

## NEWS RELEASE

# GWG Webinar: Why are you still using a 20-year-old standard? Stop that!

**GHENT, BELGIUM – December 5, 2023 – as part of its ongoing education campaign, the Ghent Workgroup is organizing a webinar around the adoption of GWG and ISO standards on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 4 pm CET. Join the webinar to learn about the current state of affairs, best practices advocated by the Ghent Workgroup, and our perspective on future standards. Refresh yourself on the most important differences between the PDF/X standards and learn why you should use, and often why you *should not* use specific versions of the standard. Christian Blaise and David van Driessche, who combined have close to 60 years of experience with PDF, standards, and automation, are your hosts for this webinar.**

“The ‘invention’ of PDF/X-1 goes back to 1999; it finally became an ISO standard under the name PDF/X-1a in 2001,” remarks David van Driessche, Executive Director of the Ghent Workgroup and CTO at Four Pees: “The PDF format itself was in its infancy at that time, it was just barely starting to be adopted by our industry. The amazing thing is that 25 years later, this standard still accounts for more than half of the PDF files floating around in print workflows”.

### **Never change a winning team**

Our industry is conservative, and often for good reasons: in a production environment, you want smooth operations. If something works, why change it? “That is probably the explanation

we get most often from people when asking them why they are still using PDF/X-1a,” comments Christian Blaise, Ghent Workgroup Marketing Officer and Head of Customer Success at Four Pees: “The problem is that the world *has* changed, and that these days, PDF/X-1a often does more bad than good.”. Why is that?

### **An old standard**

In the 25 years since the inception of the PDF/X-1a standard, many new possibilities were introduced into PDF, most notably support for transparency. PDF/X-1a does not support these modern features and requires invasive measures (such as transparency flattening) to avoid them. When 25 years ago the standard prevented problems, now it often causes problems. And yet, people continue using it.

### **What is the solution?**

“We’re the first to acknowledge that one needs to be practical and down-to-earth in production workflows,” said Christian and David. “We have been implementing such workflows for years (David and Christian combined have close to 60 years of experience with PDF, standards, and automation). Join us for this webinar, and get an overview of the available standards, the ones we think you *should* be using and the ones you can easily forget about for the foreseeable future.”.

### **What will be covered?**

The webinar will provide an overview of available standards from ISO (and their correlation to GWG standards), point out weaknesses and strengths of those standards, and guide you to what the Ghent Workgroup thinks you should be using today. It will also look ahead at the future, so you know what other standards may be coming down the pipeline and tell you whether you need to worry about those or not.

**Join the webinar Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 4 pm CET**

Join the webinar

## About Ghent Workgroup

The Ghent Workgroup, formed in June 2002, is an international assembly of industry associations, suppliers, educators and industry members from around the globe. The Ghent Workgroup's objective is to establish and disseminate process specifications for best practices in graphic arts workflows.

Since its inception almost 20 years ago, the organization has consistently produced numerous process specifications for PDF exchange, as well as developing useful tools for automating processes and testing and establishing consistent PDFs for print, publishing and packaging production – all available free at [www.gwg.org](http://www.gwg.org).

Members are comprised of graphic arts associations including CIP4 (Switzerland), Febelgra (Belgium), Fespa (UK), Medibel+ (Belgium), Printing United Alliance (USA), TAGA (Italy) and VIGC (Belgium). Vendor members include ECO3, callas software, Canon, DALIM Software, Fiery, Enfocus, Esko, Global Graphics, Heidelberg, HYBRID Software, Ricoh, Tech Research (TagG) and Ultimate Technographics. Industry members are Artoption, FourPees, Lab9, JP/Politikens Hus, RRD and ybam. Educational members are Arteveldehogeschool Gent, CEC LATAM, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, Future Schoolz India, Government Institute of Printing Technology (GIPT), Media University Stuttgart, Ryerson University, the University of Ljubljana, the University of Novi Sad, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), The Regional Institute of Printing Technology Kolkata and the University of Wuppertal.

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