

February 3, 2003 - For Immediate Release

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Think121 Partners with Major Printing Companies to Create a Variable Data Printing Benchmark Test

Harwick, PA – With an upcoming project requiring variable data print turnaround in a very tight time window, technology managers at a multi-site printing company needed a way to determine which digital color print system would best meet their needs. They were already familiar with print quality and machine specifications, but had no way to compare the variable data performance of one machine vs. another. The company turned to Think121, a Variable Data solutions provider and workflow integrator they had worked with on previous projects.

The solution was a single benchmark test that could be run in each machine's native variable data language to verify the performance of the RIP and caching system. The benchmark job is a four-page marketing brochure with versioned and personalized variable content on each page, including photos, text, illustrations and charts.

The test suite scales from a hundred records with modest variability to the full run, with 20,000 pages and up to 1.6 million image combinations. There's a combination that will show off the production "sweet spot" of any variable data print system. "The benchmark gave us an apples-to-apples comparison," says George Stubbs, Vice President of Manufacturing for Standard Register in Dayton, OH. "We can now make a straightforward business decision on which machine will fit our needs."

The benchmark test was created using Think121's pdfExpress-Pro software, allowing the four-page variable job to be printed to all of the devices on the market. Output formats for pdfExpress-Pro include:

- ppml/VDX to drive the Nexpress 2100 and Xeikon Intellistream
- VPS to drive the Creo Spire for Xerox 2060, 6060 and Igen3
- J-LYT to drive HP Indigo

- BTF to drive the IBM InfoColor and Xeikon eXpert
- PPML to drive any compatible PPML device
- PDF to drive virtually any other printer

“This benchmark study is extremely important in helping companies determine which digital color variable printer is the best suited for their needs.” says Glenn Wagner, Executive Vice President at Digital Marketing in Minneapolis, MN, a veteran variable printing shop. “We have found that the front-end technology makes or breaks a variable data color print job. Using a truly unique product such as pdfExpress, we can test any manufacturer’s digital device in a completely objective manner. It is this kind of critical information that has proven difficult to obtain in the digital printing field and this study is the first one I have seen that has directly addressed the issue of front-end performance.”

The benchmark can also be used to quickly verify the performance of an installed system, illustrating precisely how effective an upgrade has been, or allowing technicians to confirm a problem so they can begin troubleshooting.

For more information about the Variable Data Benchmark contact Bill Marchiony at (610) 658-2454 or Todd Kueny at (724) 275-1230. The full benchmark will be available for use on a wide variety of installed and proposed print systems.

An annotated sample of the benchmark is available on the Think121 web site at www.think121.com/new/Brochure_sample.pdf.

About Think121

Think121 offers revolutionary technology and integration for creating personalized, integrated print and web communications for an audience of one or one million. The company delivers PDF based variable data technology and services for Internet, laser printer and digital press. The web-enabled pdfExpress™ technology provides complete variability of text and graphics, supports integration with third-party applications and databases, and automates document assembly. More information is available at www.think121.com.