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# Printing Glossary

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Here you'll find our printing glossary. There are many different printing terms and acronyms to understand in the printing industry. Further, it's important to understand printing terminology to get the most out of your printer – whether it's at home, work or you're using a print service. Our useful glossary of printing terms is alphabetised for convenience, to help you find the term you need quickly.

## A

### A Sizes

The most common paper size used for general printing (UK), stationery and publications. (Examples of A paper sizes include A3, A4 and A5.)

### ADF

An ADF (Automatic Document Feeder) allows you to load a multi-page document into the top of the printer and have it automatically feed each page you need to scan, copy or fax.

### Adobe Illustrator

(Illustrator) is a vector-based drawing programme developed and marketed by Adobe Systems.

### Adobe Photoshop

Adobe Photoshop, or simply Photoshop, is a graphics-editing programme developed and published by Adobe Systems. It is the current and primary market leader for commercial bitmap and image manipulation.

### All-In-One Printer

Also known as a multifunction printer, whilst standard inkjet printers specialise in printing colour or black and white documents, all-in-one printers include additional functionality such as copying, scanning and faxing.

### ApogeeX

Is a complete, integrated digital workflow solution that helps streamline your prepress workflow. It uses the latest workflow technologies and standards - including PDF and Job Definition Format (JDF).

### **Apple AirPrint**

A wireless printing feature from Apple for compatible smartphones, tablets and Mac PCs.

### **Auto Duplex Printing**

Printers that support this feature allow you to print on both sides of the page, without having to turn the page over to the other side.

## **B**

### **B Sizes**

Less common paper sizes which are used mainly for bigger jobs. E.g. posters, wall charts etc.

### **Back Up**

To print on the reverse side of a printed sheet.

### **Bitmap**

A grid of pixels or printed dots generated by computer to represent type and images.

'Bitmapping' is a term often used to describe the effect where edges of a picture take on a blocky/jagged shape due to errors in image processing or poor resolution.

### **Blanket**

A rubber surfaced fabric (in offset litho printing) that is clamped around a cylinder on a litho press, to which the image is transferred from the plate, from which it is then transferred to the paper.

### **Bleed**

Printing where the colour continues off the edge of the paper.

### **Blind Emboss**

Process of raising letters or designs on card or tough paper onto which no printed image has been added.

### **Blocking**

To impress or stamp a design upon a cover. The design can be blocked in colour inks, gold leaf or metal foil. Most commonly used on case bound book covers.

### **Borderless Photo Printing**

Printing photos without a border around the edge of the print. The print extends to the edge of the paper.

### **Bulk**

Thickness of paper.

## **C**

### **C Sizes**

Paper sizes used for envelopes, designed to take A size paper.

### **Carton**

The box in which the product and its accessories are supplied.

### **Case Bound**

A hardback book made with stiff outer covers. Case bound books are usually covered with cloth, vinyl or leather.

### **CIS**

Contact Image Sensor - a type of scanning technology.

### **Cloud Printing**

Wireless printing technology that allows users to print using the internet, specifically the cloud, a shared data centre.

### **CMYK**

Letters, which stand for Cyan (C), Magenta (M), Yellow (Y) and Key (Black) (K). Full colour printed images are made up of these component colours.

### **Coating**

A special water based coating, which is applied to printed matter to protect literature from ink smudging or finger marking or to enhance appearance. The main types are sealer, gloss, matte and silk. Coatings are commonly used on matte or silk coated paper as these types are more prone to smudging than gloss coated paper. The main difference between a varnish and a coating is that coatings are faster drying and therefore jobs can be turned around quicker. They tend to be more scuff resistant than varnishes and there is also less risk of yellowing paper. However, oil based varnishes are better if specific areas of a document need to be coated. (Spot varnish)

### **Collating**

Arranging of printed sheets into the desired sequence.

### **Colour Mark Up**

Specifications on a piece of artwork to a printer, showing the required colours for the item to be printed.

### **Colour Separation**

Process by which an image is separated into the four colours for print production.

### **Copier Reduce/Enlarge**

Producing a copy of a document that is either smaller or larger than the original.

### **Copy**

Functionality that allows the machine to produce multiple identical versions of the same document.

### **CPM**

CPM (Copies Per Minute) refers to the number of copies a copier or multifunction printer can produce in a minute while operating at maximum capacity.

### **Creep**

When the middle pages of a folded section extend slightly beyond the outside pages.

### **Crop Marks**

Printed lines on the edge of the paper indicating where the paper should be cut to produce the correct page size.

## D

### **Delano**

An online proofing system allowing the customer to upload and approve jobs from their own home or office.

### **Desktop Publishing**

The creation of artwork and print from your computer using a PC or publishing Mac.

### **Die Cut**

A shaped cut-out leaflet or brochure.

### **Digital Printing**

Printing straight from electronic artwork (no plates used as with litho print). Typically printed out of four colour process. Ideal for short runs up to about the 1,000 mark.

### **Direct Thermal**

Label printing technology that's used to print barcode applications, shipping labels, receipts and tickets by heating up the paper and producing the print, with no ink needed.

### **Dot Matrix Printers**

Using pins to print dots on the page, these printers are used to print address labels and multipart forms. Both 24-pin and 9-pin dot matrix printers are available.

### **Double-Sided**

Printing or copying on both sides of the paper.

### **DPI**

Dots per inch, which indicates the resolution of images. The more dots per inch, the higher the resolution and the better quality the image. 300dpi is the ideal resolution for print.

### **Drum Unit**

Laser printers will project the document onto its drum unit. An electrically charged roller, the toner powder adheres to the drum. Heat is then used to transfer the powder onto the paper. The drum is either purchased separately (as a drum unit) or available already as part of the toner cartridge. Drums are recommended to be changed after the use of 3 to 4 toners.

### **Dual Core Processor**

A central processing unit (CPU) with two cores that helps to power the printer.

### **Dual Roll**

Design printers with two rolls to increase printing productivity.

### **Duotone**

An image printed using two colours rather than one.

### **Duplex**

Printing on both sides of a sheet of paper. Term applies to digital printing presses.

### **Duty Cycle**

The number of pages a printer can produce without failing, usually a monthly figure.

## E

### Embossing

The process of raising letters or designs on card or paper.

### Encapsulation

Plastic coating providing a rigid, watertight covering for printed matter.

### EPS

Encapsulated Postscript File. This is a file format which can be read across different programmes on Mac or PC computers.

### Ethernet

A wired connection from a PC or laptop to a printer.

## F

### Fax

To produce a digital copy of a document that is then sent to another printer electronically and is printed.

### File Format

The type/s of file that a scanner can convert a physical document into. Examples include JPG, PNG, TIFF and PDF.

### First Page

Refers to the time it takes for the printer to process the print request and print the first page of a document.

### Flatbed

A type of scanner in which the document is placed onto a flat surface in order to then convert the data from that scan into a digitised file.

### Folio

Page numbers.

### Four Colour Process

Full colour printing using four constituent colours: Cyan (C), Magenta (M), Yellow (Y) and Key (Black) (K).

### FTP

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is a network protocol used to transfer data from one computer to another through a network such as the internet.

### Fuser

A component part of a laser printer, the fuser is a heating unit that melts the toner powder onto the paper.

## G

### GHz

Gigahertz (GHz) is used to indicate the power of the CPU.

### **Gloss Coating**

A coating applied to printed matter which is quick drying and protects literature from ink smudging and finger marking and gives a gloss finish.

### **Gloss Varnish**

A varnish applied to printed matter to protect against smudging and finger marking and gives a gloss finish. Please refer to coating to see the difference between varnishes and coatings.

### **Grain of the Paper**

Machine made paper is made up of many fibres, which tend to line up in one direction due to the nature of the process. This produces a preferred direction or grain along which it is easier to fold, bend or tear paper.

### **Gripper**

A device on a printing machine for holding the sheet during the printing or finishing process.

### **Gripper Allowance**

The margin of paper along the gripper edge of the sheet, which is held by the gripper and cannot be printed on.

### **GSM**

Grams per square metre. Standard measure of paper weight.

### **Gutter**

The inside margins or blank space between two facing pages is the gutter. The gutter space is that extra space allowance used to accommodate the binding in books and magazines.

## **I**

### **Imaging Unit**

Transfers the toner (and therefore the print) to the paper. Manufacturers may also call it a drum unit or fuser unit. Only available in laser machines.

### **Imposition**

Plans for the arrangement of the pages of a job so that they will follow in the correct sequence when folded.

### **Ink Cartridge**

Printer consumables that contain liquid ink. Used in inkjet printers.

### **Ink Tank Printer**

Printers that use ink bottles instead of ink cartridges. Ink tanks are different to ink bottles as ink tanks can be replaced but ink bottles are used to top up the printhead already in the machine. In the case of ink bottles, printheads cannot be removed, they are topped up with ink bottles.

### **Inkjet Printer**

Printers that use droplets of ink in order to produce images and text on the page.

### **Input Tray**

How many pages the printer can hold at once, often this can be upgraded.

### **Internal Memory**

How much print data the machine can accumulate when a queue of printing tasks is waiting to be printed. Most personal printers don't have any memory. Measured in kilobytes (KB) or megabytes (MB).

### **IPM**

Images Per Minute. This metric is used to measure scanning speed.

### **ISO Page Life**

The approximate amount of pages that an ink or toner cartridge can print as defined by the International Organization for Standardization.

## **J**

### **JPEG**

Joint Photographic Experts Group. A type of file format for image files.

## **K**

### **Kiss Cut**

A shaped cut-out from two layered stock - mostly used for peel off stickers.

## **L**

### **Label Cassette**

A printer consumable for label printers. The tape is wrapped around a spool.

### **Label Tape**

The printer consumable needed to produce labels using a label printer or label maker.

### **Label Tape Cartridge**

A printer consumable for label printers or label makers that is contained within a cartridge.

### **Laminated Labels**

Labels that feature a laminated finish that are more durable.

### **Laser Printer**

Printers that use toner, which is a dry powder, to produce prints on the page. Laser printers can print much faster than inkjet printers can.

### **LCD Screen**

A display on which the user can often see the progress of a print and access various printer settings and functionality.

### **Lithographic (Litho) Printing**

See offset litho.



## M

### Machine Fold

The process of mechanically folding printed paper.

### Machine Varnish

A general varnish applied to printed literature to protect or seal against smudging or finger marking.

### Maintenance Kit

Maintenance products for laser printers.

### Manual Duplex Printing

Double-sided printing where the user has to manually switch over the side of the page.

### Margins

The edge of a printed document that is typically left blank.

### Matte Coating

A coating applied which is quick drying and protects literature from ink smudging and finger marking and gives a matte finish.

### Matte Varnish

A varnish applied to printed literature to protect against smudging and finger marking and gives a matte finish.

### MB/RAM

How much maximum memory a printer has and how much print data the machine can accumulate in a queue of printing tasks.

### Media Sizes Supported

The size/s of media (paper, labels etc.) that a printer supports.

### Micrometer

Instrument for measuring thickness of paper.

### mm/s

Millimetres per second, this refers to how fast a label maker or label printer can print.

### Mobile Printing

The support of printing from smart devices wirelessly.

### Mono Printer

A printer that can only print in black and white or greyscale.

### Monthly Duty Cycle

The maximum number of pages the printer can produce each month without failing.

### Mopria Certified

A printing certification. Printers that have been Mopria certified adhere to specific guidelines to make printing easier.

### **Mopria Print Service**

A wireless printing feature for Android users.

### **Multifunction Printer**

A machine that has additional functionality other than printing, including copying, scanning and faxing. (See also all-in-one printer.)

### **Multipurpose Tray**

Provides extra storage for your printer and often helps you to print on different types and sizes of media than the main tray can.

## **N**

### **Network Printer**

Part of a workgroup or network of computers that can all access the same printers simultaneously and wirelessly. This can be done through Ethernet or Wi-Fi.

## **O**

### **Offset Litho (Graphy)**

A printing process by which the inked image to be printed is transferred (offset) first to a rubber layer before coming into contact with the paper which takes up the inked areas.

### **Operating System**

The software which runs the PC, laptop or smart device. The operating system may affect certain features of the printer.

### **Output Tray**

Where the paper is stored once it's been printed.

## **P**

### **Page Yield**

The number of pages an ink or toner cartridge can be expected to print before running out. The page yield of a cartridge can vary depending on a number of factors, including the type of printer, the quality settings, the type of paper and the complexity of the document being printed. The page yield is usually specified in terms of a range, such as "up to 1,000 pages".

### **Pantone Reference (PMS)**

International system of designating colours for printing reference.

### **Paper Capacity**

The amount of pages that a printer can hold at one time.

### **Paper Handling**

The maximum amount of sheets of paper that the printer can hold at one time.

### **Paper Handling Output**

The maximum amount of paper that the printer can hold in its output bin.

### **Perfect Binding**

Pages of a book, which are glued together to give a square spine.

## **PDF**

Portable Document Format. A PDF is a special file type that combines images, drawings, layouts and text into one file for easy delivery to or from the printer. PDF's provide a very useful tool for proofing purposes, as what you see is what you get.

## **Perfactor**

A printing press, which prints on both sides of a sheet of paper in one pass.

## **Perforation**

Running a dotted score into paper to allow the paper to be torn off easily.

## **Personalisation**

Where data elements are unique to an individual print piece. Concept facilitated by digital printing. Most commonly used on direct mail literature.

## **PPM**

A metric that's used to measure print speed (pages per minute).

## **Print Resolution**

Determines the quality of the prints. Measured in DPI (dots per inch), the higher the number is, the higher the quality of the print will be.

## **Print Speed**

The higher the number, the faster your printer. This number is usually accompanied by the following acronyms: PPM (pages per minute), CPM (copies per minute) or IPM (images per minute).

## **Printer Consumable**

Resources used by a printer that will eventually be replaced. Examples include ink and toner cartridges, as well as paper, labels and tape.

## **Printing Plate**

A metal plate which has the inked images involved in the offset plate lithography printing process. It is important to realise that each colour in a printing job requires a separate plate.

## **Process Colours**

The four colours which make up full colour printing. Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black.

## **Q**

### **QuarkXPress**

(Quark) is an industry standard computer application for creating and editing complex page layouts.

## **R**

### **Ream**

500 sheets of paper.

### **Reversed Out**

Type appearing white on a black or colour background, which is either a solid or a tint.

## **Resolution**

Refers to the degree of detail of an image. It is usually measured in dots per inch (dpi) or lines per inch (lpi). A high resolution gives a high quality image and vice versa.

## **RGB**

Three colour split (Red, Green, Blue). Typically used for web based images. RGB images must not be used in artwork for print. Although RGB images can be converted to CMYK in the RIP process, unusual and unwanted results may occur.

## **RIP**

Raster Image Processor. A processor which converts files into a format ready for printing.

## **S**

### **Saddle-Stitch**

When the pages of a printed document (i.e. magazine) are bound together using metal staples.

### **Scanner**

The equipment, which converts colour transparencies or hard copy colour artwork into images on a Mac or PC.

### **Scans**

The name given to colour transparencies or colour artwork, which have been converted to images on a Mac or PC.

## **Sealer**

Alternative name for a coater.

### **Sealer Coating**

A coating applied to printed matter, which is quick drying and protects literature from ink smudging and finger marking and gives a neutral finish.

### **Sealer Varnish**

A varnish applied to printed matter to protect against finger marking and gives a neutral finish.

### **Self Cover**

The paper used inside a booklet is the same as that used for the cover.

### **Sheet Fed Press**

Printing presses which are fed by separate sheets of paper. As opposed to paper on a roll. They are suitable for all types of commercial printing, particularly high quality work.

### **Show Through**

The degree to which printing is visible through paper. Commonly seen on lightweight papers.

### **Shrink Wrapping**

Method of packing printed products by surrounding them with plastic, then shrinking by heat.

### **Silk Coating**

A coating applied to printed matter, which is quick drying and protects literature from ink smudging and finger marking and gives a silk finish.

### **Silk Varnish**

A varnish applied to printed literature to protect against finger marking and smudging and gives a silk finish.

### **Solid Colour**

An even colour, which is not shaded. Areas on a page with solid colours are known as solids.

### **Special Colour**

A colour which cannot be made up of the four component colours - CMYK. They are listed in a pantone colour swatch book. For example, if a corporate logo contains a special blue and is included in a brochure with photographs and text; this is termed a five colour job. (CMYK (pictures+text) + special blue = 5 colours)

### **Speed Colour**

How fast a laser printer produces colour documents.

### **Speed Monochrome**

How fast a laser printer produces black and white documents.

### **SPM**

Sides per minute for duplex print speed or scans per minute for scan speed.

### **Spread**

Two or more adjoining pages that would appear in view on a sheet.

## **T**

### **Thermal Label Printer**

Thermal printers use heat rather than ink to produce labels and signage on paper, tape, ribbon, wax or other materials.

### **Thermal Transfer**

A type of label printer that works by heating the label until printed text/images appear without needing ink.

### **TIFF**

Tagged Image File Format. A type of file, which stores an image.

### **Tint**

Percentage shade of a colour.

### **Toner Cartridge**

A printer consumable that contains powder that is printed onto the paper using heat. Used in laser printers.

### **Trapping**

The process of overlapping adjacent colours to eliminate the white lines that could appear between them during the print process.

## Typesetting

The assembly of text and pictures on a Mac or PC by keyboard or other digital means.

## U

### UV

A special varnish which has undergone an accelerated varnish drying process using ultraviolet is applied to printed matter to enhance its appearance. A gloss UV varnish is commonly used and this gives a very shiny effect, especially when used on printed matter with a matte laminate.

## V

### Varnishes

Special varnishes applied to printed matter to protect literature from ink smudging or finger marking or to enhance appearance. There are five main types - machine, gloss, matte, silk and UV. Varnishes are commonly used on matte or silk coated paper as these types are more prone to smudging than gloss coated paper. Varnish applied to a specific area of a document is known as spot varnish and when it is applied to the whole document it is termed as an overall varnish.

### Vinyl Labels

A strong label material that's ideal for industrial use.

## Visual

A preliminary layout, indicating the general design and the position of the various elements.

## W

### Waste Box

For laser printers, this is where the toner waste is contained.

### Web Fed Press

Presses which are fed by paper from a reel, as opposed to separate sheets. They are normally used for high run work.

### Wi-Fi Direct

A feature of some printers that allows you to print wirelessly without needing a network. The printer will create a Wireless Access Point for your device to connect to.

### Wireless Printing

Printing without needing a wired connection to the printer from your PC or laptop.



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