

UKCRA: Fighting for the industry

The latest UKCRA meeting – held in Warwick, UK, 21st February – demonstrated that attitudes towards the remanufacturing industry are changing, especially those of OEMs. Major players are becoming more vocal about their concerns about the penetration of remanufactured products.

HP advert

The hottest topic of discussion was the advertising campaign launched by HP in the British printed media. The advert compares buying remanufactured cartridges with buying half-eaten food. Keith Moss, UKCRA's Chairman commented: "Using food as a theme, a more accurate comparison would have been throwing away the crockery and the cutlery after finishing your meal. Because that is what you do when you throw away a cartridge: you discard something that can be used again."

UKCRA has filed a complaint with the Advertising Standards Authority regarding the advert. The complaint states: "We [UKCRA] were appalled by the ludicrous and erroneous analogy used by HP in comparing a refilled inkjet to partly eaten food. [...] Each cartridge refilled by a UKCRA member must carry out not only a pre inspection but following refill with high quality designated ink or toner is tested again for quality. We are also appalled by the total lack of regard HP has for the buyer by putting into question their decision to make a qualified choice which printer cartridge he chooses to purchase [...]. That HP had been allowed to substantiate their claims by quoting from their own

supported comparison study should not have been allowed."

Standards

Another good example of how OEMs are hampering the development of this industry is the approval of cartridge yield standards that do not offer a level playfield. Some remanufacturers – including some UKCRA members – have taken part in the meetings that have led to the definition of ISO standard 24711. The scope of ISO/IEC 24711:2006 is limited to the evaluation of ink cartridge

toner cartridges (ISO/IEC 19752) published in June 2004 – is insufficient to value the quality of a cartridge. It is designed to measure yield, which is only one of the aspects that should be taken into consideration. Basically, for an inkjet cartridge to achieve a certain yield, only a certain amount of ink is required. But the quality and durability of the print – which are very important characteristics – might vary depending on the quality of the ink used and the media used to print, among other factors.

In the meeting, it seemed that remanufacturers agree on the need for an industry standard, independent from the OEMs, that is more comprehensive and more useful for the end user. The STMC standard for monochrome toner cartridges is a good example – although the development of an analogue standard for inkjet cartridges has proved to be difficult.

Remanufacturing Stakeholder Event

UKCRA's chairman, Keith Moss, attended the first Stakeholder Event of the DEFRA Remanufacturing Pilot, held by Oakdene Hollins on 23rd January 2007 at University of Bristol.

In all, around forty attendees from government, academia and industry attended the event which ran for the whole day and generated food for thought. This represented the first serious attempt to coordinate supporting activity across the sector, and was a showcase for Defra's only reuse project. Objectives for the day were to:

- ★ Achieve a wider appreciation of the objectives of the programme amongst the business community.
- ★ Engage the business community so that they contribute to the

programme and act as ambassadors to engage others.

- ★ Gain the commitment of selected attendees to become core members to actively steer the centre programme.
- ★ Identify community members willing to engage in industrially-focussed remanufacturing projects.
- ★ Identify international links and synergies for exploration and development.

The ultimate purpose of the event was to produce an action plan for next year's work that met the needs of remanufacturing stakeholders.

Market Transformation Programme

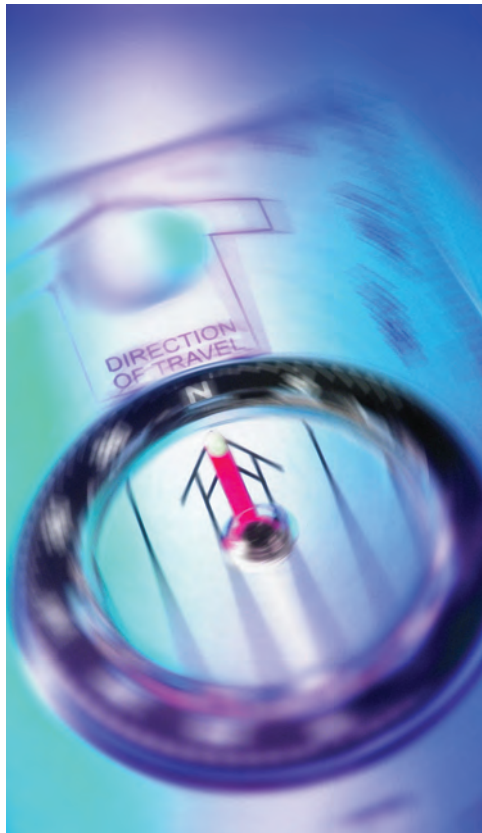
UKCRA is actively contributing to the Market Transformation Programme (MTP), which supports the development and implementation of UK Government policy on sustainable products.

The association has sent its input to the document relevant to our industry: BNICT23 Waste considerations relating to printer cartridges. The first draft is available at the Market Transformation Programme website:

www.mtprog.com/ApprovedBriefingNotes/PDF/MTP_BNICT23_2006October16.pdf

Killer chips, quality of remanufactured cartridges, definition of cartridge types and OEM recycling programmes are among the topics covered by this study which are not very accurate from remanufacturers' point of view. Taking part in these kinds of initiatives is important for the industry, regardless the outcome. Even if only a small part of the remanufacturers' suggestions are taken into account, it is a big step forward. Being recognised as stakeholders in the development of government projects is important on its own – and only can be achieved by working together as an industry.

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page yield for ink-containing cartridges (i.e. integrated ink cartridges and ink cartridges without integrated print heads) for colour inkjet printers. It can also be applied to the printer component of any multifunctional device that has a digital input printing path, including multi-function devices that contain inkjet printer components. Both liquid and solid ink products can be tested using ISO/IEC 24711:2006.

UKCRA members feel that this standard – based on the ISO/IEC yield standard for monochrome