
YOUR PRINT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS PARTNER

Print Industry Terms

Accordion Fold

In binding, a term used for two or more parallel folds that open like an accordion.

Against the Grain

Folding or feeding paper at right angles to the grain direction of the paper.
Also called crossgrain.

Bitmap

In computer imaging, the electronic representation of a page, indicating the position of every possible color.

Black and White

Originals or reproductions in single color, as distinguished from multicolor.
Abbreviation: B/W.

Bleed

An extra amount of printed image that extends beyond the trim edge of the sheet or page.

Brightness

In paper, the reflection or brilliance of the paper.

Brochure

A pamphlet bound in booklet form.

Caliper

The thickness of paper, usually expressed in thousandths of an inch (mils).
We refer to text thickness as pages per inch (ppi). In board, however, it is expressed as "points."

Case

In bookbinding, the covers of a hardbound book.

CMYK

(Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black) – The subtractive process colors used in color printing. Black (K) is added to enhance color and contrast.

Coated 1 Side (C1S)/Coated 2 Sides (C2S)

Paper stock coated on one side or two sides.

Coated Paper

Paper having a surface coating which produces a smooth finish. Substrates vary from eggshell to glossy.

Collate

In binding, the gathering of sheets and signatures.

Contrast

The tonal gradation between the highlights, middle tones, and shadows in an original or reproduction.

Copy

Any finished material (typewritten manuscript, pictures, artwork, etc.) to be used in the production of printing.

Cover Paper

A term applied to a variety of papers used for the covers of catalogs, brochures, booklets, and similar pieces.

Crop

To eliminate portions of the copy, usually on photograph or plate, indicated on the original by cropmarks.

Die

Devise for cutting, scoring, stamping, embossing and debossing.

Digital Color Proof

A color proof produced from digital data without the need for separation films.

Digital Printing

Printing by plateless imaging systems that are imaged by digital data from prepress systems.

Dots Per Inch (dpi)

A measure of the resolution of a screen image or printed page.

Duotone

In photomechanics, a term for two-color halftone reproduction from a one-color photograph.

Electronic Printing

In digital printing, any technology that reproduces pages without the use of traditional ink, water, chemistry, or plates.

Also known as plateless printing.

Embossing

The creation of a three-dimensional design on paper. Embossing can be combined with ink or foil.

EPS (Encapsulated PostScript)

In digital prepress, a file format used to transfer graphic images within compatible applications. A file containing structured PostScript code, comments and a screen display image.

Flush Left (or Right)

In composition, type set to line up at the left (or right). This page is set flush left and right.

Foil Stamping

The application of foil to paper where a heated die is stamped onto the foil, making it adhere to the paper.

Foil stamping can be combined with embossing.

Folio

The page numbers.

Font

In composition, a complete assortment of letters, numbers, punctuations, etc., of a given size and design.

Format

The size, style, type page, margins, printing requirements, etc., of a printed piece.

Gamma

The range of color across the spectrum by a monitor, printer or scanner.

Gloss Finish

Paper finish with gloss or luster.

Grain

In papermaking, the direction most fibers lie in, corresponding with the direction the paper is made.

Grayscale

Standard gray tones, ranging from white to black.

Gutter

The blank space or inner margin from printing area to binding.

Halftone

The reproduction of continuous-tone images through a screening process, which converts the image into dots of various sizes and equal spacing between centers (AM screening), or dots equal size with variable spacing between them (FM screening).

Hard Proof

A proof on paper or other substrate distinguished from a soft proof (an image on a monitor).

Imposition

In page assembly, the positioning of pages on a signature so that after printing, folding, and cutting, all pages will appear in the proper sequence.

Insert

A printed piece prepared for insertion into a publication or another printed piece.

JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)

Was formed to create a standard for color and gray scale image compression. JPEG describes a variety of algorithms (rules), each of which is targeted for a type of image application.

JPEG is the default format for most digital cameras.

Lamination

A plastic film bonded by heat and pressure to a printed sheet for protection or appearance.

Layout

The drawing or sketch of a proposed printed piece.

Make ready

In printing, all work done to set up a press for printing.

Mask

In color separation photography, an intermediate photographic negative or positive used in color correction. In offset lithography, opaque material used to protect open or selected areas of a printing plate during exposure.

Matte Finish

Dull paper finish without gloss or luster.

Mechanical Binding

A book bound with wires in spiral form inserted through holes punched along the binding side.

Offset

In printing, the process of using an intermediate blanket cylinder to transfer an image from the image carrier to the substrate. Short for offset lithography.

Opacity

The property of paper which minimizes the show-through of printing from the back side or the next sheet.

Overprinting

Double printing; printing over an area that already has been printed.

Overages

In printing, copies printed in excess of the specified quantity.

Pagination

In computerized typesetting, the process of performing page layout.

PDF (Portable Document File)

PDF is a universal electronic file format, modeled after the PostScript language and is device and resolution independent. Documents in PDF format can be viewed, navigated, and printed from any computer regardless of fonts or software programs used to create the original.

Perfect Binding

A book bound with a flexible adhesive to attach the text to the cover.

Pica

Printer's unit of measurement used principally in typesetting. One pica equals approximately 1/6 of an inch.

Pixel

Short for "picture element." A pixel is the smallest resolvable point of a raster image. It is the basic unit of digital imaging.

PMS (Pantone Matching System)

Color charts that have over 700 preprinted color patches of blended inks, used to identify, display, or define special colors.

PostScript®

A page description language developed by Adobe Systems, Inc., to describe an image for printing. It handles both text and graphics. A PostScript file is a purely text-based description of a page.

PPI

Pages per inch, in reference to the thickness of text pages.

Preflight

In digital prepress, the test used to evaluate or analyze every component needed to produce a printing job. Preflight confirms the type of disk being submitted, the color gamut, color separations, and any art required (illustrations, transparencies, reflective photos, etc.) plus layout files, fonts, EPS or TIFF files, page sizes, cropmarks, etc.

Press Proofs

In color reproduction, a proof of a color subject made on a printing press in advance of the production run.

Print Quality

A term describing the visual impression of a printed piece. In paper, the properties of the paper that affect its appearance and the quality of reproduction.

Process Color

In printing, the subtractive primaries: yellow, magenta, cyan, and black in four-color process printing.

Quality Control

A program of activities including customer service, process control, and sampling with the objective of eliminating causes of process variability now called Statistical Process Control.

(RIP) Raster Image Processor

In digital imaging, a combination of computer software and hardware that controls the printing process by calculating the bitmaps of images and instructing a printing device to create the images. Most PostScript systems use a hardware RIP built into the printer.

Ream

Five hundred sheets of paper.

Register

In printing, fitting of two or more printing images in exact alignment with each other.

Registration Marks

Crosses or other targets applied to original copy prior to photography. Used for positioning films in register, or for register of two or more colors in process printing.

Resolution

Measured in dpi (dots per inch), we use the standard of 300dpi. The greater the dip, the better the image clarity.

RGB (Red, Green and Blue)

The primary additive colors used in display devices and scanners. Commonly used to refer to the color space, mixing system, or monitor in color computer graphics.

Saddle Stitch

In binding, to fasten a booklet by stapling it through the middle fold of the sheets.

Scaling

Determining the proper size of an image to be reduced or enlarged to fit an area.

Score

To impress or indent a mark in the paper to make folding easier.

Signature

In printing and binding, the name given to a printed sheet after it has been folded.

Spine

The back of a bound book connecting the two covers; also called backbone.

Soft Proof

A proof that is viewed on a monitor screen, most likely a PDF file.

Spot Dull Finish

Process where a flat (not glossy) finish is applied in spots over a glossy finish. This allows the flossy areas to pop off the page visually.

Stock

Paper or other material to be printed.

Stock Photography

Used widely by creative professionals in need ready-made images that illustrate a specific lifestyle, scene, mood or process. Some stock images are royalty-free, but most carry a fee based on usage.

Substrate

Any material that can be printed on, such as paper, plastic, and fabric.

Tagged Image File Format (TIFF)

A file format for graphics suited for representing scanned images and other large bitmaps. TIFF is a neutral format designed for compatibility with all applications. TIFF was created specifically for storing grayscale images and is the standard format for scanned images such as photographs.

Text

The body matter of a book, as distinguished from the headings.

Trapping

In prepress, refers to how much overprinting colors overlap to eliminate white lines between colors in printing.

Trim Marks

In printing, marks placed on the copy to indicate the edge of the paper.

With the Grain

Folding or feeding paper into a press with the grain of the paper parallel to the blade of the folder or the axis of the impression cylinder.