

Better Color With Less Ink

There were a couple of vendors at Print 09 offering better color by using less ink. Specifically, Fine Eye, which also announced at the show that they were merging with Chromaticity, has developed a new algorithm for separating color. They say that the math almost everyone uses to separate color is more than 100 years old and needed refining. That makes sense: clearly we don't use the same ink, paper, screens or presses as we did 100 years ago. The company says that their real intent was simply to make better color separations, and that the ink savings from the process was a happy, though not really intentional, result. More important, Fine Eye seem to get better saturation with less ink - seeming to defy the laws of physics. Meanwhile, Alwan has been making a splash with their own color control products that use a different technology to save ink and get faster make-ready. This is not really terribly new (basically Gray Component Removal, though that's not all it is), but the Alwan solution has been used by many printers with happy results, and their approach is different enough that folks are happy to pay for their technology. A few folks we talked to downplayed the importance of saving money on ink, which is a very small percentage of the cost of printing a job. It's even less of a factor as print run lengths continue to shorten significantly. But more important than ink savings is that both of these products mean faster make ready, less time getting press OKs and more consistent color through the press run. Both Alwan and Fine Eye look like products worthy note. We'll keep you posted on how they are faring, and we'd love to hear from folks who are using them. Let us know how they're working for you.