

# Is Digital Printing Of Textiles A Viable Reality, Or Is Its Technology Chasing Application?

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The structure of the textile market has been, is now and always will be modeled by the printing technology that drives it. Globalisation, quick response, and ecology impose stringent and substantial demands on the different components of the printing process. The major trends in textile printing have been directed towards the production of better-quality prints with greater repeatability and higher fastness, printing right first time and every time, reducing down time of the printing machine, minimising pollution of the environment and waste of raw materials, reducing stock risks, shortening and flexibility of pre-printing process. In short, they have common denominations: versatility and flexibility.

These trends are the driving forces to the modifications of the printing devices. Today ink jet technology for textile is mainly being offered and used in the hitherto expensive and time-consuming procedure of design sampling. Only in very few cases this technology is being for production scale printing.

However, even in its current limited state-of-art, this new technology provides for many new business opportunities and cost savings, most notably in sampling, strike-offs and mass customization. This resulted over the past two or three years in an increasing interest in the application of digital printing technologies to textile substrates. This interest has been fueled by the rapid advances that have been made in digital printing technologies in home and office computer printing systems. Recent conferences and publications suggest

that a much broader range of companies and suppliers are now willing to undertake the work. required to solve die technological problems in fabric printing.

This lecture deals with the latest developments and potential advantages of digital printing from a viewpoint of an European printer.

## Biography

### Doctor in Chemistry

- . Projectleader (Department Textile Finishing) in Centexbel Belgian Textile Research Centre)
- . Professor at the Technical University Gent - head of the Textile department
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- . Member of the boarder of Febeltex (Belgian Federation of Textile) and Centexbel
- . Expert at the Belgian Quality Association.
- . President of UNITEX (Belgian Association of the high members of the Belgian Textile)
- . Founder of the Flemish Textile Training and Development centre
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- . Author of 92 publications, 3 books and 3 patents