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Best printer model for printing book covers is?

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Author	Message
topmailbox External Since: Apr 17, 2004 Posts: 13	<p>(Msg. 1) Posted: Sat Dec 06, 2003 12:55 pm Post subject: Best printer model for printing book covers is? Archived from groups: alt>publish>books (more info?)</p> <hr/> <p>I want to set up a small Print On Demand system.</p> <p>Please reccomend equipment I should consider.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Printer for printing color on cover stock. 2 - Printer for b&w book pages. 3 - Binding System/equipment (perfect binding) 4 - Paper Shear <p>If you know cost &/or source or contacts on any of this equipment, please advise me.</p>

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abc5 External Since: Jul 06, 2003 Posts: 51	<p>(Msg. 2) Posted: Mon Dec 08, 2003 5:04 pm Post subject: Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is? Archived from groups: per prev. post (more info?)</p> <hr/> <p>On Sat, 06 Dec 2003 12:55:19 GMT, "tmb" <topmailbox@yahoo.com> dijo:</p> <p>></p> <p>>I want to set up a small Print On Demand system.</p> <p>></p> <p>>Please reccomend equipment I should consider.</p> <p>></p> <p>>1 - Printer for printing color on cover stock.</p> <p>>2 - Printer for b&w book pages.</p> <p>>3 - Binding System/equipment (perfect binding)</p> <p>>4 - Paper Shear</p> <p>></p> <p>>If you know cost &/or source or contacts on any of this equipment, >please advise me.</p> <p>What is your budget?</p> <p>--</p> <p>Bogus e-mail address, but I read this newsgroup regularly, so reply here.</p>
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rgraham
External

Since: Jul 13, 2003
Posts: 10

📧 (Msg. 3) Posted: Mon Dec 08, 2003 11:25 pm
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

aaaaahhhh. Here I've been checking this thread for the past two days waiting and hoping someone would start throwing out some information. First reponse is a question to a question! Marek I've read your other posts. You know what your talking about. Start out with information on what you are doing and using right now. Looking forward to hearing from you and others.
Thanks
Rusty

- >
- > [What is your budget?](#)
- >
- > --
- > [Bogus e-mail address, but I read this newsgroup regularly, so reply here.](#)

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rgraham
External

Since: Jul 13, 2003
Posts: 10

📧 (Msg. 4) Posted: Mon Dec 08, 2003 11:29 pm
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Here is an item that might help in your search. I'd really like to read what Marek thinks of this. The cost, the equipment, ect....
Rusty

http://www.instabook-corporation.com/brochure/brochure_2003.pdf

The InstaBook Maker Series is our most popular system. The entry level system starts at about \$350 per month (in a Lease to Own Program for companies based in the US with more that 2 years in business), and it includes everything you need to start making your own books 5 minutes after we install it.

1. The InstaBook Maker III system allows you to make books in sizes up to 8.5" x 11" (Letter Size), or equivalent European paper sizes.
2. You may make your own Perfectly Bound, Laminated books, up to 3" thick right out of your office! The system is so quiet you barely notice it when is working.
3. The books produced by the InstaBook Maker system are of a quality just as good or in many cases better than offset. And much faster and economically.
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If you choose to become a member of the InstaBook Network of Digital Bookstores, you will receive a preferential price on the system you select- up to 30% off.

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abzug
External

Since: Jul 11, 2003
Posts: 130

📧 (Msg. 5) Posted: Tue Dec 09, 2003 7:58 pm
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

In article <_VcBb.3640\$R%4.206@fe10.private.usenetserver.com>, "rgraham" <rgraham@heart.net> wrote:

> aaaahhhh. Here I've been checking this thread for the past two days waiting
> and hoping someone would start throwing out some information. First reponse
> is a question to a question! Marek I've read your other posts. You know
> what your talking about. Start out with information on what you are doing
> and using right now. Looking forward to hearing from you and others.
> Thanks
> Rusty
>
> >
> > What is your budget?
> >
> > --
> > Bogus e-mail address, but I read this newsgroup regularly, so reply here.
>

Frankly, the question was so general and wide open that it didn't seem worth answering.

My first "POD" system, was put together for a large transportation company -- we already had some significant resources. Starting in 1982, our set-up consisted of 7 Televideo CP/M computers networked to a Plexus (UNIX) mini-computer for creation of our materials. The files were transmitted to the company mainframe (IBM 3090) where it was processed and output to a high speed (120 pages per minute) IBM 3900 laser printer. Books were "loose leaf" freight tariffs, so binding wasn't an issue as we simply used 3-hole punch stock and three-ring binders. This system stored over 10,000 pages of information (spread among 100 titles) and we produced over 4 million printed pages per year. I left the company in 1987 and the system ran, relatively unchanged until 1994. When, after an equipment failure, it was discovered that some fool had wiped the "release tape" and technicians were unable to restart the system (the OEM having gone bankrupt years earlier).

In the mid-1990s, I was working for contractor to a Federal agency. Our document preparation staff was on a Macintosh network and we had (1) a network Docutech and (2) a network A.B. Dick 'stencil duplicator'. The Docutech was our principal output device. Manuscripts were edited and typeset in our branch, then transmitted to the Docutech server when they were ready to print. An email would be sent to the reproduction branch giving the file name and details of the desired production (job ticket inclusion with the job not being available at the time). Bindery was usually with a Fastback tape binding system. (The built-in Docutech tape binder having proven to be high-maintenance and unreliable.) The networked stencil duplicator (similar to the Riso machines) was a single page, single side device, so it was reserved for more mundane projects such as a letters to "all hands" and other single sided projects. In addition to the docutech, our shop also had a large cutter (over 30", but I never measured it), collating equipment, power staplers, stitchers, folder, and several analog copy machines (including 2 Xerox 1090 and 1 Xerox 5090). We also had a networked Canon 500 copier and later added a Xerox "majestic" color copier for color work. We did close to 2 million "impressions" each month and had a rework rate (the fault of the staff) of less than 1/2 of 1% -- a figure that most commercial shops can never get anywhere close to... We were somewhat "overequipped" for the volume, but the setup was typical of a major government installation.

These days, I run a small book design service. I don't do significant production work, but I do make up sample books and ultra-ultra short runs (5 to 10 copies, usually) of "bound galleys" for clients. I print black work with an Apple 8500 laser printer (20 cpm with letter size, handles up to 12 x 18 stock) with built in duplexer and run cover stock through a Xerox Tektronix 780 laser printer (that handles up to 13 x 19 stock). I've been looking at some "workgroup" printers in the 30-45 copy

per minute range -- which might be desirable if the unit cost per page is low enough. The 8500 is about 2-1/2 to 3 cents per two sided sheet, including paper and toner, but without depreciation or maintenance (which has proved to be quite minimal -- the printer is now over 5 years old with only a fuser unit replacement about a year ago for \$250...)

Perfect binding is done with a Bindfast 5, a simple hot-melt glue binder that does not "shred" the spine. The binds are barely acceptable. Trimming is done with a hand powered, 12" guillotine cutter. I have recently found that Fiddlar-Doubleday can produce 25 copies (their minimum quantity) for about the same cost that I would charge to do 10 copies, so I now let F-D do the bound galleys -- and I reserve my equipment for sample (one or two copy) quantities only.

I can score cover stock, if needed, using a scoring blade in a Fiskars rotary paper trimmer. Plastic lamination, if desired, is applied with either a "cold" Xyron laminator (hand cranked -- Brother sells an electric powered model using the same design). I don't often laminate stuff, so I more frequently use the Xyron to apply adhesive to items I wish to "paste down". (The Bindfast 5 requires too many "set up" copies to reliably align and bind printed covers to the book block. Since I'm usually only doing one or two copies, I bind the book block into a plain, unprinted cover, then wrap the actual cover (printed on paper rather than cover weight material) to the book with the Xyron adhesive.

I also have a small (12") "pouch" laminator from USI.

This "small office" system isn't particularly economically efficient. If I had it to do over again, I'd get a larger guillotine cutter -- at least 15" or more probably an 18" -- still, hand powered. If I had room, I might look for an 18 to 19" used powered cutter from a printing equipment dealer. (Trimming books is hard work.)

For binding, my "cost-no-object" choice would be a Fastback tape binder with the special "perfect bind" tapes (along with their hand cover trimmer/scoring device). The Fastback tapes give a superior bind and even have a "lay flat" benefit when used with a wrap around cover.

High volume set up:

Examining a larger operation, one of the service providers I regularly use (not F-D) has several Xerox Docutech (network) copiers and an IBM Infoprint 6000 "web" laser printer. Color work is done with one of the higher-end Xerox 30-50 cpm copiers or with a Heidelberg DI offset press (when the quantity is above 300-400 copies). Bindery equipment includes a 24" wide single side plastic laminator (for covers) and a medium capacity semi-automated book binding system with 3-knife trimmer. They also have punches for comb, wire-o, and other mechanical bindings, staplers/stitchers, folders, large cutters and other print shop/bindery equipment to support their operation. I would estimate that their total equipment investment easily exceeds \$2 million.

If I were setting up a "modest volume" (under 1 million impressions per month) system, I'd look at some of the smaller, networkable Xerox copier printers (in the 85-100 cpm category) or competing machines from Minolta-Konica, Ricoh/Savin, Canon and other Japanese firms. Some of the copiers in the 50 to 65 cpm range can be "co-joined" to share the load with a network RIP attached. These dual system machines offer better "up-time" reliability, assuming that both copiers don't suffer a failure at the same time. Docutechs are probably too expensive for an operation running under 1 million impressions per month.

Color work could be handled with any of the Xerox or Canon machines -- estimated volume and available pricing/service contracts would "rule". There are many machines ranging from 8-10 up to 60 copies per minute. Even the slowest ones will probably handle the volume needed for a modest sized POD operation. Look for models with a fairly straight paper

path that can handle "140 lb. Index" or "80 lb. cover" stock. (Effectively, something equivalent to the thickness of "10 point" C1S cover, the standard for books. While some copiers might be able to actually feed "real" C1S 10 point stock, the coating is designed for offset printing and is unlikely to allow toner to adhere particularly well.) Look for a machine that uses little or no "fuser oil" -- laminates don't stick as well to the 'oily' coating left behind.

There are quite a number of "low cost" binding machines (under \$10,000) to choose from. The choice is mostly a matter of price and quality of the equipment plus the quality of the service available from your local dealer. It is unlikely that a used binding machine would make a good bargain (it took me months to figure out exactly how my Bindfast 5 worked and to repair and adjust it to operate more or less as intended). I would expect that any printer turning in a machine would have (1) either beat it to death or (2) had a financial failure and possibly would have sabotaged or otherwise damaged the machine before having it repossessed. (I had this occur when I took an air-feed folder in on a "trial" basis ... the previous owner, a failed "instant print" shop, had mistreated the machine, bending the frame. It could not be made to make a straight fold.)

For other bindery equipment -- the operative strategy, in my opinion, is to avoid equipment distributed by Michael Business Machines. The printing franchise I once owned "loaded" the package with MBM bindery equipment and most of it was not very durable or very useful (terms used instead of the expletive that first comes to mind). The MBM folder (friction feed) was difficult to setup, marked the sheets like crazy, and rarely made a clean fold. The expensive, optional "scoring wheels" were impossible to align, and generally cut rather than scored the stock. Within a year I purchased a German-made machine sold under the Pitney-Bowes label that was easy to setup (with electronic controls), relatively quiet (it had a sound enclosure), and, with its larger, softer, double feed wheels rarely left marks on the stock. For a folder, I'd look at those from Baum, in particular -- especially an airfeed model if you expect significant folder volume. Otherwise, a simple to setup unit with electronic controls might prove desirable. The MBM-Triumph 18" power cutter, within three years, had the frame warp, making the hand-powered clamp difficult to operate. I'd look at a smaller Challenge cutter-- possibly used or "remanufactured." The Challenge units are heavily made and are nearly indestructible. As for booklet makers and/or collaters, take in new or used machines on a "30 day trial" only and throw plenty of work at them during that period to see if they are easy to use and reliable.

Finally, if someone tries to sell you a "jogger" -- forget it. I quickly learned how to pick up a stack of paper and 'fluff' air between the sheets and jog papers more quickly by hand than the jogger ever could. In my shop, the jogger became the "really expensive job jacket holder" by the printing press. I doubt if we turned it on more than 5 times in 3 years -- and 4 of those times were to "try it out."

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abc5
External

📧 (Msg. 6) Posted: Wed Dec 10, 2003 5:04 pm
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Since: Jul 06, 2003
Posts: 51

On Tue, 09 Dec 2003 19:58:28 GMT, Stella Abzug <abzug@soda.pop.com> dijo:

> ... and run cover stock
>through a Xerox Tektronix 780 laser printer (that handles up to 13 x 19
>stock).

Can you successfully laminate the covers produced by this machine? If so, do you have any recommendations for a good, but inexpensive, laminator to do it?

What would you estimate your cost per cover (1 side, cover stock), including toner and assuming full color coverage of the sheet at 13 x 19 less margins required by the device? (My books are typically full US letter size with spines up to 1", so I need an image area of at least 11 1/2 by 18 1/2.)

There's one of these on eBay at the moment with an opening bid of \$800 and no bids so far. Just curious whether it would be worth having to avoid needing to send covers out to a real printer to be printed and laminated.

--

Bogus e-mail address, but I read this newsgroup regularly, so reply here.

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abc5
External

⏏ (Msg. 7) Posted: Wed Dec 10, 2003 5:19 pm
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Since: Jul 06, 2003
Posts: 51

On Tue, 09 Dec 2003 19:58:28 GMT, Stella Abzug <abzug@soda.pop.com> >
dijo:

>Finally, if someone tries to sell you a "jogger" -- forget it. I quickly
>learned how to pick up a stack of paper and 'fluff' air between the
>sheets and jog papers more quickly by hand than the jogger ever could.
>In my shop, the jogger became the "really expensive job jacket holder"
>by the printing press. I doubt if we turned it on more than 5 times in 3
>years -- and 4 of those times were to "try it out."

I find it would take about twice as long to jog my work by hand as I can with the jogger. I have just a simple, inexpensive table-top jogger. I typically bind 200-300 copies at a time, usually made up of several different titles -- e.g., the last time I printed I did 60 copies of one title, 40 copies each of two other titles, and 100 copies of a fourth title. I do all the printing on the laser, stacking up theunjogged copies on a table until I'm finished printing and ready to start binding. While waiting for the glue pot in the binder to heat up I take all the copies off the table and run them through the jogger, stacking the jogged copies on a roll-around cart. My jogger will hold two copies of a 1" thick book at a time. While one set of two is jogging, I place a divider sheet between the next two on the table and another divider sheet on top of the stack on the cart. By the time I finish, the two in the jogger are done, so I remove them, add them to the stack on the cart, and replace them with the two from the table. My hands are just going back and forth without stopping.

If I had to jog them by hand I would have to take each book about a fourth at a time because they are so ragged as they come out of the laser. The sheets are easily 3/8 inch this way and that, which makes it difficult even to fluff some air into them. The jogger definitely saves me time. In addition, I think I get a better bind because the copies are probably jogged a bit better and more consistently than if I did it by hand.

If I recall correctly, I paid \$50 for mine used a number of years ago.

--

Bogus e-mail address, but I read this newsgroup regularly, so reply here.

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abc5
External

⏏ (Msg. 8) Posted: Wed Dec 10, 2003 6:58 pm
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Since: Jul 06, 2003
Posts: 51

On Mon, 8 Dec 2003 23:29:16 -0600, "rgraham" <rgraham@heart.net> dijo:

>Here is an item that might help in your search. I'd really like to read what
>Marek thinks of this. The cost, the equipment, ect....
>
>http://www.instabook-corporation.com/brochure/brochure_2003.pdf

Interesting setup.

I read through the PDF file, clear to the end where they had the display of books. After I got through laughing at the multicolored vanilla-fudge swirl cover designs (aren't we past the 70s?), I went back and read through it more carefully.

The first thing I noted is that the base unit is \$24,500 and if you want to do books larger than 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 the price goes up to \$30,000.

It appears to be made up of components they bought elsewhere and mounted on a framework. As far as I can tell, the only thing they made themselves is the framework. I'm unfamiliar with the laser printer on the left, but I'm sure it's off the shelf, HP or Xerox, probably. The binding machine is harder to discern from the pictures, but considering the space it takes up it's probably something like a Bindfast 5. And the paper cutter is a Martin-Yale manual cutter.

I doubt the printer costs more than a couple thousand, you can get a Bindfast 5 brand new for about five thousand, and the cutter sells for about \$800 new. Given those facts, it seems that they want a pretty stiff price for their frame.

Oh wait ... there's a computer with it too. That would cost close to a thousand more. And it comes with "highly specialized software," too.

Evidently it comes with a color printer as well, but I didn't see that in the pictures. Probably a separate unit. Maybe they couldn't make the frame big enough to hold it.

No mention is made of the cost of consumables.

From the pictures it appears that it is not an in-line setup. In other words, you can't just push a button and come back a few minutes later to find a finished book in an output bin. It looks as though you have to print the guts on the laser, then print the cover on the color printer. Then you have to put both in the binder and bind the book. And finally, you have to put the bound book in the cutter and trim three edges. Not that this is a disaster for a beginning small publisher starting out, but I just wanted to point out that it is probably not as automated as the sales hype would lead you to believe.

On a more positive note, there appears to be some kind of network of other InstaBook owners that you can get into. Apparently the company also makes available other titles, either from other members of the network or themselves. I suspect they have laid out and set up a bunch of out-of-copyright classics, probably in PDF format, that you can add to your sales catalog. There might be some benefit to this, especially for those who want to try the kiosk model.

I do take exception to the statement that the system will pay for itself by selling just a couple of books a day. Assuming a five-year amortization at 8% interest, the monthly payments would be \$500 even for the model that does only half-letter size books, and more for the other models. That's nearly \$17 a day. I don't know how much profit you can make per book, but \$8.50 profit per copy on a half-letter size book is pushing it for most publishers, if you ask me.

Instead of spending \$25-30,000 on this setup, I suggest doing without

their framework and buying the components yourself separately. The black and white laser could be replaced with a Laserjet 8000, easily available pretty fully decked out from eBay for under \$1,000. Cost per impression is under half a cent, including paper. You already have a computer, and probably enough "highly specialized software" to do the layout, so that will cost you nothing. Farm your covers out for 50 cents or so each. Get a Bindfast 5 on eBay for under a thousand and the cutter for about \$500. You're in business, with equipment that is pretty much the same quality as the InstaBook, and for under \$2,500. Plus you can probably afford to pay cash for that small an amount, so you have no payments or interest charges.

I think the part about the InstaBook that puts me off most is the price, which is outrageous for what you get. I realize I'm pretty tight with a buck, but damn!

--

Bogus e-mail address, but I read this newsgroup regularly, so reply here.

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abzug

External

📧 (Msg. 9) Posted: Thu Dec 11, 2003 1:50 am
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Since: Jul 11, 2003
Posts: 130

In article <a3gftvkvik12c1u4e2j188q3m89rrbis0@4ax.com>, Marek Williams <abc@example.com> wrote:

> On Tue, 09 Dec 2003 19:58:28 GMT, Stella Abzug <abzug@soda.pop.com>
> dijo:

>

>> ... and run cover stock
>> through a Xerox Tektronix 780 laser printer (that handles up to 13 x 19
>> stock).

>

> Can you successfully laminate the covers produced by this machine? If
> so, do you have any recommendations for a good, but inexpensive,
> laminator to do it?

>

I have laminated output from this printer, but don't make a regular practice of it. I use a cheap 'pocket' laminator or a Xyron cold adhesive laminator. The cold adhesive isn't suitable for "commercial" work (it is a bit hazy), but the pocket laminations are ok. You need to laminate two covers back to back. The largest pockets, however, are slightly larger than 11 x 17, so the cover needs to be trimmed down somewhat first. Also, the thinnest laminate is a 3 mil product ... that's too thick. (It also has a tendency to curl.) Like I said... I make "sample copies" only.

I'd look at the USI plastics laminators. Look for a single side, heat laminator that can handle 1 to 1-1/2 mil polyester or nylon laminate. The cheaper polypropolyne (sp?) will cause the covers to curl. They have "school" quality laminators at very reasonable prices (sold in kits with necessary supplies) and models in the "better" and "best" categories -- with "best" machines suitable for commercial quantity production. New machines range up from \$750 or so...

> What would you estimate your cost per cover (1 side, cover stock),
> including toner and assuming full color coverage of the sheet at 13 x
> 19 less margins required by the device? (My books are typically full
> US letter size with spines up to 1", so I need an image area of at
> least 11 1/2 by 18 1/2.)

>

The 780 will disappoint here. Although it can accept a 13 x 19 sheet, the `_length_` that it will image remains at about 17-3/4 inch. A limitation I discovered when I was trying to make a 18-1/2 inch dust jacket. Bummer. The later 790 or whatever followed it, the 7700 or something-- I lost track of the model number changes... might have a

longer maximum image size... got to the Xerox Tektronix web site and carefully read the specs.

I estimate that my full coverage cover images cost around 65 cents to about a dollar out of pocket for toner and paper. Figuring the cost of other consumables, such as the fuser oil unit, is complex due to the varying life span of all the different parts. I'd guess those parts might end up costing another 40 cents per print or so. (I'd have to dig out the manual, but there's the fuser unit... and the fuser oil unit, a drum (eventually), waste toner recovery container (you might be able to empty and re-use that, but the toner is rather vile stuff, is really messy, and is considered (in California) as a Hazardous Material. And some other part that works for some time. Xerox/Tektronix has a neat way for their machines to "cut" an electric connection when they reach the end of their life, making the printer inoperable until the component is replaced. (Now that I'm aware of the "trick" it might be possible to put a temporary "shunt" in to restore the power while waiting for parts.)

- > There's one of these on eBay at the moment with an opening bid of \$800
- > and no bids so far. Just curious whether it would be worth having to
- > avoid needing to send covers out to a real printer to be printed and
- > laminated.
- >

Probably won't do it for you. I'd also be somewhat leery of a used printer of this class. These are really complex machines and they have a lot of user replacable parts that must be replaced from time to time. A "bargain" machine might have \$3000 worth of repairs waiting to surprise you. (see my remarks above.)

The printer is also big. The kind truck driver that delivered it helped me uncrate it in my garage and then carry the printer (without all the packaging) up the flight of stairs into my house. Only later, when trying to sooth my sore muscles did I read the "unpacking instructions" that suggested that three people handle the machine. It weighs about 250 lbs in operating trim and close to 300 when packed for shipping. The chance of an eBay shipper (unless they're a dealer) packing and shipping this monster to avoid damage is slim.

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rgraham

External

Since: Jul 13, 2003
Posts: 10

(Msg. 10) Posted: Thu Dec 11, 2003 3:24 am
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Thanks for the feedback on the Instabook system. When I first saw this add, I was very interested. The one thing that caused me to pause was I remembered reading posts from you in the past. It seemed to me what they did is exactly what you explained. Why the cost was so high seemed odd to the impression I got from reading your other posts. Thats why I was looking forward to reading what you thought. It seems you like to use the bindfast 5. Would you mind checking out this webpage and posting your thoughts on this binder? Thank you.

<http://www.exactbind.com/>

Rusty

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rgraham

External

Since: Jul 13, 2003
Posts: 10

(Msg. 11) Posted: Thu Dec 11, 2003 3:26 am
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Stella, you don't seem to care for the bindfast 5? Would you mind checking this webpage out and posting your thoughts on this binder that is similar to the bindfast 5?? Thank you

<http://www.exactbind.com/>

rusty

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abzug
External

(Msg. 12) Posted: Thu Dec 11, 2003 7:17 pm
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Since: Jul 11, 2003
Posts: 130

In article <mcWbb.35\$gO.4@fe10>, "rgraham" <rgraham@heart.net> wrote:

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> <http://www.exactbind.com/>
>
> Rusty
>
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To make it clear, I'm not thrilled with the Bindfast 5. It's adequate -- that's about all. It is difficult to do "one off" books -- you need to be highly observant and learn to adjust the machine with great finesse to make a single book -- and if you're trying to bind on a preprinted cover, it's truly plain, blind, dumb luck if you get it right on the first try. (That why I described binding into blank cover stock and applying covers printed on normal weight paper with an adhesive to the 'real' cover.) In practice, the Bindfast requires 3 to 5 "set up" copies to get all the adjustments just right in a production environment. Even then, because the spine isn't "roughened" the binding adhesive has less holding power than more advanced binding machines. (I've had many copies start coming apart after only a few minutes of handling. Sometimes the whole cover falls off -- can often be fixed with a hot melt glue gun.

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Although expensive, my "if I had the opportunity to do it over" approach would be to go with the Fastback system from Powis Parker. See <http://www.powis.com/index/index.asp> for details on their system.

The negative aspect of the Powis Parker Fastback is the use of binding tapes... both the cost, an inventory requirement where 3 or 4 sizes are required to be kept for various thicknesses of books, and lowered durability when smaller books are cut down. (If you look at the Fastback binding tapes, you'll see extra adhesive for about 1/4 inch on each end. If you print on 'letter size' paper and trim to a typical 6 x 9 book, then you cut off this extra adhesive. Still, the tapes seem to have stronger and more durable glue than the Bindfast machine.

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My original do-it-yourself binding approach simply followed up on the basic concept of the "padding clamp" method. Being cheap, I didn't spend the \$100 to \$250 that padding devices cost ... I simply made up my own with a couple of roughly 12" long pieces of 3 x 3 aluminum angle bar purchased from a hardware store along with a set of "C" clamps and pieces of thin "hardboard" aka "Masonite" (a pressed wood and resin product).

To make the clamping system: Cut two 8-1/2 x 11 (or corresponding metric size) sheets out of a "Masonite" hardboard sheet. Be sure to trim these verly slightly undersized -- no more than about 1/16 inch. (This facilitates 'jogging' the book block and cover boards together.)

Place two or three extra pages on the front and back of the book block.

If the book is not very thick, you can bind several book blocks at one time, although I would avoid letting the stack get much beyond 3 inches.

If necessary, trim the book block(s) to the spine position. (e.g. if you printed a 6 x 9 book on 8-1/2 x 11 paper, you'll probably trim about 1-1/4 inch off the long edge on the side where it will be bound.)

Fold two sheets of paper in half, lengthwise. Put them around the 'spine edge' of the Masonite sheets. (These are to keep glue off the Masonite.)

Assemble the Masonite and book block(s) and jog together so that the spine is straight and square. You should end up with a "sandwich" with a Masonite sheet top and bottom separated by the book blocks.

Set the "sandwich" on its spine edge on a flat, clear table or counter, holding it all together with one hand. Then, set the two angle bars with a flat edge against the top and bottom sheets of Masonite. Having previously opened a C-clamp to be slightly larger than the combined thickness of the sandwich and angle bars, slip one around the sandwich and bars, leaving the "twist" end sticking over the edge of the table. Tighten the C-clamp until the sandwich and angle bars are controlled (won't fall apart) -- but not really tight (yet).

Position the second C-clamp, ensuring that the pressure points are as well in from the edge -- about 1/4 the length of the spine or so. Tighten the second C-clamp firmly. Loosen, reposition, and tighten the first C-clamp as necessary.

Flip the clamped sandwich on its side so it's supported by the C-clamps and an edge of the Masonite on one side. Place the set up on old newspapers or some other disposable materials (The next step will be "drippy.")

Optional step: use a power drill, Rotozip, or Dremel tool with a metal brush attachment and lightly run it across the spine area to roughen the paper. This exposes more paper fibers to "grip" the glue. There's no need to overdue this step. It makes a lot of paper dust -- wear a dust mask. (I only tried this step once and didn't feel that it was worth the extra effort or mess.)

Starting with a slightly thinned mix of Elmer's White Glue (thinned with water at about a 1 to 3 or 1 to 4 proportion) use a cheap bristle paint brush and thoroughly cover the spine with a thin coat of glue. The glue should be thin enough to penetrate the spine, not just sit up on the top. Let dry. Repeat the process with a thin coat of full strength glue and let dry. Apply another one, two, or three coats, allowing the spine to dry between them. (The process can be speeded up using a small fan pointed at the spine.)

Be sure that the spine is thoroughly dry before removing the clamp. (If you rush this process, you will end up with a wavy spine.)

Finally, cut the book blocks apart with a dull knife. (A metal spatula, or "padding knife" is appropriate.) Here you'll find the extra "sacrifice" sheets come into play to avoid damaging "live" sheets of the book block. It's ok to leave a blank sheet or two at the front or back of the book block. You can clean up any torn sheets with an Exacto knife... work with care.

Measure your spine and layout the cover to the proper spine width... add about 2/100" inch for the thickness of the cover stock. Print the cover onto 10 point stock (80# cover or 140# index), score along the front and back spine (take care to 'fit' the cover closely around the book block). Prefold the cover along the spine and recheck the fit.

Attach the cover to the book block by applying a generous bead of hot melt glue (get a hot melt glue gun from a hardware store and hot melt

glue sticks -- the light weight models sold in many stationery stores probably won't do so well). Squiggle the bead of hot-melt glue as you apply it, but try not to get up on the sides of the "trough" created by the cover. Very quickly, before the glue cools, place the book block into the folded cover and press hard against the glue. This can be facilitated by pressing the spine against a hard flat surface (the table) as you push the book block down against the spine. After about 10 seconds or so, you can set the book flat. Put a modest weight on the book. (I usually set 4-5 other books on the just-bound book.) Leave the book to sit for 10 minutes or so -- until the hot-melt glue is thoroughly cool.

Trim the books to size. Take care to check the alignment of the cover against the alignment of the inside pages. Measure everything twice, then make your cuts. (You'll need a guillotine cutter that can handle the thickness of the book and cover stock. I usually use some chipboard (or waste cover stock) to protect the actual cover from the cutter clamp and to ensure that the 'down' edge cuts cleanly.

Gently open the front/back covers and use an Exacto knife to trim excess glue along the spine, if necessary.

This method is cheap, reasonably effective, and time consuming. I had to start to make up sample copies a day or two before they were needed... something that was not always practical -- that's why I got the Bindfast 5.

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The Exactbind machine:

From what I can see on their web site, their machine (assuming it works reasonably as well as advertised) looks like a pretty good solution. It is somewhat less expensive than the Fastback system (about \$5k) and it doesn't depend on expensive binding tapes. It appears that you don't need any materials from the vendor, other than adhesive, for "regular" perfect bound books. (Their machine even seems to have a means to roughen the spine -- a good addition to the process.)

The possibility of making hard cover books is interesting. You would be required to buy their adhesive sheets (end papers) to attach the cover boards, but it seems like it would make a "regular" adhesive bound hardcover. I'm not sure how durable the binding would be in hard cover, but it beats doing it completely manually!

I would observe that their binding machine/system corresponds quite closely to the traditional way that book binders used to work in the "old days" -- with book block clamps that allowed them to move the work around as they applied glue, etc. to bind the book. The only missing aspect is the ability to 'feather' the spine so that the glue gets applied to the sides as well as the edge of the sheets. (And, of course, Smyth sewing is "out.") Since the hard covers (apparently) don't need to use "special" (read expensive) stock from the vendor (as many heat-bind systems do) you aren't limited to the cover design nor to the particulars of the case material, thickness, etc.

Although my budget isn't large enough to buy their system as an experiment, I'd sure be interested in hearing the experiences that a user might have with their system. It truly looks like they've made one off book binding or ultra-ultra-short production runs reasonably practical. (Clearly, in a professional production system, a larger (\$10-15k) system would be more productive. I sincerely doubt that the "books per hour" productivity suggested in the Exactbind information is realistic. (But such exaggeration is common in this type of equipment. The Bindfast 5 claims "360 books per hour" -- a more honest "full production" mark might be more like 30 books per hour--- and that only applies the glue and covers. All the other steps take additional time.)

Thanks Rusty for finding this alternative.

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rgraham
External

(Msg. 13) Posted: Fri Dec 12, 2003 2:01 am
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Since: Jul 13, 2003
Posts: 10

Doing a quick search for special computer programs to assist in making books. Here is one that is reasonable. I think, this along with Indesign or Pagemaker would be all the special software you'd need??

<http://www.bluesquirrel.com/clickBook/index.html>

Rusty

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rgraham
External

(Msg. 14) Posted: Fri Dec 12, 2003 2:04 am
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Since: Jul 13, 2003
Posts: 10

Stella, your post on book binding by hand made me remember finding a webpage a year or so back on this subject. Check this webpage out. From what you explained this is what I pictured you were doing?? Very interesting.

Rusty

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rgraham
External

(Msg. 15) Posted: Fri Dec 12, 2003 2:13 am
Post subject: **Re: Best printer model for printing book covers is?**
Archived from groups: per prev. post ([more info?](#))

Since: Jul 13, 2003
Posts: 10

Stella, Thanks for your comments on the Exactbind. Like you said, you had not used this machine before, but with your experience you have a sound idea of what it could do. I'd say its moved up a notch or two on my list of plans. thank you.
Rusty

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