

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:00] DC: Today on The Print Report podcast, we are live once again from hall seven, drupa DNA.

[0:00:08] PM: Hey, if you were one of those drupa naysayers, we got news for you.

[0:00:12] DC: Welcome to The Print Report with Deborah Corn and Pat McGrew. All the print that's fit for news.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:22] DC: Hey, everybody. Welcome to The Print Report Podcast on Podcasts From the Printerverse. My name is Deborah Corn. I am your Intergalactic Ambassador. If we are here with The Print Report podcast, that means I am here with my printy reporter, Pat McGrew. Hello, Pat McGrew.

[0:00:38] PM: Hello, Deborah. I'm the one with my feet on the ground.

[0:00:41] DC: You are your feet all over the ground. I think you said you did eight miles at drupa yesterday.

[0:00:45] PM: Yes, I sure did, 8.43 to be specific.

[0:00:48] DC: Ooh, my head did a 0.43 miles. I had so many conversations with people, amazing conversations with people, amazing conversations with exhibitors, and amazing conversations with the producers of drupa, which is our topic today. Perhaps, this is going to be the FOMO drupa, because anybody who decided, "Let's see what happens, maybe I'll go to the next drupa." You missed out, or as they say in *Pretty Women*, big mistake.

[0:01:26] PM: Really big mistake. I knew that – Deb, you and I had a lot of conversations from even last year. We kept hearing from people that drupa wasn't going to be relevant, that the time for big trade shows had passed, and these fairs were not –

[0:01:41] DC: Nobody's making technology announcements.

[0:01:43] PM: Yes. Nobody's showing anything new, it's all old stuff. We kept saying, that wasn't what we were hearing, that basically we thought that printers would come and support the industry by coming with their shopping list in their checkbook to look for things. But we also, in talking to a lot of the vendors knew that they were trying to decide just how big to come. The ones who came big, I think it's paying off for him.

[0:02:11] DC: It did. Even if people took a smaller footprint, they still hear. But for the people that did take a smaller footprint, what I'm hearing from them is, the booth size was fine, but they wish they had more people in the booth because there was so many people visiting them. I have to say that, the Americans don't always get credit for showing up at drupa. It's a big trip. But there are so many Americans here this year. I'm so proud, Patricia.

[0:02:42] PM: There are and there are another 13 arriving today that I know of, that specifically decided to come for week two.

[0:02:48] DC: I'm just going to say, a bunch came yesterday.

[0:02:51] PM: Yes, because there's a strategy to drupa. This is 18 halls of innovation, information, and education. Because we've got – we're here at drupa next stage, there's also the drupa cube. But there are presentations going on in stands all over the messe. If you really want to be able to spend time, it makes sense to have almost coming week two, when you're not fighting the crowds of the people who have to be first in line.

[0:03:22] DC: Yes. I mean, the other thing that I'm hearing from so many of the manufacturers is, they're selling things in their booth that were not pre-sold, having meetings with people that were not in their funnel list, they had not had been discussing anything with. And they're spending time at the booth and they're educated. They're coming here knowing things.

[0:03:46] PM: They are and they're coming with open ears, I think is the best way to put it. I talked to several printers yesterday who said to me, "I'm just sort of on the fence about coming.

But then, I looked at what I started to see at the beginning of the week of announcements." These were two printers I was talking to who on Tuesday of last week when we opened did not plan to come to drupa. But then, when they started seeing all this focus, and all of these announcements, and the idea that everyone did bring equipment, they brought innovation, they brought stores, they literally hopped on a train from Northern Europe, and got their feet here, and have, basically, every day they keep extending one more day to learn more.

[0:04:33] DC: Yes. I mean, it's also so weird, because we're here, so we're in this bubble. I have no idea how drupa is being spoken about beyond the messe, in the international trade of press, and people who have been here for the first week and went back home.

[0:04:52] PM: Yes, some did.

[0:04:53] DC: Have you been hearing anything about that?

[0:04:56] PM: Yes. Here's what's kind of fun. So, there are a lot of roving bands of reporters. Some are contracted to provide content to the drupa daily. You probably – if you're here, or if you're reading it online, you would have, and you can read it online for some time. You'll see country-based reporters who are bringing their stories. But as I've been running around, I've been seeing video folks. So, a lot of solo people with the camera and the tripod pointed at themselves with their microphone.

[0:05:26] DC: Or as speaker who are speaking at events.

[0:05:28] PM: Always. I've seen folks from Australia, from New Zealand. I have seen folks from Singapore, I have seen folks from Malaysia, Thailand, China, Japan, certainly. But then, also, from pretty much every European country, the US, and of course, the South American contingent. Honestly, this is a global show. If you were one of the naysayers and decided it wasn't for you, that fear of missing out, I hope you're feeling it.

[0:05:57] DC: I mean, I don't really know how anybody can't, especially if you sell equipment. There is so much equipment that has been sold at this show. I mean, I was in the HP booth for two days, and they had already almost hit their mark in the first week and beyond. You were

telling me that in conversations you were having, there are people who will now be building presses for the next two years, orders that they've taken here.

Something that I really appreciated this year, is that people aren't counting pipeline, they're only reporting on signed contracts. Which means that nobody's spinning anything, that they don't need to spin anything, that they're saying, "Oh, we have so much in the pipeline, but we don't ever want to talk about that. We want to talk about the contracts."

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[0:07:48] PM: Yes. We've spent a lot of time in the digital halls with the digital press manufacturers. But I've been for the last couple of days, I've been out on the other end of the messe with a lot of the offset people, and they are having the same experience. Their experience is that people are coming to them that maybe they talked to a few years ago, maybe they even talked to them at the last drupa. But for, you know, maybe COVID-based reasons, they might have decided not to make investments. But now, they're here with a vengeance, literally a shopping list and checkbook, and they're going through. Koenig & Bauer is having an amazing event. Durst is having an amazing time in their stand.

[0:08:30] DC: I saw Rick Salinas from Duplo yesterday, he said it's out of control over by their stands.

[0:08:33] PM: Absolutely. It's not just the press manufacturers. It's the finishing equipment manufacturers. But then, also, the people with specialty equipment. So, over when you get into the halls where the offset guys are hanging out, you'll see a lot of these specialty manufacturers, hot foiling machines, cold foiling machines, all sorts of interesting things. I had the most fascinating conversation with the folks from Xaar this morning, who collaborated with Koenig & Bauer, and with Marabu for high-viscosity inks. You can print on glass and make it look etched. They've got a line of people coming out of their demonstration. It's just crazy.

[0:09:13] DC: It really is. The other thing is that, you spent yesterday, I believe, or the day before, you made it your, Visit the Asian Vendors Day.

[0:09:22] PM: I did.

[0:09:24] DC: It's a really interesting perspective because most of the names here, they just don't sell them to the United States. There's no distributors for it, but they do sell all over Europe, and they are out of control over there selling things.

[0:09:39] PM: They are. So, we have a number of the Chinese vendors of many – this is their first drupa. Although, for some, it's their second or third to be fair. Hanglory has been here before. If you have a conversation with them, you learn a number of things. One, they already have partnerships with many of the brands you already know. So, their technology is continuing to be extended that way. But they are actively looking for agents around the world to help take their technology out and move it. The Chinese vendors, they're highly motivated, they're very, very precise people, they are building machines that are commercial ready. Those I think are things that – they're conversations that are good to have.

The demonstrations that I've been able to get have been amazing. The one challenge for them is that for many of them, they've brought translators who are struggling with the print industry terminology. We have funny terms we use in printing. We use terms like imposition. Imagine putting that into Google Translate and seeing what you get, especially trying to put it into Chinese, which is not a literal translation language.

I have been blessed that I have my own personal Chinese translator who has been helping me through this, a longtime friend. He's the VP of Asia for Memjet, Alex Yuen, and was kind enough to walk me to people and do the translation for me with the right terminology so that I could really understand the technology they had.

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[0:11:43] DC: The last thing I want to say about the sales is that you, yes, in the beginning of the show, those first couple of days, there are big announcements about sales. Most of them are pre-arranged because people don't want to drag presses back all over the world. But there are people walking up to those giant inkjet presses and just saying, "I'll take one" or two.

[0:12:06] PM: "Can I package it up to go?"

[0:12:08] DC: Or five. I mean, I was actually just passing through the Fuji booth this morning. As I was standing there at 9:40 in the morning, the show had not even open and the bell was ringing.

[0:12:22] PM: The bell was ringing.

[0:12:22] DC: The bell was ringing.

[0:12:23] PM: What that means for those of you who don't know shows. If you've ever been to a large equipment trade show, one of the things that many of the vendors will do is when they do

a big sale, they'll ring a bell to celebrate the sales team, and let everyone in this town know that something big has happened. That bell just keeps ringing as you walk through the halls.

[0:12:44] DC: But at 9:40am, not even 10:40am.

[0:12:47] PM: Yes, it was not even 10am yet. The show opens at 10am here. If it's ringing at 9:40am, somebody we've worked on some magic.

[0:12:54] DC: Yes. Well, it's just really been incredible. There's also a lot of people here. I mean, on the messe just walking around. Now, look, it is cyclical. I have noticed in all trade shows that I've ever gone to, depending upon the point you come in, or the point the most people come in. In the messe, there's a north entrance and a south entrance. If you come in the north entrance with thousands of people in a cluster, you kind of going to move around the north and make your way to the south. If you come in the south, the same thing.

Sometimes, it shifts the pass in the night. Sometimes closest to the entrances on both sides are the most crowded. Sometimes those halls, I'm not going to say they fit, I'm just going to say they thin out, they don't empty out. Then, the sides get the traffic. But you can always tell just by the people walking around in the middle, and in transient, and even this hall that we're in, in hall seven is cyclical. I would like to say that Europeans take their lunchtime very seriously. They love their lunch. Everybody goes to lunch. All the Americans are like, "Where's everybody. We don't ever stop working."

[0:14:09] PM: Let me tell you if you did not come to drupa, one of the things you are missing is drupalicious. There are food trucks selling absolutely every kind of food here.

[0:14:21] DC: I mean, it gives people a reason to stop and have lunch. But, usually between like 12:30 and 2:00, I can see a lull in this hall of the transient traffic. We are in a hub. But 2:30-ish comes around, or when the show opens up in the morning, there are thousands of people just walking back and forth through this hall, and luckily stopping because of the amazing people that are part of the drupa DNA exhibition family.

[0:14:47] PM: One of the things we noticed, so over the last several drupas, we've seen workflow, and software, design software, operational efficiency software, print MISs, ERPs, dams, all of the different pieces that help a printer become more efficient are now much more on display. These vendors have – I mean, they always take a risk when they come to a heavy equipment show like, "My gosh, will anyone come and talk to us because we don't have sexy heavy equipment." But I think the vendors here in seven, over in 7A, where many of the MIS vendors and ERP vendors are, I think that every one of them has said, "We're talking to people, and these are quality conversations, solving problems."

[0:15:34] DC: The other thing that I think the people who were whiny about drupa, and maybe didn't – well, you know, I don't like people who are whiny about drupa, I just don't understand it. This is it. But the other thing is that –

[0:15:48] PM: The Super Bowl of print.

[0:15:50] DC: It really is not coming, is disrespectful to your customers. They might not have seen you in eight years. I was speaking to some heads of marketing, and sales, and some of the exhibition at the booth. I asked them, are you using this as an opportunity to reconnect with your customers? They said, "Absolutely." Some of them don't know about new products that they've introduced over the past year, over the past three years. Some of them, they just haven't been able to connect for whatever reason. Just the ability for those printers out there to say, "Oh, my people are still here." That means you're still relevant. That is how I framed it. The people that aren't here aren't here. But the people who are here are the ones who want to move into the future together.

[0:16:47] PM: If you are at drupa, you have bought into the idea that print never died. It's just fine, thank you. It is growing logarithmically. The kinds of print you can do, the substrate you can print on. You can make it look like etched glass. Whether you're a label printer, you're a packaging printer. This is really the first drupa where I feel that every segment in print is getting equal respect. You're printing on textiles, you're doing photo books, you're doing glass, you're doing wall hangings, you're doing feather signs, you're doing bills and statements, and direct mail marketing. You're doing commercial posters. It doesn't matter what kind of print you're doing, everyone's getting respect here.

If I think back to drupa like 2000, 2004, we didn't really see a lot of labels, we didn't see a lot of packaging, because they had other shows. But because the vendors are embracing with their hardware, so many diverse kinds of print. Now, they have a reason to bring all of their print and all of their people together in a single event. I'll tell you, if I'm a printer, I want to go hug my machines, I want to kick the tires, I want to look at the print, touch it, feel it, lick it, maybe smell it, do all those things we do with print. I can do that in one stop to every single printer in one event. Why would I want to go to everybody's individual events when I can see it all here.

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[0:18:59] DC: I mean, every four years, you have the opportunity to really understand what's going on in the world. I have to say, I'm very fortunate that I get to come to these events in Europe because the United States is its own little thing over there. We have our way of doing things. All the people from Europe are smiling at me right now. They're like, "Really?"

[0:19:21] PM: Really? We're nice people?

[0:19:23] DC: Really, we like things we like the way that we like them, and we do our events the way we do them. Maybe we focus on things like we're having a big party, instead of the substance of what is actually going on at the show. But I have to say that reconnecting with people, actually seeing them –

[0:19:46] PM: Most important.

[0:19:47] DC: – has been very significant for me at this drupa. I'm somebody who lives in my own little world in many ways. I put out content online. I know it's being read, I can see stats, I'm very grateful for the thousand people that read my website weekly. I put out a podcast, I'm extremely grateful for the thousands of people that listened to them over the years. But I don't know who those people are. There's no face to it. I have to say that one of the most humbling and empowering experiences I've had at drupa so far is people telling me what that content meant to them over these years, and thanking me. I'm not trying to be egotistical, thanking me for keeping the coolness of print, the passion for print alive, and it meant something to them. I would not have felt as reenergized as I absolutely do now if I hadn't come here.

[0:20:58] PM: Yes, I think that – look, this is an industry that is people-based. We got a lot of hardware; we get a lot of software. But if you don't have people to buy the print, to look at the print, to touch and feel the print, to create the print, to do all of the things that it takes to put out a printed product of any substrate, any segment, it's hard to imagine what we would look like. Even as we talk about automation, which is very important, even as we talk about digital transformation, which is very important. It's the people that make the industry grow. I have never been so hugged in my life as I have been here.

[0:21:36] DC: I mean, it just feels really good to come back.

[0:21:40] PM: It is.

[0:21:39] DC: I mean, I really feel like this is the next phase. That's what I'd said to everybody. There's going to be pre-drupa and post-drupa. Post-drupa, if people haven't left here with a new strategy for their business, or a new thing, a new channel, a new software to explore or get a deeper demo on because it just wasn't enough time. Even though there's 11 days, there's not a lot of time. One of the things I just want to mention, because I know I have to be mindful of your time, you need to leave, is the project that we've done, the WeAreDrupa Project that we have done with Antigro Designer and Roland DGA who was generous to give them the printers that they need to create these customized stickers.

The purpose of the WeAreDrupa initiative was exactly what you said, Patricia, to put faces, to the click, to the scans, to the purchases to the everything. I have to say, I'm a little sad that it

hasn't gotten more coverage. But I would like to report that over 2,000 people have participated in the initiative, and they have also made the banner their own manifestation, putting families together, putting exhibition teams together, putting friends together. So many young people that are engaging with print, telling their friends how cool it is.

I just really want to thank drupa for supporting the project and for their line, "We create the future together," because I think that is exactly what is happening over these 11 days.

[0:23:23] PM: So now, let's be drupa together in 2028.

[0:23:26] DC: Excellent. Thank you everybody so much for your time and attention. Drupa long and prosper.

[END OF EPISODE]

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Mentioned in This Episode:

drupa: <https://www.drupa.com/>

drupa Next Age (drupa DNA): https://www.drupa.com/en/Program/Forums/drupa_next_age

drupa daily: https://www.drupa.com/en/Media_News/drupa_daily

HP: <https://www.hp.com>

Koenig & Bauer: <https://www.koenig-bauer.com>

Durst: <https://www.durst-group.com/>

Duplo: <https://www.duplointernational.com/>

Xaar: <https://www.xaar.com/>

Marabu: <https://www.marabu.de/en>

Hanglory: <https://www.hanglorygroup.com/en>

Memjet: <https://www.memjet.com/>

Alex Yuen: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/alex-yuen-52227825/>

Antigro Designer: <https://antigrodesigner.com/>

Roland DGA: <https://www.rolanddga.com/>

#WeAreDrupa Project: <https://antigrodesigner.com/drupa-2024/>

Antigro Sticker Builder <https://stickerbuilder.co/>

Deborah Corn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborahcorn/>

Pat McGrew: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/patmcgrew/>

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