

Lucidiom kiosks are currently distributed in Australia by www.photokiosk.com.au



Four becomes two

The first day of PMA 09 was marked by two significant corporate announcements, with Noritsu acquiring major US kiosk and software supplier Lucidiom and US photo retail supplier Pakor acquiring "certain assets" of Whitech USA.

"This acquisition is an important step forward in our vision to provide the retail industry a compelling single source photo solution," said Akihiko Kuwabara, president of Noritsu America Corporation. "We are also broadening the retailer's opportunities for new sources of revenue via the web."

It is not clear what implications this might have in the Australian marketplace. At present Lucidiom is handled by www.photokiosk.com.au. It has around 150 "Luci" kiosk installations around Australia, mainly among more independent-minded retailers.

At time of going to press Whitech in Australia was not able to respond to PIN's question on any Australian implications for the Pakor/Whitech USA deal. (Relevant executives were attending PMA in Las Vegas.) Fujifilm Holdings Australasia Pty Ltd became a 35 percent shareholder of Australian company Whitech Pty Ltd in July last year.

At the time the press release stated that "Whitech Pty Ltd owns and develops all the software products sold in Australia and internationally." So it's not clear exactly what Pakor is buying.

Gates buys up Kodak stock

Bill Gates has increased his stake in Eastman Kodak to 5.2 percent of the company, making him the fourth largest investor.

Gates other involvement in the photo industry is his ownership of international stock photography agency, Corbis. There has been some speculation on photo industry forums that the recent acquisition indicates Gates is "up to something" in the photo industry. However, as one of the

richest men in the world, Gates has a wide range of financial interests, including a stake in the Canadian National Railways, in the manufacturer of Croc sandals – and in a gay and lesbian publishing house.

Eastman Kodak shares are currently at the bargain-basement price of under \$4. Gates' 5.2 percent stake was acquired late last year.

Panasonic to buy Sanyo

Panasonic has announced its intention to purchase Sanyo, but the deal has been delayed by regulatory snags in several countries.

It plans to announce a new buyout schedule sometime around late April 2009.

"Due to delayed investigations in the area of batteries, where Panasonic and Sanyo have two of the largest global market shares, in the US and some other countries, Panasonic will postpone its plans to make Sanyo a subsidiary until sometime around the summer of 2009," stated a report in *The Nikkei* in late February. The takeover requires antitrust clearance in 11 countries, including Japan and China, Panasonic said on Feb 27.


Panasonic said it would pay as much as 806.7 billion yen (around \$13 billion) to buy Osaka-based Sanyo in what will be Japan's biggest consumer-electronics acquisition. 

Photo industry rallies for bushfire victims

Independent Melbourne-based photo retailer, Rob Gateley (Beau Photos, Beaumaris) is driving a major initiative to assist Victorian bushfire victims who have lost their homes and possessions.

During a meeting of the Just Picture It! buying group in February the discussion turned to how photo retailers could assist people who have lost their family photo collections.

The next day, Gateley began calling suppliers. Stuart Holmes from Independent Photo Supplies (IPS) got the ball rolling with a generous commitment to provide DNP photo paper for around 500,000 prints. Playcorp pitched in with 2000 photo albums, while Melbourne-based framemaker Samuel Winston put its hand up for a donation of the same number of 8x10-inch frames.

Then came Furwood Imports, which offered two thousand of its cardboard photo frames, and Verbatim, which after reading of the initiative in www.photoimagingnews.com.au, offered the same number of its recordable CDs.

Yaffa Publishing – publishers of this magazine and a range of leading photographic magazines including *Australian Photography*, has agreed to handle printing associated with the project, namely the 20,000 vouchers which will be supplied for free-of-charge photo printing.

Leader Newspapers – which publishes over 40 suburban and regional newspaper titles through Melbourne and the surrounding districts – has volunteered its team of photographers to take informal family portraits (and no doubt help the initiative along with a bit of localised publicity).

Other local photographers have also donated their services.

"Rob is always the first out of the gate,"

said Just Picture It! managing director, Rob Heim. "When he gets an idea in his head he usually achieves his aim."

"He has set a great example for the rest of the industry and I hope everyone will get behind him and support it."

To complete the package Gateley is seeking a contribution of digital cameras from one or more of the camera distributors. Memory card supplier Amicore has agreed to supply flash memory, provided cameras can be sourced.

The Red Cross has been asked to assist with the logistics needed to make sure the gift packs go to the right families.

"The concept is to package the photo album with the frame and provide a series of vouchers for free prints to fill the album, and enlargements for the frame."

"Each album will take 200 photos – we estimate there will be approximately 50 percent digital files and 50 percent coming from slides and prints from extended families."

He estimated the total project – 200 photos for each of the 2000 albums (400,000 prints) and 2000 8x10-inch enlargements, would require something like 3500 hours of labour.

Ted's Cameras also came on board after reading about the initiative, offering to honour the vouchers for printing via its Victorian stores. This generous gesture will take the pressure off the Gateleys and fellow retailing volunteers Jim Kent Hughes (Laser Image, Geelong) and Tony Borg (Moonee Ponds, Pt Cook), both members of the Just Picture It! group, who had already expressed a willingness to participate.

Camera distributors and Melbourne-based retailers who want to assist can call Rob direct on 03 9589 2466 or click@beauphotos.com.au 