

direct marketing  
**dm**

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# THE DIRECT MAIL REVOLUTION

## WHY DIRECT MAIL IS HOT

**PLUS HOW TO MAKE YOUR MARKETING  
MORE ENTERTAINING AND EFFECTIVE**

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### On the mobile

Latest word on m-marketing

### Breaking down barriers

Integration – buzzword or best practice?

# SEXING UP

Malcolm Auld ponders the possibilities of new digital print technologies and predicts a direct mail renaissance

## direct mail

**W**hen you've lived through a couple of technology cycles and all the regular sales pitches from the media spruikers about their 'new' new thing to make you (read: them) money, you get a bit blasé about major technology leaps.

It happened with the internet. Nobody predicted the pace of the boom of the great 'dotcom', because in many ways nobody believed what they were being sold and the inevitable bust was rather obvious.

And now, as e-mail is choking on its own success and is no longer a viable acquisition media, marketers are once again looking for the newest new thing. Interestingly, you only need look at one of the oldest communication technologies for the next leap – that is, the printed word.

Thanks to an alignment of

a number of mostly unrelated factors, we are about to undergo a renaissance in direct mail. In fact when you see the creative options available, you'll realise just how sexy direct mail has become and why marketers are achieving results way above historical campaigns.

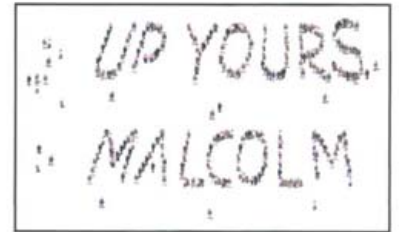
The factors responsible for the rebirth of direct mail are new DM design software, digital colour printing, privacy laws and improved postal services. Software such as XMPie and Direct Smile are radically altering the creative possibilities for direct mail and particularly how it integrates with websites and other print and electronic media. And high quality, variable-data digital colour printers have made short-run personalised printing cost-effective.

Privacy laws have meant the data held by marketers is

now much better quality, allowing for better targeting and personalisation, while Australia Post, for example, has introduced new services to encourage more creative mail solutions.

The main difference caused by all this activity is the creative way in which print media can now be personalised – using data, graphics, colour and other variables. As every marketer knows, personalised media are the most powerful for building brands, so the more creatively you can personalise your communications, the better your results.

The most important thing to most people is themselves and the more you can flatter people with relevant communications reflecting creative use of specific data about them, the better your results and the stronger you build your brand.



### Integrate mail and online

XMPie is a complete desktop workflow tool distributed by Fuji Xerox. It allows you to prepare and manage a personal communications campaign from your desktop – prepare the data sets, upload and manipulate data, import text, graphics and images and send them directly to a printer and website for production.

Identical personalised messages – image and text – can then appear on a postcard, mailpack, poster, banners, stickers or other print media, as well as on a website, HTML newsletter and even SMS. In fact, the

recipient of a mailing can link via a personalised URL directly to a unique website that features the same content from the mailing.

### Making customers smile

Another software making a huge impact in Europe and more recently here, is Direct Smile. It offers a completely new dimension in personalised print creativity. You can select fonts from an existing font library or even manufacture your own by creating letterforms out of any image you like, such as flowers, birds, shells, people, anything imaginable.

The 'Up Yours' postcard pictured is the first campaign in Australia to use Direct Smile fonts combined with XMPie website personalisation. The font in this example is made of people, and the message includes a personalised website link for each postcard recipient, where they could download a PDF of the seminar brochure.

Apart from the creative opportunities, the real power of Direct Smile is the results.

Hundreds of people linked to their personal website within the first few hours of receiving this postcard – and the first booking came in under four hours. Axel Marciniak from Direct Smile in Germany says it is getting response rates of up to 30% for business communications and 17% for consumer mailings. It can be used to creatively personalise calendars, mousepads, invitations, anything which can be printed, which these days is almost everything.

### New direction for digital print

Another area where this technology will impact is the short-run print market for industries such as travel. For example, a customer will visit a travel agent or website and as they create their itinerary the agent or customer can build a brochure using only the content (text and images) relevant to their holiday. Their personalised colour brochure can then be printed and maybe even a PDF

produced to e-mail to friends and family.

There's no longer any need to print and store thousands of holiday brochures because each can be printed uniquely according to the customer's choice. It's far more relevant to the customer, not to mention environmentally friendly.

Digital printing is not new. But the marketing industry has been very slow to embrace it, partly through ignorance of its potential, and partly because data quality, cost or print quality have been somehow sub-optimal. The issue of print quality and cost have largely been overcome, as personalisation and short-run offset print costs become increasingly viable.

The high-end printers supplied by companies like Fuji Xerox, HP, Kodak and Xerox expand on the options. You can print on paper

sizes of up to A2, manufacture personalised envelopes, posters, banners, brochures, magazine covers, fly-sheets and more. Print personalised banners for trade shows can run up to 82m long. The stock on which you can print is as varied as the creative options – paper, card, vinyl, metallics, plastics, even canvas.

Despite hyped anticipation of a pixellated world, the argument that print will become obsolete is now itself obsolete. People prefer to read from paper than from a screen – you don't have to wait for downloads or scroll up and down to see the whole picture. And if your printed words are the words that your customers love to hear – their names – and they are produced in a creative way with related imagery and data, their responses will increase and your brand value will grow. **dm**

*Malcolm Auld is an author, marketing trainer and runs his own agency. He will be speaking on this topic at seminars in Australia. E-mail: malcolm@madmail.com.au*

## case study

# Snackinar breaks new ground for events

This case study from Xerox in the US demonstrates the potential of XMPie. Executives received a personalised mailing tube with a poster inside. The poster was an invitation to attend a Xerox event, called a Snackinar. The poster had a personal URL for the recipient to go to a website to register for the Snackinar.

When the recipient keyed the

URL, the website opened to a personalised welcome page. They then linked to the home page where they chose the snacks they wanted to eat when they attended the Snackinar. They also registered to attend one of the events.

Xerox then mailed each registered delegate a personalised postcard with the images of the snacks they selected

on the site. When the delegates arrived at the Snackinar they received personalised delegate kits with the images of snacks they chose when they registered and that appeared in their confirmation postcard.

The personalised elements included text and images specifically relevant to the data provided by each delegate.

Update My Site | Welcome | Invite a Colleague | Xerox site | Digital print

## XEROX 1:1 SNACKINAR

Tanya, all it takes is a minute to register for the Xerox 1:1 Snackinar.

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Please complete all information below:

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