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Industry Quality Guidelines

The graphic arts industry has more than one set of quality guidelines for various types of products and processes. Guidelines are specific about topics including screen ruling, ink density, dot gain and so forth.

In North America, there are some common guidelines and organizations used by printers:

SNAP

The full name of SNAP is Specifications for Non-Heatset Advertising Printing. This report includes pigmentation standards for process inks, recommended ink film densities, screen rulings, stock brightness, opacity and hue standards, type reverses and proofing standards for non-heatset applications such as newsprint and insert printing.

SWOP

SWOP's (Specifications for Web Offset Publications) goal is to improve the quality of printing and the communication between print buyer and printer through specifications and tolerances. SWOP provides specifications for advertising and editorial input to publication printers. When specifications are followed, all input received by printers can be reproduced as intended and desired by the advertiser/publisher with minimal difficulty. Quality should be measurable and verifiable at each step in the process of reproduction, which allows everyone in the imaging chain to monitor and improve performance by statistical methods.

CGATS

CGATS was formed in 1987 following a year-long assessment of the need for an umbrella standards committee by the Image Technology Standards Board (ITSB) of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and received ANSI accreditation in 1989. The goal of CGATS is to have the entire scope of printing, publishing and converting technologies represented in one national standardization and coordination effort, while respecting the established activities of existing accredited standards committees and industry standards developers.

GRACOL

The full name of GRACOL is long - General Requirements for Applications in Commercial Offset Lithography. The purpose for GRACOL has always been to establish better communication within the Graphic Arts. With the support of the industry in the surge for common practices and standardization, GRACOL's mission to provide the foundations for excellence can only be fulfilled before a wider audience.