Step into the World of Augmented Reality

Lots of innovative marketing technologies come and go; they gain a degree of popularity for a time and then fade into the sunset. Sometimes, they even find a longer-term niche but never make it into widespread use. In the graphic arts world, technologies like lenticular printing come to mind. Its three-dimensional look is cool, but a variety of factors limit this technology’s use.

One of the big decisions for marketers and service providers alike is choosing which technologies will have staying power and help advance their businesses over the long term. From our perspective, Augmented Reality (AR) has groundbreaking potential to change commerce as we know it. AR meets a number of important success criteria:

- Connects the print and digital worlds in our increasingly integrated marketing environment
- Cost-effective and easily implemented
- Suitable for highly targeted or mass campaigns
- Fits naturally into the constantly expanding mobile world

What Is AR?
AR is technology that combines virtual reality with the real world. The present AR world deals with live video imagery that is digitally-enhanced with computer-generated graphics. For instance, a user might wear translucent goggles or, more commonly, view the screen of a camera-equipped mobile device where he or she can see the real world as well as strategically placed computer-generated images.

The software recognizes a particular marker, such as an image, a symbol or barcode, on the analog piece when a camera points at it and then overlays a digital image at that point on the screen. If the image is three-dimensional or animated, the effect is a digital experience unfolding on the analog surface.

A Multitude of Uses
Augmented Reality marketing strategies are being applied in a variety of ways and with impressive results. Here are just some of the possibilities AR brings you:

- Link images directly to an online store that lets customers shop directly through a catalog or magazine
- Bring customer service or product manuals to life
- Provide product demos
- Offer customer testimonials
- Encourage social sharing
- Provide “try-before-you-buy” scenarios with clothing, furniture, etc.
- Show multidimensional product views
- Create an in-store experience
- Augment events and conferences to help attendees
where the pattern is printed.

An important issue is that of successfully integrating computer-generated images within the real world. They need to be realistic and useful to be of real benefit to the user. Otherwise, they are not likely to generate the desired marketing response.

**Older Than You Think**

AR has actually been around for awhile. One of the earliest examples is the double exposure technique that creates the impression of a ghost onstage. The military has long equipped pilots with goggles that provide a layer of radar data over the real-world view to enable better targeting of missiles. And the famous yellow first-down line used in NFL games, where players appear to be able to cross over the line, is a form of AR. What now brings AR to the forefront of the marketing world is the combination of inexpensive, easy-to-use software and the rapid global expansion of smartphones.

In addition to being able to deliver the animation aspect, these phones have GPS, which obtains information about a particular geographical location. This information can be overlaid with tags and enable images,

“Anyone with a mobile phone, tablet or laptop with built-in video capability can augment and extend their reality with easy-to-use applications.”

videos and other elements to be superimposed onto the selected location.

Mobile handheld devices such as the iPad are other ways to use augmented reality. They contain software, sensors, a compass and small digital projectors that display images onto real world objects.

**Augmented Reality vs. Virtual Reality**

There are differences between the two, mainly related to the level of immersion. Virtual reality is based upon a complete simulation of a real-world environment in which the user completely immerses themselves in the virtual environment.

In Augmented Reality, the user sees the real world but with the addition of computer-generated images overlaid on various objects within the analog environment. There is no attempt to replace the real with the artificial, but rather to enhance real life with artificial images.

**Step into the World of AR with Ripon**

You can easily make your print materials come alive with AR powered by Ripon Interactive. We can enable a wide range of AR interactions including video, music, 3-D modeling, web, phone, email and social media. Ripon Interactive is a robust yet cost-effective AR solution geared toward increasing your marketing ROI.

Contact your Ripon Printers’ representative or send an email inquiry to sales@riponprinters.com for more information.

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**Inspect Your Print Shipments First, Sign Later**

Occasionally, print shipments sent via common carrier arrive visibly damaged. Noting the damage on the bill of lading is vitally important to our ability to go back to the carrier and make a claim. There have been a few instances where customers have noticed damage and called us to report the problem. Unfortunately, there isn’t anything we can do, because trucking companies almost universally demand that visible damage must be described on the bill of lading and at the time of delivery.

While freight companies generally do a good job and don’t have many instances where damage occurs, you definitely want to be diligent in both your observations of incoming shipments and your reporting of any damage on the bill of lading. And there is nothing better than some digital images to document what you have seen.

Ripon Printers can assist you with all of your distribution and fulfillment needs. We pay attention to details and seek every opportunity to gain an edge in speed, quality and cost control.
Happy Birthday, Commonwealth Press!

Our company, Ripon Printers, got its start as the publisher of the local weekly paper – the Ripon Commonwealth Press. In early January, Ian Stepleton (editor) led my brother, Tim Lyke (publisher), to a dog-earred copy of the Commonwealth’s first front page. Ian pointed to the date at the top of the page – January 22, 1864. “Know what this means?” Ian asked. Tim said something like, “It means the paper is really old.” Ian explained that they had 14 days to put together a special paper recognizing the Commonwealth’s 150th birthday. It’s hard to imagine that we almost let a major milestone pass unnoticed!

Could there have been a better lead (the first sentence or paragraph of a news story) on the front page of the first-ever Ripon Commonwealth than this one?
“FROM MADISON, January 19, 1864 – Nothing of importance was done in the Senate to-day.” Okay, it wasn’t too newsy and didn’t incite readers to go out the next week to buy the second paper; but it was the start of an era and an unending commitment to telling the truth and covering public affairs.

Mom and Dad purchased the Commonwealth in September 1962 and we use that date as the birth of what is now Ripon Printers. I remember the 100th anniversary of the Commonwealth being a “big deal,” even though I was only 3 years old at the time. My Dad and his staff published a New York Times-sized paper to commemorate the milestone, with sections devoted to various topics such as politics, sports, fashion, education and so on. I know Dad was at the office all hours of the day culling information for that paper. Eventually, parts of that paper ended up in our family room as wallpaper (Mom’s idea). It was fun to go downstairs and read about Ripon’s history on our walls.

While we were only publishers of the local paper starting out, once we started purchasing our own printing equipment, we quickly became printer for others. Today it takes about 45 minutes per section – only about two of our over 400+ press hours are used to print the Commonwealth each week. However, we are still very proud of the paper, which was recognized in 2011 and 2012 as the “Wisconsin Weekly Newspaper of the Year.” As Dad wrote in his first editorial on September 6, 1962, the Commonwealth is obliged to:

1. Keep the citizens informed;
2. Recognize their achievements;
3. Promote community activities;
4. Contribute to civic progress.

We continue to do just that to this day. Happy 150th Birthday, Ripon Commonwealth Press! RIPON

ANDY LYKE
Contest Season Finale Strikes Gold

Sponsored by North American Publishing Co., the Gold Ink Awards was the final 2013 printing competition. In its 26th year, Gold Ink Awards competition receives thousands of entries each year from creators and producers of print materials from around the world who seek to be recognized for their superior craftsmanship. This year, awards were passed out in 50 categories. Ripon Printers was honored to receive two of these awards.

Top award winning companies and their entries were showcased during a multimedia presentation at the Gold Ink Awards & Hall of Fame Gala held during PRINT 13 in Chicago, Ill. Ripon

First Place – Gold Brochures, web printing category Wisconsin Department of Transportation Rustic Roads

Third Place – Bronze Consumer Catalogs, web printing category Kohler Showering Line