Twenty years ago, Adobe System’s John Warnock and Chuck Geschke asked: “What if you could translate ideas into print, exactly as intended and across platforms and print devices?” The answer was Adobe PostScript – the core technology for more than 20 million printers, provers and production and commercial printing systems. This revolutionary technology spawned an industry that continues to grow and encompass more complicated projects with increasingly complex technology requirements. Customers also have shorter deadlines, tighter profit margins and higher expectations – all of this driving the need for a more automated workflow that starts with the customer’s imagination and flows through the print shop to final output.

Four years ago at DRUPA 2000, Adobe, Agfa, Heidelberg and MAN Roland came together to bridge the communication gap between content originators and the print production processes. Today, these companies together with CIP4 are responding to the need for automation by supporting the Job Definition Format (JDF) standard – an open, extensible, XML-based format that unifies the pre-press, press and post-press aspects of any printing job. JDF benefits print buyers and print service providers by simplifying the job specification process, ensuring cross-vendor system communication and automating many of today’s manual production processes with a flexible, universal job ticket.

For JDF to prosper and gain mass adoption, the creation tools, presses and post-production tools used in the print workflow need to incorporate the standard. At DRUPA 2004, the industry will see advancements in JDF-compliant products spanning the print workflow – from client-side JDF creation and printing presses to MIS systems and bindery equipment. Today, many JDF-compliant technologies are in use, including Adobe PostScript, Adobe PDF JobReady and Adobe Acrobat. Before long, JDF may stimulate the next printing evolution. Adobe, along with our partners, continues to ask “What if...” to help insure a viable future for all of us in the printing industry.

— Darin Kotalik, Sr. Product Manager, Adobe Systems Inc.