

It's one of the biggest catalogues on earth.



And it's got GMG colour management at its heart.

Produced and shipped in the space of just two months (June and July) from up to 25 printing locations around the globe, and with a circulation of almost 200 million in 2009, the main Ikea catalogue is surely one of the most impressive publications ever conceived.

Inter Ikea Systems, the worldwide franchisor of the Ikea concept, has automated most of its printing standards through color management in the main Ikea catalogue. A central image archive approves the RGB images and creates a master proof. Michael Farkas, the Technical Manager at Inter Ikea Systems is responsible for color management and process development. He calls Ikea an 'image factory' as it deals with thousands of photos every year that have to be prepared, preferably automatically, for the Internet and printing by

a wide variety of methods and, in some cases, regionally different standards. However, as Farkas points out, the term 'image factory' should not be misconstrued as suggesting there is no manual correction of images. Every image has to be approved on a master proof by an Ikea Art Director before it can be uploaded into the central Ikea image archive. For subsequent printing of the catalogue in different regions the Art Director once again approves a further proof that accurately simulates the respective print variables in that country.

The Art Director can make further manual corrections if necessary. In his discussions with production partners and the solution providers from the graphic arts industry, Farkas coined the phrase 'Ikea Color Family'. A series of representative Ikea test images were matched harmoniously, both on the master proof and on proofs for a wide variety of paper grades and printing processes, without a trained eye calling for additional, manual corrections. The 'Ikea Color Family' was created in two steps. First, the binding proofing standards were defined in cooperation with the printing partners. The target in this respect was for the proofs at the repro businesses working for Inter Ikea Systems to match the in-house proofing solutions of the printers as perfectly as possible. Where available, Inter Ikea Systems goes for industry standards for web offset and gravure printing. In exceptional cases, however, proofing is even adapted to the in-house standards of the printers (for example Japan and Australia).



Following an evaluation phase, during which various solutions were compared with the ICC profiles previously used, and after discussions with its repro partners, Inter Ikea Systems decided on the GMG ColorServer solution. In cooperation with GMG, optimally characterised conversion profiles were created using GMG ColorServer technology. According to Farkas, the combination of RGB color correction, approval on the master proof and use of GMG ColorServer has greatly reduced the effort involved in repro work. This particularly means elimination of the extensive manual colour corrections that were necessary in the past to ensure that the Ikea products have the most consistent possible appearance on different papers and when printed by different processes. Which in turn means, one of the worlds most dynamic retail brands continues its incredible success. Both in store and on paper.