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Issue No.3 | July 2026

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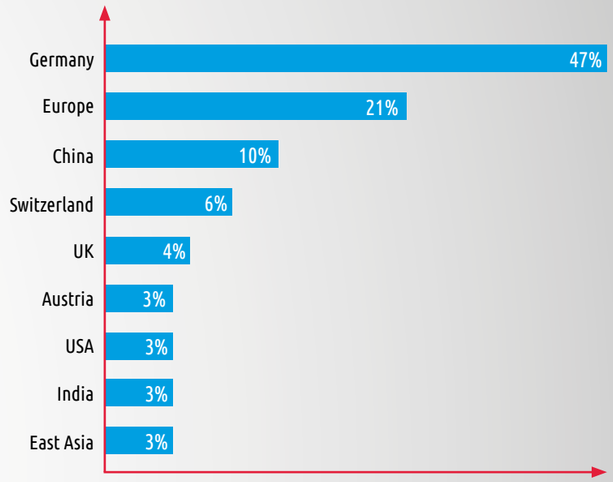

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EditoriaL

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IS REVOLUTIONISING THE PRINTING INDUSTRY

Despite all the enthusiasm – some of it more or less staged – one might think that AI is a new topic. But the development of AI began as early as around 250 BC, when the Greek mathematician Ctesibius devised the first artificial automatic self-regulating system, often regarded in the history of technology as an early milestone in robotics.

In 1936, the British mathematician Alan Turing proved that a computing machine – a so-called 'Turing machine' – would be capable of carrying out cognitive processes, provided these could be broken down into several individual steps and represented by an algorithm. In doing so, Turing laid the foundations for what is today understood as artificial intelligence.

Twenty years later, scientists gathered in the US state of New Hampshire for a conference. They shared the view that learning and other aspects of human intelligence could be simulated by machines. The programmer John McCarthy proposed the term 'artificial intelligence' for this concept. During the conference, the world's first AI programme – the 'Logic Theorist', which proved several dozen mathematical theorems – was created.

At present, ChatGPT, humanoid robots, highly specialised AI agents, language models in practical use and AI-powered video generation have become a global phenomenon. In the printing industry, too, AI is no longer a marginal phenomenon, but rather the almost tangible consequence of cost pressures in a sector that has been shrinking for years, driven by thinner margins, smaller print runs and higher customer expectations. Anyone wishing to survive in this dog-eat-dog environment is forced to streamline processes. AI models can carry out cross-system process data analyses, thereby shortening and simplifying workflows. Extensive data pools form the central basis for training AI models, and whilst AI is present in many printing businesses, its technological implementation sometimes lags behind due to poor data quality and insufficient system integration. Consequently, confidence in AI is sometimes lacking because companies distrust their own key performance indicators.

> *"With AI support, standardised tasks can be completed more quickly and with fewer staff resources."*

The risks and opportunities, when weighed against one another, may also play a role. For instance, there are fears that automation software enhanced by AI could lead to the loss of lucrative services. This could be countered by alleviating the shortage of skilled workers if jobs are made redundant and standardised tasks can be carried out more quickly and with fewer staff resources thanks to AI support. The negative cost spiral is in full swing because ever-smaller print runs are leading to rising investment costs. On the other hand, digital workflows, customised print products and directly integrated online shops can open up new areas of business. Some print shops believe they have fallen behind because they have not engaged intensively with rapidly advancing AI technology in recent years. However, it is probably never too late to jump on the future-oriented bandwagon and specialise with the help of AI, even if other companies got on board earlier.

The future holds exciting developments. This issue shows you how you can best prepare for them. Enjoy reading it.

Best regards,

Udo Schulz

Udo W. Schulz

Content

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Nonwovens and Cleaning Cloths delivering maximum performance

Vliesstoffe Kasper GmbH has been supplying and manufacturing high-quality cleaning solutions for industry, trade and households for over 40 years. Its wide range extends from cellulose and microfibre cloths to specialised non-woven rolls for automated processes in the printing and electronics sectors.

Guided by the principle that "optimal cleaning is a question of the right cloth", Vliesstoff Kasper sees itself as a service provider offering personalised and individual advice. It operates to the highest ethical standards regarding integrity, fairness, sustainability and partnership, whilst complying with applicable laws.

The Mönchengladbach-based company manufactures exclusively certified non-woven fabrics, taking into account health, the environment and quality assurance, and also produces custom sizes upon customer request. The internal management system continuously monitors all processes from goods receipt to dispatch.

We use high-quality raw materials and products from certified suppliers, which are also subject to internal quality controls upon receipt of goods, as well as testing and inspection procedures at various stages of production, right through to the packaging and dispatch of the finished goods. In this way, the raw materials are subjected to a seamless series of quality checks throughout the manufacturing process, right up to the finished product. Vliesstoff Kasper is an ISO 9001:2015 certified company.

Vliesstoff Kasper

Founded in 1984, Vliesstoff Kasper GmbH has been distributing and converting high-quality cleaning nonwovens for over 40 years. Since 2008, the Mönchengladbach-based company has also been represented in the USA by Kasper Consumables Inc. The product range includes both wet and dry wipes – from fine cellulose and microfiber to specialized nonwoven rolls for automated cleaning processes in the printing and electronics industries

Digital single-pass UV solution by Barberán and Fujifilm

Barberán and Fujifilm have continued their strategic partnership in single-pass technology with a fully digital printing solution, including a coating function, for the Nautilus system. The development, unveiled by Barberán in May 2026, is set to redefine the possibilities for high-speed inkjet printing.

Barberán is regarded as a market leader in corrugated board printing, and the introduction of single-pass technology faced the challenges of supporting smaller print runs and wider substrate widths, as well as achieving the high-gloss finish typical of single-pass UV printing. Working in close collaboration, Fujifilm's chemists developed UV inks designed for high print quality and good adhesion to a wide range of substrates, which can reduce the need for analogue primers. This advance in inkjet technology broadens the range of printable substrates and enables printing on thinner paper.

The second challenge was the finish. Whilst digital varnishes are common in multi-pass applications, their use in single-pass printing required a new level of technical precision. To address this, Fujifilm Ink developed a fully integrated digital varnishing solution for single-pass UV printing that produces a silk-matt finish.

Oliver Mills, Single-Pass Marketing Manager at Fujifilm Ink, explains: "We are thrilled by the opportunities this new development offers the printing industry. Fujifilm and Barberán both aim to push the boundaries of digital printing through innovation. With the new, fully integrated digital varnishing function for single-pass UV printing, we are enabling our customers to achieve a whole new level of productivity, substrate versatility and creative freedom."

Barberán's CTO, Eladio Lerga, adds: "In terms of technical advances, the Nautilus is unique and superior to any other system worldwide. With its exceptional performance, innovative inks that deliver outstanding print quality on a wide range of substrates, and a production output of over 4,000 square metres per hour, it can compete with large-format offset printing."

Among the companies likely to benefit from this new development are manufacturers of large-format advertising who require flexible and highly productive printing solutions.

Fujifilm

FUJIFILM Integrated Inkjet Solutions is the team within the FUJIFILM Inkjet Business Division that designs and manufactures inkjet printer products for integration into other machines and production processes as part of bespoke printing systems. FUJIFILM Holdings Corporation, headquartered in Tokyo, employs over 70,000 people and offers innovative products and services worldwide in its core business areas of healthcare, electronics, corporate innovation and imaging.

The matt, translucent coating on both sides – with single-sided printability – ensures brilliant colour transfer, sharp detail and lines, and print results without colour bleeding.

Print Equipment DTF transfer films: optimont® 11 by Bleher

As part of a partnership with Bleher Folientechnik, Print Equipment has expanded its range of DTF transfer films and added optimont® 11, a high-performance HotPeel film, to its portfolio.

PRINT EQUIPMENT & BLEHER

With the addition of optimont® 11, Print Equipment is combining its expertise in textile printing with Bleher Folientechnik's expertise in films. The aim of the partnership is to offer users a DTF transfer film that impresses with its print quality, process reliability, consistent results and high dependability. Bleher Folientechnik has more than 50 years' experience in the processing and finishing of high-quality polyester films. Under the optimont® brand, Dreher markets specialised films for printing, packaging, technology, design and presentation.

STABLE DTF PROCESSES

With optimont® 11, Print Equipment is expanding its portfolio to include a DTF transfer film developed specifically for the HotPeel process. optimont® 11 is designed to compensate for fluctuations in temperature, humidity or machine settings. Bleher relies on defined coating formulations, full batch traceability and certificates of analysis to ensure that production processes can be planned and results remain consistent.

PRINT RESULTS AND WORKFLOW

The matt, translucent coating on both sides, combined with single-sided printability, ensures brilliant colour reproduction as well as sharp detail and line definition. With its ink absorption properties and antistatic finish, optimont® 11 supports an efficient production process. The film is free from formaldehyde, chromium and phthalates and is certified to OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100.

DAY-TO-DAY PRODUCTION

Thanks to its high process stability, optimont® 11 is suitable not only for experienced print service providers, but also for companies that do not have traditional printing expertise yet still wish to achieve reproducible results in DTF printing.

Print Equipment

Print Equipment sees itself as a systems provider for customised printing techniques. As Europe's leading wholesaler of sublimation products and equipment for transfer and digital direct printing, Print Equipment offers a wide range of services covering various printing technologies. Founded in 1997, the company is headquartered in Ottersweier, Baden. Around 100 employees look after the international client base, and five German showrooms provide industry professionals with an insight into the world of customised printing technologies.

VersaStudio BY2-20 by Roland DG

Direct-to-film printing

Roland DG, a leading global provider of digital printing solutions, has announced the launch of the VersaStudio BY2-20, a compact direct-to-film printer. The BY2-20 combines professional print performance with an integrated, production-ready workflow that simplifies operation.

Whilst the DTF market is growing and many solutions prioritise low upfront costs over long-term reliability, the BY2-20 positions itself as an alternative designed for reliable results and predictable performance. By combining advanced printing technology, integrated software and a supportive ecosystem, it can eliminate much of the complexity associated with DTF printing. The BY2-20 is a CMYK and white DTF printer designed for sharp details and vibrant colours. It is suitable for apparel applications, ranging from T-shirts and sportswear to workwear, décor and accessories. Ink flow control, internal temperature regulation and white ink cartridges ensure predictable performance and stable continuous operation. The automatic application of a white undercoat simplifies production. The BY2-20 has been designed as an integrated solution that combines hardware, inks, software, media and support.

"With the BY2-20, we wanted to redefine expectations for compact direct-to-film printing," said Ryugo Nimura, Executive Officer of the Global Sales and Marketing Division at Roland DG. "This is a professional, production-ready solution that delivers consistent quality, integrated simplicity and reliable performance in day-to-day use. By combining hardware, software, inks, media and support into a single workflow, we help businesses maintain their reputation."

The BY2-20 supports small-run and on-demand production, enabling a rapid response to customer requirements. The integrated cutting function also allows heat-transfer vinyl graphics to be produced. This enables premium effects such as metallic, glitter and holographic finishes. The S-PG2 inks and S-Powder, certified under the OEKO-TEX® Eco Passport, underline Roland DG's commitment to responsible production practices.

The BY2-20 will be available from June 2026 via Roland DG and authorised dealers.

Roland DG

Roland DG is a subsidiary of the Japanese Roland DG Corporation and a manufacturer of large-format printers, cutting plotters, print-and-cut plotters, engravers, milling machines and metal printers, which are primarily used in the graphics and medical industries. Roland DG Corporation has branches and partners in Belgium, the USA, Australia, the UK, Spain, Italy, Denmark and Brazil.

IPI 2026: New Directions in Industrial Printing

The Industrial Print Integration (IPI) conference returns to Düsseldorf from 24 to 25 Nov., bringing together manufacturers, researchers, developers and technology providers working in the fields of industrial, functional and specialised printing.

IPI has become the central meeting place for printing companies involved in electronics, automotive engineering, biomedical technology, optics and advanced materials.

Organised by ESMA, the event has become the key meeting place for companies and institutions specialising in printing applications within the electronics, automotive, biomedical engineering, optics and advanced materials sectors. Among the companies presenting this year is the Belgian start-up Antleron, which will showcase its work in the field of multi-material 3D printing for biomedical and life sciences applications through its 'Biology-in-a-Smart-Box' concept.

The Austrian company EV Group will discuss inkjet processes for optical manufacturing, focusing on applications related to augmented and virtual reality systems, as well as co-packaged optics. In the automotive sector, Axalta, Dürr and Xaar will present EcoNextJet, a digital printing system that enables custom graphics and lettering to be applied directly to vehicle bodies during the painting process.

The event will also focus on printed electronics and precision manufacturing. XTPL from Poland will demonstrate a dispensing technology capable of producing connections in the range of 1 µm, whilst researchers from ETH Zurich will present their work on electrochemical sensors.

The Belgian CRM Group will investigate printed and 3D structural electronics for large-area applications and use in harsh environmental conditions, highlighting industrial application possibilities in sectors where durability and integration are crucial. The German company SAT Electronic is focusing on inkjet printing technologies for printed circuit boards, flexible electronics and wearable devices.

Alongside the conference programme, materials manufacturers, software developers, inkjet specialists and providers of curing technologies will be represented. Exhibitors confirmed so far include Agfa, Arranged, ChemStream, ColorGATE, CRM Group, Cyan-Tec, Dr Hoenle, Duo-Technik, ETH Zurich, the European Centre for Dispersion Technologies, Evonik, Excelitas, Fiery, Fujifilm Dimatix, Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems, Hakko, Hasselt University, Hybrid Software Helix, IEMN Lille, Inkatronic, iPrint, IST INTECH, Kelenn, KNF, Konica Minolta, Meteor Inkjet, Micor, Neatjet, Plasmatreat, Polytype, Quantica, Ricoh, RISO, Roki, Seiko Instruments, Sitech, Sudarshan, Sun Chemical, Tigres, Wuxi Broad Chem and Xaar.

ESMA

ESMA has been active in the industrial printing sector since 1990 and, as the European association for screen and digital printing manufacturers, has evolved into an organization representing industrial, functional and specialist printing. Over the years, ESMA has developed the concept of the Knowledge Hub, which today provides cross-technology expertise to nearly 70 European manufacturer members and technology partners.

FESPA in Barcelona attracted considerable interest and will take place in Munich from 6 to 9 April 2027.

Die FESPA 2026:

A valuable multi-exhibition format

From 19 to 22 May, FESPA welcomed visitors from the specialist printing, lighting and signage, packaging, personalization, wrapping and textile sectors to the FESPA Global Print Expo, European Sign Expo, Personalization Experience, WrapFest, Corrugated and Textile at the Fira de Barcelona.

It was the first leading trade fair in Southern Europe since 2012, and, with six parallel events and three conference programs under one roof, also the most diverse. The expansion into new, print-related vertical markets reinforced the 'FESPA Future' strategy to connect, inspire and support diverse business communities worldwide. In 2026, FESPA welcomed visitors from 126 countries. The largest numbers of visitors came, in descending order, from Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium and Switzerland. Including repeat visits, FESPA welcomed 24,798 visitors this year, making it one of the most successful editions to date. 85 per cent of visitors were decision-makers and 77 per cent were CEOs, managing directors, owners or managers. The median total visitor budget was 3.5 billion euros, an increase of around 20 per cent on the previous year.

Michael Ryan, Head of FESPA Global Print Expo, explains: "By bringing together six clearly defined events, we wanted to offer visitors more opportunities to learn, be inspired and explore related market segments and applications. The trends observed in registrations, use of the FESPA app and attendance at the conferences show that most visitors have several overlapping areas of interest and that our format perfectly meets their needs. For example, there are visitors who come primarily for the FESPA Global Print Expo but are also interested in the European Sign Expo, Textile and the FESPA conference program. This underlines the exceptional value of a comprehensive international event with multiple exhibition and program focuses: decision-makers have access to a wide range of expertise to review their current direction whilst also exploring new growth opportunities – all under one roof."

Mathew Faulkner, Head of Marketing & Innovation for EMEA at Canon Europe, comments: "FESPA is ideal for us in the large-format market. The whole sector came together and we had a unique opportunity to learn about new technologies and industry-shaping developments. Whether it was decoration, personalization or corrugated – areas where we were represented as an exhibitor and sponsor – FESPA is the perfect platform for showcasing the strengths of on-demand digital printing across various industries."

Folker Statchetzki, Head of Marketing at Brother, explains: "FESPA Global Print Expo has always been the perfect opportunity for us to showcase our latest innovations. It is clearly an extremely professional event, a trade fair where exhibitors openly share market developments and interesting discussions take place between industry experts and visitors. FESPA offers a comprehensive visitor experience for anyone who wants to keep their finger on the pulse of the printing industry."

Amit Shvartz, Managing Director and COO of Scodix, explains: "The new Corrugated was a must-attend event for us. Signage and displays are our market, and the trade fair was the perfect opportunity to connect with key decision-makers, strengthen our customer relationships and showcase our latest innovations and product developments."

CONCURRENT EVENTS AND CONFERENCE PROGRAMS

The concurrent events, European Sign Expo and Personalization Experience, enriched the exhibition program. Sign Expo showcased new innovations, products and solutions for signage and visual communication. The Personalization Experience provided information on personalization and opportunities for personalised print products.

New additions in 2026 were the Corrugated and Textile sections, whilst WrapFest featured on the program of the flagship event.

Corrugated brought together manufacturers of corrugated cardboard packaging and display solutions, as well as leading suppliers of machinery, printing technology, software, materials and automation systems.

At Textile, solutions for fashion, sportswear and interior design were showcased. Visitors were able to find out about trends, technologies and applications.

At WrapFest, solutions for vehicle and surface wrapping were on display, including self-adhesive films, software, design tools and accessories. The exhibition was accompanied by live demonstrations, workshops, technical advice and training opportunities.

Three conferences took place as part of FESPA. The FESPA Conference, the Corrugated Conference and WrapTalks offered industry insights, expert-led sessions and panel discussions. The conference programs covered key topics from the fields of printing, signage, packaging, wrapping, textile finishing and personalization.

FESPA

FESPA is an association of trade organizations founded in 1962 that organises exhibitions and conferences for the screen and digital printing industries. FESPA's objectives are to promote screen printing and digital imaging, and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge on screen and digital printing amongst its members worldwide, in order to support the expansion of their businesses and keep them informed about the latest developments in these rapidly growing sectors.

The exhibition portfolio cemented FESPA's role as the leading forum for innovation, knowledge exchange and business growth in the specialist printing industry.

From the glasstec conference to glass technology live and new formats such as Women in Glass: the world's leading trade fair offers a market overview, future-oriented topics and practical knowledge transfer.
Photo: Messe Düsseldorf / ctillmann.

glasstec
INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR FOR GLASS
PRODUCTION • PROCESSING • PRODUCTS

glasstec 2026 opens its ticket shop

and unveils program highlights

With the start of ticket sales, glasstec 2026 is gathering momentum. From 20 to 23 October, Düsseldorf will become the meeting place for the international glass industry. The focus will be on solutions to the industry's key future challenges, ranging from decarbonization and the circular economy, through AI and digital technologies, to resilient and safety-related glass solutions.

The formats of the glasstec conference include the glass trends sessions, CircuClarity Two, the glass melting pot and the Start-Up Sessions. These are complemented by the architecture forum, where architectural practices present projects relating to building envelopes and structural glass applications. With 'Women in Glass', glasstec is expanding to include a new format that highlights female expertise.

For the first time, in collaboration with ift Rosenheim, the special exhibition 'safe – innovative – sustainable' will be presented, focusing on safety-related glass solutions and critical infrastructure. A central role is played by 'glass technology live', which serves as a platform for forward-looking applications of glass and showcases innovations.

Daniel Feische, Director of glasstec, emphasises: "glasstec 2026 not only showcases what is technologically possible today, but above all, where the glass industry is heading. Our supporting program brings the key issues for the future to the fore – from decarbonization and the circular economy through to AI and safe, resilient glass solutions. In doing so, we provide guidance, foster dialogue and offer concrete impetus for investment decisions."

Tickets for glasstec 2026 are now available online at **www.glasstec.de**.

glasstec

glasstec is regarded as the world's leading trade fair for glass production, processing and products. The supporting program brings together international decision-makers, market leaders and experts from the glass industry, linking science and practice and addressing key industry topics. The focus is on the hot topics of the circular economy, AI & digital technologies, and decarbonization. These future-oriented topics will be discussed at conferences, forums and specialist events, where representatives from research, science and industry will present potential solutions.

85.9 % recycling rate: AGRAPA

meets its voluntary commitment

The Working Group for Graphic Papers (AGRAPA) has once again significantly exceeded the recycling target for graphic papers set out in its voluntary commitment to the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection. With a recycling rate of 85.9 per cent in the current reporting year, the industry has exceeded the pledged target of 80 percent.

Together with nine member associations, AGRAPA is making an important contribution to the circular economy and the sustainable use of resources in Germany. A key topic at this year's meeting was the gradual switch to mineral oil-free printing inks in newspaper printing. The aim is to safeguard the quality of paper recycling and reduce the entry of mineral oil components into the waste paper cycle.

The latest AGRAPA annual report also shows that further efforts are required to achieve this goal. The Federal Ministry and the Federal Environment Agency recognised the successes achieved so far by the graphic arts and paper supply chain and highlighted AGRAPA as a successful example of a functioning, industry-led voluntary commitment. The fact that, despite the difficult economic situation facing newspaper printers, the switch to mineral oil-free newspaper printing inks is gaining momentum was viewed particularly positively.

"The recycling rate achieved underlines the high level of performance of the German printing and paper industry in the field of the circular economy," says Julia Rohmann, the project manager at the BVDM. "This result is important evidence that voluntary industry initiatives can contribute effectively to achieving environmental and sustainability goals."

The AGRAPA meeting took place at Zeitungsdruck Dierichs in Offenbach. From left to right: Josefine Römer (Federal Environment Agency), Julia Rohmann (BVDM), Volker Hotop (Zeitungsdruck Dierichs), Christian Albrecht (General Association of Press Wholesalers), Barbara Scheuer (German Book Trade Association), Fabian Sinnwell (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection) and Christian Eggert (Federal Association of Digital Publishers and Newspaper Publishers).

BVDM

The Federal Association of Printing and Media (BVDM) is the umbrella organization for the German printing industry. As an employers' organization, a political trade association and a technical trade association, it represents the positions and objectives of the printing industry in dealings with politicians, public authorities, trade unions and the supply industry. The BVDM is supported by eight regional associations. Internationally, it is organised through its membership of Intergraf and FESPA. The printing industry currently comprises around 6,300 predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises with more than 99,000 employees subject to social security contributions.

The Online Print initiative is working with the BVDM and Intergraf to develop a UCP vertical for the printing industry.

Google's Universal Commerce Protocol (UCP): IOP, BVDM and Intergraf develop industry standard

The Initiative Online Print (IOP), the German Printing and Media Association (BVDM) and the European printing federation Intergraf are developing their own industry standard – a so-called 'vertical' – for Google's Universal Commerce Protocol (UCP). The aim is to ensure that the specific requirements of the printing industry are taken into account in the era of agentic commerce.

THE UNIVERSAL COMMERCE PROTOCOL

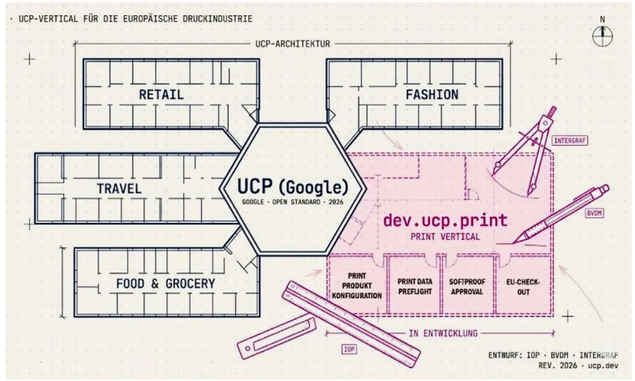
In January 2026, Google unveiled the Universal Commerce Protocol at the National Retail Federation Conference in New York. This open standard enables AI agents to purchase products on behalf of consumers directly within Google's AI Mode and the Gemini app, without having to visit a retailer's website.

PRINT PRODUCTS DO NOT FIT WITHIN THE CURRENT UCP

UCP was designed for traditional retail, for products with fixed stock levels or item numbers, fixed prices and few variants. In the printing industry, however, print products are individually configured, require the submission of production-ready print data, undergo pre-flight checks and approval processes, and are manufactured in dynamically planned production runs. None of this is covered by the current UCP specification. Key gaps relate to product configuration, the upload and pre-flight of print data, the soft proof approval process as a blocking workflow step, the exclusion of the right of withdrawal for personalised products in accordance with the EU Directive, and dynamic production planning. "Whoever defines the standard defines the rules of the game. The print industry can either actively shape the future of agentic commerce for print – or let others shape it," emphasises Bernd Zipper, Chairman of the Board of the Online Print Initiative.

A MARKET OF SIGNIFICANT SIZE

The initiative targets a substantial market. Online-generated print revenue in the DACH region alone is estimated at around eight billion euros, with growth of just over nine per cent projected for 2025. The European print services market is estimated to be worth 85 billion euros by 2026. Initial UCP implementations in the retail sector are already yielding results: Conversion rates from agent-driven traffic are around 28 per cent higher than those from traditional search traffic.



The Universal Commerce Protocol (UCP) is an open standard designed to regulate communication between AI assistants, online retailers and payment providers.

A DEDICATED UCP VERTICAL: 'DEV.UCP.PRINT'

IOP, BVDM and Intergraf are planning to develop a dedicated service namespace, 'dev.ucp.print', which will address the specific requirements of the printing industry within the UCP architecture. Planned features include dynamic product configurations with real-time price calculation, the upload and automated pre-flight of print data, soft proofing and approval workflows, dynamic delivery time calculation based on machine availability and post-press processing, as well as industry-specific checkout logic in line with EU consumer law. In addition, enhancements are planned for sustainability (carbon footprint, FSC/PEFC certification), compliance (EUDR compliance via the IOP standard EUDR-X), mass customization (Variable Data Printing) and B2B discount structures.

THE TIMETABLE

In mid-2026, a working group is to be formed under the leadership of the IOP, and requirements engineering is to be carried out. This will be followed in the third quarter by the drafting of specifications by the IOP and BVDM. In parallel, Intergraf will launch the European consultation. Submission to Google as a GitHub pull request or RFC is planned for the fourth quarter of 2026. Initial pilot implementations with selected IOP members are scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2027, followed by a roll-out to the wider industry in the first half of 2027.

THE TIMEFRAME

UCP is an open-source project that explicitly invites contributions from the industry. To date, no industry outside the traditional retail sector has proposed a UCP vertical. UCP has not yet been introduced in Europe, and the planned expansion therefore offers the printing industry the opportunity to be involved from the outset. Furthermore, a print vertical would also serve as a reference for further protocols or future standards.

THREE ORGANIZATIONS – ONE INITIATIVE

The Federal Association of the Printing and Media Industry (bvdm) is the umbrella organization for the German printing industry. As an employers' organization, a political trade association and a technical trade association, it represents the positions and objectives of the printing industry in dealings with politicians, public authorities, trade unions and the supply industry. The bvdm is supported by eight regional associations. Internationally, it is organised through its membership of Intergraf and FESPA. The printing industry currently comprises around 6,900 predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises with more than 110,000 employees subject to social security contributions.

Intergraf is the European umbrella organization for print and digital communication, based in Brussels. It represents 22 national printing associations from 21 countries. The European printing industry comprises around 110,000 companies with 550,000 employees.

The Online Print Initiative (IOP) is a communication and networking platform for the online print industry. It raises the profile of online print as a distinct sector within the global printing industry, promotes professional exchange amongst its members and develops positions on technological, economic and regulatory issues. Its focus is on representing the industry's interests, fostering cooperation, engaging in dialogue with the media and the public, and further developing processes and standards relating to online print.

German Printing and Media Day 2026

The business hub of the future

The German Printing and Media Day demonstrated that sustainability, innovation and economic success go hand in hand. During the forum, representatives from politics, academia and industry discussed how climate protection and growth can be achieved, and what role the printing and media sector plays in this.

The business forum kicked off with a keynote speech by Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Member of the Bundestag and Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. Under the title 'Industry. Environment. Cohesion. – Sustainability as the Foundation for Tomorrow's Business Hub', she highlighted the importance of sustainable economic structures for Germany's future viability.

In the subsequent industry statement, Kirsten Hommelhoff presented the BVDM's services and initiatives and highlighted how the printing and media industry contributes to climate protection. "Sustainable action and economic success need not be mutually exclusive. Only economically strong companies can invest, develop innovations, secure jobs and assume long-term responsibility. Sustainability must therefore always be practical, financially viable and achievable," she urged policymakers.

High-profile participants at the German Printing and Media Day (from left to right): Frederike Holewik (Senior Reporter at Politico Europe), Prof. Marcel Fratzscher (President of the German Institute for Economic Research), Maren Grondey (Managing Director of Siemer Verpackungen), and Alexander Bonde (Secretary General of the German Federal Environmental Foundation). © BVDM/Hans-Christian Plambeck

The subsequent panel discussion focused on the question: "Pathways to Change: How Can Climate Action and Economic Growth Go Hand in Hand?" Moderated by Frederike Holewik, Senior Reporter for Energy and Climate at Politico Europe, the discussion featured Prof. Marcel Fratzscher (President of the German Institute for Economic Research), Alexander Bonde (Secretary General of the German Federal Environmental Foundation), and Maren Grondey (Managing Director of Siemer Verpackungen). The discussion highlighted that a sustainable transformation can only succeed through the interplay of policymakers, the business community, and society. At the same time, it was emphasized that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a key role in driving innovation and implementing sustainable business models.

During the "Sustainability Speed Dating" sessions and "Innovation Impulses"—moderated by Jens Meyer, Managing Director of the Printing and Media Association (BVDM)—experts shared their experiences and successful models. These presentations demonstrated how sustainability can be effectively implemented in practice.

German Printing and Media Industry

Business Climate Improves in June

The business climate index for the German printing and media industry improved in June 2026. The seasonally adjusted business climate index, calculated by the German Printing and Media Industries Federation (bvdm), showed a 2.7 percent increase compared to the previous month. Both the current business situation and expectations for the coming six months improved.

In June, decision-makers surveyed by the ifo Institute rated their current business situation less favorably than in the previous month, and assessments regarding the next six months were also pessimistic. The readings for the current and expected business situation determine the trend of the business climate, which serves as a reliable leading indicator for production trends in the printing and media industry.

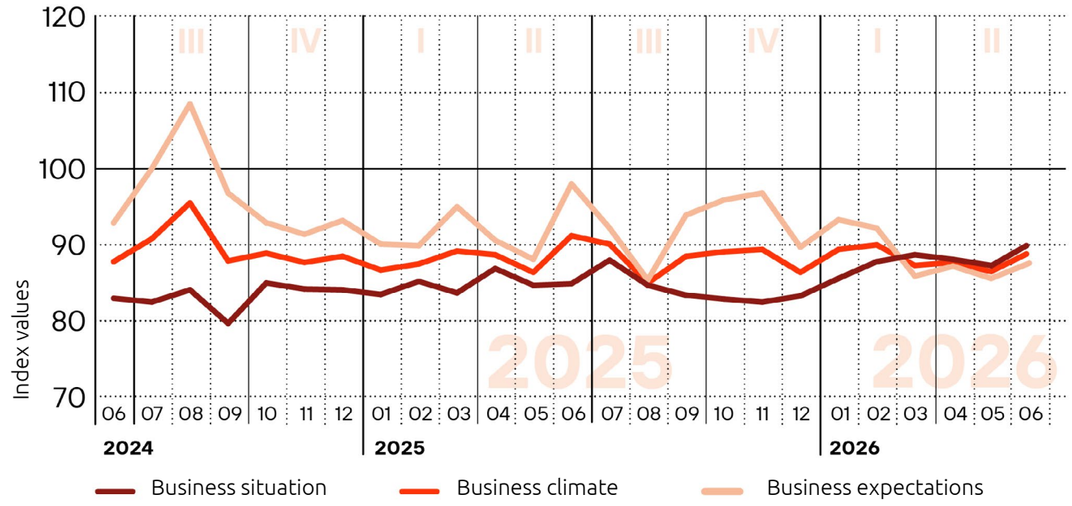
The seasonally and calendar-adjusted index for the current business situation recorded a rise of around three percent compared to the previous month. This development stems from a shift in how companies assess their situation. Eight percent of the surveyed firms rated their current business situation as positive, 22 percent as negative, and 70 percent as satisfactory.

Assessments of order backlogs improved in June. Six percent of the surveyed companies rated their order backlog as positive, 62 percent as satisfactory, and 32 percent as negative. However, the overall business and order situation remains strained.

Business expectations among companies in the printing and media industry for the coming six months improved again in June. Five percent of companies expect a better business situation, while 22 percent anticipate a deterioration. Seventy-three percent of respondents expect business trends to remain stable over the next six months. Expectations regarding selling price trends over the next three months indicate that 22 percent of the companies surveyed anticipate price increases, 72 percent expect prices to remain stable, and only six percent foresee price decreases.

Economic situation in the German printing industry 6/2026

Index values (2015=100), seasonally adjusted | Calculation/graph: bvdm, source: ifo Business Survey



National & international trade fairs

A selection on the topics of screen, digital, pad, large format and textile printing

As of July 2026. Due to the current situation, dates and information may be outdated or not up-to-date. Please contact the respective organizer for confirmation of dates. Further international trade fairs can be found on our website at:

printmarket.online/en/fairs-en/

National Trade Fair Dates 2026

Digital X
Trade fair for digitalization, AI, and future technologies
September 8, 2026 in Cologne

Textile Printing & Sustainability
Conference on critical factors and global trends in the textile market
September 15–17, 2026 in Mönchengladbach

European Printing Summit
Event for AI, digitalization, and automation
September 29–30 in Dortmund

EHI Connect
Trade fair for omnichannel concepts and mobile commerce
September 29–30, 2026 in Düsseldorf

Additive Manufacturing of Pressure Equipment
Specialist conference for manufacturers, operators and planners of pressure equipment
October 8–9, 2026 in Munich

Fakuma
International trade fair for plastics processing
October 12–16, 2026 in Friedrichshafen

glasstec
World's leading trade fair for the glass industry
October 20–23, 2026 in Düsseldorf

Creative Paper Conference
Fine paper trade fair for printing and finishing technology
October 29–30, 2026 in Munich

Formnext
International trade fair for additive manufacturing
November 17–20, 2026 in Frankfurt am Main

IPI Conference 2026
Conference on industrial print integration
November 24–25, 2026 in Düsseldorf-Neuss

Optical Document Security
International trade fair for document security
January 25–27, 2027 in Berlin

wetec
Trade fair for advertising technology, digital printing, and digital signage
March 3–5, 2027 in Stuttgart

TecStyle Visions
Leading trade fair for textile finishing and promotion
February 3–5, 2027 in Stuttgart

LOPEC
Trade fair for printed and flexible electronics
March 3–4, 2027 in Munich

InPrint Munich
Trade fair for print technology in industrial manufacturing
9–11 March 2027 in Munich

ICE Europe
International flagship trade fair for the converting of paper, film, and foil
9–11 March 2027 in Munich

CCE International
Trade fair for the corrugated and folding carton industry
9–11 March 2027 in Munich

AM Forum
Conference on industrial additive manufacturing
10–11 March 2027 in Berlin

International trade fair dates for 2026

Labelexpo Americas
International trade fair for label and packaging printing
September 15–17, 2026 in Chicago, USA

London Packaging Week
International trade fair for packaging innovation and design
September 16–17, 2026 in London

Warsaw Print-Tech Expo
International trade fair for all graphic arts sectors
September 22–24, 2026 in Warsaw

Printing United Expo
Trade fair for the printing and graphics industry
September 23–25, 2026 in Las Vegas, USA

Sign Istanbul
International trade fair for the advertising industry and digital printing technologies
September 23–26, 2026 in Istanbul

Responsible Packaging Expo
Trade fair for refillable, reusable, and recyclable packaging
September 29–30, 2026 in London, United Kingdom

FESPA Eurasia
Trade fair for digital printing, visualization, garment printing, and signage
September 24–27, 2026 in Istanbul

Eurasia Packaging
International packaging trade fair
October 13–16, 2026 in Istanbul, Turkey

3DExpo
Trade fair for 3D printers and industrial 3D technology
October 2026 in Prague, Czech Republic

Viscom Italia
Trade fair for visual communication
October 27–28, 2026 in Milan, Italy

Isprint
Trade fair for printing, digital printing, graphics, signage, digital signage & publishing
November 3–4, 2026 in Tel Aviv, Israel

Interdye Printing Eurasia
Trade fair for dyes, printing inks, pigments, and technologies
November 25–27, 2026 in Istanbul, Turkey

C!Print
Trade fair for printing, visual communication and personalization
12 to... January 14, 2027 in Madrid, Spain

Warsaw Remadays
Trade fair for the advertising and printing sectors, featuring printing technologies and innovative solutions
January 26–28, 2027 in Warsaw, Poland

EMBAX-Print
Trade fair for the packaging and printing industries
February 2027 in Brno, Czech Republic

Print & Sign
Trade fair for visual communication, signage, printing machinery, and new materials
March 23–25, 2027 in Gorinchem, Netherlands

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