



DigePrint is a former Warwick University spin-out. It has invented a disruptive, light exposure technology, branded LumeJet[®], for imaging digital images onto photosensitive media. Patents have been granted. Like an inkjet, LumeJet[®] uses a moving head technology, but instead of using expensive coloured inks it "sprays" free (red-green-blue) light.

Its first application is in digital photographic printing machines, such as you might see in Boots, Snappy Snaps etc. The high street retailer and professional studio both require machines to print high volume, holiday snaps as well as high margin, large format prints. Inkjet is uneconomic for small prints. LCD, a competing technology, struggles to print large prints. Laser systems, able to do both, are expensive and complex.

Digeprint's first success came in January this year with the installation of a LumeJet[®] machine in a photo shop in Lyon, France where photos are being printed commercially. This is the first machine from a Manufacturing Pilot programme of 20 units, which is planned to finish in May. Break-even production, of c. 12 machines per month is scheduled for late summer, which will be equivalent to a £3m turnover business. The ultimate aim is not to manufacture machines but to adopt the "Intel Inside" model and become the dominant imaging technology in the digital print processing market.

Other steps towards developing their international business include the appointment of their first distributor JOBO AG in Germany, a respected name in the professional photographic world. Digeprint also exhibited LumeJet[®] at the recent PMA trade show in Las Vegas.

Initial sales (85 projected for 2009) will be direct to customers and through resellers and territory-based distributors, such as JOBO, and will be aimed initially at photo labs. Larger volumes of sales (750 projected for 2010) are expected to be achieved through OEM and White Labelling, to companies such as Kodak or Dai Nippon (both known to DigePrint). Ultimately the LumeJet[®] technology should be able to be licensed.

LumeJet[®] technology is significantly cheaper to buy and maintain than laser which it outperforms in terms of compactness and ease of use, matches or exceeds in terms of quality and matches in terms of speed. Like inkjet, it is able to scale to any print width depending on the length of the rail along which the exposure head travels. The sharpness, colour fidelity, saturation and tonal values of LumeJet[®] prints are judged to be amongst the best available.

The scalability of LumeJet[®] technology, to print for example meter long prints, from the same machine that prints holiday snaps, extends the use of photography into new markets such as banner printing for business applications. The edge-to-edge quality of LumeJet[®] prints may also allow other commercial applications, for example high value military and land survey.

In the current climate it is good to hear that Digeprint, based in Coventry, will be expanding its manufacturing facility following the pilot phase. This will generate further employment opportunities in the area for skilled production engineers and research personnel.