Barcodes in Draw!

by Darryl Howman

Corel Draw has been able to create barcodes for some time, in X5 as well as many of the earlier versions. At last months meeting I was approached by Luigi, who has just joined Corel Down Under. He asked me why Draw only produced barcodes in CMYK, that is, in the four primary printing colours, cyan, magenta, yellow and black.

I thought that can't be right, because as a printer, it is important to print barcodes in black. I came back to my office the day after, opened up Draw, and produced a beautiful Code 128. It was in black.

Code 128

CorelDraw_Ver_X3

My immediate thought must be that Luigi must have a wrong setting somewhere, but he **didn't.** You see, I still use Corel X3 as my main software. I then went to another machine, which has X4 loaded, and tried it on there. Sure enough, the barcode that X4 created is in 100% cyan, 100% magenta, 100% yellow and 100% black.

Thinking that this was strange, I then went to my laptop, which runs Corel X5, and tried it again, with the same result. It appears that from X4 on, Corel Draw does produce their barcodes in cmyk.

This seems to me to be a bit strange. As a printer, Luigi doesn't want to send his file off, particularly if all other elements are in black only, and receive back four plates or negatives, with the C,M & Y plates only having a barcode on them, which he doesn't want anyway.

Of course, if you are aware of this beforehand, you can ask for only the black plate to be run. But we are all very busy, and sooner or later you will forget to ask or the bureau will forget and run the whole file, producing four plates. This becomes a costly exercise in money and time for all concerned, and it's things like this that ultimately put up the cost of printing.

I would be very interested to know if there is a way to change this somewhere in the settings.

Meanwhile, there is a way around the problem which appears to work. Select your barcode, with the pick tool, open up Bitmaps in the file menu and then convert your barcode to a 300 dpi black and white 1 bit bitmap. It is now in black only and should still read. I wouldn't turn it into a grayscale bitmap as you may have problems with reading due to the blurry edges.

Having said that, barcode reading equipment is so much better these days, that I think in most cases, most scanners would read all three versions, B&W barcode, (produced in X3, B&W bitmap or the grayscale bitmap.

All three have been blown up in size and partially printed here.

Partial X3 barcode

Grayscale Bitmap

1 bit B&W Bitmap

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Beta Testers Wanted!

Now is your chance to become a Beta tester of a new version of software. Corel Down Under has been approached by Krasbit Technologies, who are working on their version 2 of *Chameleon Sports Studio* software. This application is a CorelDRAW plugin. It is a workflow solution that lets event or sports photographers import player data, connect photos with the data and then automatically output hundreds of personalised products for photo-gifting - all with just a few keystrokes. This is done onsite at the photo shoot within seconds of a subject's photo being taken.

Version 2 includes a new interface that makes the entire process more intuitive - users can be up and running within minutes.

Krasbit Technologies are looking for beta testers to give the new system a test run and report back on how it has helped them. Priority is given to professional photographers who are using PCs and have tethered connections (USB or wireless) to their cameras.

Because there is a lot of CorelDRAW design work involved, Krasbit would also like to hear from the CorelDRAW community. Krasbit also wants the software to respond to the realities of the Australian market so are looking for a lot of international participation on this test.

This means they want Corel Down Under members to participate! Beta testing starts 1 December 2010. **Sign up now at:**

http://krasbit.prefinery.com/betas/1104/welcome