on our staffs—what they do and need to know, how they work with each other, with authors, and with vendors—when the workflows dramatically accelerate, take place more and more out of house, and demand the collaborative development of intricately configured packages of content online. And we need to take a close look at its totalizing effects on publishing houses as a whole—what do a university press’s rock solid strength and abiding purpose become when immediacy in content dissemination and access is possible, when content is unleashed and remixed in forms not bound by the rigidity of the material world? How have we and our campus-based presses fundamentally changed over the past ten years? And where will those trajectories of transformation take us?

Mostly, we just don’t know the answers to these questions. Honestly, I suspect that few of us in the university press world have thought a great deal about how the digital publishing revolution could and should change us fundamentally as workers and workplaces. We seem enamored by what we can now do with content, but less interested in how that transformational potency really affects us. Little seems to have really changed in the century-old operational makeup and mission of university presses, despite the increasing appearance of digitally-based deliverables. Yes, there are new tools and products, but we’re still basically organized in the same way as our ancestors, still walking down the familiar, well-worn, linear proscribed path of collaboration with our academic authors and each other.

Consider the author, the acquisition editor, and the project editor—let’s call them Harriet, an author from an American Indian Reservation; Eileen, a fairly new acquisition editor, and her colleague, Sam, a veteran project editor. Let’s say that the university press which Eileen and Sam work for is publishing Harriet’s new book, which collects transcriptions of tribal narratives recorded originally on a reel-to-reel tape recorder by tribal elders in the 1950s. Many years ago, Eileen, Sam, and their colleagues stood at different operational points on a riverbank as a print content project slowly and steadily made its way downstream from the author.

They still do so today. Although the Press has agreed to publish a digital edition of the book with the original recordings linked to the English transcriptions that appear in the print edition, conversations between Eileen and her author about the exciting new book are predicated on a print, linearly bound content package to be read. Eileen the acquisition editor treats the digital content vehicle as...
“Rather than be marginalized or displaced by new communication technologies, we can be repurposed and reenergized by them.”

supplement, the digital trappings, added to the definitive print edition at the end of a conventional workflow. She focuses most of her initial attention in author conversation and editing on assembling the print transcriptions for the assumed target audience of readers. As the Press staff shepherds the project through publication, Sam the project editor treats the book work-wise as a print project through most of the process until the digital elements are added on, usually accomplished as an exception to the normal workflow and frequently carried out by someone else. For Harriet’s book, Sam researched an appropriate vendor and asked them to handle the multimedia elements; for other presses, the task might go to a grant-funded temporary staff member, or an IT-related colleague not usually involved in the production of a print book.

This example is not uncommon in the university press world; in fact, it is based on my own experience. It illustrates that digital publishing as a way of thinking about and producing content is even today frequently treated as special, as distinctive, and is not usually well integrated into the normal operations of most university presses.

Now, moving from the staff to the university press as a whole, let’s honestly confront a key question: When the grant funds run out for a digital publishing endeavor, how much has that project really changed the way a university press as a whole thinks about itself and does business? Here’s another telling question: Has the availability of digital tools to publish faster, more nimbly, and in more forms than ever before altered our stated purpose and mission? Such tools hold great promise of a press more radically responsive to the world and a readership more engaged than we’ve ever seen. Our primary academic relevance still seems however to be adding to the world’s stockpile of knowledge, one long-form monograph at a time, unfolding in yearly increments. That function will always be valuable, of course, but our digital tools also give us more opportunities to startle and educate, to provoke and make a difference, in timely, relevant new ways.

I need to state this with emphasis: To fully capitalize on the digital publishing revolution in the university press world, we need to better grasp that its real, widespread effects are not just a gloss of dazzling products, accelerated workflows, and specialized staff hired for the duration of a grant or the execution of a digital project. Instead, its effects entail a more fundamental and widespread transformation in the publishing workforce and workplace. Rather than be marginalized or displaced by new communication technologies, we can be repurposed and reenergized by them.

The digital publishing revolution carries the radicalizing potential to forge a different disciplinary organization, to draw on Foucault’s sense of the term, a potent mix of creative relationships, educational opportunities, and responsive dissemination that would benefit us to understand and make our own. The enduring innovations brought about by the revolution in digital communications technology occur not just on the level of individual products but in how we organize and purpose ourselves in the collaborative development process.

Seeing us differently, in my experience, depends on recognizing three basic propositions.

First, introducing an array of robust digital products into a university press is not only a tail end process. Radically opening up content to authors and to those accessing their work is sweepingly transformative across the organization. It fundamentally alters the
relationship between author and publisher, and transforms the role of the university press and its staff from a steward of books and journals, moving them safely and competently along to publication, to an engineer of content, creatively and dynamically developing and building content packages with authors, who are afforded a wide range of options for how to share their research and tell their stories. The digital opportunities for content prefigure an acquiring editor’s approach to a new book; they do not supplement it.

Consequently, acquiring editor Eileen’s first question to Harriet the author should be predicated on a digital engagement with the author’s proposed book. She should ask a simple but powerfully transformative question: “How do you envision readers as experiencing your content?” Completely conversant with the range of options to realize the author’s ambitions, Eileen then would turn to her colleague Sam, the former project editor who is now a publishing technologist complete with a sophisticated digital toolkit, and together they would engineer, they would build, the project with author Harriet.

Which leads me to the second proposition. Digital technological literacy cannot be ceded to a select staff member or to others outside the Press. We university presses cannot afford to watch the revolution from afar. As publishers, we have a professional responsibility to be intimately familiar with the digital tools that will provide the best dissemination options for our authors, and the most robust engagement for our users and readers, and draw upon them as needed. We do not need to relegate such knowledge to select specialists or outsiders. We need to be informed, to stay informed, and to achieve a consistent level of technological literacy for all staff appropriate for our role as engineers rather than just stewards of content. Such technological literacy encourages a rethinking and repurposing of many staff roles, including the role of project editors. At Eileen and Sam’s university press, as a number of the basic routinized production tasks were outsourced to a vendor, after training Sam’s role as project editor was transformed into a publishing technologist, who works closely with the author and acquiring editor to explore dissemination options and produce a robust online publication. Sam remains actively involved in producing a book, but now he is a creative collaborator with the author, more closely connected to Harriet and to the final product than he would have been in past years.

The third proposition helps guide the other two: Digital communication tools are just that—they are behind-the-scenes instruments designed to empower authors and help us better share and access content. They are not ends in themselves. Now, I readily admit that I just love a lively exchange about what’s just been developed and made available out there. But we need to be careful not to fetishize or valorize digital tools. Yes, they are bright, shiny objects, all sparkly and impressive looking, and sometimes surrounded by deep-pockets grant funding. However, leave alone those tools that are not directly integral to the press’s strategic plan and long-term goals, to its engineering mandate for the publishing lists, to helping its authors reach their audiences in the most effective ways possible. Devoid of careful strategic application, digital publishing technology can become at best a cul de sac.
"Science and invention have made it possible for us . . . to be creators, collaborators, and activists"

distraction, at worst a ravenous consumer of time and resources for a university press.

So, can a sweeping organizational and mission change be done for a university press in the digital era? We at Indiana University Press, working closely with Indiana University Libraries, are attempting to do just that. We recently completed a new, long-term strategic plan that spells out many things, including a new array of digital products built on some of the latest developments in digital communications technology.

As important, we’re calling for fundamental, totalizing changes in ourselves—how we will purpose the press for our authors, for those accessing our content, for our university, our Hoosier state, and those select fields of scholarship that we vividly represent. That change also involves a detailed program for raising the technological literacy of the staff, and the repurposing of a number of positions to better serve our authors and content users as we create and engineer over 150 books and journals every year.

As we move forward, that change in ourselves will also involve harnessing the immediacy of a digital workflow to realize and make content available in some promising ways—shortening book publication dramatically, building edited volumes online as the chapters are processed, and enabling users to subscribe to varying levels of real-time content feeds across books and journals. More important, we see this technologically-impelled nimbleness as opening up our press to be more socially relevant and strategically responsive to current events and research breakthroughs. That ability to quickly disseminate real-time content is shaping our future acquisition plans and energizing our role in supporting our university’s efforts to help build a prosperous Indiana and sharing world-class research.

By not losing sight of ourselves in this dizzying and dazzling era of technological innovation, the future beckons bright and promising for those of us fortunate enough to be working at university presses. Science and invention have made it possible for us, more than ever before, to be creators, collaborators, and activists, making a difference and connecting people with one another in new ways. That’s a profession, and a new world of opportunity, to embrace. *
Nine Publications, Fourteen Printing Awards

On April 28 at the PIA MidAmerica’s Graphic Excellence Competition (GraphEx) Gala, Allen Press collected fourteen printing awards awarded for nine publications.

Of the fourteen printing awards, five were awarded for one publication, Arabian Horse Times. It was the first issue produced after the magazine underwent an extensive redesign which included new size and layout, increased number of paper stocks and gold foil accents. The magazine won Regional Best of Show Honorable Mention, Best of Kansas City Gold, Division III Silver, Best Use of Paper in Kansas City and Best of Category for Web Magazines, Periodicals & Publications.

Allen Press also collected Best Use of Ink Kansas City and Best of Category for Environmentally Sound Materials for Naked Food, Best of Category in Sheetfed Magazine for Creative Quarterly, Best of Category for Volume 84 of Orchids, and Best of Category in Calendars for the 2016 Ames Percherons Calendar. Mineralogical Record, Catfish Alley, PLY and Albert Bloch: Themes and Variations earned Awards of Excellence.

“These publications are outstanding examples of great design, production choices and standards of quality,” said Allen Press CEO Randy Radosevich. “We are proud to work with these customers and earn these achievements together.”

PIA MidAmerica has been recognizing outstanding work in the print media industry for more than 25 years. Judges qualify pieces based on several categories, including binding, use of paper, coating, clarity, and smoothness.

Congratulations to everyone involved in writing, designing, and producing these stunning publications! ★
Session: Symbiosis—Is Collaboration the New Innovation?

Alice Meadows, Director, Community Engagement and Support, ORCID

The day’s exploration began with a case study of ORCID and its vision of a “world where all those involved in research, scholarship, and innovation are uniquely identified and connected to their contributions across time, disciplines, and borders.” Alice Meadows introduced her talk with the concepts of “collaborate to compete” and the importance of infrastructure for innovation, and relayed how these are essential to ORCID’s work. Community-driven and led at its core, the project was founded by organizations from across scholarly communications: associations, funders (Wellcome), publishers (Elsevier, Nature, Wiley), repositories, and research institutions. Meadows relayed that ORCID collaborates with other organizations to ensure adoption and use of research information standards, including persistent identifiers, and to enable interoperability. Involved in these projects are CASRAI, FORCE11, Crossref, Ringold, DataCite and ISNI. She then showed four examples of collaboration in practice at ORCID, including efforts to provide a mechanism for recognition of peer review service (early adopters being F1000, AGU/eJournal Press, and Publons). She concluded with some thoughts about collaboration within the larger ecosystem. She mentioned several initiatives including the STM Consultation on Article Sharing, aimed at facilitating discussion to establish a core set of principles that clarify how, where and what content should be shared.

Kristen Ratan, Co-Founder, Collaborative Knowledge Foundation

In her talk, Kristen Ratan provided a look at the Collaborative Knowledge Foundation (CKF), which she co-founded with Adam Hyde. The goal of CKF is to build open source tools that will improve the way knowledge is produced and shared and ultimately improve research output. Ratan began with the definition of collaboration—and why it matters—and also how it differs from “other things we do all the time.” Frequently we use the word “collaboration” when, in fact, we really mean “cooperation” or “working together.” Referencing the work of John Abele, author of The Collaboration Paradox, she spoke about the difficulty of brilliant innovators to achieve true collaboration, and the need to “create a new mindset.” CKF is approaching this need on three levels: collaborative knowledge production, collaborative product design, and collaboration among publishers. At the level of knowledge production, work is underway in the
To do this successfully we need 1) open data about scholarship, 2) open, common data models, and 3) a community of persistent identifiers, 2) open, common data models, and 3) a community of diversification – moving away from technocratic meritocracy and toward a community of diverse stakeholders, facilitation – leaders need to cede control, not vigorously exert it, and flexibility – products that can be reinvented breed innovation. Finally, at the level of publishers, there is a need to create an open and shared “public utilities of publishing.” To this end, CKF is building PubSweet, which rather than a monolithic end-to-end technology, is an architecture in which components can be arranged together to create many different platforms.

Mike Conlon, Project Director, VIVO

Rounding out the morning session, Mike Conlon focused his talk on scholarship, collaboration and data, and implementation of Project Vivo, a technology that integrates the scholarly record of institutions and organizations. He set the stage for this by laying out five trends that are having a large impact on the scientific environment: molecular science, the increasing complexity of scientific problems, Big Data, the internet’s impact on science (including social media), and Team Science. These are big changes affecting the lives of researchers and how they do their work, so “how do we respond to these things and what do we do about it?” One way to respond to these factors is to study them and this is how Project Vivo was born. Vivo essentially assembles information about research — gathering data from ORCID, Crossref, institutions, and the researchers themselves about “what happened” and “who did it.” It examines the problem that to study scholarship we need open data about scholarship. To do this successfully we need 1) open data about scholarship. As described on the project web page, “the rich semantically structured data in Vivo data support and facilitate the research discovery and enable the discovery of researchers across institutions.” If we want to head toward a future of openness and collaboration in scholarly communication, then data about scholarship are critical to this endeavor.

Keynote Address: Adoption—The Changing Nature of Libraries

Roger Schonfeld, Director, Libraries and Scholarly Communication Program, Ithaka S+R

Our keynote speaker for 2016 was Roger Schonfeld, who outlined the systemic forces that are re-shaping the role and function of libraries in scholarly communication. He asked the audience of mostly publishers and editors to think through “what some of the things are from the research libraries transformation that matter to you” and what the role of the society, the publisher, and the content provider is in thinking about the “stability, health, and success” of the research library. As a fundamental principle Roger began with expressing the simple reality that “it can be hard to recognize that the sector you are working in has been transformed.” Libraries are going through many of the same changes that publishers have wrestled with for two decades, as “customer behaviors are changing, budgets are increasingly impacted, and ultimately the strategic context is shifting.” Based on his experience leading teams at Ithaka S+R in strategic consulting, innovative survey development and ethnographic research projects, Schonfeld distilled the forces impacting libraries down into three transformations and three sources of tension.

Format Transformation: The priorities, operations, and strategies of libraries are reflected in their budgets and the overwhelming share of materials budgets have flipped from traditional formats to digital resources.

Tension #1: Library collecting has shifted towards being exclusively digital in many fields, and, although library collections have not seen the same degree of transition, their digitization has transformed discovery for all.

Systems Transformation: There is a shift going on away from managing collections and toward facilitating research and learning workflows.

Tension #2: Libraries are making a generational transition to new systems platforms but these alone do not provide a discovery and access experience that empowers individual users in a way that meets online consumer expectations.

Role Transformation: There is a role transformation taking place for the research library away from the content provision role to facilitating research and learning outcomes.

Tension #3: Content remains at the heart of the academic library service portfolio, but as content selection becomes more commoditized libraries are looking beyond their general collections for adding value.

Schonfeld summarized by stating that there is no doubt that libraries...

2016 no. 32
have challenges but there is also a tremendous amount of potential in each of the three transformations. In conclusion, he left the audience with several questions. What do publishers need from libraries? “What do you need them to be thinking about to make this set of transformations work well for you?” How can publishers strengthen libraries as the libraries are grappling with these transformations?

Session: Evolving Species—The Journal in Transition

Travis Rich, Viral Communications, MIT Media Lab, Journal of Design and Science

In his presentation, Travis Rich provided a look at the recent launch of the Journal of Design and Science. Introducing himself as an “outsider,” he described how the typical incentives that drive the publishing pipeline don’t apply to him and his colleagues at MIT Media Lab. Because they do a lot of big data work and interactive visualizations, traditional publishing for them is “slow, the wrong format, and gives us rewards we don’t even want.” Still needing to communicate with each other, they created a platform (PubPub) that can host layers of “grassroots” community journals such as JoDS which are “free to launch, and free to curate.” The role of the journal is to be a curator and community organizer. Rich contrasted the traditional workflow of final draft, submission, peer review, acceptance, and publication to the PubPub pathway which is essentially a dynamic series of versions with the author choosing the point at which the content is ready for publication. It works in a Google Docs environment and employs a LaTeX-type approach where the content happens first and styling comes later. A set of plug-ins allows for seamless incorporation of objects like data sets and interactive visualizations. Peer review is post-publication by the community. The model is driven by the need for immediate peer feedback, and the beliefs that research is never finished, politics are hindering progress, and hiding the research and iteration process is damaging to science. Rich invited discussion and quoted the words of Marvin Minksy: “There’s nothing as scary as everyone thinking the same way.”

Sara Bowman, Project Manager, Center for Open Science, Registered Reports

Referring to the Center for Open Science (CoS) mission to improve the openness, integrity and reproducibility of scientific research, and to provide some context for her talk about a new CoS publishing format, Sara Bowman began her talk with some data on how researchers perceive the norms and counternorms of research activity. Examples of these are “evaluate research on own merit” vs. “evaluate research by reputation” and “motivated by knowledge and discovery” vs. “treat science as a competition.” She pointed out that counternorms can lead to questionable practices as researchers feel pressured to produce only positive findings, or the most “beautiful” findings, in order to get published. In the current environment, “incentives for individual success are focused on getting it published, not getting it right.” This leads to selective reporting, ignoring nulls, flexibility in analysis, and lack of replication. While researches are not intentionally engaging in fraud, there is a definitely a problem. This is what the new format Registered Reports is attempting to solve. Bowman explained this by first showing the typical life of research outputs: Design → Collect & Analyze → Report → Publish. This process can get short-circuited by activity like p-hacking (adjusting data to get a statistically significant p-value) and HARKing (Hypothesizing After Results are Known). To address this, Registered Reports removes peer review from its place between the Report and Publish stages and moves it further upstream between the Design and Collect & Analyze stages. This allows reviewers to critique the design and soundness of the study before research begins. Later peer review determines only if the researcher “did what you said you were going to do.” A critical part of this concept is that accepted papers are virtually guaranteed publication in the journal if the authors follow through with the registered methodology. Bowman demonstrated how this works with a few case studies.

Session: Biodiversity—A Healthy Ecosystem Thrives on Fresh Ideas

Phill Jones, Head of Publisher Outreach, Digital Science

To frame his talk on the promise of open, linked, and shared data, Phill Jones remarked that these are all part of the larger idea of open science. As
this is a “big and scary word” for some, he offered to “tame” the concept, and show why it’s of use to publishers. Open science is a research-first model. This means that data and hypotheses are the primary output. As researchers conceive of an idea and complete an experiment, they put this into the public domain, enabling other researchers to build on it. This leads to a “web of contextual references” where all the artifacts are interlinked, citeable, and re-usable. The narrative (currently the research article) is still useful and necessary, but it’s downstream from the original research object. We are also now moving from a cottage industry to an industrial scale version of science in which “multiple groups, in multiple locations, are each contributing to a single unified research project.” Due to this complexity and scale, data needs to be effectively archived and funders are threatening to withhold funding if researchers don’t make their data available. In addition, Jones stressed the need for structured data repositories, where data are curated and standards are enforced, and unstructured repositories, where all data types can be stored. Why should publishers be interested in open science? We are moving from a model in which publishers first interact with research at the point of submission for publication toward a more service-oriented role in which they engage with researchers and their activity both upstream and downstream from publication. In an “Emerging Trends prediction,” Jones said that the result of this improved engagement will be the ability for publishers to gather extensive business intelligence and involve themselves in the full life cycle of science communication.

Judy Ruttenberg, Program Director, ARL

Continuing the themes of collaboration and open science raised in previous talks, Judy Ruttenberg offered that “a healthy ecosystem thrives on openness” and described the place that SHARE occupies in this. Created in response to federally mandated public access policies, SHARE is a higher education initiative whose mission is to maximize research impact by making research widely accessible, discoverable, and reusable. To fulfill this mission, it is building a free, open data set about research and scholarly activities across their life cycle. To this end, it is an aggregator of metadata, not an aggregator of content. Why is it “free and open” and why is that important? Ruttenberg answered that open access advocacy and policy, on the institutional, governmental, and funder level, is more mature than open access infrastructure and our ability to implement these policies. To integrate the open standards, identifiers, code, platform, and APIs needed to create this infrastructure, SHARE has partnered with the Open Science Framework. Describing SHARE as a “data processing pipeline,” Ruttenberg illustrated how the highly inconsistent metadata of scholarly activity output is harvested from a number of different providers and output in a consistent feed, open API, or searchable database so that research events can be tracked in real time. This is an ambitious project, and she stated that “there is a lot of work to do.” Some of the technical, schema work of SHARE going forward are: 1) to connect research components, 2) to connect multiple instances of an object to a singular entity, 3) to model conflict in previously mentioned multiple instances of an object, and 4) to capture provenance/history across objects, instances of objects, and resolution of conflict.

Gary Dunham, Director of Indiana University Press and Digital Publishing at Indiana University

See our feature article: Finding Ourselves in an Era of Digital Manifest Destiny ★
employee spotlight

MARTINE PADILLA
Vice President, Sales

Martine Padilla joined Allen Press in February 2016. As Vice President of Sales, she leads the company’s sales strategy for printing, distribution, online content hosting and publishing management. With more than 30 years of print industry experience on both the print buying and printing selling sides of the industry, Martine is a major asset to Allen Press and to all of our customers.

Before coming to Allen Press, Martine served as Retail Production Manager with Sprint’s marketing division and held prior positions as Print Director at Callahan Creek, where she led its Los Angeles graphics and print purchasing team onsite at Toyota Motor Sales, and as Vice President at Mainline Printing in Topeka, where she helped build its Holographic division. She also served as Executive Director of the non-profit Sustainable Green Printing Partnership (SGP).

Throughout every position and company, Martine has stood out as a leader in the print industry, contributing to its growth and actively promoting the value and versatility of print. At the PIA MidAmerica GraphEx Award Gala this year, Martine was recognized for her contributions and was selected to win one of two Print Evangelist Awards.

best practices

The Pace of Business is Changing How Companies Approach Print

The following is repurposed from a presentation that Martine Padilla, Allen Press VP of Sales, gave at a Retail 2020 reprise event alongside the ISA Sign Expo in Orlando, Florida in April 2016. While much of her talk concerned what printers can do to remain relevant, the topic involved the changing nature of how companies use print today.

The pace of business today dramatically affects how companies need to plan their print communications.

The prominence of social media and the speed at which information is received from customers and competitors now mandates that companies adapt their marketing on the fly. The trusty marketing plan is no longer sufficient. Flexibility and nimbleness is the new norm.

Companies need to be prepared to quickly modify—or completely reimagine—their website, social media, mailings, brochures, promotional items, and educational materials. While digital messaging can be easier to change at a moment’s notice, printed communication materials can be more challenging.

“You think you have a plan for the first quarter. You get art files ready to go on a Thursday, then all of a sudden one of your ‘followers’ posts a statement you need to address or your competitor comes out with a new TV ad.” It’s akin to the old ‘stop the presses’ scenario; during these situations, you must be able to react swiftly” said Martine Padilla during her talk at the reprise event.

Having an in-house creative team or marketing partner that you trust is crucial to accomplishing these fast creative changes. So is a trusted print partner who can turn jobs quickly and reliably.

Nimble companies also need to think through the realities of getting the finished printed product to its final destination, especially if it has national or international distribution. When marketing timelines were more pre-planned, there was time for one print provider to print and distribute materials via ground to their final locations at a reasonable delivery speed and cost. In today’s socially reactive environment, last minute reactions to the market could cost thousands of dollars in shipping rush charges.

Instead, Padilla suggested that a company can save shipping money and time by using regionally positioned print partners for a single job, as a way to disperse the order quantity and allow for least shipping costs and quickest delivery-speed to market. “I can spend $1,300 to print a sign and $32,000 to ship it,” Padilla said.

The speed of business today has created the need for overnight marketing changes. To successfully and affordably achieve this for print communication projects requires developing partners that are up for the challenge. Companies need to approach the new reality of overnight speed-to-market, whether creative or print, with flexibility and proactive planning.