

# AVA Dialogue

The "World-wide" issue – AVA's Australasian partners, and all you need for "wising up for the web"

Issue 3, Year 2000

## CAD designed Wallcoverings and Weaves from around the world



It seems a long time now since the bright lights and fireworks of the millennium celebrations, the global partying and hour by hour transition from 20th to 21st Century. Midnight struck in New Zealand a fair while before a lot of the rest of us (in fact it was still lunchtime in the UK!) and one of AVA's customers can rightly claim to have been the "first into the future."

The first wallpaper factory in the world to see the light of the new millennium, Pacific Wallcoverings of New Zealand, was already looking to the future in 1998 when it decided AVA provided the best option for its Design Department to meet the demands of a busy factory and a discerning public.

Pacific, formed from three New Zealand companies in 1996, services markets in New Zealand, Australia, China, Japan and the United States. The company produces 10-12 lines a year that include its own brands – Vision and Ashley – as well as other retail house brands and contract printing for American clients.



Paul Hush, Pete Sullivan and Dave Abbotts at Pacific

As a result of the merger, the work load increased throughout the factory, and ways of streamlining the processes were examined. For the Design studio, introducing an effective CAD system was essential. After examining various systems on the market AVA was selected not only for its excellent product, that exactly met the requirements of the studio, but also for its support service which has proved invaluable.

**"AVA's support service has proved invaluable"**

Dave Abbotts and Pete Sullivan run the Design Department as a team along with colourist, Paul Hush; an approach that echoes the company's overall management style. In addition to increasing efficiency in the processing of designs and colourways through the studio, the system also meets the longer term goals of the company with regard to closer integration between the Design Department and the Production Department's Colour Kitchen.

AVA has been able to provide a solution to the demands of quicker throughput

as well as providing a great tool for designing wallcoverings, subtly adjusting colours and varying



Part of Pacific's "Odyssey" collection

textures to provide what the market demands. But it's not just current demands the AVA system has addressed. The capacity for Design and Production Departments to work more closely together in the future will greatly assist Pacific in being a company responsive to its clients' needs well into the next century.

**September 2000 saw the Olympic Games in Australia, and one company involved with an important part of the spectators enjoyment of it was INSTYLE Contract Fabrics and Leathers.**

Developed at a local Australian Mill, Instyle has supplied a unique seating fabric for use at the Homebush Olympic Stadium in Sydney.

A textile designer and wholesaler for contract fabrics, Instyle Contract Fabrics and Leathers employs two fulltime designers with a fully equipped AVA CAD/CAM studio for Dobby and Jacquard Design. *(continued over)*

# AVA Around the World

...continued from Page One



Instyle's design studio also has a 24 shaft floor loom which interfaces with the AVA Dobby Design software. This loom is used for development of design ideas for new doobby textile collections and for generating samples for custom projects for clients that require a fast turnaround from concept through to fabric stage. If a client requires a special design or colourway, they are able to weave samples very quickly rather than wait for a supplier to take time out of production schedules to make a sample.

With over 40 staff and established offices in all capital cities of Australia, and New Zealand, Instyle feel it is important to maintain as much of a hands-on approach to the design process as possible. As well as the ability to combine more traditional creative



Some great marketing from Instyle!

techniques such as painting, they find the AVA software itself provides exciting creative opportunities to develop design concepts in many new and interesting ways, with filters and layers which all work in realtime repeat.

**"The AVA software provides exciting creative opportunities"**

Marketing Manager, **Frances Brown** says: "Whether for a collection design or a custom design, we are able to generate a number of design options quickly for presentation and selection before proceeding to a sample stage, whereby the selected design can be emailed directly to a mill for production."

With new features and regular upgrades in the software, Instyle see a long term future working together with AVA, utilising the latest developments, technological advances and R & D.

*"Despite our distance from the UK, we have found the AVA Support team to be*

*excellent in providing fast and*



*helpful support by email and 'phone,"* says Frances. *"With rapid changes in available technology we rely very much on their technical support, not only to maximise our efficiency in the latest version of the AVA software, but also to advise us on the best solutions for our future CAD requirements."*

Instyle's superbly put together website – [www.instylefabrics.com.au](http://www.instylefabrics.com.au) – is well worth a look and gives an exciting and colourful insight into this successful, innovative business driven by dedicated and achievement orientated people. 

## Contact

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**New Zealand**

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[www.pacwall.co.nz](http://www.pacwall.co.nz)

**Instyle Contract Fabrics & Leathers**

Alexandria, NSW

**Australia**

Telephone: +61 29 557 8755

[www.instylefabrics.com.au](http://www.instylefabrics.com.au)

## IHDG Transprints on the web

**T**ransprints' web site went live in March 2000 and has already produced many enquiries from potential customers and design students interested in heat transfer paper and their beautiful textile designs.

**Dialogue** caught up with Transprints' Marketing Manager, **Pamela Cairns** who told us how it all works for them:

// The site provides background detail about Transprints and heat transfer printing. Most importantly, it includes information about **international trends** in fashion and furnishings, about our **new design collections** and about the exhibitions where we will be showing. In the information age, change happens

quicker and quicker, so it is vital we update the site regularly to ensure that it is kept fresh and attractive to encourage repeat visits and that out-of-date information is deleted.




Transprints use AVA Materialize

When we first launched the site, we used flat examples of our designs. We have subsequently had photographs taken of fashion models and furnishings

room sets. Using the **AVA 'Materialize'** software, we drop our designs into the photograph to make virtual reality pictures. This marvellous piece of technology means **our customers can visualise how our designs will work in real life** and 'sells' them more quickly. Evidence of the success of our virtual realities is the huge number of requests we get from customers and agents for copies.

Plans are in place to exploit the speed and international power of the Internet to develop the site to become a more useful tool for existing customers and agents throughout the world. //

**Have a look at Transprints website at:** [www.transprints.co.uk](http://www.transprints.co.uk) 

# Moving Big Files

## (or "How I learnt to FTP")

by **FabriCAD's Alison Hardy**

**T**he internet is a wonderful tool for communication. *Have a thought?* Jot an email and send it off to anywhere in the world. *Want to show someone your latest print design?* Send them the file as an email attachment. But wait! You're getting a message that the email system either won't accept the file or you get a message from the person on the receiving end who is a little put out that you've jammed up their email system.

Most internet service providers (ISPs) limit the size of file attachments to a couple of MB in size. That's no problem if you're sending documents, but it is a problem when you are sending design files that can be several MB in size. I found this out the hard way working on a project for the Computer Integrated Textile Design Association (CITDA).

The goal was to produce a seminar to discuss the reality of digital textile printing. It is definitely a reality with several dozen suppliers offering solutions in printing direct to cloth with a wide format printer (including **AVA**). As designers, the CITDA members were a bit confused, as representatives from hardware, software, and ink suppliers would call on them showing a bewildering array of fabrics and papers, with few of them looking anything like textile designs.

So my job was to collect **TEXTILE** images and send them to any and all suppliers who claim to have a "solution" to see if we could get a range of samples and compare apples to apples. From professional designers I received a 1.2MB swimwear image, a 4MB bedding image



and a 45MB upholstery image. (see *pictures on this page*).

Dozens of Zip disks containing the files were sent out to over 30 vendors. But, as luck would have it, some disks were lost and some were delayed in customs. New suppliers were added to the list at the last moment. And thus the "can you just email me the files?" question arose.

Given the size of the files (and yes, I did try to compress them, but they still did not go below the 1MB limit) it was time to try **FTP**. Looking at the big picture – when you use this technique you are uploading files to a site on the internet and the receiver then goes to this site to download the file. It doesn't involve email at all.



**Apple Macintosh** users can use a great program called *Fetch*, which has an adorable dog that runs to show you that your file is moving. The other critical piece you need is a web address where your files can live. If your company has a web site, there should be enough extra space for you to put a folder for your files.

The other option is a personal web site space. Most ISPs offer 1-5MB of free web site storage space for a new account. Even sites like *Yahoo!* offer free accounts where you can create your own web site. To use an FTP program you will need a host name, a user ID, a password and a directory location. For my project I used the FabriCAD web site – [www.fabricad.com](http://www.fabricad.com) – and created a new folder called "CITDA".

Once done, moving files is as simple as clicking on a button that says "Put File" in *Fetch*. Click on the document you want to move from your hard drive to the web folder and *voila!* There is one important step that is critical that needs to happen as you select "Put file" and

that is to select the format of the file. All image files should be sent as *raw data*. If you're moving text files then they can go as *text* or *ASCII*.



If that all works correctly, then you have a file that now lives on the web. Now it's time to tell the person who needs the file where to find it. The address will not look like a typical web site address. Here's what mine looked like: <ftp://ftp.fabricad.com/citda>

I copied and pasted the address into an email and off it went to a company halfway round the world. The receivers have it easy – they just click on the link and choose to save the file to disk and the job is done!

Using FTP is quick and easy, once you get all of the setup done. There is lots of help available from places like [www.cnet.com](http://www.cnet.com), [www.zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com), not to mention ISP's own web sites. FTP is a very familiar tool for anyone developing web sites, as it's the way files are uploaded to a server to create the site.

### "CITDA Seminar was a great success"

The CITDA seminar was a great success with over 200 samples of digital textile printing submitted, with the range from fantastic to "what were they thinking?" Not only was it a great way to review the current capabilities of the technology, but it has been a great way for designers to provide real feedback to suppliers on what they consider acceptable image output. The presentation will be repeated at the IMI Digital Textile Printing Conference to be held November 13-15 in Atlanta, GA.

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# Beginners guide to the Internet

## Part One – “Getting Started”

One thing that all the AVA partners in this issue of *Dialogue* have in common is that they are all making use of the Internet. Be it selling, promotion, service or support, their website and networking technologies now form a vital part of their communication setup. Whilst use of the Internet to some people is clearly second nature, to others it is still anathema. Now, with acceptance of the technology by both business and home users, it's becoming increasingly important to be “web savvy” – not just using, but planning, understanding and building around internet technologies. Apple Mac computers come “internet ready” so getting online has never been easier, but if you're worried you're getting left behind, here's AVA's step-by-step guide.

### First things first: What is the Internet?

The **Internet** is a world wide network of computers, that originated in the USA way back in 1969 in order to provide a secure communications network for government defence departments.

The world wide web, or the **web**, as it is also known, forms a large part of the Internet and is a series of documents connected to each other by hypertext links – essentially ‘sign posts’ to other related documents. Navigation around the web is done by clicking these links and jumping to other documents.

The documents will usually form a part of a website – a collection of pages accessed from each other and (hopefully) provided in a logical, easily navigable form. The pages can contain text, pictures, moving pictures, sound, forms (for the visitor to complete when, say, requesting information) and files for downloading. Sites can be from one simple page, right up to many hundreds of pages, so good navigation and search facilities are vital.

### Finding your way around: Search Engines

There are sites on the web that are primarily designed as search tools – such as *altavista*, *Yahoo* and *Excite* (to name but a few). These sites are known as **search engines** and they provide a facility to enter the subject that you are looking for, they then scan the whole web and return results, usually in order of relevance to your question. Therefore, if you type in “wallpaper”, you may return many thousands of results, ranging from wall coverings retailers, manufacturers, designers, computer wallpaper (the



AVA's recently enlarged website – see for yourself at [www.avacadcam.com](http://www.avacadcam.com)

name for images that you put on your desktop as an attractive background on your monitor) and so on. However if you type in a more specific search, such as “wallpaper design in New York”, the chances are you will have more success, with generally less results, but more specific to your request.

### What's next? Getting Connected

So what's next then? Well, if you've got a computer and a 'phone line, you can get connected. Most new Apple Macs come with a modem – a device that enables you to connect your computer to a 'phone line. If you haven't got one, they're very inexpensive and simple to


fit. Recent Mac Operating Systems come ready loaded with a web browser – usually Microsoft Internet Explorer but other alternatives are available from Netscape and AOL. The only other thing you'll need is an ISP or Internet Service Provider. These companies supply a (now generally free) service that connects you to the web, so that all you pay for is the 'phone call.

Once you're comfortable navigating around the web, you may start to want to make a bit more use of the technology. Your ISP will in most cases offer you an email service. Email, or electronic mail, is an easy to use means of communicating written and pictorial material between computers. You will be assigned an email address that can look something like: `john@mycompany.com` and you can then simply type out emails, attach pictures and send them to friends and business associates. The software to do this will also usually come with your web browser software, or can be bought, or in some cases used free. Ones to look out for are Microsoft Outlook Express, Eudora and Netscape Communicator.

### See the benefits? In the next issue – “How AVA can really make the web work for you”

Next time around, we'll look at how easily you can establish a presence on the web with your own website, the people to talk to, and some fantastic technology that AVA's developing to turn your website into a powerful sales and marketing tool.

In the meantime – *good surfing!*

In addition to [www.avacadcam.com](http://www.avacadcam.com) itself, one site that's well worth a look at is AVA customer, and part of IHDG – **Transprints UK**. They've been using **AVA Materialize** to great effect, and a good example can be seen on Page 3. 

# AVA *ADVANCE* Recruitment

**T**rained AVA CAD operators are becoming a powerful commodity and if you're struggling to recruit, AVA are now working to supply the resources to assist.

A highly trained skills base is as much of an asset as the CAD system itself, and enables your investment in hardware and software to work productively and consistently.

AVA are currently running another CST course (CAD Specialist Training) which, over its two month duration provides six graduate designers with the AVA and industry knowledge required to "hit the ground running". Being fully trained in AVA Quick Separations, Colour, Materialize, Weave and Archive software, these designers can provide an excellent resource for any of our customers.

We are also finding that more and more often, our customers are struggling to

recruit the people that they require. If you're a separation artist, designer or colourist looking for a career with one of AVA's customers, we can help:

- **Are you using a CAD system at the moment?** Even if it's not an AVA system, we can offer a 'fast-track' training course to transfer existing skills and add in new ones, in readiness for employment with an AVA equipped studio.
- **Are you traditionally trained, with no CAD experience, but see the advantages in a new set of skills?** Again, AVA frequently train up new customers with little or no computer knowledge and have them progressing rapidly in a matter of weeks.
- **If you're keen to move into a new field of work, AVA can provide flexible training schemes**, with some evening capacity available (at the UK

**"We have customers actively looking for AVA trained personnel"**

says AVA's Bernadette Hughes.

office in Macclesfield) that can be arranged with individuals, companies or a combination of both.


As a result of our ongoing growth, AVA are always keen to talk to people with a combination of industry experience and team spirit. We have a flexible structure that is designed to promote an individual's best skills and examples of roles that can arise for the right people are service, sales and programming.

Please contact Bernadette Hughes, on +44 (0) 1625 506 807 or email her at [hughes@avacadcam.com](mailto:hughes@avacadcam.com) to confidentially discuss the wide variety of options available. ➡

## Tips

**T**his issues' user tip comes from AVA CAD Support Specialist **Robert Soames** and is great for when you're using AVA Materialize, and want to create a 'highlight' layer:

1. Make an 8 bit white layer.
2. Activate this layer and make only the original image visible.
3. Hold down the option key, go to the "Separate" menu and choose 'Continuous Tone Spot'
4. Make the layer black to allow you to see what is on it and gamma it to the desired level, then make it white again.
5. Make this layer's transparency 50%, and see how it looks over a 'transferred' design.

**Note:** It is a good idea to name this layer so it does not get confused with other layers. A similar method to this can also be used for making shadows. 

**F**or the last few releases, we have been providing our customers with digital "pdf" versions of the Release Notes and Manuals, as well as traditional "paper" versions.

The advantages of the digital versions are that they allow us to provide fully updated manuals with each release, with integrated links and indexing – enabling far easier navigation and use from the CAD Operator's point of view.

Whilst developing the new digital versions, we now have available the hard copy manuals that are current up to version 2.16, and future release notes will also be provided in a format that makes them easier to incorporate in the bound manuals.



If you would like a revised hard copy of the manual, please call

## AVA Software Manuals


Customer Services. The first hard copy per customer is free, and any subsequent copies cost GBP35 + carriage.

### "21st Century Manuals!"

We would be interested in your thoughts on the new digital versions of the manuals. Let us know if you prefer them to the paper ones.

Do you use Adobe Acrobat Reader in other areas of your work? Are you more comfortable with a paper version? Do you call Tech Support rather than use a manual at all? Do you incorporate your Release Notes into your existing manual?



We will be delighted to receive and act upon any feedback you have, and look forward to your thoughts. Contact us at [support@avacadcam.com](mailto:support@avacadcam.com) 

# One-minute Materialize!

The revamped **AVA Materialize** software provides a unique 3D visualisation experience for fashion, wallcoverings, textile, laminates and ceramic designers.

As before, AVA Materialize enables you to view your separated designs with up to 32 colourways in-situ, and provide web or print ready samples to your sales and marketing teams at the touch of a button. Recent and extensive customer driven development has resulted in a whole host of new features which have been included in the 2.16 release.

➤ **Unparalleled ease of use:** AVA Materialize seamlessly fits into the AVA software portfolio, using intuitive, icon driven commands to quickly and easily transfer designs into digital photographic scenes.

➤ **One minute transfer of designs:** Simply select the layers you want to show transposed into your scene, click "Transfer" and your design will be rendered in super quick time.

➤ **All Colourways for the particular transferred design are included with it**, resulting in there being no need to re-transfer to view other colourways. Viewing alternative colourways is achieved by simply 'tabbing' between them in the toolbox.



*Used by sales people, designers and colourists, and it's perfect for your website!*

➤ **Grids are invisible when opening a file:** An invaluable enhancement for sales people that enables a cleaner initial view of the scene. For the slickest available design transfer, you never actually need to see the grids at all.

➤ **'Pre-gridded' scenes** are included on the release CD. Simply transfer your designs and use them in any of your internal or external marketing material.

If you already own AVA Materialize, simply select the scene from your "Materialize Scenes" folder on your 2.16 Release CD and import your separated design.

➤ **Now it's so easy to use, every single design that you produce can be shown in a scene at the touch of a button!**

If you are interested in evaluating AVA Materialize and would like a demonstration, please contact the sales team by 'phone, fax or email.

Alternatively, you can visit the AVA Materialize page on our website for an on-line demonstration at:

[www.avacadcam.com/materialize](http://www.avacadcam.com/materialize)

## Local Mac-User Groups can put your old computers to good use

Located around the globe is a huge network of Apple Mac fans who inform, assist and lend support to the network of Apple users worldwide. As the Apple website says, "User Groups are more than just a link to technical assistance; with many offering a combination of resources such as

newsletters, meetings, technology training and community service opportunities."

In Macclesfield, UK, the local Mac User Group – "**Macus**" – have distributed Macs from our customers that have become outdated (in terms of the high-end performance required for running design software) to local schools and colleges.

old storeroom or worse still, chucking it in a skip, contact your local Mac User Group and see what they can do with it. Not only is it an altruistic thing to do, but it also helps create more Apple literate students and colleges. To find out more about Mac User Groups, or to locate your nearest one, go to: [www.apple.com/usergroups/locator](http://www.apple.com/usergroups/locator).



*The great new G4!*



*Got any computers that look like this?*  
**The time has come to upgrade. . . . but they can still be put to good use in the community.**

Instead of using your old computer kit as doorstops, letting it gather dust in an

It's a great way to help your community with your old computer hardware.

### AVA Dialogue

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