

Does print stand a chance in a wired world?

Print's future in a wired age was the subject of the presentation on 'The Power of Print - Keys to Profitability' by Michael Makin, President and CEO of the Printing Industries of America and the Graphic Arts Technical Foundation, at the World Print Congress (WPC8) in Cape Town, Wednesday.



By [Louise Marsland](#) 25 Jan 2005

Since 1998 in North America, 7000 printers have gone out of business and 110 000 people in the industry have lost their jobs.

But despite this, there has been a recovery in the print industry since 2003 in the US - "this is a positive story", Makin assured the almost 700 delegates, dominated by international visitors from the Asian block.

"There is no escaping the fact that we are a mature industry that faces tough competition, not from other graphic service providers, but other media - particularly the internet.

"Somehow, print is perceived as 'old school', 'boring' in the world of blogs, vlogs and so on. But does it even feature on the radar of kids today? Probably not," Makin said.

The print industry has a responsibility as an industry, as parents, as educators... to educate our children, said Makin.

"Print is a technologically diverse industry where analogue and digital come together to produce print documents. Despite the common perception, print workers are technology workers and we need to encourage the youth to realize that there are exciting careers in the printing industry."

Print is an industry which is long overdue for some "shameless self promotion", said Makin. At issue, was fragmentation in the industry.

"No one has taken on the responsibility of promoting print as a media itself."

Makin is right - local South African media and publishers were not in attendance at WPC8, despite being invited. The print publishers have seen margins and resources slashed in the past decade as print and paper costs have squeezed margins and electronic media steals the readers of the future. Why were they not here to listen, learn and network with the print industry, to try solve common issues?

In the US, a campaign to promote the power of print focused on how print influences decisions and its role in society. In essence, The Print Council in the US is fighting back to influence and increase the level of print buy in, and raise awareness for print as the preferred communications medium with the most important audience - media.

Recent studies disprove earlier studies that the Internet would kill magazines, Makin said.

"Seventy percent of individuals who receive printed information, read it. That is outstanding. And no media holds a candle to personalized direct media mail shots. No media!

"The bottom line is that we must stop listening to the profits of doom. Where is the paperless offices predicted by the year 2000? All there was in 2000 was a LAN-less society. Print is alive and well, thank you very much! In today's world of sound bites and fleeting impressions... it's that print lasts," Makin concludes

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

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