

Position Paper of the Initiative Online Print e.V.

Who we are

The Initiative Online Print (IOP) is the interest representation for online-generated print in Europe. We are an agile association of relevant players in the online print industry and, in addition to printing companies, also bring together software providers, machine manufacturers and all those involved in online-generated printing and its production and marketing. We include new as well as established market players, small as well as large companies, who jointly benefit from our network through real partnerships. We are not in competition with existing associations, rather we complement traditional interest groups with a focus on online printing.

We see ourselves as the driving force that provides networking opportunities for all players in the industry and established ourselves with the visionary intention of creating open spaces for a prosperous future for the vibrant online print industry. Our founding story is also our roadmap: an ongoing commitment to innovation and a collaborative spirit in the pursuit of modern print production.

In view of the increasing EU regulations and an ever more networked Europe, we also see a great need to be active at a European level and to not limit our work as representatives of interests to Germany. A Europe-wide network not only expands the scope for action, but also offers market opportunities for all involved.

Our mission is to actively shape and develop the online print industry in Europe. Our focus is on technology, artificial intelligence (AI), progress and sustainability. As a driving force and information platform, we bring current, relevant topics to our members as they arise, thus contributing to the further development of the industry. Our curiosity and openness lay the foundation for identifying and classifying trends at an early stage. We create spaces for innovation, exchange and the development of sustainable strategies that drive the sector forward.

Every day, IOP members work to actively shape the future of print in their companies and promote progress and sustainability in the industry. In doing so, we firmly believe in the symbiosis of print and digital media and fight to ensure that print remains an indispensable part of the modern communications

landscape. In everything we do, the sustainability and future viability of print are at the forefront as we dynamically drive the next generation of print solutions.

Why print is relevant

Printed products create a lasting impression, an impression that stays with you. What is written – or printed - "in black and white" is what people trust. Printed information is also readily available to virtually everyone, even if they don't have access to the Internet, e-mail or social media. Attention paid to print is automatically significantly higher in comparison to digital media, because it is not continuously interrupted by push notifications, new e-mails, or other stimuli. Print media is therefore a reliable companion in our everyday lives, a medium that will still be around tomorrow and that we can stand by. It represents a form of sustainability that manifests itself through its physical presence and its permanence over time.

Where information overload, fake news and disinformation are the order of the day, print stands for authenticity and trustworthiness. Printed products invite people to pause, reflect, and seriously engage with content instead of consuming fast-moving and superficial information. Print is a bulwark against the volatility and disconnect of the digital world. It promotes a culture of reflection and reliability - values that are central to a democratic society. The print industry is not only an economic sector, but also an essential component of democratic culture, helping to promote education, critical faculties and informed citizens.

Core topics

Sustainability and future viability

Climate change is a concern for all sectors. Doing business sustainably is therefore the great task of our time and far more than simply protecting the environment. It enables us to ensure that our businesses have a future through long-term thinking and action. This includes taking environmental, social and economic aspects into account in order to promote environmentally friendly practices, assume social responsibility and ensure economic stability. Acting sustainably enables us all to achieve our goals without compromising the needs of future generations. We are aware of our responsibility to the environment, society and our employees and work to find forward-looking solutions.

We rely on the innovative dynamics of the online print industry to promote sustainable developments. By introducing sustainable print products and future-oriented solutions, we are building a bridge between tradition and the future, where the tried and tested meets the innovative. This is not only a matter of responsibility, but also of economic sense: sustainable solutions are at the heart of long-lasting business models. We support our members in finding their path to sustainability that goes beyond the mere reduction of greenhouse gases.

At the same time, the online print industry creates jobs and contributes to the vitalization of the economy. From designers to logistics experts, the sector enables a wide range of job opportunities and career paths for people from diverse fields. We are committed to improving working conditions for professionals and trainees and fostering a creative work environment.

Individualization

Mass customization or print-on-demand offer the printing industry enormous opportunities and are revolutionizing the industry from the ground up. They bring a breath of fresh air to production and enable companies in our industry to respond to the increasing individualization of society by manufacturing products that are tailored precisely to customers' specific needs and preferences. This personalized approach encourages the emergence of new products, bringing new designs, new formats, and new materials into play.

Mass customization is emblematic of the current changes, a driver for the emergence of new kinds of products that go deeper and reach further than the standard offerings of yesterday. It allows us to go one step further and create products that not only represent something but tell a story that is unique and personal. The world of printed products thus becomes a vast field of unlimited possibilities, a space for creativity and individuality.

Technology and Artificial Intelligence

We are convinced: artificial intelligence has the potential to take our industry to the next level of development. AI is the next big disruption to the industry after the emergence of digital printing. And it will also have a lasting impact on the industry.

After all, AI can be used to simplify processes as well as unleash a new level of previously unknown creativity. It offers significant potential savings and can not

only improve the quality of end products and process efficiency, but also tailor them much more precisely to the needs of clients. It is our goal to demonstrate the opportunities of AI to our members and be a pioneer in this technological revolution. AI is creating new markets, new areas of demand, but also new job fields. It has what it takes to massively accelerate the evolution of the online print industry.

We firmly believe that artificial intelligence will be the next big steppingstone for breakthrough innovations in the online print environment. It accelerates processes and catapults efficiency to a whole new level.

Print is the future - online print is the future

We invite our members to become part of our vision and together redefine the future of print. It is a journey of shared learning, growth and commitment to a more sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future. In the IOP, our members find not only a community of like-minded people, but also a platform to represent their interests as we move into the future of the online print industry.