Digital Technology Trends *End User*

by Howie Fenton, Prinicipal, DTP Ink

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⇥ Prices for flat panel monitors going down

If you're like most computer users you have either wanted or have bought one of those beautiful flat panel displays. These TFT-LCD (thin film transistor liquid crystal display) monitors are not only brighter but they also take up much less real estate on your desk then traditional, bulky CRT (cathode ray tube) monitors.

TFT-LCD prices have soared more than 40 percent over the past year but analysts tracking the display market say prices will now head lower due to increases in production capacity.

The average selling price (ASP) for large-area TFT-LCDs – greater than 8.4-inches in size -- reached $270 during the second quarter of 2002. That represents a 42 percent increase over the same period last year, when the ASP for large flat-panel displays hit a low of $189, according to AU Optronics Corp., the world's third-largest TFT-LCD maker, in Hsinchu, Taiwan.

With production capacity on the increase, prices for TFT-LCD modules are expected to fall and that will translate into lower prices for end users as vendors are likely to cut prices on 15-inch monitors, according to market analyst DisplaySearch

http://maccentral.macworld.com/news/0208/20.flatpanel.php
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⇥ Computer sales and what's new with computers

According to Gartner Dataquest's statistics as of April 2002, 1 billion personal computers have been shipped worldwide. That figure translates to one PC shipped every second over the past 25 years.

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What's more impressive, is that Dataquest expects PC sales to reach the 2 billion mark, with five units shipping each second, over the next six years.These impressive sales statistics are a testament to the value of computers. They have quickly become an essential part of daily life. For the vast majority of professionals, computers are an integral part of not only work, but also or a "wired" lifestyle. In fact, they have so permeated life that chances are, when your computer is out of commission, your work, finances, and communications with friends, family, and colleagues will suffer dramatically.

Given its importance to so many and for so much, this already powerful tool is the subject of significant R&D. Gartner Dataquest's study offers evidence of its continuous evolution, stating that today's PCs equipped with Intel Pentium 4 processors are 30,000 times faster than the first consumer models in the 1970s.

Workstations are becoming not only increasingly more powerful, reliable, compact, and easy to use, but also highly targeted in function. Hardware vendors are customizing workstations to meet the specific demands of certain market segments, including the graphic arts.

One of the major changes that we see at Digital technology Trends, is that computers for the graphic arts are being sold with more powerful graphics cards and the tasks previously performed by the CPU (central processing unit) are now being transferred (off loaded) to the graphics card. In one of the keynote addresses at the recent Seybold show Apple demonstrated several speed enhancements of with their newest computers achieved by offloading the screen redraw to the video card. This new philosophy is also evident for PC makers

http://ep.pennnet.com/Articles/Article_Display.cfm?Section=Articles&Subsection=Display&ARTICLE_ID=151631

⇥ 51% of U.S. online time is high speed or broadband

Time spent online by consumers who surf the Web via high-speed broadband access accounted for more than half of all time spent online in January, 02, according to Nielsen/NetRatings.

The U.S. finding, which included home and work use, marks the first time broadband Internet usage has ever outpaced dial-up. The findings have significant implications for the advertising industry because observers believe that widespread household penetration of broadband access will open up a new era of online programming and marketing potential. Broadband users logged 1.19 billion hours in January, accounting for 51% of the 2.3 billion hours spent online during the month. By contrast, broadband users spent 727 million hours online in January 2001, accounting for 38% of the total time spent online.

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Total time spent online by broadband users spiked 64% year-over-year to 1.19 billion hours, while time spent online by narrowband consumers decreased 3% from 1.18 billion hours to 1.14 billion.

"Broadband surfers spend as much time online as non-broadband surfers and also comprise a growing proportion of the overall online population. Increasingly, online business models will be built and marketed with the broadband surfer in mind," said Jarvis Mark, Nielsen/NetRatings analyst.

http://www.adage.com/news.cms?newsId=34157

⤸ Study discusses proofing, cross-media, & digital camera usage

On August 14 TrendWatch a market research company announced a summary of their latest research projects:

- ➢ 27% of commercial printers say they did not do any "analog" (film based) proofs in the last 12 months;
- ➢ 28% report their use of analog proofs has declined in the last year;
- ➢ 10% of publishing firms say they are decreasing or eliminating "analog" proofing from film"
- ➢ 53% of design and production firms, and 61% of publishing firms, consistently work on cross-media projects;
- ➢ 35% of design and production firms, who own a digital camera, say their use of color scanners has decreased

http://www.trendwatchgraphicarts.com/fastfacts.html

⤸ Free Web Directories (catalogs)

Search engine giant Google and online superstore Amazon.com are each testing online catalog directories that are free. Google Catalog Search, launched in December, lists about 3,800 catalogs. Mountain View, CA-based Google collects print catalogs, then scans and converts them into a database that users can search online. Amazon's catalog directory went live in May. Users access it by clicking the "See More Stores" tab on the home page. Amazon's service has the same "look inside the book" function that the site uses to sell books, enabling visitors to view pages of the catalogs.

http://industryclick.com/magazinearticle.asp?magazineid=153&releaseid=10396&magazinearticleid=153676&siteid=2

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⇥ PC World Ranks Inexpensive Inkjets

The September issue of PC World ranked the top ten general-purpose, inexpensive inkjet printers These low-priced color printers print text, graphics, and photos adequately. They factored in not only the purchase price but also the ink costs, which can make a cheap printer no bargain. For those of use in the graphic arts considering the purchase of one of these devices you should think about network printing, the availability of PostScript interpreters and the ability to use color management profiles to "fine tune" the output.

#1 **Canon S750 Color Bubble Jet Printer$169**
The quick S750 printed beautiful glossy photos, and handles text with accuracy and speed. Its gray-scale images and lines were only adequate. Price drops $30 this month.

#2 **Epson Stylus C80$149**
The C80 is a fast unit good for high-volume home-office printing. Excels at photos and uses pigment-based inks, so photos should last longer.

#3 **Canon S520 Color BubbleJet Printer$129**
Text printed fast but looked somewhat fuzzy. Graphics and photos were smooth and detailed. Colors appeared slightly oversaturated.

#4 **HP Deskjet 940c Color Inkjet Printer$149**
Gray-scale images looked wonderful in our tests; glossy photos displayed great detail and texture but were too dark.

#5 **Deskjet 920c Color Inkjet Printer $99**
Affordable printer with respectable print quality. Both gray-scale and color graphics were attractive. Limited 90-day warranty is unimpressive.

#6 **HP Deskjet 845c Color Inkjet Printer $79**
Delivered smooth, detailed gray-scale images and superb highlights and shadows on photos. An excellent option for inexpensive photo printing.

#7 **Epson Stylus Photo 820 $99**
Optimized specifically for printing photos, the Photo 820 turned in slow text speeds but produced beautiful, vivid photos on glossy paper.

#8 **Epson Stylus C60 $79**
Printed subtle details in test photos quite well and with above average speed. A capable photo printer, some photos showed a slightly red cast

#9 **HP Color Inkjet Cp 1700 $499**
Designed for business use, the Cp 1700 has optional networking, low printing costs, and a slightly larger output tray. Text and graphics appeared sharp and detailed

#10 **Lexmark Z65 Color Jetprinter$199**
The Z65 is fairly fast and has two input trays for switching media quickly. Though print quality was acceptable, images looked somewhat fuzzy and dotted.

http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,103139,00.asp

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⇥ DVD sends the VCR tapes packing

After years of walking into Blockbuster or Hollywood Video and watching the DVD areas grow and shrink, over and over again - it looks like the critical mass required for success has been reached and the DVD areas will grow and remain larger then video tape.

According to industry projections, Americans will spend nearly $3 billion more on DVD's this year than they did last, an increase of 50 percent. And some recent films, such as "The Fast and the Furious" and "Training Day," have earned more money from DVD sales than from theater runs. And for the first time, DVD sales have surpassed those of videocassettes, even though DVD players are in only about a third of American households, compared with a saturation of more than 90 percent for videocassette players.

Based on this information retailers are poised to make the permanent shift to DVD's from videocassettes, much as they did to CD's from vinyl albums a decade ago. According to Warren Lieberfarb, president of Warner Home Video, "In five years, it has gone from zero to 30 million households, and a quarter of those have more than one DVD player. Nothing else has come close to doing that in such a short time, not CD's, not VCR's, not personal computers, not even television itself."

Estimates the late 90's, predicted that it would take much longer for the new format to assert itself. But no one foresaw how quickly Hollywood studios would move to put their recent releases and extensive libraries onto the new larger format discs.

And most important, no one knew how quickly the price of DVD players would drop. They typically cost between $600 and $700 in 1997 and now go for $150 to $160, with some retailers last Christmas offering players for as low as $79.

Adding to the popularity of DVD's is that many computers and gaming systems can now play them. Meaning that viewers are no longer chained to their television sets; they can watch DVD's in the car, on the train, even at work.

Boasting sales further is that, unlike videocassettes, which ruled home entertainment for a generation, DVD's are much more likely to be bought than rented — sometimes purchased more than once as upgraded or expanded versions of films are released with new bells and whistles.

A case in point is the sequential release on DVD and VHS cassette of three versions of "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring." A release earlier this month will be followed in November by an expanded version, with 30 minutes

of extra scenes woven in and interviews with the filmmakers, and then by a deluxe four-disc set with more features. New Line Cinema, which released film, is counting on some DVD aficionados to buy two and perhaps all three versions, leaving it to future scholars to ponder which is the definitive version of the movie.

The sudden popularity of DVD is transforming the rental market as well as sales: DVD rentals in the first half of 2002 were up 116 percent from the first half of 2001, while video rentals (though still a larger proportion of the rental market) declined 22 percent. Although some in the industry cling to the notion that videocassettes will persevere, most believe they will gradually, go the way of the record album and the dodo bird.

"My guess is that within 24 months it will become very difficult to find any titles in video, other than family films," said Benjamin S. Feingold, president of Columbia Tri-Star Motion Picture Group. Family films are an important part of the home video industry because children, much more than adults, are eager to watch the same movies over and over, making buying them much more economical than renting.

"One profound impact that DVD is having is that it's re-energized people's buying behavior," said Bob Chapek, present of Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Disney's video and DVD division. "Even in the heyday of VHS, the average household bought about five videocassettes a year. Now, consumers are buying 15 DVD's per year."

Earlier this summer, the Circuit City electronics chain announced that it intended to stop selling videotapes altogether to devote its shelf space to DVD's, and many experts predict that giant retailers like Wal-Mart may soon follow suit. So next time you walk into your local video rental store, see if the shelf's in your area are switching from video tape to DVD.

http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/26/technology/26DVD.html

⇥ Happy – smiley opening Mac Icon gets the ax

For those of use who have been using the Macintosh since its inception, you will soon be disappointed that the smiling "happy Mac" icon that for millions of us has defined Apple's creative and cuddly alternative to dark suited, corporate, Windows environment - has been terminated.

With the latest revision of the Mac OS the smiling icon that appeared on the start up screen quietly vanished. As someone who started with a 128 Kb Mac with 2 400 Kb disk drives I will miss the smiling Macintosh icon that has for 18 years been the first thing to greet me every morning upon start up.

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Instead the new Jaguar OS X that began shipping last week, a bland, gray Apple logo has replaced the anthropomorphic happy Mac. "He was carried off into the night," said Susan Kare, the graphic artist who was part of the original Macintosh design team and who drew the original happy Mac icon. "There isn't even a milk carton that reads, `Have you seen this icon?' "

The change, according to Apple, reflects the refined aesthetic vision of Steven P. Jobs, the company's chief executive and co-founder. While the original Macintosh pioneered the use of small, simple icons to represent programs and documents, when Mr. Jobs left Apple and founded Next Inc., his tastes shifted to thumbnail photo- realistic images.

http://maccentral.macworld.com/news/0208/13.powermac.php

⇥ Editorial: This is a bad sign

Well if you ask me this was monumentally stupid. You don't take one of the best representations of the culture created by your product and the your brand recognition and simply eliminate it. There are parts of the Macintosh experience that have been indelibly cast into the hearts and souls of the loyal users and our society as a whole. Examples include the award winning 1984 Superbowl commercial, the more recent commercials by teachers discussing "empowerment" and the simple yet elegant "happy Mac" icon.

For me this is akin to hearing Steve Jobs say 'you know all that innovation and culture we have created over the last 18 years, well we don't need it anymore, we don't care that anymore – because we are too cool to care about your experiences or your past'. Simply throwing away the icons that represented the passions and devotion of the loyal Mac users is disrespect of the highest order and in my mind evidence of Apples continued ignorance. It shows again that Apple disregards the desires of their loyal and core market base - who are us – you and me - in the graphic arts community.

It seems to me that Apple management thinks that their vision is all that counts – and that they can change the Macintosh experience against the wishes of their loyal users. Don't they know that it is the Macintosh experience, they keeps us loyal and it is the user interface that is the Macintosh experience.

I hate to speak badly about Apple but in my opinion this inconsistency, this ignorance is one of the reasons why the user base does not grow. Sure there are loyal users who stick with their computers - through thick and then. But there are also "fence sitters" who want to buy from companies that they think are innovative, cool and understand what is important to them. For me the Macintosh experience has just fallen a notch and I will miss the little guy!

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▸▸ **Schedule**

Are there questions or issues you are wrestling with – let's schedule a visit - here is a travel schedule.

| Date	City	Purpose
10/2	Boston	Banta Technovation Workflow Seminars
10/3	San Francisco	PDF Training for Sales (private)
10/8-9	Chicago Graph Expo Seminars	Digital Salesperson Digital Workflow Heidelberg Academy PDF training Digital Printing Vendor Panel
10/29-30	Sidney, Nebraska	PDF Training for creatives (private) PDF Training for production (private)

Adding or Removing Names

To add someone email **HowieAtPre@aol.com** and write "add to End User list" or "add to Pro list" in the subject

To be removed from either list - email and write "remove from Pro" or "remove from End User list" in the subject line

To switch write "switch from Pro to End User" or "switch from End User to Pro" in the subject line
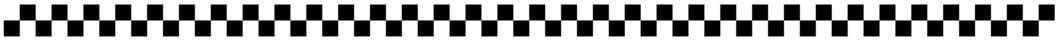
Questions about the alphabet soup of digital technologies?
- ➢ **CTP** (computer to plate)
- ➢ **QC** (Quality Control) **or process control,**
- ➢ **PDF** (Portable Document Format)
- ➢ **CMS** (Color Management Systems),
- ➢ **Working faster or doing more with less**

drop me a note: **HowieAtPre@aol.com**