

Editorial

Dear reader,



This is number 7 of the International Circular of Graphic Education and Research, the journal of the International Circle. It demonstrates the idea of the International Circle exceedingly well: to combine research and education for our trades on an international basis.

On the one hand, we have, of course, several high-calibre scientific contributions; on the other hand there are several and very diverse contributions dealing with the present and future of the education for our business.

Ken Macro from CalPoly at San Luis Obispo – who serves there as the new chair of the Graphic Communication Department and so is the successor of the legendary Harvey Levenson – continues our little series about the future of the media industries and the right education for it, from a US perspective. According to his analysis, education for printing has – and only has – a future as a part of a comprehensive media education. This article, I feel, could spark a lot of comment and hot debate. I wonder if representatives of currently quite successful printing programmes will express their dissent – or support. The *forum* section of this journal is open, and the editor is looking forward to your contributions.

Ken, by the way, is also the main organiser of the 2015 Annual Conference of the International Circle. He also managed to bring the conferences of three learned societies together, the IC, the Graphic Communication Education Association, GCEA (formerly IGAEA), and PrintEd. So you will certainly meet there many colleagues to discuss future developments.

Luk Bouters from University College Artevelde at Ghent, Belgium, and two of his colleagues ask for the best way to assess and improve educational programmes, and recommend a well-prepared benchmarking system including international collaboration. Leaving aside the fact that international cooperation is a value in itself, Luk notes that, at best, there are only very few, perhaps just one, or even no institutions of higher education for printing technology in a certain country.

Almost in passing he remarks, "The financing of these [print media, W.F.] programmes is not, however, always cost-effective: the small numbers typically enrolled inescapably result in diminished economies of scale and corresponding rising unit costs." This, among other things, may explain to a rather large extent the financial difficulties many of our programmes have to struggle with.

I don't think it's just by coincidence that those countries which regard higher education mainly as a business were the first to shut down these "over-expensive" programmes. Maybe they will regret it some time when there is no academically qualified manpower any more though our industry hasn't ceased to exist even by then. "Figures are not necessarily the most appropriate performance indicators", also one of Luk's statements (with regard to benchmarking, but in my eyes generally true).

Yuri Kuznetsov from St. Petersburg in Russia reminds us of the value of traditional knowledge if it's about understanding new developments.

Finally, Zhanar Ibraeva from the National Technical University of Kazakhstan at Almaty describes the Bologna-oriented reform of higher education in her country in general, and also its impact on the education for print media, which was introduced there only in 1994, after the Soviet Union had disintegrated. "Printing [...] is one of the most dynamically developing areas in the country", she reports. Encouraging information you will possibly only find published in the journal of the IC.

Wolfgang Faigle

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