The European Market for Business Printing

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欧州先進各国のプリンタ市場は岐路に立っている。経済状況の悪化とテクノロジーの成熟により，市場は失速した。このような状況下で，カラーのページ・プリンタとMFP（Multi-Functional Peripherals ＝複合機）は市場の再成長を促す役割を担う。ハードコピー機器の主要顧客である企業は，プリンタとコピアの設置ベースを置き換えるにあたり，その投資の将来にわたる有効性と生産性の向上を重要視する。電子メールとDistributed Printingの登場により，ファックスとコピアの使用度合いは減り，単一機器に複数の重要な機能を依存するリスクを心配する傾向は弱まりつつある。一方ではCustomer Relationship Management（CRM）システムの浸透により，顧客一人ひとりにカスタマイズされたコミュニケーションへの需要は企業の大小にかかわらず急激に高まりつつあり，カラーのオンデマンド印刷に対する需要を喚起する。カラー・ページ・プリンタの販売拡大は，企業がワークグループ・モノクロ・ページ・プリンタの設置ベースを置き換える形で導入することにより実現され，そのためモノクロ・ワークグループ・ページ・プリンタの出荷台数は向こう3年間でおよそ30%の減少が見込まれる。

Printer Market Environment

The adverse conditions affecting much of Europe's economy are restraining acquisition of Information Technology by businesses. Printer purchases are occurring on an "if required" basis rather than through planned replacement programmes.

The less developed markets of Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East remain relatively buoyant. These areas are still in the phase of IT adoption and expansion. However, they are price sensitive and tend to purchase entry-level equipment – often under featured for the application. Developing markets have a tendency to leapfrog from older systems to state-of-the-art solutions without going through a conventional transition route. Consequently, there is considerable potential to upgrade installed equipment to colour in the future.

The generally weak economic situation across Europe is masking underlying market trends and making predictions about future demand very tricky for businesses and for industry analysts alike. Consequently, market forecasts are conservative and cautious.

Technology Shift

Inkjet

Inkjet printers are sold predominantly to the consumer for home office and photographic output. However, desktop inkjets proliferate in corporate offices as the low price allows them to be purchased within the budgets of individuals and outside of the IT Manager's control. The European preference for personal printers has contributed to this tendency to acquire local inkjet capability in the office for occasional colour output.

Workgroup inkjets have failed to penetrate the mainstream office despite continuous performance improvements. It remains to be seen whether the cost advantages over multi-pass colour laser can change business users' entrenched perceptions of inkjet limitations.

Impact

Impact printing is declining steeply across the whole of Europe (see Figure 1). Traditional serial impact dot matrix (SIDM) applications like multi-part invoicing and listing are

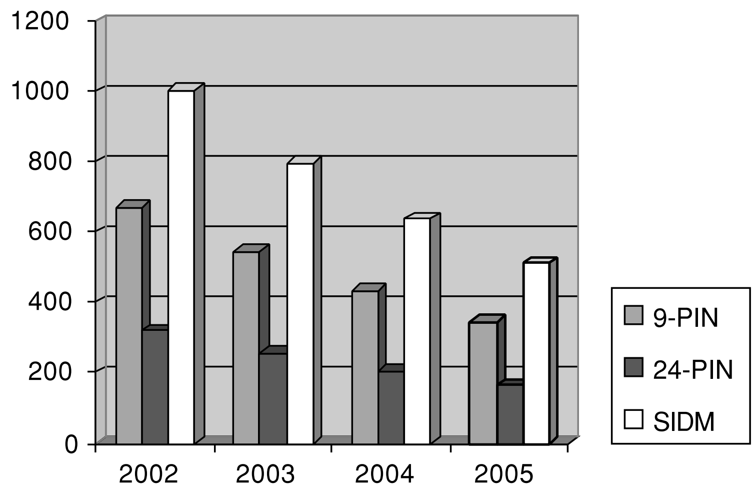


Figure 1　SIDM Market Forecast for Europe, Middle East and Africa　(K units)

migrating to alternative technologies: either electronic document management or non-impact printing. New installations are rare and the majority of sales are to replace defective kit.

Oki and/or Epson dominate nearly everywhere. End-users tend to purchase compatible models which will plug into legacy systems without causing issues. The technology is mature and there is little demand for enhancements. Where vendors have exited the SIDM market, some users are obliged to transfer to alternative products when they need to replace impact equipment.

The rate of impact printer market decline is predicted to continue, picking up momentum in Central and Eastern Europe as business matures and moves to alternative solutions.

Mono Page

Mono page has become a commodity product in Western Europe. That is to say, the technology is mature, user needs satisfied and opportunities are generally to replace existing products at existing sites. Sales decisions are driven through brand and price trade-off to obtain a certain feature set.

Traditionally large in Europe, the market for personal printers remains strong. Speeds have migrated upwards and the purchase price for entry-level equipment for very small businesses and home office users is continually squeezed by inkjet and multi-functional peripherals (MFPs). Changes in the dynamics of this market are caused by technology and not by working practices or purchase preferences.

Demand for desktop printers is expected to remain constant – with contracting sales in W. Europe compensated for by increased sales in emerging territories. The price gap between desktop mono and entry level colour laser is too great for a significant impact on this segment.

Small to mid-size mono workgroup, due to its price performance position in the market, is the most vulnerable to migration to colour capable workgroup solutions. Many installed shared mono devices are several generations old and single pass colour printers offer better mono performance with colour as a bonus.

The most profitable segments of large workgroup and production printing are under siege from both printer vendors and copier vendors.

Colour Page

One area of the printer market which has experienced consistent growth, despite the IT slowdown, is the colour page segment. Colour printing has become the primary focus for many vendors.

However, explosive market growth has not materialised as anticipated, instead the small base has grown steadily each year.

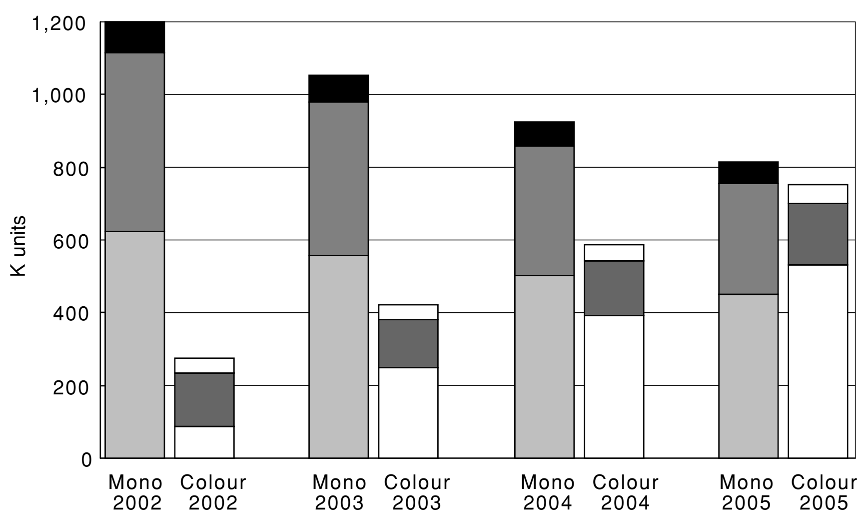
This gradual trend is likely to be over-turned since the introduction of both affordable multi-pass colour page and single pass colour page by the market leader, Hewlett-Packard. With H-P's considerable resource focused on educating the market about the advantages and availability of office colour, general market adoption is expected to accelerate. As often occurs, growth will be spurred from the lower spectrum of the market as volumes of small and mid-size businesses migrate to colour printing.

This provides Oki with its best opportunity for many decades. H-P will increase the visibility of colour and convince small-large businesses of the need to upgrade. Oki's superior performance single pass colour offers users colour speeds able to satisfy workgroup needs without compromising mono performance.

Once the market shift to colour begins in earnest, it will rapidly escalate. Second generation colour buyers will demand higher productivity – not satisfied by multi-pass technology which quickly will be relegated to entry-level products.

The colour page market has diverged into three distinct segments: A4 multi-pass entry level to replace mono-only with low-volume colour capability; A4 single pass for widespread colour needs and A3 single pass for specialized colour applications or colour copier replacement.

Increasingly businesses, ready to replace mono printers, are evaluating their future needs and opting for a colour capable solution. As the colour market matures, the user spectrum expands from creative specialist to the general office. Within the general office environment there is a range of workgroup size, volume requirements and available budgets.



	Mono 2002	Colour 2002	Mono 2003	Colour 2003	Mono 2004	Colour 2004	Mono 2005	Colour 2005
□ A3 Workgroup		44		46		50		53
■ A4 Workgroup		144		130		149		165
□ A4 Small Workgroup		86		250		389		536
■ A3 Workgroup	79		71		64		57	
■ A4 Workgroup	496		422		359		305	
■ A4 Small Workgroup	621		558		503		452	

Figure 2 Workgroup Printer Market Assumption 2002 - 2005 for Europe, Middle East and Africa （Source: Oki Europe Limited）

Although colour growth is expected to be strong in Central, Eastern and other developing areas of Europe, the starting base is low and colour will remain a small segment in comparison to mono page. One of the main inhibitors is running cost as price sensitive markets are as heavily influenced by the price of supplies as by the capital cost.

Routes to Market

Routes to market will be a major factor in successfully exploiting the growth of colour adoption. Today, many colour products are distributed through specialist resellers with expertise in colour management, document management and workflow. As lower performance and lower cost colour products emerge to target the small business user, general IT dealers will play an important role in accessing this mainstream customer. However, given the complexity and potential problems inherent in colour printing, there are increased risks of customer dissatisfaction and alienation due to poor understanding and service from the reseller.

Short-Run & On-Demand Printing

Cluster colour printing (low volume production printing) could threaten high speed printing chiefly in the latter two of its three main applications.

1. Transaction Printing of business critical and time critical documents such as invoices and statements. Frequently simple in terms of fonts, graphics and layout but may incorporate security codes. Some small to mid-size firms outsource this function to specialists. High volume runs are typical. Increasingly combined with one-to-one marketing or with sales promotions.

2. Direct Marketing with letters, brochures and other materials for mailings, personalized to a greater or lesser degree. May be combined with transaction printing.

3. Publishing digitally printed books, manuals, booklets, brochures and catalogues at the time of request rather than for stock. The content may be tailored if required.

The appeal is to replace a high cost production printer with several ganged workgroup printers at much lower capital cost. The real opportunity lies in low volume, highly customised applications due to higher page for page costs compared to production printers.

Print Cost Management

Managing print costs through usage-based programs will become a widespread requirement for medium to large corporates. Today the majority of users are unaware of the cost of hardcopy output to their businesses but concerns highlighted by the widespread adoption of colour will encourage many firms to implement tracking and look for pay for print schemes or fixed monthly cost contracts. The proliferation of financing schemes is a result of the copier world's influence where hardware is acquired on a click charge or lease basis. ◆◆

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