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INSPIRING OUTPERFORMANCE

LED TECHNOLOGY IS GAINING GROUND

David Turner summarises its potential in UV-curable inks

Curing using UV LED has the potential for energy savings and to have less impact on the environment. There are strong arguments for and against this statement, but what is abundantly clear is that UV-LED is a viable option for at least some, if not all, situations where UV curing of inks and coatings is required.

It can be argued that the running costs of a conventional UV system are set against the need for the cooling of an LED set-up and that

over temperature of an LED array can result in (best case) reduction of the LED life, if not a complete failure. An argument against mercury vapour lamps is the disposal responsibility of the used mercury, and the ozone generation caused by the system. These shortcomings on both sides can be overcome, but the end customer has to make a validity judgement as to whether or not LED is right for them.

Over the past five years, the buzzword in the industry has been LED curing. Whereas some

UV ink systems can be pressed into service (pardon the pun) the need for specifically formulated LED cured products is essential. The safety and efficiency arguments are clear. An ink system that reacts fully with a narrowly defined spectral output must result in a coating where the risk of non-activated photo-initiators is not an issue. This may not be the case where a regular UV ink has been irradiated with only a narrow spectrum of UV energy.

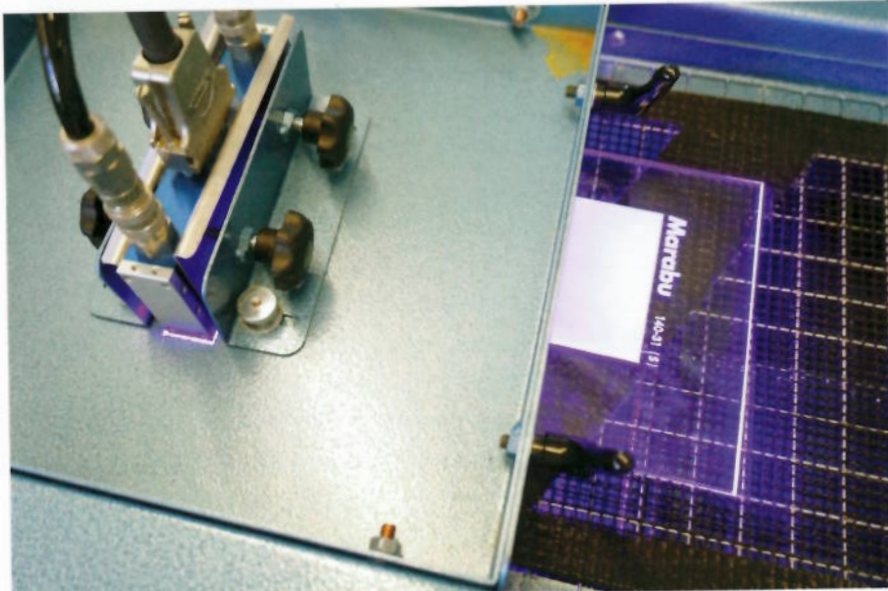
LED-CURABLE SCREEN-PRINTING INK

Marabu, as a leading, responsible ink producer has worked to produce specific LED curable inks for different industries and applications. The ink series Ultra Pack LEDC is specifically designed and produced for UV-LED curing in the container industry. The very flexible ink is suitable for screen-printing of both containers and for flat-bed printing of regular substrates used in the container market (PP, PE, PET, rigid PVC, and PC). The ink is high gloss, has brilliant colour shades, and is highly resistant to filling substances such as cosmetics or oils. It is a perfect ink solution for lots of application where UV-LED curing is used. ■

David Turner is Product Manager at Marabu

Further information:

Marabu GmbH & Co KG, Tamm, Germany
tel: +49 7141 691 360
email: tu@marabu.com
web: www.marabu-inks.com



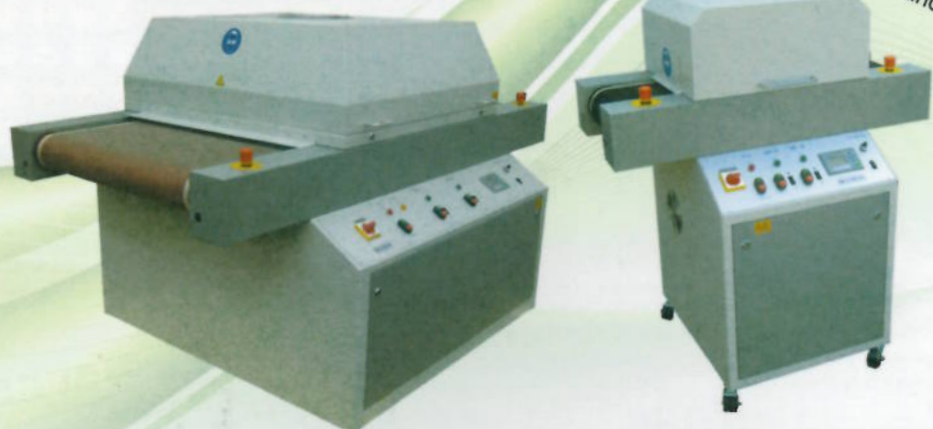
Marabu has an ink solution for many applications where UV-LED curing is used

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IJJ's XYPrint 300

and what the problems will be. Exhibitions and shows are another good opportunity for discussions and demonstrations of live printing, such as with our XYPrint 300 system that was launched two years ago.

INK-JET TECHNOLOGY IS SPREADING OUT

It's our job to find out if digital print is really going to make sense for them. As well as the obvious print sample work, we spend a long time talking about how the ink-jet system would need to fit into their production line. We talk about issues like pre-treatment of the material, ink adhesion, resolution and print quality as well as post-print curing of the ink.

What we think is now happening in ink-jet technology is a rapid spread out into many different application areas. Thirty years ago, 'best before date' regulations caused a rapid expansion of simple, 'continuous' ink-jet printers that printed a low quality date code with smelly solvent inks. That market still exists but it's very mature and stable. Nothing much changes.

The same companies that were successful with date coding also introduced mechanical valvejet technology for outer-case coding. Typically, this is very low resolution, big-drop print onto brown cardboard boxes. Again, it's simply applying a code – it's not printing the full decoration onto the box.

Continued over



IJJ's XYPrint 300 system launched two years ago

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