

HAS **AR** REALLY GONE MAINSTREAM?

The Pokémon GO Phenomenon Is Inspiring Designers, Printers and Brands

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Introduction

Let's start with a question: What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "Augmented Reality?" Rather than answering with older examples such as sports-related AR (1st down markers, motorsports overlays [gauges/gearshifts/speed/position] and heads-up displays in cars or fighter jets, you're more likely to answer "Pokémon GO!"



The Pokémon GO phenomenon has focused attention on AR, but we've been trending in the direction of screen-enhanced information for years. And PG is different in that it exploded out of consumer fascination with the game/app into the world of marketing and business.

According to PEW Research, 72 percent of adults have smart phones, and there are more opportunities than ever to use AR to present information to users and keep them interacting with the real and digital worlds.

So what exactly is Augmented Reality?



The Oxford dictionary defines it as follows:

- a noun
- a technology that superimposes a computer-generated image over a user's view of the real world, creating a composite view

A current Marketing definition is:

- a cutting-edge technology that connects the print and digital worlds via a smart device, allowing any user to access a virtually unlimited supply of information

Augmented Reality and the Future of Print

Why should you be curious about AR?

And why AR and #interactiveprint?

Because mobile devices have radically changed the way we communicate with each other, and AR is changing the way we interact with the world. AR allows you to provide media-rich experiences for audiences that allow not just viewing, but interacting with animation, graphics and links to relevant content.

Cross-media programs utilizing AR can combine personalization and real-time metrics that give you the ability to communicate with customers and prospects through their preferred channels with targeted offers and messages.

All from the printed page!

It's all about the Content! Keys to Successful AR Implementation

There are specific objectives that need to be met in creating a successful Augmented Reality program:

- The application should be free, of course, and easy to use. The landing pages must be mobile-friendly and have good responsiveness in poor signal areas.
- Execution of your program should result in an engaging experience. Make it worthwhile for users to come back. Which also ties into...
- CONTENT, CONTENT, CONTENT! The AR experience must be worth the user's time and attention. It's all about what information you put up to engage your client.

Kevin Keane, a noted social media guru, marketing consultant and #interactiveprint proponent, has posited these goals for any good AR plan.

Augmented Reality Should:

1. Bring print to life.
2. Add value to print.
3. Involve M-commerce (mobile commerce), like "Porter" magazine, where every page is enhanced for the shopper's convenience.
4. Offer a deeper dive of engagement with the product and service offerings from the client's enterprise.
5. Offer social sharing integration.
6. Offer gamification, á la Pokémon GO, as it is a proven way to develop "stickiness" with customers – sweepstakes, contests, surveys, and even puzzles cause folks to stick around.
7. And, last but not least, provide analytics.

And there you have it –

"Seven Splendid Layers of Discovery!"

Variations on a Theme: The Different Types of Augmented Reality



Other than Pokémon GO, most of the hype in the media is about immersive technology and Virtual Reality via head-mounted displays (Oculus Rift and others, Google cardboard, the promised Magic Leap tech). As time goes on, however, it's anticipated that AR and VR will grow closer together, with AR actually gaining the edge. AR/VR may also morph into more wearable tech for medical and other commercial uses, with more growth areas over time.

There are myriad paths to take to add Augmented Reality to a printed piece. How do you decide what's the best approach for your specific marketing campaign? Let's take a look at the most commonly used types and their differences.

- **QR Codes** Codes have become ubiquitous on packaging and many other printed materials. But despite their popularity, they are not attractive, not cyber-secure and can be easily hijacked. QR readers are generic, not custom, which contributes to the lack of security. There could even be ads from competitors popping up on your landing page!

- **Embedded NFC/RFID Tags** use is growing, especially in the liquor/wine industry. These tags are complicated by wires, chips and specialty inks, which make them more expensive to produce. Disposal is an issue, as the wires/chips render the tags not eco-friendly. In addition, iPhones do not read NFC tags, which excludes a large portion of your potential audience.

- **Image Recognition (IR)**, or Visual Search, is another popular form of Augmented Reality. As a best example, Pokémon GO is based on visual search. You scan physical objects or printed pieces and connect to digital information (or collect characters, in the case of Pokémon GO). It requires creating a database of images, usually stored "in the cloud." When an image is scanned, the app searches the database to identify the proper image and connects to the related digital content. Despite IR being used via print, it is not a true "print-centric" format.

- **#InterActivePrint (IP)** is Augmented Reality triggered by a "coded" image from a printed piece and is a genuine "print-centric" format. The invisible code can be embedded into printed photos, icons, logos, labels and packaging, fabrics, clothing tags – any printed material. It can also be used in any printing process - offset, digital, inkjet, wide-format – and substrate (paper, synthetic paper, corrugated, even textiles). Just scan the image to trigger the AR experience. As we like to say "The Magic is IN The Print!"

Augmented Reality in Print Campaigns

Although today's marketing tactics seemingly exclude print and focus more and more on digital formats, multi-channel marketing campaigns can integrate print and make it much more of an immersive "experience" by including Augmented Reality.

Below are a few stand-outs from 2016:

The New Yorker Enhanced Covers – May 16, 2016 issue

For its annual Innovators Issue, The New Yorker worked with AD Francoise Mouly and Nexus Studio in London to create the magazine's first Augmented Reality cover.

The tech was incorporated as a way of pulling layers of meaning out of an iconic daily moment: a passenger steps into the train with a cup of coffee as the doors close.

Scan the cover and it springs to life, featuring a yellow and black subway car and city skyline that twists and turns through a NY landscape.

[Click here for more info](#)



Virtual Blood Donations Outdoor Campaign



From May 18 to May 22, shoppers in Birmingham and London England had the opportunity to become virtual blood donors.

The award-winning campaign, developed by London agency 23Red, developed an Augmented Reality application that triggered animation on large format outdoor screens. Scanning a sticker overlays a needle, plaster and tube, triggering a blood bag on screen to fill. As it fills, watch an image of a sick patient gradually return to health.

The goal of the campaign was to inspire those who have never given blood to register to donate.

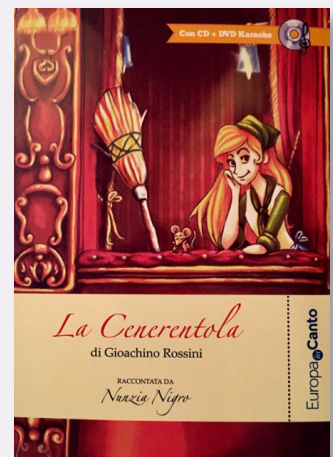
[Click here for more info](#)

Europa in Canto Music Course

"Europa in Canto" is an Italian children's music course book designed to introduce a new generation to opera, history, music and culture. The Stampatech Group (www.stampatech.strikingly.com) created an AR application that could be used by the students to download sheet music, listen to audio music samples, watch videos, print and make props to put on their own performances and more.

The initial book, "The Barber of Seville," received an overwhelming response, which resulted in expanding the program into the next opera book in the series – "Cinderella," with triple the print run and response rate from students, teachers and parents. A excellent example of the successful use of AR in education!

[Click here for more info](#)





AR and Marketing – The Power of Print

Amid today's constant barrage of content through numerous devices and sources – tablets, phones, TV, social sites, et al – the window to gain someone's attention is ONLY 3-5 seconds! So the information you are providing must be timely and relevant. According to Daniel Dejan of Sappi Fine Paper, that is where the power of print and ink on paper has a great advantage.

By including print in your multi-channel marketing plan, you have the ability to tell more stories and create more valued content. Studies have shown that readers take more time and pay more attention when reading printed materials. Combined with the extraordinary tactile and sensual quality of ink on paper, it all adds up to print having staying power and meaning. Merge Augmented Reality with print to connect to the digital world, you have a dynamic blend that appeals to all demographics.

Using AR: Build a Brand via Print and #InterActivePrint

Great! You're sold on AR, you've researched and decided which platform works best for you and now you can't wait to get started. What's the best way to use AR for your marketing materials?

Maximize your design. You should tell your story with attractive, well-designed print, along with other matching multi-channel materials.

Link your digital content (existing or new) via #InterActiveprint, and give your readers the ability to get information from both worlds with links to storefronts, coupons, online social, research information, maps, GPS locators et al.

Add in VDDP (Variable Data Digital Print) – personalized print, along with a personalized digital AR experience – even personalized videos!

The “cool” factor to engage is always changing, too. A beautiful dragon is “cool” the first time you see it. By the twentieth dragon, it gets pretty old. Show something useful and add updates and information frequently.

Keep in mind that AR can Educate and Engage. AR can also facilitate Tracking and Tracing, Document verification and authentication (through #InterActivePrint only), branding and customer relationship.

Current High-Profile Players and Companies in the AR Universe

The landscape of high-profile players in Augmented Reality is constantly shifting, but here's our current top list of providers:

Aurasma is HP's Augmented Reality platform, available to all of its clients. It is an IR-based Software Development Kit, with a DIY option, used by many recognizable brands such as Marvel Entertainment, KFC, NBC Universal and others.

Blippar/Layar coins itself as a “visual discovery” app, harnessing image recognition, augmented reality and computer vision tech to bring the physical world to life. Blippar acquired Layar in 2014 and partners with many major companies.

Digimarc is a digital watermarking technology provider, enabling the embedding of digital information into many different forms of print. Its current focus is on barcodes.

Documobi and Documobi FUSE Video card tech provides mobile solutions for adding personal messages to greeting cards, gift cards and photos (P2P). FUSE is a DIY platform for adding Augmented Reality (via IR) to print and other forms of communication.

Magic Leap is the current favorite for VCs, gaining huge investment dollars over the past year. It's released a number of fantastic demos, but no actual product to date, nor did it introduce any product at the 2017 CES. Magic Leap also announced a partnership deal with Disney and Lucasfilm to help shape immersive entertainment.

Modiface is aimed towards the cosmetics industry. It powers AR applications that bring skin-care/makeup products to life by simulating how they will look on a consumer's own video or photo.

Stampatech was created to “bring print to life” and transition to the digital world from print. Stampatech uses an invisible “code” that recognizes photos, logos et al, on any form of printed material to trigger a world of interactive content. Its current focus is in labeling and packaging.

Wikitude is a DIY, all-in-one SDK that allows the creation of branded AR applications. Its tech is image-recognition-based and was one of the earliest to adopt location-based and tracking solutions.

Zappar is a platform that helps create “entertainment experiences” via their “Zaps.” You can utilize its DIY programs or work with its teams to produce tailor-made Augmented Reality experiences.

How Secure is AR?

When an AR solution is launched, a good marketing mind will be excited to harvest and then harness the power of customer analytics – the data points that are presented when an individual uses a smart phone to engage with the AR solution.

These data points can be quite innocuous (your name) or much more invasive (your location revealed by the GPS locator on your phone). We would do well to remember that different cultures have different perspectives and expectations when it comes to personal privacy. So think about these items as you create your program.

Could your AR app be hacked? In a nutshell – it's code, and ALL code can be hacked. But we think almost certainly that a print-based coded app is safer than one using image recognition, which is tied to images stored in the cloud. A few years back, there was a flap over QR codes from a major food producer that were hijacked to lead not to a customer offer, but to a porn site!

Privacy issues between the US and EU resulted in the negation of Safe Harbor for US companies, resulting in a new construction called the Privacy Shield, which is also being hotly debated. The best advice is to decide how much information is truly needed and institute best practices to guard that data. Treat others' data the way you would want your own data treated.

In short – it's important to be careful out there!

What's My Budget?

Last, but certainly not least, how much is an AR program going to cost? As usual, it all depends upon what you do. A small DIY implementation will be less expensive than a large-scale launch across many product lines that involves an equally large staff.

Here are few benefits to consider. An #InterActivePrint program can:

- Generate great interest and involvement with key audiences
- Provide feedback on key elements, products, issues, etc.
- Supply additional data and stats that can help tailor future programs and products

Once you implement your program, you can:

- Update content constantly in real time, with less need to reprint materials.
 - Enhance your print materials to expand your content (via fewer printed pages needed) and extend your shelf life (more time between and fewer reprints).
 - Use extra incentives to add cost savings in your overall budget.
- For instance, the USPS promotes special postal rates for pieces using Emerging and Advanced Tech, which includes AR and embedded videos. You can sign up for the 2017 programs on the USPS website.

Maximize your content without increasing your print budget!!



The Power of AR and #InterActivePrint

Augmented Reality is a powerful tool that the print community needs to embrace.

It's not just a gimmick. It's about pragmatic solutions. It creates engagement, education, entertainment and enjoyment!

AR will be everywhere and impact everything, and #InterActivePrint will help your clients better connect with their audiences in the future.

The possibilities are infinite – Print Infinity!

About CINDY WALAS, Principal, Walas Younger Ltd

Guitarist (retired), motorcyclist, and avid reader of mystery novels, Cindy spent almost 30 years with agencies as print production director before moving on to form Walas Younger Ltd. She joins Kevin Keane as a #printprotagonist to promote #interactive print as the perfect bridge between print and the digital world. Walas Younger assists clients in developing high-quality communications materials – everything from ink on paper to integrated media solutions. Visit us at www.WalasYoungerLtd.com

About KEVIN KEANE, Attorney and #printprotagonist

Kevin Keane has run for profit and non-profit organizations in the global graphic arts for the past 30 years. A prolific writer, blogger, speaker, commentator, he urges the early adoption of #interactiveprint #mcommerce #AR as means to drive a powerful marriage between print + digital. He is also an attorney who counsels technology start-ups on legal matters as well as on his real passion: marketing applications. He is also an expert in the fields of information security and interactive print and retail packaging.



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