

## PRESS RELEASE

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### EUROPEAN PRINTING INDUSTRY DEVELOPS INDUSTRY STANDARD FOR GOOGLE'S UNIVERSAL COMMERCE PROTOCOL (UCP)

**The Initiative Online Print e.V. (IOP), the German Printing and Media Industries Federation (BVDM), and the European printing federation Intergraf are joining forces to develop a dedicated industry standard – a so-called “vertical” – for Google's Universal Commerce Protocol (UCP). Their objective is to ensure that the specific requirements of the printing industry are taken into account from the outset in the emerging era of agentic commerce.**

The timing is particularly favourable: UCP is still under development, operates as an open-source standard welcoming industry contributions, and has not yet been introduced in Europe.

#### **What is the Universal Commerce Protocol?**

On 11 January 2026, Google introduced the Universal Commerce Protocol (UCP) at the National Retail Federation Conference (NRF) in New York. UCP is an open standard enabling AI agents to purchase products on behalf of consumers directly within Google AI Mode and the Gemini app, without requiring users to visit a retailer's website.

The protocol has been co-developed with major industry players including Shopify, Etsy, Wayfair, Target and Walmart. More than 20 global companies, among them Visa, Mastercard, Stripe and Adyen, already support the protocol.

#### **The Challenge: Print Products Do Not Fit the Current UCP Model**

UCP was designed for traditional retail products characterised by fixed SKUs, fixed pricing and limited product variations. The printing industry operates fundamentally differently.

Print products are highly customised, require the transfer of production-ready print files, involve preflight checks and approval workflows, and are manufactured through dynamically planned production runs. None of these processes are currently reflected in the UCP specification.

Key gaps include:

- Product configuration instead of static catalogues
- Upload and preflight verification of print files
- Softproof approval workflows as mandatory process steps
- Exclusion of the right of withdrawal for personalised products under EU Directive 2011/83/EU

- Dynamic production planning and real-time delivery calculations

*“Whoever defines the standard defines the rules of the game. The printing industry can either actively shape the future of agentic commerce for print – or allow others to shape it instead,” said Bernd Zipper, Chairman of Initiative Online Print.*

### **A Market of Significant Scale**

The initiative addresses a substantial market opportunity. In the DACH region alone, Online Generated Print Revenue (OGPR) is estimated at €8.1 billion, with projected growth of 9.2% in 2025. The overall European print services market is expected to reach €85 billion in 2026.

Initial UCP implementations in retail are already demonstrating measurable results, with conversion rates from AI agent-driven traffic averaging 28% higher than those generated through traditional search traffic.

### **The Objective: A Dedicated UCP Vertical “dev.ucp.print”**

IOP, BVDM and Intergraf plan to develop a dedicated service namespace, provisionally titled “dev.ucp.print”, to integrate the specific requirements of the printing industry into the UCP architecture.

Planned core functionalities include:

- Dynamic product configuration with real-time pricing
- Upload and automated preflight verification of print files
- Softproof and approval workflows
- Dynamic delivery calculations based on machine availability and finishing processes
- Industry-specific checkout logic aligned with EU consumer protection legislation

Additional extensions are also planned for:

- Sustainability data (CO<sub>2</sub> footprint, FSC/PEFC certification)
- Compliance requirements (including EUDR compliance via the IOP’s EUDR-X standard)
- Mass customisation and Variable Data Printing
- B2B pricing and discount structures

## Roadmap

The initiative follows a clearly defined timeline:

- **Q2 2026:** Establishment of the working group under IOP leadership and requirements engineering
- **Q3 2026:** Drafting of the specification by IOP and BVDM, alongside a European consultation coordinated by Intergraf
- **Q4 2026:** Submission to Google as a GitHub pull request and/or Request for Comments (RFC)
- **Q1 2027:** Launch of initial pilot implementations with selected IOP members
- **H1 2027:** Wider industry rollout

## Why Now?

The window of opportunity for industry involvement is open now.

UCP is an open-source project explicitly inviting contributions from industry stakeholders. To date, no industry outside traditional retail has proposed a dedicated UCP vertical. As UCP has not yet been launched in Europe, the planned expansion offers the printing industry a unique opportunity to be included from the beginning.

Moreover, a well-defined print vertical could also serve as a reference model for future protocols, including OpenAI's ACP and other emerging standards.

## Three Organisations – One Joint Initiative

Together, IOP, BVDM and Intergraf represent the full value chain of the European printing industry.

### Initiative Online Print (IOP)

Founded in Düsseldorf in 2007, Initiative Online Print e.V. (IOP) is the leading association of the European online print industry. Its 62 member companies – ranging from online print providers and software developers to machinery manufacturers – represent a market exceeding €12 billion. The organisation is chaired by Bernd Zipper (CEO, zipcon consulting).

### BVDM

The German Printing and Media Industries Federation (BVDM) is the umbrella organisation of the German printing industry. As an employers' association, economic policy body and technical trade association, it represents the interests of the printing industry vis-à-vis policymakers, public authorities, trade unions and suppliers. The federation is supported by eight regional associations. Internationally, it is represented through memberships in Intergraf and FESPA. The German printing industry currently comprises around 6,900 predominantly small and medium-sized



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enterprises employing more than 110,000 people. President: Wolfgang Poppen; Chief Executive Officer: Kirsten Hommelhoff.

### Intergraf

Intergraf is the European federation for print and digital communication, based in Brussels. It represents 22 national printing federations across 21 countries. The European printing industry comprises approximately 110,000 companies employing 550,000 people.

### **Press Contact**

Initiative Online Print e.V. (IOP)

Bernd Zipper, Chairman

Email: [info@initiative-online-print.de](mailto:info@initiative-online-print.de)

Web: [www.initiative-online-print.de](http://www.initiative-online-print.de)