

INAUGURAL EVENT

MediaPack Summit at Media-Tech: securing packaged media's future

Reports of packaged media's death have been greatly exaggerated. Mainstream media are full of news reports pronouncing the impending death of physical media at the expense of downloads, yet CDs still account for the lion's share of how music is distributed, DVDs are the preferred means of watching a movie and new release videogames priced at US\$50 appear to be recession-proof.

These topics will be tackled at the first annual MediaPack Summit, presented by *MediaPack* magazine at the MEDIA-TECH EXPO May 16 at the Long Beach Convention Center in California.

The conference will examine the role of packaging in ensuring packaged media remains a viable alternative to digital product, and will discuss how replicators can embrace the challenges and opportunities of the packaging marketplace.



Packaging company executives, designers, equipment manufacturers and machinery suppliers will all provide their insights for this thought-provoking event.

Sessions, which will run between 2pm-6pm in a conference room on the show floor, will cover relationships between content owners and packaging companies amid shrinking budgets and demands for faster turn-around times; as well as

trends in security packaging, automation and raw materials.

The MediaPack Summit is part of a series of MEDIA-TECH Partner Events at the show in Long Beach. Companies from the entire packaged media supply chain have already signed up to exhibit in Long Beach.

Commented Media-Tech managing director Bryan Ekus: "Many companies in this industry have recognised the need for diversifica-

tion, and Media-Tech is no exception. Last fall, we announced our campaign 'Expanding Media-Tech Expo' to extend the event in several directions. While in the past, it was basically a show for optical disc manufacture, the new event format will also focus on packaging, solid-state memory as well as magnetic storage and online media. Within these areas, there will be increased focus on topics such as content creation, duplication, manufacturing, digital printing and supply chain/RFID.

"We believe this broadened scope will offer valuable information on new opportunities for optical media companies seeking to diversify their own product portfolio," Ekus concludes. "Opening up communications between converging industries generates a win-win show for everyone."

www.media-tech.net

USPS rate hike impacts on media mail

Price to mail optical discs within US expected to go up 8.5% this May, reports Tom O'Reilly

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has proposed an average rate increase of 8.5% in order to cover its increasing operational costs, including fuel and health care. The rate changes would include the cost of mailing CDs and DVDs. When the USPS files for an increase, it begins a regulatory process followed by a vote of the governors. The USPS expects the rate change to go into effect in May.

The rate change, which includes a three-cent increase on the rate of a first class postage stamp to \$0.42 from \$0.39, comes just a little more than a year after the previous USPS rate increase. But that increase was the result of a federal law passed in 2003 requiring the USPS to place \$3.1 billion in escrow, the government agency says.

Current USPS prices do not necessarily distinguish between



letters, flats, and parcels. For example, the current price for a 2-ounce First-Class Mail letter is 63 cents, as is a 2-ounce flat and a 2-ounce parcel. The proposed pricing will put more emphasis on the shape of the piece to be mailed.

"The [new] cost will depend on the dimensions of the package and the weight," Charlie Kowalski, a regional USPS account manager, told *MediaPack*.

While the USPS did not break out specific rate increases for discs, it noted that standard mail flats, such as CDs and DVDs now mailed in jewel cases or Amaray-type boxes, would be defined as a

processing category in between flats and parcels in the proposed structure. The price would increase 78% for such a disc package mailed at standard mail rates. The impact on the cost to mail more traditional cardboard mailers would typically be less significant.

Kowalski speculated that companies such as Netflix and Blockbuster, who both send and receive DVD movie rentals by USPS mail, would be the companies sending discs in the mail most affected by the rate change, just based on the sheer number of DVDs they each mail in a given month. He also cited universities, which are sending a growing number of CDs to prospective students.

Companies and organisations mailing CDs and DVDs in the US should talk to their local USPS office to both better understand the forthcoming rate changes, and choose disc packaging that will minimise any postal rate increases.

Univenture promotes sales, marketing execs

Univenture have announced the promotions of Jim Geers and Johanna Espinosa. Geers has been promoted to director of sales and Espinosa to marketing director.

Geers joined Univenture eight years ago. He was promoted from his position of eastern regional sales manager and prior to that was a senior sales representative. During his time with Univenture, Geers has been conducive to the success of a number of projects and to the development of bind-in sleeves for Univenture's printer, bindery and publishing customers.

Espinosa joined Univenture the beginning of 2005. She was previously marketing manager, responsible for managing and designing Univenture's marketing campaigns.

In 2006, Espinosa acted as Univenture's representative in joining Gov. Bob Taft to travel to the Ohio Department of Development's conference in Mexico to promote investments with the state.

www.univenture.com

PARTNERSHIP EXPANDED

AGI van de Steeg, AGI Media gets exclusive Expericard production

Expericard AB, of Stockholm, Sweden, has moved all production in Europe to AGI van de Steeg, Enschede the Netherlands and in the US to AGI Media, Melrose Park Chicago.

Expericard AB was founded in 2003 and designed as ultra-lightweight durable postcard for optical media packaging that comes in the mail. In addition to offering its Expericard™ Postcards



Expericard production line

“We are especially proud to announce that a new revolutionary step has been taken by AGI van de Steeg and

Expericard AB in order to meet the increasing personalisation needs for direct mailings,” said Peter Gustafsson,

Expericard managing director.

As the only supplier in the world, AGI van de Steeg may now offer Expericard produced in a fully automated production line with an Optical reader. The optical reader can read a bar code on the disc and it is synchronised with a laser printer and that after Expericard has been closed, can print the matching address or data directly onto the card. As another option it is also possible to print individual greetings or messages on the back of the card. Automated postal sorting and bundling can be made to meet specific country requirements.

www.expericard.com

Inbrief

SUPER JEWEL BOX (SJB) received a verdict letter on December 5, 2006, from the Shanghai No.1 Intermediate People's Court confirming that China Fu Daqing, which had claimed its design was infringed by SJB, had dropped its case, reports SJB spokeswoman Brigit van Winkel. That court action was preceded the month before by the Patent Reexamination Board of the State Intellectual Property Office of P.R. China declaring invalid the patent of Fu Daqing.

www.superjewelbox.com



Michigan, US-based WYNALDA LITHO has added Desiree Millard (pictured) to their west coast sales force. She brings with her more than 20 years of sales experience in packaging and printing, areas of continued growth for Wynalda Litho. “With the addition of Desiree we will be able to expand further into new markets and offer better coverage to our current customers,” said Michael Fabbri, West Coast sales manager for Wynalda Litho.

Millard will be based out of Wynalda Litho's west coast office, located in Los Angeles. She will focus on maintaining current customer relationships and developing new customers in a wide variety of industries on a national level.

www.wynalda.com

HD VMD disc housed in unique case

With all the attention on the next-generation DVD focused on the format war between HD DVD and Blu-ray, at least a third entrant, New Medium Enterprises (NME), is looking to differentiate itself the HD market not only with technology but also with packaging.

NME, based in London, has developed and have begun manufacturing its flagship product, Versatile Multilayer Disc (VMD).

NME creative director Nicolas Lavrov invented and designed a new disc case that will package all our its HD VMD discs, which have recently been selected for use by content owners in China and India.

Dubbed the “NL” case after its inventor, the package features an inte-

grated security system for better anti-theft protection, including a patented security proof opening, 14-point lid and one-sided opening system. Although the security feature is integrated, the NL case is priced competitively with standard DVD cases, according to Lavrov.

The case is available in both one and two-disc versions, and is constructed with a round-edge design with air bubble providing shock-proof sides for added protection.

NME is working with Gima for automated machinery to produce the NL case, which initially is being manufactured in China.

Lavrov noted that the VMD case is the same size as standard DVD cases for minimal packaging line integration/upgrade costs and easier implementation on retail store shelves.

www.nmeinc.com



The NL case for the Versatile Multilayer Disc

Shorewood parent scraps paper plant

International Paper, parent company of Shorewood Packaging, announced on January 9 plans to discontinue production of uncoated paper at its Pensacola, Florida, Mill in April-May of this year to begin the conversion of its 350,000 ton-per-year uncoated paper machine to a 500,000 ton-per-year lightweight linerboard machine.

The machine conversion at Pensacola is part of International Paper's transformation plan to focus on its global uncoated papers and packaging businesses, as well as xpedx, its North American distribution business. The company is realigning its North American mill system to increase operational efficiencies and to redeploy capital to the most competitive, lowest-cost facilities.

Originally, International Paper

planned to cease uncoated paper production in July 2007 at the Pensacola mill, but the company moved up the date to provide adequate time to complete the conversion and provide for an on-schedule startup of lightweight linerboard production this fall.

“This timeline will enable our conversion teams to complete equipment changes and employee training while delivering the project on schedule at the lowest possible cost,” said Wayne Bradford, International Paper senior vice president. “As we move forward, we are working closely with employees and customers to ensure a smooth transition of the mill into a globally competitive lightweight linerboard facility.”

www.internationalpaper.com

www.shorewoodpackaging.com

The Snap-Pac snaps back

New York-based packaging specialists Information Packaging recently announced the Snap-Pac, which is suited for both single and double disc sets. The product's patent pending design features a smooth disc button that allows the disc to snap on to the case and does away with brittle trays. The casing also displays a large area to showcase the discs and any custom panel graphics.

“Many of our customers have asked for an alternative to plastic DVD cases and packaging that utilises plastic trays and we responded,” said Brenda Fitzsimons, marketing manager of Information Packaging. “We designed it with their needs in mind.”

www.infopkg.com

Indies, majors vie for 2007 Grammy packaging nominees

At press-time, the Grammy Award winners still weren't known (the Los Angeles event is scheduled for 11 February, but the nominees in the two packaging categories promise a spirited competition from a combination of independent and major label releases.

Among nominees are recent Grammy winners Rhino's Hugh Brown, Sony Legacy's Howard Fritzson and indie designer Susan Archie, while this year's packaging crop also features significant musician involvement including previously nominated Ani DiFranco, as well as members from the alternative metal bands Tool and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

In the CD Package category, the nominees (release title; art director/s; musicians in parentheses; label in brackets) are:

- *The Best Worst-Case Scenario*
Ryan Clark, art director (Fair) [Tooth & Nail Records]
- *Personal File*
Randall Martin, art director (Johnny Cash) [Columbia/Legacy Recordings]
- *Reprive*
Ani DiFranco & Brian Grunert, art directors (Ani DiFranco) [Righteous Babe Records]



- *10,000 Days*
Adam Jones, art director (Tool) [Tool Dissectional/Volcano/Zomba Label Group]
- *Versions*
Neal Ashby & Matthew Curry, art directors (Thievery Corporation) [ESL Music]

In the Best Boxed Or Special Limited Edition Package category the nominees are:

- *The Cellar Door Sessions 1970*
Howard Fritzson, Dan Ichimoto & Seth Rothstein, art directors (Miles Davis) [Columbia/Legacy Recordings]
- *Fonotone Records*
Susan Archie & Henry Owings, art directors (Various Artists) [Dust-To-Digital]



- *A Life Less Lived – The Gothic Box*
Hugh Brown & Jean Krikorian, art directors (Various Artists) [Rhino Entertainment]
- *One Kiss Can Lead To Another: Girl Group Sounds Lost & Found*
Hugh Brown, Sheryl Farber & Maria Villar, art directors (Various Artists) [Rhino Entertainment]
- *Stadium Arcadium*
Flea, John Frusciante, Anthony Kiedis, Chad Smith & Matt Taylor, art directors (Red Hot Chili Peppers) [Warner Bros]

Special DVD case gives 3D stills preview of movie

A new case that lets consumers preview a DVD before they pay for it was released in January by SeeView Promotions, a Los Angeles-based media promotions company

"Current DVD cases just don't have enough information to help consumers make the best choice," said Rick Andrade, SeeView's DVD preview case creator and company president.

Andrade is making the Hollywood rounds to promote adoption of the patented SeeView box, which has 12 three-dimensional slides built into it, viewable with a pocket viewer about the size of a mobile phone.

The viewer enables the user to flick through the shots, all without

opening the DVD case. "There's nothing like it on the market. We hope consumers will ask for all DVDs to have previewers built-in," said Andrade, who has worked in the film distribution business for 20 years.

The idea for the SeeViewer was developed by Andrade after his wife sent him to the video store to rent a DVD movie. Knowing his wife's taste in movies was very discriminating compared to his own, he tried desperately to compare a few



The SeeViewer

movies side by side. But the packaging on the front and back of each DVD movie was not enough. It would take a year of Andrade making models in his garage before he was awarded a patent, and another year more making dozens of design and prototype changes. Then, finally with the help of two designers, Luis Niquet and James Graham, 3D master conversion artist Jim Long, and film recorder experts Nelson and John Monceaux, the SeeViewer was born.

Beyond DVD, Andrade anticipates other applications for the SeeViewer, which can be used to advertise and promote any product, service, sports team, or videogame.

www.seeviewpromotions.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Console makers dictate convoluted rental game packaging process

Dear *MediaPack*,

Your article in the November-December 2006 issue of *Media-Pack* ("Repacking of Blockbuster game product creates waste") was poorly researched and presents the game publishing community as wasteful and poorly operated. Did you bother to even interview a single person from a game publisher to find out why we do not provide videogames to Blockbuster in a spindle format?

We have very limited control over the manufacturing of our videogames for videogame consoles. We have been asking Sony, Nintendo, and Microsoft to allow us for years to provide videogames to our rental customers in spindle format, but they dictate the parameters under which we may manufacture. These are our

COGS and our bottom line that is being thrown out the door so of course we'd prefer to sell rental customers a slimmed down, less wasteful product.

Videogames are a royalty-based business and the console makers do not allow us to sell spindled product to our customers. Manufacturing requirements are dictated by the console makers, not the videogame publishers. Your quote, "Obviously if game publishers told their replicators that they wanted their discs placed on spindles, the plants would heed the call of their customers and make the necessary adjustments" demonstrates that you did no research for this article.

Name withheld upon request (The author works for a major games publisher, and asked for anonymity.)

Editor's response: Executives representing replicators, packaging companies and the retailer in question were interviewed, but he's right: publisher input would be a welcomed addition.

Shorewood Opens LA Design Center

International Paper affiliates Shorewood Packaging and Shorewood Display have joined forces to open the Shorewood Design Center in Los Angeles. The facility will enable the company to expand their service offerings for home entertainment and consumer products companies. Shorewood has increased its focus on creative services and regional customer support and will provide a full spectrum of innovative packaging and retail merchandising solutions.

Activision's senior production director, Wade Pottinger said, "The new Shorewood LA facility will provide us with greater strategic planning capabilities and will shorten our prototyping timeframes due to the ability to test on the west coast directly rather than wait for concepts to arrive from the east".

After meeting with customers at a recent open house event, Shorewood Packaging's vice president of west coast sales, Dustin Wills said, "With this investment in our new

studio, we are letting our customers know that Shorewood Packaging is committed to their business needs. We are aggressively investing in state-of-the-art technology, equipment and personnel."

In terms of new products, Shorewood has partnered with a leading custom plastic sheet extruder to produce packaging using Lenstar lenticular plastic for its customers. Lenstar polyester, a recently improved product, was specifically designed for the lenticular market. Lenstar is said to create greater clarity, brightness and strength.

"To deliver high-end packaging with lenticular printing to our customers, we have also partnered with two approved lenticular printers," said Greg Chup, product development manager for Shorewood Packaging. "By working directly with these printers, we can deliver top-quality products at competitive rates for our customers."

www.ipaper.com



Panel: Tom Wilkes, Tommy Steele, Mick Haggerty

The art of rock

Grammy organisation panel discussion focuses on the stories behind classic album covers and why they're still treasured, reports Bruce Britt

LOS ANGELES – Sitting before an audience at the US headquarters of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, music journalist Chris Morris held up the pale, almost featureless album cover of the classic 1968 recording, *The Beatles*. The *Hollywood Reporter* music editor then asked the crowd why the Fab Four's self-titled masterpiece is most commonly referred to as "The White Album."

"Because it's an example of really amazing record design," Morris replied, answering his own question.

Morris was serving as moderator at "The Art of Music," a visual presentation and conversation hosted by the Recording Academy.

Grammy-winning graphic artists Tom Wilkes and Mick Haggerty shared the stories behind some of the most iconic album covers in music history.

"Before music video, these covers were the thing that helped create a mood around a piece of music," said Tommy Steele, a panelist and former Capitol Records creative director. Steele's own cover designs include Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' *Damn the Torpedoes*, Blind Melon's self-titled debut CD and Foo Fighters' *The Colour and the Shape*.

"We're selling music (by) creating visual images that hook people," Haggerty said. "The musi-

cians... make this product. But how does it get into people's rooms? It's with their eyes, not their ears."

Each panelist described his creative approach. Wilkes, who designed classic covers like Neil Young's *Harvest*, George Harrison's *All Things Must Pass*, Janis Joplin's *Pearl* and the controversial Beggar's Banquet bathroom cover for the Rolling Stones, said he "always tried to work with a title or a concept, something that would relate on some level to the individual artist, or say something about the album."

It was Wilkes' own childhood that inspired his Grammy-winning cover for the London Symphony Orchestra's 1973 recording of The Who's rock opera, *Tommy*. As a youth, Wilkes spent weekends playing pinball – the perfect visual peg for a record about a pinball wizard. The *Tommy* cover, co-designed by Craig Braun, features eyes peering out from a pair of pinballs, while the album's gatefold bears photos of pinball machines in surreal natural settings. "It was a major production, because there was so much to it," Wilkes said of the project. "These images weren't computer generated."

Born and raised in England, Mick Haggerty earned a reputation for creating eccentric covers, such as The Police's *Ghost in the Machine*, The Go-Go's *Vacation* and David Bowie's *Never Let You Down*. I was called in mostly because people wanted rules to be broken on some level," he said.

Haggerty and co-designer Mike Doud nabbed the 1979 "Best Recording Package" Grammy for Supertramp's rock classic, *Breakfast in America*.

Haggerty explained that his initial mock-up featured a svelte blonde model posing as a waitress, but Supertramp was put-off by the sexy image. The final cover strikes a powerful compromise between Haggerty's vision of a stylised New York skyline and the band's choice of a more ordinary-looking coffee shop waitress.

Haggerty said the *Breakfast in America* cover is a great example of a "hook" (ie, a concept that can spin off merchandise and promotional materials like plates, aprons and posters. "Think of an idea that can be transposed to other things," Haggerty advised.

Tommy Steele's Grammy-winning Digipak sampler for Capitol Records' "Ultra-Lounge" series helped spark a revival in 1950s Tiki-torch culture. Steele said that he was commencing work on the CD design when he encountered workers carting file cabinets out to the Capitol Records' dumpster. He discovered the cabinets contained archival photos, posters and graphics chronicling Capitol's history from 1942 onward; a mind-muddling 300,000 images in all.

That treasure trove provided Steele with the inspiration and material for the entire 20-volume "Ultra-Lounge" series. "All that stuff was able to be made into albums and box sets," Steele said.

The panelists speculated about a future where Photoshop and other software democratises art. "We used to think this was a mysterious process, but it really isn't that way anymore," Steele said.

But Haggerty commended today's computer-enabled mavericks. "It's sad that everyone talks about 'how do we market it?', while the kids are actually doing it," Haggerty said.

Univenture's UniKeep 10-disc wallet chosen for music classroom teaching aid

Univenture's 10-Disc UniKeep Wallet packaging is being used by Music in the Classroom programme, which was founded in Ireland but since has been distributed to schools all over Ireland, Europe, and as far away as South Africa, Australia, and Alaska.

Univenture's team in Dublin, Ireland provided the packaging for the project.

Gearoid Grant devised the Music in the Classroom programme, along with the backing of *The Irish Times* and Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ, Ireland's Public Service Broadcaster, a major contributor to the arts in Ireland, including the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra). The programme was developed to help with teaching students to read or to listen appreciatively and discriminately to music.

The box set of Music in the Classroom contains 10 CDs and includes a teacher's manual.

"Univenture's UniKeep wallets are perfect for a classroom environment," commented Lisa Hand, European operations manager. The UniKeep Disc Wallet is available in five, 10, 20, 30, 40, and 80 disc capacities. Each size is available with a full-wrap cover overlay,

which offers complete customisation in a single cover sheet.

The stackable bookshelf design and easy shipping is ideal for packaging, archiving and transporting multi-disc sets for many commercial and educational applications such as multiple CD music sets, books on disc and data archival purposes.

Univenture's Disc Wallets have integrated interlocking rings, are made from durable polypropylene and are curbside recyclable worldwide.

The wide array of UniKeep disc storage products is compatible with Univenture's patented Safety-sleeves.

www.univenture.com