

## Title:

Digital Printing's Impact on the Modern Printing Industry

## Word Count:

739

## Summary:

A description of the digital printing process and its impact on the current printing industry as well as a brief history about printing.

## Keywords:

printing, commercial printing, printing company, printing consulting, trade printing, digital printing

## Article Body:

If you've ever used one of the old dot matrix printers with rows of holes to feed the ream of paper and dealt with the constant paper jams, then you have an idea of just how far technology has come in the printing industry. Long gone are the days of slightly fuzzy text and faded grey images. Today's printing process has gone digital, and the benefit clearly shows. From the strikingly clear images to the brilliance of the colors, digital printing displays everything on your company's marketing material, stationery, business cards and more with as much detail as a photograph. And the best part? Digital printing has revolutionized the printing industry to make it possible for any company, whether it has 10 employees or 10,000, to show the same level of quality as much larger corporations with every piece of printed media, and it can be accomplished both quickly and inexpensively!

Still not clear on the difference between digital printing and making color copies at the local 24-hour shop? The main difference is quality, which is best explained by how digital printing actually works. Digital printing is actually a bit of a misnomer, as the process doesn't apply as much to the printing itself as it does to the way the image is transferred to the printing device. Think of it this way-- with a traditional copy machine (even with the highest quality color copier), when you place a piece of paper through the machine to be copied, the resulting page can only ever be as good as the original in your hand. That means if you have a slight crease where you held it in your hand or a speck of dust on the copier, it will show up in the results. With digital printing however, the image, whether it be text or a full color photograph, is taken directly from a computer file and output through the printing device. The end result will be as good as the original every time because there is never a

physical piece of paper being copied.

It seems like with technology this foolproof, everyone would be using it, but that is clearly not the case. According to ThePrinters.com, a company specializing in digital printing, the printing industry has remained behind the times when it comes to digital printing. Newer high-speed digital printing devices have been able to produce single and multi color images for over a decade, but less than 5% of printing companies have actually installed these devices. There are approximately 30,700 printing companies in the United States alone according to the 2006 U.S. Industry & Market Outlook by Barnes Reports so it is difficult to understand how such a large industry can be so slow to embrace new technology.

Perhaps the amount of time it is taking for the printing industry to catch up with the newest advances is rooted in its long history. After all, this is a process which has been slowly evolving for centuries. Woodblock printing was already in use in China by the 6th century, and methods were steadily updated over the years, with the biggest leap forward being made when Johann Gutenberg of Germany invented the printing press in the 1400s. Of course, the advances did not stop there. According to Wikipedia, several innovations occurred at the end of the eighteenth century including a new method of using engraving tools, lithography, and relief etchings. By the early nineteenth century, new types of presses were being made which were far more durable than anything produced up until that time. Arguably one of the greatest advances, at least for the every day consumer, was when Chester Carlson invented the process called Xerography, or photocopying, in 1937. His invention is considered the "technological foundation of printing today" according to PrintOnDemand.com.

Advances in digital printing make it the best option for individuals and businesses that are looking for high quality marketing materials at an affordable price, and companies like ThePrinters.com make the technology easy to use. Incorporating the internet with digital printing seems like a natural step, and this company allows its clients to transmit files via FTP, electronically warehouse various documents, forms, catalogs, etc. with the option to edit the stored data securely online and print on demand the amount of each item needed. With copies that match the original every time, low cost, and that level of convenience, how can you go wrong with digital printing?