

# Technical

Advisory Group Column

## Print scene brighter but don't over-ink the paper

Steve Packham  
PANPA Judge

THE calibre of entries in the PANPA Technical Excellence awards illustrated that newspaper print quality is continuing to improve, providing readers and advertisers with a higher quality product.

This improvement has not happened by magic. Newspapers have spent millions of dollars over many years on training, new equipment and technologies.

Recent and upcoming upgrades and installs by Fairfax, News Ltd and APN (who print *The Bulletin* at their Yandina site) show this commitment to excellence is not restricted to one publisher.

More commonly, improvements have been small and incremental yet they all add up to reflect how far we have come in print quality.



Steve Packham at PANPA judging, hard work separating the best of the best

Technicalities aside, newspapers are still just news by ink on paper.

There is a lot of hype about new platforms and publishers as 'content providers'. Call me a traditionalist, but newsweb, newsSMS, newsberry and news-plasma just don't do it for me like a newspaper.

Print is a proven winner. It continues to evolve to keep up with the changing dynamics of news gathering and editing – and this shouldn't be forgotten. Not all the changes in newspapers occur within the framework of the so-called integrated newsroom.

As one of three technical judges for the PANPA awards for the past two years, I have picked up some trends.

There are five key evaluation aspects:

- The fold
- The black printing
- The colour printing
- The non-image area
- The reproduction

The fold is one area with room for improvement. The Asian newspapers do much better than everyone else.

The black printing, colour printing and non-image area components are all of excellent quality, and no newspaper or geographic area outshines another among the major players.

Reproduction of skin tones can be inconsistent across the page or from one edition to another.

Colour management is a field of opportunity. Printers are achieving consistent results but more work can be done at earlier stages in the process. Just because it looks good on the screen doesn't mean it will look good on the paper.

There is sometimes a tendency to over ink. Newspapers should be wary of pushing the process to achieve brightness when the process doesn't lend itself to that.

Asian newspapers traditionally achieve higher quality results with the same standard of equipment as their Australian and New Zealand neighbours. It's no secret that this ability to set the bar high comes from people power. As judges, we believe it is a feature of Asian craftsmanship to work tirelessly until it is right.

No disrespect is meant as it is a reminder that no amount of investment or world-class equipment can guarantee print excellence – it comes from our people.

When the Technical Advisory Group conducts its annual review of the awards, it will discuss the possibility of individual review sheets for each technical entry.

It was disappointing to think some newspapers didn't enter because they weren't happy with their product. Perhaps the opportunity to receive independent expert feedback on their print quality will give value to all of those who enter next year, winners or not.

Steve Packham is Technical Services Manager – WEB for DIC Australia. He was one of three independent judges for the PANPA Technical Excellence awards.



Dr Tony Wilkins came to the PANPA office to audit our green credentials – if he could find them. The aim was to see how we could reduce our emissions and electricity bill.

# Flick the switch on power hunger

Brett Taylor  
PANPA

WHEN it comes to reducing the carbon footprint of a poky little office for four, it is amazing how a little effort goes a long way and a small device can save you cash.

That is the message of Dr Tony Wilkins, News Ltd's top man on environment and climate change.

Dr Wilkins came to the PANPA office to audit our green credentials – if he could find them. The aim was to see how we could reduce our emissions and electricity bill.

In theory, if the association can do it and share its lessons, then so can the many hundreds of small newspaper offices around the region.

Dr Wilkins, who heads up News Ltd's 1 Degree program, speaks excitedly about the progress being made at News and he is equally exuberant when explaining how one small office can make a difference.

Our office is relatively simple to assess because only the kitchen appliances and computers are under its control for energy use.

A major factor in any building's energy consumption – Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) – could not be assessed because ours is a leased office.

Dr Wilkins estimates HVAC was responsible for 45 percent of our energy consumption. Even in a print centre, he says, HVAC counts for 35 percent of energy use on average while the presses use just 27 percent.

For offices that operate their own HVAC, a 13 percent



Dr Tony Wilkins...it's not easy being green

It costs less than \$A40 and it could save you hundreds of dollars and reduce your carbon footprint" Dr Tony Wilkins

saving can be achieved by an adjustment of just 2 degrees Celsius. "If you can have your work environment a little cooler in winter or warmer in summer, it will pay dividends," Dr Wilkins says.

His gadget for evaluating energy consumption is a Mains Power Meter from Jaycar Electronics.

"It costs less than \$A40 and it could save you hundreds of dollars and reduce your carbon footprint," Dr Wilkins says.

The meter plugs into a regular power socket and then you

plug the appliance into it. It then measures the wattage (one watt of power equals one joule of energy per second) of the appliance and converts that data into annual costs.

Dr Wilkins analysed our computers, monitors, TV, radio, and refrigerator. We spend money on electricity even when the appliances are turned off. My Apple used 28w when turned off, compared to the CEO's Asus laptop that used 36w when it was on and (according to the boss) being used for work.

"Most newer appliances are made with a standby mode rather than a real off switch, so they can be turned on remotely by controls, modems or other devices," Dr Wilkins says.

"Even those that can't be activated remotely can use power while they are off because the circuitry is now made

that way. There is a washing machine with a five-star energy rating that uses more power sitting idle over a week than for one wash cycle."

One watt loosely equates to \$A1 a year on your electricity bill – so it quickly adds up.

An LCD monitor scored 7w when off, 9w when on standby, and 31w when on. Dr Wilkins says a plasma TV can use up to 500w when in use, and 30w when off.

Our Ricoh multifunction photocopier checked in at 16w (off), 31w (sleep), 55w (ready) and a whopping 930w when copying one sheet of paper.

Like many offices, ours has a couple of old computers we've been meaning to throw out for ages so we measured them, too. The old Apple used 40w when on and 0w when off.

Dr Wilkins says he was concerned about our photocopier's power consumption, adding:

"It's the unnecessary power being consumed by the appliances when not in use – particularly for up to 16 hours overnight – that adds up."

Mains Power Meter from Jaycar Electronics



## Tony's recommendations for PANPA

- Turn everything off at the power point – don't leave on stand-by
- Buy laptops, not desktops
- Adjust air con by 2C (up or down depending on the season)
- Encourage staff to make the same changes at home

Discover more... Visit [www.1degree.com.au](http://www.1degree.com.au) to calculate your carbon emissions and receive tips to save the planet and your money in the office and the home



## Congratulations to our Yandina and Toowoomba print sites and their teams, for their top results at PANPA 2008

Yandina: Queensland Times won the Technical Award for the highest quality in the category of under 20,000 circulation. The Sunshine Coast Daily was runner up and highly commended in the category of circulation between 20,000 and 50,000 copies.

Toowoomba: Won the Technical Award for the Toowoomba Chronicle.

Well done on behalf of everyone at APN Print!

[www.apnprint.com.au](http://www.apnprint.com.au) - Total Print Solutions