

Ad standard backers agree to merge specs

The Newspaper Association of America agreed to merge Crest 2.0 and SpaceXML, North American standards governing how ad data is transmitted to newspapers, with the international AdsML spec, according to the AdsML Consortium.

The decision, announced last week, also covers a third ad standard, AdConnexion 2.0, backed by Ifra. IDEAlliance, which co-owns SpaceXML with NAA, also endorsed the move, the AdsML Consortium said.

A revised AdsML standard embracing the other specs is expected to be released this fall, the Consortium said. AdsML 1.0 was released in October

2003.

The merger of the three standards will define the booking standard of the AdsML Specification, which will provide full support for booking classified, display and insert advertising in all markets, worldwide.

The ensuing AdsML development phase will mesh the three standards and create a structure robust enough to support regional demands, the group said. The integration will also likely use portions of an XML e-commerce message spec now in development by the Data Interchange Standards Association.

"Our goal for this project is simple,"

said Tony Stewart, director of consulting for U.K.-based consultancy RivCom Ltd. and chair of the Consortium's Technical Working Group. "We want to make the advertising booking process seamless, efficient and cheap."

By integrating the three standards under the AdsML umbrella, the AdsML Consortium said marketplace confusion and duplication will be eliminated.

Crest, a North American standard, governs the exchange of classified display and liner ads; SpaceXML, another North American spec, manages displays ads. Ifra AdConnexion was developed for European publishers and is geared toward display ads.▲

Despite loss, KBA expects sales uptick

Press manufacturer Koenig & Bauer AG today issued a mixed financial report for 2003, posting a loss for the year but projecting increased sales as market conditions improve worldwide.

The Wurzburg, Germany, press vendor posted a net loss of \$30 million on sales of \$1.5 billion, based in part on slumping web press sales, currency losses and costs associated with cutting capacity at press manufacturing sites.

More cuts could come, particularly in web press operations, as the company anticipates a further reduction in web press employees this year, following elimination of 337 jobs in 2003.

As a result of the loss, the firm's management and supervisory boards will eliminate the dividend payment for the first time since KBA went public in 1985.

Despite the negative earnings in 2003, this year looks brighter, the company said.

Thanks to a 15.8 percent increase in new orders, including a 17.2 percent hike in web press orders, conditions "give promise of an upturn in the market for the first time since 2000," KBA said.

KBA's 2003 financial results were molded by steady sheetfed press sales, but web press sales fell 16 percent, to \$737 million, KBA said.

KBA executives said they are confident that anticipated web sales and the increase in orders will translate into higher sales in 2004. This year's Drupa convention should also generate additional sales, particularly in the sheetfed market, KBA said.

The company is anticipating that it will post a profit in 2004, but will wait until summer before making any projections.▲

Smith named to head NAA, Ifra venture

Industry consultant Owen Smith was named president and managing director of NAA/Ifra Technical Solutions LLC, filling a slot that's been vacant since former Managing Director Tom Norton resigned last fall.

"Owen's depth of knowledge and experience in newspaper operations, consulting and technology education makes him uniquely qualified to lead Technical Solutions," NAA President and Chief Executive Officer John F. Sturm said in a statement.

Smith joins Technical Solutions from Owen Smith & Associates, a Rochester, N.Y.-based consulting firm he formed in 1996.

From 1995 to 2000, Smith served as the Paul & Louise Miller Distinguished Professor of Newspaper Operations at the Rochester Institute of Technology. As the chair, Smith coordinated the newspaper program at the Institute and was the primary instructor of classes in newspaper systems analysis, management, distribution and production.

Smith also served in newspaper production management roles at The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee and

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GMA draws scores to operations complex

GMA Inc. said its second annual Open House drew close to 100 newspaper industry participants at the vendor's Allentown, Pa., operations complex. Those attending turned out at workshops and also saw a GMA SLS3000 inserter in action as it built Sunday comic jacket packages for the (New York) Daily News at speeds of up to 32,000 copies per hour.

GMA also showcased its Print-on-Demand technology, which creates FSIs as they are being processed through the inserter at production speeds.

GMA's Allentown center

serves as the firm's research and development home and also processes up to 30 million pieces each week for papers that include the Daily News and Philadelphia Newspapers Inc.

"GMA organized the event as a showcase and learning experience highlighting the company's passion for innovation and underscoring some of the significant technological advances we've made for the past year," said GMA President and Chief Executive Officer Randy Seidel in a statement.▲



Photo: GMA

Production floor at GMA's Allentown facility.

WSJ enhances online service

The Wall Street Journal Online rolled out Audience Search, an online search service aimed at helping advertisers identify their target audiences.

Audience Search, developed by Revenue Science Inc., uses natural-language keywords to

identify audiences responding to online ads.

The software will also enable WSJ Online to tailor the size of campaigns by growing or shrinking the audience.

Singapore Airlines is the first Journal Online advertiser to sign up for the service.▲

IN BRIEF

NEW MEDIA

► **Business Wire**, in conjunction with public relations firm **Delahaye**, introduced NewsTrak Compass, a news analysis service that allows corporations to monitor and assess their media coverage.

The service is available online to help Business Wire members identify media trends and track the impact of their investor relations and public relations programs.

www.businesswire.com
www.medialink.com

► USA Today Sports Weekly selected **NewsStand Inc.** to provide digital production and delivery of its publication. Sports Weekly digital subscriptions are available for \$19.50 for 26 weeks or \$34.95 for 52 weeks through NewsStand Inc.
www.newstand.com

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the (Little Rock) Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

"I am delighted to become a part of this cutting-edge effort to guarantee publishers world-class talent when they are looking for help training, problem-solving or information," Smith said in a statement.

NAA-Ifra Technical Solutions was formed last year to help newspapers obtain training and get information aimed at improving their operations.▲

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