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Branding Digital Philatelic References or Studies

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Part X

This article brings to a close a series on developing and producing a digital philatelic study. Additional information on other facets of digital philately may also be found on the DPS Workshop web site (DPSWORKSHOP.COM). Part I appeared in the second quarter 2007 issue, Part II in the fourth quarter 2007, Part III in the first quarter 2008, Part IV in the second quarter 2008, Part V in the third quarter 2008, Part VI in the fourth quarter 2008, Part VII in the first quarter 2009, Part VIII in the second quarter 2009, and Part IX in the third quarter 2009.

Ensuring your Digital Philatelic Reference or Study (DPS) is properly produced is a major concern. Your work makes a lasting impression on viewers that is often judged by its cover. Fairly or unfairly, this is a trait of human nature. We'll want to present our work in the best possible light.

If your study is in competition, the jury considers more than only the cover, but making a good first impression is always a great idea. The devil is in the details, so incorporate as many points as may be appropriate for your work, perspective or budget.

Promoting Instant Recognition

An advantage to using CD/DVDs for your study is the opportunity to present a polished product.

The face of a CD/DVD may include prominently displayed artwork or text identifying the study by name. Hand lettered titles and descriptions, etc. made with permanent ink markers were common in the past, however, hand-applied text and images imply the study is less than professional and that's what we wish to avoid.

A study on Windsor Castle for example will profit from displaying an image of the castle. Such images may be either from your own photographs or from artwork and images you have permission to use. Keep copyright restrictions in mind at all times.

Additional information appearing on the face of the disc might include the publishing date and/or the version number of the study, a copyright statement and the publisher's name. Including this information is good practice and will also help if versions are tracked.

If you include authors or contributors in your effort, each member of the team could also be recognized on the label (unless they expressly do not wish to be). The format for this information is up to the team to determine, but it presents an opportunity to get the names of the authors in front of the viewers.

The Label

The best looking CD/DVD labeling quality is often obtained by printing artwork and text directly onto the front side of discs that have a surface capable of accepting ink. Typically this is done using an inkjet printer capable of loading a CD/DVD tray.

A second option is a self-adhesive label. Self-adhesive labels for CD/DVDs are available

Continued on Page 16

Branding — Continued from Cover

in standard sized sheets and can be printed on your laser or inkjet printer and then applied using an applicator tool available with the labels or bought separately.

If using a paper adhesive label, ensure it is printed cleanly and pressed firmly onto the CD/DVD as a loose label can jam a CD/DVD drive mechanism causing infinite pain for the viewer.

Don't think you have enough talent to make CD/DVD labels from scratch? The answer is free software and templates from Avery (avery.com/avery/en_us/Templates-&-Software) or Memorex (ememorex.com/product_list.asp?skw=MEMLABEL&MENU=accessories&HDR=accessories-labeling). Both are available with an applicator tool when purchasing the labels.

If you label your CD/DVD, the graphics or text will be visible if the case is transparent; one more reason to use a label.

Labels on Other Media

Attempting to label the plastic cases of flash drives can be somewhat more problematic. The external face cannot be modified cheaply to include the name of the study, etc. One might apply a label to the case, but the shape of the device and type of adhesive should be taken into consideration. Some labels peel quite easily from unevenly shaped plastic surfaces and some plastics refuse to allow labels to stick to them at all.

An option I've had some luck with is using thin, rectangular, transparent address labels, again from Avery. The color of the underlying plastic case will show through, so ensuring the text is readable when the label is applied is advisable. Given the choice, pick light colored plastic cases and use transparent labels with black text.

Labels for SD cards can also be challenging as the area is small and there are no ready-made labels for these cards. A standard address label can be printed on a standard inkjet printer and trimmed to fit. This is a slow process however and each label will be slightly different when hand cut.

Labels and Color

You may also choose solid colors rather than photographic images for your CD/DVD labels and paper inserts. Using solid colors can produce an 'eye-popping' product. The term *eye-popping* having two connotations, one good and the other not so good if color is used inappropriately.

Don't use label colors that make the CD/DVD jump off the desk without help or scare your spouse or pets. Brighter is not better, keep the colors within reason and the reader will be more favorably impressed.

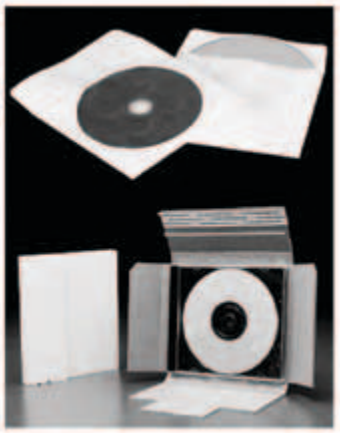
Having trouble determining which colors to use? Begin with a basic color you think represents the study's subject. This is something to really give some thought to as it will influence the reader's initial impression of what's in the box. That's a very important impression — some people never get over it regardless of the quality of the content.

Once you have chosen a basic color, you will need to find complimentary colors. Free online software color tools like Color Scheme Designer (http://colorschemedesigner.com) can produce a palette of complimentary colors. PowerPoint also has a limited color scheme function readily available within the software.

These additional colors may be used for lines, other graphic embellishments or text to enhance the CD/DVD packaging. You may use as many shades as you wish, but keeping the number of complimentary colors to perhaps two or three works well for me.

If using a colored background and colored text, ensure the contrast between the background and the text is readily discernible. Do not make it difficult to read by using shades that are too closely matched. We want to be able to read the text clearly and easily even if the viewer is color blind for instance.

Protective Sleeves



Protective sleeves for your new CD/DVD study are the minimum protection required. Sleeves are simple envelopes to slip the CD/DVD into and are generally made from either paper or card.

Sleeves afford your CD/DVD protection from damage should it be placed on a rough surface for instance. It's important that both surfaces of the CD/DVD remain damage free as the drive's laser passes through the CD/DVD's transparent side to its reflective side to read the data on the disc. Damage to either side compromises the data on the disc.

Jewel Cases

The ultimate protection for your study is a hard case. Protective plastic cases for CD/DVDs, are commonly referred to as *jewel cases* and are another avenue to explore. These cases come in both thick and thin versions and can accommodate one, two or even three CD/DVDs depending on whether the cases are slim, thick or thick with a hinged center leaf.

Thin cases are nice as many of them can be stored in a limited space. Thick cases afford better protection during mailing and offer more area for *branding*. If you're at all serious about this, thick cases are the way to go to accommodate the branding factor.

If you're using SD memory cards, they typically come in a small plastic protector case with a snap-lock feature to keep the case closed. Internally, the case has a formed pocket that retains the card and prevents it from rattling around. The advantage to these is they come with the card, have a relatively large, flat surface and usually will accept a self-adhesive label easily.

Storage Cases

Options for storing multiple copies of studies are also available. Cases accommodating several CD/DVDs or SD cards are advisable if more than a single study is produced or if multiple copies are made at one time. A *stock* of media with the study can be built so that when one is needed, it can simply be pulled from

stock rather than being produced individually. It's a time saver.

Heavy-duty plastic boxes are also available and are similar to cases many standard DVD movies come in. That's probably overkill, but they should be mentioned. They're larger than CD/DVD jewel cases and accommodate printed inserts, etc. The one neat thing about these is the inside cover has a holder for paper documentation which might be of special value with some studies.

Jewel Case Inserts

If your study CD/DVD has been labeled, it will show through the front of a transparent jewel case. These cases allow you to brand your work better by using a paper insert that is visible through the front of the case. Branding your work is important in that it becomes readily apparent what is in the case and if a graphic is included, it usually enhances the viewer's interest.

Although a paper insert with a transparent case is not a requirement, the advantage is that there's more area available for information. Much the same as disc labels, paper inserts may include the name of the study as well as artwork, etc. Including this additional feature and the information contained on it makes the work appear more sophisticated.

Both thick and thin cases allow inserts to be included. Thin cases only have front inserts whereas thick cases allow multiple inserts — front, side and rear. If you desire to add a rear cover or text along the side panels, the extra places for inserts in the thick cases allow you to do this.

With a thick case, information can be included on the rear panel. Why waste that area by not including an insert? Would you leave the last page in your exhibit frame or book blank?

I also like to print on the reverse side of the front cover insert. Instructions on how to use the CD/DVD can be included so that when the case is opened, the instructions for use are readily visible. It makes for a much friendlier user experience.

Paper inserts are readily available at office supply stores and they may be printed using your desktop laser or inkjet printer. Templates for inserts are available with various label-generating programs or in MS Word.

Paper and Plastic Mailers

If you plan to mail your CD/DVDs, a cardboard mailing box is a necessity. These can be purchased at any computer or office supply store that sells blank CD/DVDs. Most boxes have self-adhesive or locking tabs and come in various sizes that can accommodate one, two or even three CD/DVDs depending on the protective case size.

When initially folding the sides of the mailing box during the assembly process, insert the CD/DVD case into the box. (Before peeling off the self-stick adhesive paper cover.) That helps the box's self-adhesive tabs line up better when finishing the packing.

Mailer Logo Labels

There are often extra labels on the CD/DVD label sheet. Your logo and mailing information can be printed on these extra labels and added to the exterior of the shipping box. This makes your brand visible in one more place. I use one of these extra self-adhesive labels, with the CD image printed on it, to help seal the edges of the mailer box and keep it from opening during transit.

Conclusion

Building your DPS with style can only be a source of satisfaction. I sincerely hope the foregoing information, in this and earlier articles, is of some assistance when you author your digital philatelic study on your favorite philatelic area of interest.

David A. Kent and Kees Adema Receive Luff Awards

This year's winners of John N. Luff Awards presented by the American Philatelic Society are David A. Kent and Kees Adema. They were honored at the *StampShow 2009* awards banquet on August 8 in Pittsburgh, PA.

Kent has written more than 2,000 philatelic articles for the general philatelic press and specialist society journals. He has written a stamp column for the *Hartford Courant* for more than 25 years.

His journal editing dates back to the 1950s when he edited *The Confederate Stamp Album*, journal of the Confederate Stamp Alliance. In 1991 he became a staff writer for *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* and now is associate editor of *Mekeel's & Stamps Magazine*. For the past 15 years he has edited the *Military Postal History Society Bulletin*. For his extensive editing and writing in our hobby he was elected to the Writers Unit #30 Hall of Fame in 2007.

Adema has written more than two dozen articles on various aspects of Netherlands philately, including a recent article in the *London Philatelist* based on his presentation at the Royal Philatelic Society London for which he received the Lee Medal. He has written more than 15 articles for the *Collectors Club Philatelist*.

He has written research articles for the *Journal of the American Society for Netherlands Philately*. The Philatelic Foundation in New York produced a DVD, *Holland's Wars and Struggles 1568–1815*, showing original letters and documents from his collection.

In 2002 the Dutch Postal History Organization published his *The First Postage Dues: Holland's 3s Markings 1667–1811* that identified 31 different types of early markings, many previously unrecorded. His *Adema Identification Method* cataloguing system has been adopted by other handbooks, periodicals, and auction houses. He also developed a system to differentiate between forgeries and authentic postal markings from the 17th to the early 19th centuries.