

for Affiliates this month in Center research:

New Meets Old with Hybrid Model of Book Publishing at RIT Press

It may seem unlikely that an innovative use of new technology in the university press business model would come out of an organization that prides itself on having the oldest examples of printing to be found anywhere, from extremely rare European printing incunabula (books printed from movable type before 1501), to artifacts printed in China, Korea and Japan that predate Gutenberg by several centuries. But sometimes the future bursts right out of the past, and this summer it happened at RIT.

RIT Cary Graphic Arts Press, the publishing arm of the Melbert B. Cary, Jr., Graphic Arts Collection at Rochester Institute of Technology, has broken new ground for the second time in 2005, with the release of a hybrid publication in July. Five thousand copies of *The New Medium of Print: Material Communication in the Internet Age* by Frank Cost, associate dean of RIT's College of Imaging Arts and Sciences and co-director of the RIT Printing Industry Center, were delivered to RIT from RR Donnelley's book production plant in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and the following week the book also became available as a print-on-demand publication through a partnership that the Cary Press recently solidified with a company called Lulu.



The New Medium of Print

In the book, Cost takes the reader step-by-step through the two processes that were used to produce it. Cost says that he often wished for a small, fun-to-read book to give to people who were thinking for the first time about the ubiquitous world of printing, and so finally wrote one himself. His book surveys current uses of print media and constructs a new model for understanding the role of print in the networked digital world.

"We are witnessing the emergence of a new medium of print made possible by digital printing, the Internet, and the global infrastructure that enables high-speed digital communications, customization, and targeted distribution," he writes.

The New Medium of Print covers steps in the print production of everyday items—from newspapers to billboards to potato chip bags—and sets forth a paradigm for how these products and their markets will transform as a result of the digital era. The book is the first in a new series of works about the printing industry, co-published by RIT Cary Graphic Arts Press and the RIT Printing Industry Center.

Center Spotlight

Print '05

An Invitation to the Cary Award Breakfast Honoring Frank Romano

Hosted by RIT, the Cary Award honors pioneering inventors and entrepreneurs who have profoundly and permanently altered the technologies of business practices in the printing industry. We invite you to celebrate the founder of this award, Frank Romano.

Sunday, 9/11/2005
8 - 10 a.m.

Hyatt McCormick Place
Regency Room

RSVP by August 26, 2005 to
Grace Gladney,
585-475-2728 or
glg8801@rit.edu

Booth #6028

Come visit with us at the Rochester Institute of Technology booth at the Print 05 convention in Chicago, September 9 - 15!

The e review

The *eReview* is a monthly publication of the Printing Industry Center at RIT for registered Affiliate companies. Articles are also published in the quarterly printed publication *PrintReview*.

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RIT's Printing History Archive

The Melbert B. Cary, Jr., Graphic Arts Collection is arguably one of the foremost printing history archives in the U.S. Curator David Pankow explains that the collection includes 10 books that are considered incunabula, many leaves of other books from the period, a substantial collection of manuscript leaves that predate the incunabula period, and some 50,000 other books and printed artifacts from the 16th to the 21st centuries. But Pankow is also forward-looking, acquiring many examples of contemporary finely printed books for the collection, as well as keeping tabs on how the future of printing is unfolding.

When Pankow arrived at RIT in 1979, he noticed that only local users—students, faculty and scholars—had access to the Cary Collection. After he became curator of the collection in 1983, he began to aggressively increase the resources of the collection and coordinated the design of a new seven-room facility for it in RIT's Wallace Memorial Library. Climate- and light-controlled, as well as affording ample room and light for more patrons to view materials, the expansion was completed in 1991.

Reaching a Wider Audience

Pankow wanted to provide broader access to Cary resources, and so began publishing books about the collection and the items in it. Many of these early publications were short runs of beautiful letterpress-printed scholarly works about the history of printing, with mould-made papers and elaborate bindings, some even with tipped-in pages from original private presses. The special features in many of these books dictated a very high purchase price, and as a consequence they were affordable by only the most sincere printing enthusiasts.

In the hope of reaching an even wider audience, RIT Cary Graphic Arts Press was formally launched early in 2001 with the directive to produce publications of significant intellectual value for a scholarly audience. With the help of production editor Amelia Hugill-Fontanel, the first commercial release came that same year: *Digital Book Design and Publishing*, by Douglas Holleley. By 2004, designer Marnie Soom had been added to the press's staff.

In the fall of 2004 Pankow was introduced to a three-year-old startup called Lulu (<http://www.lulu.com>), an industry leader in zero-cost, print-on-demand publishing. Lulu collaborates with Colorcentric Corporation of Rochester, NY, to offer Internet-based printing. Pankow saw the opportunity in on-demand publishing to order and pay for just one copy of a title at a time, and have it delivered directly to the consumer.

A New Publishing Model

RIT Cary Graphic Arts Press entered into a partnership with Lulu early in 2005, establishing the Press as a groundbreaking model for other university presses because it incurs no up-front printing costs for publications issued by the print-on-demand mechanism. "The on-demand model relieves us from investing capital in the physical production of a large edition of books," Pankow says. "We are not giving away money and waiting for it to come back—or not come back. That enables us to make a university press economically viable."

Since signing the agreement with Lulu, Cary Press has published

the Printing Industry Center.

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About the Center

Dedicated to the study of major business environment influences in the printing industry precipitated by new technologies and societal changes, the Printing Industry Center at RIT addresses the concerns of the printing industry through educational outreach and research initiatives.

Support for the Center comes from:

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six titles using the on-demand model. Others with a wider audience, like *The New Medium of Print*, will be produced as hybrid print-on-demand and offset publications because the initial demand is expected to be high enough to justify the longer runs that offset printing requires. How this hybrid model pans out remains to be seen, but those involved are optimistic. "Printing this book on demand gave us a fast turn-around plus the ability to produce a color edition, and the offset version affords us the economy of scale. *The New Medium of Print's* production workflow has been the best of both printing worlds," says Soom, designer for the book.

"We also hope to occasionally publish the type of fine printing books we initially produced, as the need arises," says Pankow. Maintaining a presence in both the historical and cutting-edge worlds of print production is the kind of challenge he enjoys.

The New Medium of Print will be provided to participants in IEP's Orientation to the Graphic Arts seminars; more information on the book is available at <http://print.rit.edu/cost/>. A dedicated message board is also available from that site. Insightful commentary that emerges from those discussions will become new content in subsequent editions of the book.

The next book scheduled to be published in the RIT Printing Industry Center Series is *Data-Driven Print: Strategy and Implementation*, by Patricia Sorce, administrative chair of the RIT School of Print Media and co-director of the RIT Printing Industry Center (<http://print.rit.edu>).

RIT Cary Graphic Arts Press is the publication arm of the Melbert B. Cary, Jr. Graphic Arts Collection at RIT, a renowned resource for those studying printing history, bookbinding, typography, papermaking, calligraphy, and book illustration processes.

Printing Industry Center Publications :

To learn more about *The New Medium of Print* and other research publications of the Printing Industry Center, visit: <http://print.rit.edu/research/>

