FACTSHEET

Glossary of print terms

Printing, like any other profession, has its fair share of terminology and jargon. Understanding some of the key terms and concepts in printing will give you a better idea of the print process, and the options available to you. If there are any terms listed below that you would like more information about, or if you can't find what you were looking for, please don't hesitate to contact Victoire at info@victoirepress.com, or on 01954 781919.

A-sized paper (A4, A5, etc.)

The most familiar system of paper sizes is the ISO standard, which includes the common A4 sheet. The ratio of all A-sized paper is 1:1.414, which means that, if you cut the sheet exactly in half, you are left with two sheets which retain the original ratio - hence if you cut an A4 sheet in half, you get two A5 sheets.

See also:
B-sized paper
C-sized paper
Victoire factsheet – paper sizes

Artwork

All the files needed by the printer before going to print, including text and image files. Artwork is commonly delivered to Victoire in hard copy, on a CD-ROM, or by email.

B-sized paper

Rarely used intermediate paper sizes that sit between the A-sizes.

See also:
A-sized paper
C-sized paper
Victoire factsheet – paper sizes

Binding

The physical binding together of leafs of paper or board. There are various types of binding available – for example, Victoire offers saddle-stitch, thermal binding, wiro binding, comb binding, and more.

See also:
Burst binding   Spiral binding
Comb binding   Wiro binding
Saddle-stitch

Bleed

Printing right up to the edge of the finished page. Because it is not actually possible to print all the way up to the edge of a sheet, Victoire may ask you to supply the artwork with a 3mm 'bleed' which extends beyond the finished size (i.e. a larger print area than is required), to make sure that the print goes right up to the edge once the sheet is trimmed.

See also:
Trimming

Board

Heavier paper (normally over 200gsm) which is usually used for products such as book covers and business cards. Generally, what most people might refer to as 'card'.

Bulk

The thickness of a paper, normally measured in thousands of an inch, or number of pages per inch. 'Bulky' paper can be useful, for example, for making publications appear larger without making them heavier.

Burst binding

A type of 'perfect' binding, where the leafs of, for example, a book are held in place by glue. In burst binding, the glue is forced into notches along the spine of the paper, making the binding stronger because more surface area is covered.

See also:
Binding
Perfect binding

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CMYK

The four colours – cyan, magenta, yellow and black – which are used in four-colour process printing.

See also:
Four-colour printing
RGB

Coated paper

Paper is coated in clay to produce the two main finishes: matt and gloss.

See also:
Gloss paper
Matt paper
Silk paper
Uncoated paper

C-sized paper

Commonly used for envelope sizes, slightly larger than equivalent A-size. For example, a C4 envelope is slightly larger than an A4 sheet, which allows it to hold an A4 sheet. Another common envelop size is DL, which holds an A4 sheet folded in three.

Comb binding

Method of binding leafs of paper by inserting the teeth of a plastic comb through punched holes. Comb binding is commonly used for quick turnaround products, such as reports, conference packs, and training manuals.

See also:
Binding

Die cutting

Cutting or trimming irregular paper shapes using a custom-made 'die'. For example, if you need an irregularly-shaped business card, a die (often made of metal) would first need to be created in the correct shape, which could then be cut around.

Digital printing

Printing directly from electronic data, and without the need for film. Digital print is ideal for short-run printing and quick turnaround, and the quality of digital print is improving all the time and is fine for many print jobs. Victoire specialises in digital print, and offers full-colour and black-and-white digital print.

See also:
Litho

DPI / dots per inch

Measurement of resolution, often abbreviated to DPI. 'High resolution' artwork is needed for good quality printing (for example, 300dpi upwards), whereas 'low resolution' artwork is ideal for computer screens.

Drilling

What most people call hole punching, i.e., making holes in paper for use in a ring binder. The big difference is that commercial drilling can punch holes through hundreds of sheets of paper at a time.

See also:
Finishing

Dummy

Mock up of an intended product (for example, a leaflet or journal) to give you a good idea of and feel for the finished item. A dummy will not usually be printed to a high quality, but will be made with the correct paper and materials. Victoire is more than happy to put together dummies if needed.

See also:
Proof

Films

Produced for each of the colours used in a four-colour printing job. The films are used to make the printing plates, using a photochemical process.

See also:
CMYK
Four-colour print
Printing plate

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Finishing

Where the printed materials get put into their final format. Examples of finishing include guillotining, folding, binding, drilling, and numbering.

See also:
Binding
Drilling
Laminate
Machine glazed
UV varnish

Four-colour process printing

Process of combining four basic colours to produce a full-colour final product. A plate is created for each of the four colours in a full-colour job (cyan, magenta, yellow and black). The colours are then printed one at a time using lithography and combine to produce the full variety of colours that we see on the finished product (for example, a magazine).

See also:
CMYK
Lithography

Gloss paper

A reflective, shiny coat on coated paper, for example, glossy magazines.

See also:
Coated paper   r
Matt paper
Silk paper
Uncoated pape

GSM / grammes per square metre

The weight of paper or board, measured in grammes per square metre. For example, office copier paper is normally 80gsm, whereas the cover of a book might be 350gsm.

See also:
Bulk
Paper

Laminate

Plastic coating which protects the surface of printed paper, and often provides a glossy finish (although matt laminate is also available). Paperback book covers are usually laminated, for example.

Litho / lithography

Printing using plates, some areas of which attract ink, and some which repel. Ideal for longer print ones and a higher quality of print, colour or paper. Litho print is likely to be used for jobs such as letterhead, brochures, leaflets, business cards, label printing, magazines, and so on.

See also:
Digital print
Four-colour process print

Machine glazed

Glossy finish on one side of a sheet of paper only.

See also:
Finishing
Laminate

Make ready (or makeready)

Preparation of a printing press – can be a significant chunk of the lead time.

Matt paper

Dull coat on paper, the opposite of glossy.

See also:
Coated paper   Uncoated paper
Gloss paper   Silk paper

Offset printing

Litho print, but where the printing plates do not actually come into contact with the paper. Instead, the ink is transferred from the plate onto a blanket and then onto the paper.

See also:
Litho

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Over run

The number of surplus copies printed. Almost inevitable using litho, and could be a significant number if using a web press. There is often no extra charge for over runs.

Page

Normally one side of a leaf in a publication – for example an A4 sheet folded in half would have four 'pages'. Technical printers' term for page number is 'folio'.

Pantone

Standard range of colours denoted by a number – for example, pantone 248 is a purple colour. Using pantone inks (as opposed to four-colour process) provides a greater variety of colour, and makes it much easier to match colours across products. If your brand requires a very specific colour, then you may wish to use a pantone colour (a 'spot colour') in addition to CMYK – hence five-colour printing.

See also:
CMYK
Four-colour process printing
Spot colour

Paper

There is a huge variety of paper available, including different weights, bulkiness, finishes, environmental impact, and so on. It is important that you choose the paper that is right for your product, and Victoire is happy to help with this and to provide samples and dummies where appropriate.

See also:
A-sized paper   C-sized paper
B-sized paper   Gloss paper
Bulk   GSM
Coated paper   Matt paper

PDF

Abbreviated form of portable document format. The PDF format was developed by Adobe and uses the postscript language, and it gives publishers the ability to set a design "in stone". Printers will frequently ask for artwork to be submitted in PDF format. Victoire is happy to provide PDF training for clients.

See also:
Postscript

Perfect binding

Gluing leafs of paper to the spine of a cover. Perfect binding is the most common form of binding books, and magazines where there is a spine.

See also:
Binding
Burst binding

Plates – see litho

Postscript

Page description language developed by Adobe, which is generated by graphics packages and output by printing devices.

See also:
PDF

Pre-press (or prepress)

Preparation carried out by the printer before printing, such as making sure artwork is print-ready, preparing printing plates, and so on. Victoire has a full design and pre-press studio.

Proof

Proof of how the finished page will look, usually printed on a laser printer or could even be a PDF. Victoire will usually ask you to approve a 'proof' before going to print.

See also:
Dummy

Ream

500 sheets of paper. Office copier paper is usually supplied by the 'ream'.

See also:
Paper

Resolution – see DPI

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RBG

The three colours – red, blue and green – which make up colours which you see on a computer screen. Printing usually uses four colours – cyan, magenta, yellow and black,

See also:
CMYK
Four-colour process print

Run-on

The estimated cost of printing extra copies. The setup and make ready costs of getting ready to print, particularly for litho, may form a significant chunk of the overall cost, so printing as many copies as possible is often an economical option. For example, you may be quoted £500 for 250 copies of leaflet, plus a 'run-on' quote of just £100 for an extra 250 copies. It's important to note that the run-on price only applies if you print the extra copies in the same print run. It is always sensible to ask for a run-on quotation.

Saddle-stitch

Printing terminology for 'stapling'. Booklets and newsletters are often 'saddle-stitched'.

See also:
Binding

Screen printing

Method of printing where ink is forced through a fine mesh and a stencil. Screen printing is particularly suitable for large display posters, or for printing onto unusual surfaces such as T-shirts.

Sheet-fed press

Printing press which prints onto sheets of paper – as opposed to a web press, which prints onto rolls of paper.

Silk paper

Somewhere between matt and gloss paper – smoother finish than matt, and more reflective.

See also:
Coated paper

Gloss paper
Matt paper

Uncoated paper

Paper which has not been coated with clay, commonly used for books, newspapers, etc. Absorbs the ink more than coated paper, which means that colours will display differently (beware of this). Available in a wide range of weights and finishes.

See also:
Coated paper   Paper
Gloss paper   Silk paper
Matt paper

Spine

The binding edge of a publication or leaf or paper.

See also:
Binding

Spiral binding

Method of binding using a single, continuous spiral of plastic or wire looped through holes and around the spine. Spiral binding is commonly used for quick turnaround products, such as reports, conference packs, and training manuals.

See also:
Binding

Spot colour

Single ink of a specific colour used for printing, often a pantone colour. 'Spot varnish' is a varnish applied to a specific section of the printed area.

See also:
Four-colour process printing
Pantone

Stock

The material that is actually printed on, e.g. the paper or board.

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Trim size

The final size of the paper after it has been 'trimmed', e.g. A4. Printers usually print on oversized paper, and then trim the paper down to the finished size after printing. This allows for greater flexibility of sizes, and makes it possible to print right up to the edge of the finished page.

See also:
Bleed

Two-colour printing

Colour printing with just two colours – as opposed to the more usual four colours (CMYK). Two-colour printing is normally chosen where full colour is not necessary, and can make significant cost savings – for example, company stationery is frequently two colours, often black plus the company colour. The colours can be combined and tinted to produce a variety of effects.

See also:
Four-colour process printing
Pantone
Spot colour

Uncoated paper

Paper which has not been coated in clay – as opposed to 'coated' paper such as matt and gloss.

See also:
Coated paper
Gloss paper
Matt paper
Silk paper

UV varnish

Alternative to lamination – printed area is covered with a liquid, the dried using UV light. Produces a glossy, laminated effect, and can be applied to specific areas to produce special effects. Can be more economical than laminating

Web press – see sheet-fed press

Wiro binding

Method of binding where wire is looped through drilled holes and bound around the spine, which allows the final publication to lie flat when open. Spiral binding is commonly used for quick turnaround products, such as reports, conference packs, and training manuals.

See also:
Binding