

## Acrobat 8 Comes Up Short in Some Areas

**A**crobat Professional 8 doesn't rectify some major problems for the graphic professional market. PDF specialist Stephan Jaeggi, Prepress Consulting Switzerland, discusses the new version's shortcomings with Bernd Zipper.

**Bernd Zipper:** *Which are the most important new features in Acrobat 8 from your perspective?*

**Stephan Jaeggi:** Unfortunately, there is not much new in Acrobat 8 for prepress users. Only a third of the items on my wish list have been addressed. In some areas, like crop pages, convert colors and add printer marks, I could detect nice improvements. One can save transparency flattening styles now, but unfortunately they are not exchangeable with CS2. However, color settings defined in Adobe Bridge are now supported by Acrobat 8. Also, some — but certainly not all — of the bugs of Version 7 have been fixed.

The biggest enhancements are certainly in the area of preflight. The interface is easier to use and the new fixing features are a welcome addition. Callas certainly did a very good job. As technical officer to the Ghent PDF workgroup, I also welcome that Acrobat 8 Professional ships with the latest version of our preflight specifications and especially the fact that Adobe now officially gives credit to the Ghent PDF Workgroup for these profiles. In Version 7, Adobe referred to us just as "industry associations."

**Zipper:** *You are one of the fathers of PDF/X-3. What do you think about the new PDF/X features?*

**Jaeggi:** I begged Adobe for several years to give us a "Save As PDF/X" feature. It's now in Acrobat 8 Professional and they even added an "Export as PDF/X" menu as well! However, I am disap-

pointed that this feature is only part of Acrobat Professional while the "Save as PDF/A" will also be available in the standard version of Acrobat 8. Since more and more documents for print production are created by office or (as Adobe calls them now) knowledge workers, this feature should also be part of the standard version. A good thing is that Adobe has already added support of PDF/X-4, which allows the use of transparency and layers in PDF/X. Hopefully, in future versions Adobe will also integrate support for PDF/X-4p, which allows references to external output intent profiles and therefore reduces the file size of PDF/X documents.

**Zipper:** *You are also a member of the CIP4 advisory board, which takes care of the development of the job definition format (JDF). What's your opinion regarding the JDF features in Acrobat 8?*

**Jaeggi:** From a user's perspective there are almost no changes in the JDF editor compared with Version 7. The editor is still too complicated to use. In fact, I only know of one company that is taking advantage of this feature. It's a small print shop in Düsseldorf (Germany) that recently received a CIPPI award from CIP4 for this. There is certainly still a lot of work to do in this area. I hope that Adobe will do a better implementation of JDF in the next version of the Creative Suite. **TSR**

