[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:01] DC: Today on The Print Report; circling back with XMPie after drupa.

[00:00:06] PM: What they saw? What they heard? What trends they're interested in? And more.

[00:00:13] DC: Welcome to The Print Report with Deborah Corn and Pat McGrew. All the print that's fit for news.

[EPISODE]

[00:00:21] DC: Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. More specifically, we are here with The Print Report podcast, which means I am here with my very printing reporting co-host, Pat McGrew. Hello, Pat.

[00:00:37] PM: Hello, Deborah Corn, my favorite Intergalactic Ambassador.

[00:00:40] DC: Oh. Thank you so much. I appreciate that. I am really excited because we have our friends from XMPie on the podcast again. And they are here to talk about some of the trends that they saw at drupa. Some of the customer conversations they had with printers from around the world. Some of the collaborations they were working on. And how they work with more manufacturers and companies that people are really aware of.

We are going to welcome Ayelet Szabo-Melamed. She is the Vice President of Marketing. And Philip Gaskin, the Business Development Channel Manager for UK, Ireland, and the Middle East for XMPie.

If anyone is not familiar, XMPie is the leading provider of software solutions for variable data printing, integrated cross-media campaigns, web-to-print, and marketing automation. Welcome to the program, team XMPie.

[00:01:43] ASM: Hi, Deborah. Nice to be here.

[00:01:45] PG: Hi, Deborah. Hi, Pat. Great to be here.

[00:01:48] DC: We recorded a podcast at drupa with Enda Kavanagh and Phil. And, Ayelet, you were sitting there. But I'm so happy to have you on this one. And I want to start off with your experience. Because you actually exhibited it in the drupa DNA area. Let's just talk about that first, your experience there.

[00:02:10] ASM: Okay. And thanks for starting there, because we were very happy. We took a stand in drupa DNA. We weren't sure quite what to expect. There were a mix of different companies there. But, really, the DNA, the drupa next age, fits really well with us. We came to the show with shaping the future of personalization message. And that really evoked curiosity. People were asking us a lot about that. And we had very good conversations. The fact that the drupa DNA Hall had sessions was really another draw. People came for the sessions. Stayed around to chat to us. We were really happy to be in Hall 7.

[00:02:50] DC: I mean, you actually had two stands in there. And they were packed the whole time. I'm not saying your coffee machine didn't have anything to do with it. I certainly appreciated getting a quick espresso now and then. But, no. Seriously, you guys did an amazing job. And I want to thank you. Because, every once in a while, we had a session that somebody couldn't make it and I would just run over to XMPie and grab somebody and say, "Hey, come do a session." Because not only were you well-prepared. But as you mentioned, you were speaking about something that was very topical at drupa, which is what is actually the future of personalization? Pat, I'm going to kick it over to you.

[00:03:27] PM: Yeah. Ayelet and Phil, I think one of the things that I noticed about your stand, every time I walked through Hall 7, and I was doing about 10 kilometers a day running between halls, there was always a crowd. And it said a lot to me that that crowd kept changing. And they were a diverse crowd. They weren't from any one specific place. You could tell that there were people who were coming looking for you. And there were people who discovered you in Hall 7. When people came to the stand, what were the questions they were asking? What were they searching for?

[00:04:06] ASM: Well, it's a mix. And I'll start. And I'll let Phil give his point of view. But, really, it's interesting that you said that people were looking for us and people that discovered us. Absolutely, people that were looking for us were people that were quite frankly sent from other stands, from other booths. HP booth, the Landa booth, the Fujifilm booth. These people just said, "Go on over to XMPie and have the conversation. This is what you need to be looking at. This is what you need to be talking about."

And then there are people – in every show, there are people that wonder and are not quite sure what everything is. I think the colorfulness, I think this shaping the future of personalization was really something that made people stop and said, "Wait a minute. What do you mean the future of personalization? Right? Personalization is here. It's always been here."

And then we started the conversation of how we see personalization and how we see personalization being much more than a name on a card. When we talk about personalization, we quickly then talk about relevancy, which is maybe an image that's relevant to you. Maybe a tone of voice that's relevant to you. We talk about a lot more things than just the classical, "Oh, I need to put data on paper." And that resonated well with a lot of the conversations that I saw.

[00:05:28] PM: Were they multi-channel conversations? Because, with XMPie, what we know is that we all grew up in print together. But XMPie doesn't only produce output for print. There are people who use you for multi-channel communication. Was that part of the conversation? Or because it was a print show, was it mostly focused on print?

[00:05:49] PG: Well, from my point of view, it was a mix of the two. Some people are talking to us because they do print and they're interested in getting into other channels offering other services. But what is surprising is even the people that were just interested in print-related stuff got really excited about how they could start doing other things offering new services. That was a surprise.

But, also, I've done a few drupas. And for me, normally, when you get the people that come up and don't really know what you do and they say to you, "So what do you do?" The moment you say software they would say, "Oh, okay. Not interested. Or not really for us." And they'd walk away. This drupa was very different. There were people were wanting to understand then what

sort of software do you offer. And the focus – certainly, the trends I saw were it was all about automation and also integration. And so, we had many conversations that stemmed from really an initial conversation about how can we integrate. Or how can we automate what we do?

[00:06:47] DC: I have a quick question. Did anybody share how they're currently trying to do any of this personalization? Or they're just not doing it at all?

[00:06:59] PG: A lot of people are doing what they think is personalization. But I'm shocked. I really am shocked not just from drupa, but from dealing with people. Just how many people are manually doing this stuff still? Now in the print space, it's very repetitive. But if you imagine in the omni-channel, the digital space, we've got people that think they can do it themselves and they get a web developer and maybe a programmer that comes in. And they'll build something and they'll get away with it. It'll work.

But then, of course, as they become successful, they try and replicate, duplicate, and add more. And it doesn't scale. And, of course, that's where we can help them because we've got the technology as a platform that allows them to do it, be successful with it, and then very quickly and easily scale to whatever level they need.

[00:07:44] DC: That's actually why I wanted to ask you that question. I'm interested what Pat and Ayelet think about this. I really feel that, at drupa, there were a whole bunch of people there that realized that they have to move to the next level in some manner. Like this was the time for them to do it. And they went to drupa too because it was essentially a global one-stop shopping, right? Where they could get all their information.

Understanding where they're coming from is super important, as well as the fact that – and we discuss this all the time, that you have users that don't even understand the full capabilities of the software that they have themselves. Pat, let me just start with you do you agree with that statement? Do you want to add anything to it?

[00:08:29] PM: And I'll camp onto that. But I'll camp on to Phil too. I think that, certainly, in the conversations I was having in the different halls, it was clear that many of the printers who thought they understood the capabilities of different pieces of software understood about 10% of

the capabilities of any given software we were talking about. It didn't matter whether it was XMPie, it was Locker, it was CarbonQuota, whoever it was. The understanding was sort of the tombstone webpage version and not the full capability set. And for those who took the time to ask the right questions and to listen to the answers, I think that they got much more out of their drupa experience than the people who went, "Oh, I know what you do," and kept on walking through.

I don't think that, as an industry, we have done as good a job of forcing education on the uninitiated as we might have because we still run into people who don't understand the basics of VDP. They think that if you have an Excel Spreadsheet with some columns or a common delimited file and you throw it at an Adobe plugin, you have VDP. And that just misses the essence of the power of doing personalized communication. And it doesn't matter whether that communication is a direct mail piece, or it's a personalized label, or personalized package. Right? I think that we saw a little bit of everybody at drupa this time. But I want to see more of the people who understand what we're saying to them.

[00:10:06] DC: Yeah. Ayelet?

[00:10:07] ASM: Well, being from a software company, I take it as a given that most people don't understand more than the 10%, 15% of what we're capable of. To me, that's fine. Because, really, we cater to such a wide variety. And everyone uses the software differently. What was nice this time and exactly the same way as Phil said is that people took time to explore software. I didn't see any reaction like, "Oh, software. No. I don't do that." Customers understand that they have to do software. It's part of their business now. And that was the change, the acceptance of software. The fact that software is really something that they have to get their head around to see how to run their companies efficiently. Because without running it efficiently, then you're just running faster and faster and faster to just keep up. But it really doesn't scale. I was encouraged, really.

[00:11:00] DC: Were the conversations you were having – let's see if we can get some trends out of what you were talking about with people so. In regards to that, were people asking you about how to optimize the time and do things faster? Were they more interested in providing more opportunities to their customers? Were they more interested in a way of creating more

margins for themselves? Pat McGrew tells me, less human touches, more money. Trend-wise – and I'm sure that it was a bit of everything. But I want to understand more from your perspective what were people who didn't know about you asking about? And the people who did know about you, what were they asking about?

[00:11:44] ASM: Absolutely. It's a bit of everything. You're right. It's a bit of everything. But I think many customers want us to fit in. That's like in a simple statement. They have things that are working for them. They have things that are not working. And the first question is can you work with? Do you work with this software? I have this. Does it work with that?

And I think if you're asking about a trend, we see that trend. We see that customers don't want to throw everything out and change everything and start from scratch, because now they want to work with XMPie. Now they have a different printer. They need the Adobe end-to-end or whatever it is that they need. They don't want to throw everything out. They want us to play in this ecosystem of different software where they can choose best of breed and things work together.

And it wasn't just software vendor to customers' discussion. We had discussions among the vendors. And we see vendors working more and more together. There's workflow vendors out there that basically create platforms and invite other vendors to come in whether with little apps or with integrations.

And I'm, for one, really excited about that. Because I think that's a better way for XMPie to grow to get more customers. Not to come in and say, "Hey, this is a solution that you have to sort of have end-to-end. And this is how we do things." We've always been open. But the world is now so much more open. API is one word. It's not enough to just say API. You really have to make your software like these little small chunks of pieces that can work together with different vendors. And that's the way to go.

[00:13:26] PM: The term I like that we heard a lot at this drupa and at follow-on conferences since drupa, and there have been several, is the term microservices. The ability to access the things about the software that I need in a way that works within my workflow. And I know that

with XMPie, one of the things that you do is you can work with some of the – I don't know if it was the platform drupa or not. There were times when it felt that way.

But with these emerging platforms, some of which have actually been around for a while, but I think the idea of a platform where there's a framework that everyone shares. There are rules everybody agrees to play by in terms of data interchange and data format. And the ability for XMPie to plug into a platform to give access to the things that XMPie is great at to a client who may have their own bits and pieces that they've written themselves as well as having purchased things. It seems like there's a huge amount of power, especially since you bring the content creation piece and the design piece to the table. It seems like there's a lot of growth opportunity for you.

[00:14:43] PG: Yeah. Absolutely. Having a platform like XMPie offers where we really excel because of the integration with Adobe. We excel with the brand compliance and color management. The end-to-end. It goes without saying that if you can do that with a data-driven approach and you can do that in an e-commerce space, then you need a way to be able to integrate with other solutions that are out there, other platforms. And we've been working with many different providers, software providers, platform providers and looking at new ways both from an automation perspective. And I guess, actually, they're all from an automation perspective. But from sort of the integrating with the process. But, also, on the MIS side. I mean, literally, it's kind of end-to-end. And if we're going play in that space, we need to be plugging into different touch points.

[00:15:33] PM: One of the ones I know you plug into is Esko S2. And I just had a chance to spend several days in Esco World and XMPie was on a lot of the attendees' lips. Some of them because they already use you, but some because they're interested in XMPie because of that ability to plug into S2 into that end-to-end package and labeling workflow. And as you look for those kinds of platform partnerships, are there specific markets you're looking for?

[00:16:10] ASM: Interesting that you mentioned Esko S2. Because, yes, we are looking at that. It's a great platform. And we are looking of course at the labels and packaging market because it's a great growing market. And I think in labels and packaging, it's different to commercial print.

It's a different kind of personalization. But, still, there's a lot to do in personalization in ways that maybe converters are not looking at it. Not even using the word personalization.

When I look at 10, 15 SKUs that are very similar but all slightly different, to me that jumps as, "Hey, template and different variation, personalization." I think it's a market that we are exploring and we have a lot to offer to. It's a market that can start thinking about not the design part of the package. That's one part. But then the ordering, the reordering, the web-to-print, the web-to-pack. Things that are maybe less developed in that world. And the fact that a well-known software provider like Esko is taking leadership in offering this platform is going to help the industry.

[BREAK]

[00:17:17] DC: Print Media Centr provides printspiration and resources to our vast network of global print and marketing professionals. Whether you are an industry supplier, print service provider, print customer, or consultant, we have you covered by providing resources and strategies that enable business marketing and creative success, reporting from global events, these podcasts, Project Peacock TV, and an array of community-lifting initiatives. We also work with OEMs, suppliers, industry organizations, and event producers helping you connect and engage with our vast audience and achieve success with your sales, marketing, and conference endeavors. Visit Print Media Centr and connect with the Printerverse. Links in the show notes. Print long and prosper.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:18:12] PM: I love the platform. I think that from an ease of use perspective and just the way they've built up on it and the cloud native aspects of it, I think for a lot of people it's going to be that jump out of the old way of doing things into the new way of doing things.

But it not just in S2. We were sharing Hall 7 with the Atomics folks who kind of address more of a commercial market generally and commercial and DM market. Are there other platforms like that that you're looking at working with?

[00:18:45] ASM: We're looking at the market. And, actually, the market is looking at us. There's people that are coming and discussing it. And as I said, a lot of customers are coming in and saying, "Can you work – I work this way. Do you fit?" And this is something that our understanding is there. I don't have product launches right now. But the understanding that we have to be more of a microservice and more of services that fit within an ecosystem is – absolutely, I see it not as a burden, but as an opportunity for XMPie.

[00:19:15] PM: Can we come back to Deb for one second? And, Deborah, I want to kind of camp on your question about what printers were asking. I was wondering if there was a big problem that you heard repeatedly during the show. Because I heard a lot of the same thing over and over and over again. It kind of surprised me that printers seem to have global problems. It's like you don't have people just in one country with one single problem. Printers share things. What did you –

[00:19:43] PG: For me, and I did touch on it earlier, automation was the thing. We're fortunate that we've got a really big software portfolio. We offer entry-level desktop solutions for people that want to get into it. And, of course, it's very, very capable. Very robust. But, of course, it's not there for huge volumes.

I actually had one of our existing customers that came in that has our desktop software that, since drupa, actually now taken a server-based solution. And the reason I'm using that as a sort of an example is that we had quite a lot of people that have small ad hoc type variable data campaigns. They're taking them in. And, actually, they're being very successful with them. But they're a little bit scared of being able to take the bigger ones, the repeat ones. And so, this is a trend that I'm definitely seeing. And you only have to look around technology nowadays.

I mentioned on one of our previous podcasts about how things are changing in print applications. Some are going completely. Some are evolving. And there are some new ones. You've just got to literally drive around the world now and see all of these sensors, traffic violation cameras, emissions cameras. Well, they don't know your email address. Right? They have to look up your details by your registration. And so, this is triggering loads and loads of data-driven print applications, because they have to mail it to your address. There's a lot of

focus on what are actually new applications. But they sort of conform to this repeatable higher volume category.

[00:21:13] PM: I love it. Deborah, you had a question a second ago, and I interrupted you.

[00:21:17] DC: No. It's okay. It's interesting. Because everything you're seeing from a platform software package was manifested literally across boots and during a lot of collaborations that you had, which brought things into my world, which is what can you actually do with XMPie. And I would see the results, because you had amazing print samples. And you collaborated with many of the vendors there. And one of the things you also collaborated on was artificial intelligence and using that in campaigns.

Now, at this point in time, I'm starting to push back a little on the phrases artificial intelligence and the phrases automation. Because people are using them in a very broad term that maybe makes some people think, "Well, automation is something that's bigger than I need because I'm only 10-person print shop. And artificial intelligence is something I never – what do I need that for? I'm a printer. Right?" Bringing it down to the ground level of looking at a small print shop. Can you just explain some of the collaborations you did and how that would benefit a small to medium-sized printing business?

[00:22:34] PG: Well, I suppose if we start with what we did with Lander, maybe Lander is a bad example for a small print company. But in terms of the application, I think it's perfect. They had some amazing creative mailers, direct mail mailers postcards that they were producing.

Now, obviously, their equipment, their nanotechnology give an amazing print quality. But, actually, that as an application is ideal for anybody that wants to get into offering variable data printing services because it's really very powerful. But it's very straightforward. You just take a standard double-sided postcard template, let's say, and you can start by just putting mailing information on the back, which everybody does.

But with XMPie, you've got that creative capability of enhancing. And then you can start offering as a service not just the same content, but actually adjusting the content based on what you know about each of the individual recipients. I think that's a really good example.

You've thrown a lot of questions at me again. Let me drill into the AI. Because AI is a generic term. And I agree, Deborah, everybody talks about AI and it means lots of different things. We were using it in the context of our future of personalization. And we were – really, I think a better phrase in terms of the AI bits we're using is generative content.

You deliver a kind of data-driven campaign. And, historically, you've had to rely on what data you've got. And in a lot of cases, it was down to what versions or segmentation have you got. What generative content allows you to start doing is to say I don't have this content. But I have some data. So you can then go to AI – we used OpenAI in our demonstration on the Fujifilm stand and we're actually saying, "So, with this data that somebody's just given us, give me some content that I can use that will fit their brief."

Now that was obviously in the context of a comic. But what if you were to consider something like real estate? I'm looking for a particular property in a particular area. But so are lots of other people. If you're trying to sell that property, you've generally got a standard brochure that sells that property. But if you know where I work, for example. Or am I married? Do I have children? What age are they? Then all of my requirements change. So I can go out and say, "With this property, and, by the way, here's a link to it on my website, go get all of the content that I might need to persuade this person that meets this data brief and provide something that's completely unique for each person that's interested. That's where you start getting into generative content. And, of course, you can take it further by using some of the capability to generate images in the same process as well.

[00:25:25] DC: I don't want to get into the weeds about this. But is your expectation that the printer is creating this content for customers? And if so, what is your talk track around that? I know I'm a compound-question person. How successful has it been?

[00:25:42] ASM: Deborah, absolutely. I'm with you. AI is a word. And we're not recommending that every printer in the world just jump into AI and start generating all the content with AI. Generative AI is great. But it also has to be well-controlled and reviewed. You can't just put anything that it creates on a page.

And the way I think printers should look at it is that's another service that they can tell their customers that they can come to them for this service. Right? I'm not suggesting that printers start doing these AI campaigns and do AI generation of campaigns instead of their customers. But just like when we talk to the printers about going from print to email, we said, "If you say no to a customer that now needs to start doing emails, then that customer is going to go somewhere else."

And what we're saying now is when you look at multi-channel campaigns, when you look at creating more than just one channel, have the conversations with your customers. Obviously, don't do it yourself. But when a customer – when a marketing person and customers comes to talk to you, don't shut that conversation out. Don't be the one that says, "Well, I don't understand that. Just come to me for the print." That make sense?

[00:27:05] PM: That makes a lot of sense.

[00:27:06] PG: Yeah. If I could just add to that. Taking the AI to one side, the amount of people printers that I talk to that say, "Well, we're really interested in offering variable data-driven printing. But our customers just don't have the data." But what we're really demonstrating is you don't need the data. Because most of our demonstrations start with no data. It what's you interact. And it doesn't have to be a cross-media campaign. It can be a website. So you can acquire that data and you can generate content from that.

And AI, if you like, is just an extension of that. But it really is opening up the conversation to don't worry about not having data. Because believe me, there's so much data out there. If you want to get it, you can get it, and use it, and deliver content.

[BREAK]

[00:27:54] PM: McGrewGroup can help you with assessments, RFP reviews, education content, and surveys. Plus, our consulting practice to offer guidance on your best business workflows and integrations. McGrewGroup is ready to help you grow, expand, optimize, and thrive. Drop us a note on LinkedIn or at our website, mcgrewgroup.com.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:28:18] PM: One of the applications that I saw, and I know that it was built with XMPie, but, sadly, I don't know the name of the printer who did it, was for one of the European country local governments. In addition to sending traffic tickets when you violated the speed cameras, they started capturing data in the cameras of people who were actually following the speed regulations.

And if you were within one kilometer an hour on either side of the speed limit, you would get a direct mail postcard from your regional government to thank you for following the speed limit. And it included some information about how to further interact with your government. It was kind of used as a reminder that, "Hi. We're here to help." But the idea that they figured out a different thing to do with the data that was just sitting there. I mean, the camera captures everybody. It doesn't just capture the violators. Right?

And that one just tickled me so much to realize that there are so many pieces of data that are available for free effectively just based on your address or your postcode that anybody who thinks they don't have data, they absolutely do. And I know you guys know how to work with just about anything.

[00:29:44] PG: Yeah. Another good example. And, interestingly, I mean, the reference you made there was to a local government in the UK or local council. And one of our customers, a print service provider, a few years back used XMPie in conjunction with our friends at LockerMap who do obviously data-driven geo-maps that we can include in direct mail.

A local council was looking to encourage people to start using public transport and not take their cars into town. They actually used the postcode of the area and they actually showed where the nearest bus stops were. And they actually put the times of the buses and how long it took to encourage people to do that. Again, it's just data that's already there. But it's just a clever use of it. And I'll bet, most people that listening to this won't consider that a government is a great target audience for this type of data-driven print.

[00:30:35] DC: Well, also, most printers aren't printing for governments. Right? Bringing this back down to like how can I help the yogurt shop on the corner? Or even a better example I think we discussed was using Pat's grandchildren as an example. And I mentioned this because something that you spoke about during your sessions at drupa was programmatic printing. And I really feel that this is where the big opportunity is for printers. And it's not as scary as some of the things we've been talking about that seem like they're beyond the normal day-to-day functions of what people do in print shops. Right?

I'm just going to put it that way. I'm not saying that things don't need to evolve. But if we look at our current landscape, most people, most printers I know are not generating content for their customers. Even though they should be and should be asking about who's doing your email blasts, and your newsletters, and your social media posts, and things like that if they have you know the ability to repurpose or use your platform to do that.

But in the case of programmatic printing – and this is going back to a practical use of data. Right? What does somebody know? Well, somebody knows if somebody buys clothes for a baby that's a six-month size, what's the next they're going in a certain amount of months they're going to need the 12-month size. Right? That's the time to start communicating with those customers of that baby store. Or another great example is like a home store. Or like a lumber store. Or I don't know what you would call them out of America. But Home Depot. Pat, what are those called?

[00:32:24] PM: They're DIY stores.

[00:32:26] DC: Okay. DIY stores. Do-it-yourself stores. Right. If a construction company is coming in and they just bought 20 bags of cement or more, you know that they're laying a foundation. Right? What's the next thing they need to purchase? Lumber. Right? To start building the walls. And then after that, insulation, drywall, and wiring. There is a cadence to a lot of people's habits.

I mean, car dealers are great about that. And dentists, too, mind you, which use a ton of variable data. And remind you of appointments, "It's been six months since your last cleaning," and things of that nature. And I do think that is reachable for most printers to have those types of

conversations on at least a 30,000-foot level of this is possible. Now let's discuss how we can specifically help you. Ayelet?

[00:33:23] ASM: Yeah. I completely agree. It's reachable. It's not scary. What we say about programmatic print is it's just prepare for all eventualities. And, absolutely, that's a service that a printer can today go to their local and even larger customers in their area and offer these services that maybe the customers think that it's a very big deal. Oh, are you sure that if you send this direct mail out after a week if the person went to a website or didn't go to a website, you can send them a follow-up email or a follow-up postcard? Most businesses think that that's very complicated. Most businesses think that it's very complicated to create this kind of campaign that also involves print.

But then that's where we come into play. That's where XMPie comes into play. And that's where our customers that are printers can come into play. They can take on things that are more than just print but includes print and everything works in synchronization. And tell their customers, "We can plan this out. I can be emailing that direct mail for you. But, hey. What are we going to do with these people that don't hit the QR code? That don't go to the website? Do you want me to send another reminder in two weeks? I can do that." That's not so difficult. I can use the data and we can use the data that we get during a campaign to respond differently to different people. And that's programmatic print.

[00:34:55] PM: And, Ayelet, is part of the challenge there training the sales for those organizations what's really possible? Because a lot of the relationships with the – and client are held by the salespeople who may just be used to selling the same thing over and over again. And even when the printing company brings in new capabilities, they bring in XMPie. They partner with someone who has it. The sales sometimes aren't trained in my experience to know what those new capabilities are. Do you offer help with that?

[00:35:30] ASM: There's two things here. And I'll actually be interested in Phil's point of view on it, because he's much more in the field than I am. It's not just that they're not trained. It's also that their customers aren't comfortable coming to them with all their requirements. Oh, yeah. You do my print. But someone else does my website. Someone else is in charge of my e-

commerce site. Customers never think that the printer can monitor the abandoned cards in the e-commerce site and respond with a postcard within 48 hours.

[00:36:03] DC: Okay. I just learned that right now. I didn't know that XMPie could do that. Oh, my God. That's a good talking point. Go ahead.

[00:36:12] ASM: There's a lot of ways to use the software. And omni-channel is not something that print sales people are comfortable with. But in my mind, it's a two-way street. It's the customers bringing the conversation to their printers and the printers opening more conversations with their customers. Not just sticking in what they do. But, Phil, you're out there every day.

[00:36:38] PG: Yeah. You actually touched on what I was going to say, and that is that I don't think it's a training thing. I think it's actually a comfort zone thing. They're comfortable in talking about print and don't feel confident about talking about some of these other services. But sometimes they learn the hard way. And sometimes that can actually win in their favor.

We've got some great studies on our website. And I've worked with many companies. And some of those companies have actually grown to be – well, they were printers. You wouldn't recognize them as printers. They still do it. But what they offer now are all sorts of marketing services, digital services. But they all started as small businesses.

And I'll give you another example of a company that I worked with that went in and, again, didn't talk about the digital stuff. They talked about print. And it just so happened that the company that they were dealing with already had a local printer that they dealt with and had done for years didn't want to change. But then they sort of fell back on, "Well, what about your digital services or digital campaigns?" And they said, "Well, funny you should say that. We're actually looking for somebody to do that. Do you do that?" And so, consequently, they then won the digital services.

And an element of that, because it was omni-channel, was then the print that their existing printer couldn't do. Because it was triggered. It was programmatic print. It was part of that

campaign. That's a really good example of how you don't need to be a big company. That was a company with sort of four or five people that had gone out and done that.

And what I should also throw in there is that our software, it's sold in many different ways depending where you want to start. But a great example of omni-channel is we have a subscription model. For people that don't want to jump in, maybe just want to try it out, we offer annual subscriptions. Which, to be honest, is if you were going to have a try, you need to give it 12 months to see the benefits.

[BREAK]

[00:38:31] DC: Like what you hear? Leave us a comment. Click a few stars, share this episode, and please subscribe to the show. Are you interested in being a guest and sharing your information with our active and growing global audience? Podcasts are trending as a potent direct marketing and educational channel for brands and businesses who want to provide portable content for customers and consumers. Visit printmediacentr.com, click on podcasts, and request a partner package today. Share along and prosper.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:39:04] DC: You almost triggered me, Phil, when you said that printers want to talk about printing. And that's where their comfort zone is. And talk about trends, printers I believe have to start rethinking that very quickly and start understanding that they are in the business of helping their customers be successful. Period. End of story. Whatever that takes.

And during the pandemic, I was blasphemous by saying to people printers should be helping restaurants, for example, get people on their Facebook page. Because that's how a lot of restaurants were dealing with ordering and things like that. And, no. Not through print. Through digital marketing campaigns. Because the point was that that's a simple-ish thing to do to let a customer know, "Oh, this worked. What else can you do?" And then start integrating sending someone a postcard by saying, "Hi, we're new to the neighborhood. Whatever it might be, scan this QR code. Securely join our mailing list. Get offers."

Being able to then send them emails and say, "Look in your mailbox for our new catalog or our new flyer." And creating that omni-channel communication so that there are multiple touchpoints for the customers, the customers of the printer, to be able to have success through their sales, marketing, education communication, whatever their goal might be. And that's where I think you are squarely leading the market. But how do we get more people on board? Pat, how do we get more people on board to my way of thinking?

[00:40:49] PM: Well, I think that podcasts like this help a lot, because people will listen to them who don't understand all the possibilities and learn about them. They now know to reach out to Phil and his team to learn more, to Enda as well, in his region to find out more.

I think the other thing that happens is that collaborative relationships really help lift these stories as well. And it's something that I really wanted to touch on, Phil and Ayelet, with you because one of the things that we definitely saw at drupa was a lot of collaboration. We've talked a little bit about it. But you've got relationships. Forgive me for saying that people used to think of you as a Xerox company. And that's just sort of that X in front of your name kind of got people thinking that maybe I had to be a Xerox customer to use XMPie. But you don't.

And in fact, you work with everybody. It doesn't matter whose printing equipment you have. It doesn't matter whose digital solution you're using. That you can work with them. And it seemed like between Fujifilm, and HP, and everybody else out there that you can feed, there's a lot of collaboration going on out there. But then there's also collaboration with people like Locker to bring some additional capabilities.

And if people would understand that there's so much in that XMPie platform – and I consider XMPie platform. We talked about an S2, or an Atomics, or even a PrintOS, or a Switch. But, really, if you think about how XMPie works and all the pieces, and components, and the way Partners can plug into you, you're a platform too. Do you feel like customers are more open to that idea that you can be a collaborative partner with them than they used to be?

[00:42:38] PG: Definitely. From what I see in the customers and companies that I deal with, for sure. And some of those that you just went through we already integrate with. PrintOS. And

we've got customers integrated with Enfocus. Switch as well. Along with many, many other systems.

And, nowadays, you can't just take something that's siloed and use it. You need just like our – and you're quite right. I consider our software as a platform. And our customers use it as a way of growing into other areas. But that can't just be an island. It has to integrate with everything else that they're doing.

[00:43:10] PM: I think what we want to come back to is a couple of capping ideas. XMPie is a platform and works with platforms which makes you one of the most collaborative tools for design, web-to-print, and integration into other systems. If you look out over the next three to four years, and if we take the idea that everybody's going to be talking AI off the table, do you think that there's some set of services or microservices that printers are going to be asking you for? Perhaps that you already have and can do, but that they're just catching up with you? Because one of the things that I heard a lot at drupa and, again, at a few other conferences since then is, "I had no idea they did that." Right? People who they're already a user of XMPie Solutions but they know kind of maybe 10% of it. And they don't know all the other things you're doing. Phil, the question comes down to do you think that you're existing customers are going to grow into more and more of your platform? Or do you think that a lot of your push will come from net new customers?

[00:44:22] PG: I think it's a mix of new customers and existing customers. And a good example with our existing customers is, despite spending a lot of time with them when they take our software in terms of training and professional services, quite often they'll get a phone call saying, "Can you recommend some software? Or do you have a module to do direct mail?" Well, okay. You bought a web-to-print solution. But, actually, part of that is direct mail so you can do that already.

And it's quite surprising how many people buy the software and use a small amount of it. Don't realize that they don't need any more investment. They can just grow with it. But equally, there's companies that really are getting excited. And for me at drupa, one of those areas that really stood out was digital packaging.

Now, again, we mentioned it a little bit earlier. But digital packaging, it tends to be versioned rather than personalized. But we have the ability to not just create a fixed version, but vary it based on who was the producer. Or a little bit of history about that particular product. Or link it to some content online that then takes what is really very expensive real estate and just expands it into whatever content you want. I think that digital packaging is an area of phenomenal growth. And I've got quite a few customers that aren't into it big time, but they do small-scale digital packaging and labeling as well.

[00:45:46] DC: Ayelet, would you agree with Phil that packaging is a growth area? Because it's certainly something we heard a lot of talk track on at drupa.

[00:45:55] ASM: Definitely agree that packaging is a growth area that everyone's talking about it. There's so many opportunities with the packaging. I also want to go back to your previous question. What customers are asking from us? And I agree that existing customers sort of discover areas of the software. But I think when we're looking at new conversations, a lot of times, it's customers that have a lot of things already. And they want us to fit in. They want us to maybe just give a small piece of things that they can't do.

Going back to our core strength, which is really the basis of XMPie, is the ability to match a great Adobe piece of print with data and create that perfectly with brand colors and all of that. Customers are going to want the XMPie advantage but without throwing everything out and starting fresh. And that's where I think that we have to really go forward and do a lot of things.

[00:46:55] PG: Yeah. I mean, having that Adobe native integration really makes a difference. But what – again, talking about expanding and what you can do, we're object-based. So not only can we change content on a page. We can control the look and the feel of a document. Which means that every recipient gets something that is completely different, unique, and relevant to them.

[00:47:16] PM: Just one quick question. If I'm one of those companies out there that has a library of other stuff sitting out there, are there services that XMPie can bring to the able to help them get into an XMPie world to control those libraries in a more scalable way long-term?

[00:47:37] PG: I mean, we offer professional services and application services. And we also have some integrators around the world that can offer various different services. But because we integrate predominantly into an adobe environment, most people that use competitive systems, they've already converted those original InDesign or Adobe documents into some proprietary formats. So you'll find invariably that those original Adobe documents still exist. In which case, you can just port them straight in. And it's very, very easy.

[00:48:05] DC: Well, as evident by the length of this podcast, we can talk about XMPie all day long. Because you having the right conversation. The future of personalization. And I'm sorry but it's not just print-based. Everybody has got to start getting on this page. That, for printers to succeed in the future, they have to expand their offerings into other areas. And XMPie is a platform that allows you to slowly, carefully, and strategically look at what those opportunities are. Find customers or sell them on the idea on how you can help them help them. And then use those case studies to find more.

Thank you, guys, so much for your time and for all you do to help everybody in the printing industry for many years. And, of course, for supporting Podcasts From the Printerverse. You guys love podcasts. I love you for that.

Everything you need to know about XMPie and connect with Phil and Ayelet are in the show notes. Patricia, any final words?

[00:49:17] PM: I just love it as a platform. I love the fact that XMPie has embraced platforms. Platform long and prosper.

[00:49:25] DC: Excellent. Okay, everybody. She's going to try to steal it from me. But I'm going to put it in there. Until next time, everybody. XMPie long and proper.

[OUTRO]

[00:49:36] DC: Thanks for listening to Podcast From The Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through printmediacentr.com. We'd love to

hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time. Thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

[END]

Mentioned in This Episode:

XMPIE: https://www.xmpie.com/

The Future of Personalisation: https://url.xmpie.com/sfop

XMPie Partners: https://www.xmpie.com/about-xmpie/partners/

XMPie Training Campus: https://campus.xmpie.com/

Phil Gaskin: https://www.linkedin.com/in/philgaskin/

Ayelet Szabo-Melamed: https://www.linkedin.com/in/ayelet-szabo-melamed-41b1781/

'The Print Report: LIVE at drupa with Enda Kavanagh and Phil Gaskin, XMPIE': https://podcastsfromtheprinterverse.com/the-print-report-live-at-drupa-with-enda-kavanagh-and-phil-gaskin-xmpie/

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