Printing Jargon

Understand the Language of the PrePress

If you're a customer or a sales rep of a company and you have a print project, you will be working with someone from a printing house. Companies in all industries have their own unique jargon or words they use for the department that they are in. Here are the definitions of some words a PrePress person might use in a conversation. *(Click on blue links to see animated examples).*

An image on a screen

Aliasing - the process in which smooth curves and other lines become jagged because an image is enlarged or the resolution of the graphic image is reduced. A graphic's edge with a stair step appearance.
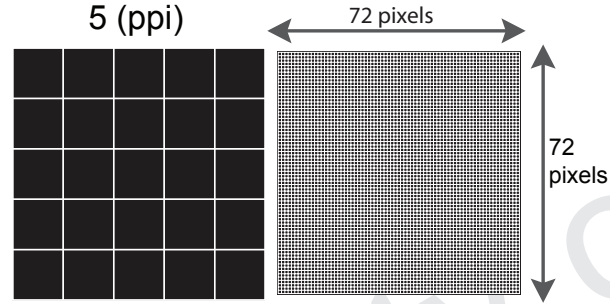
Antialiasing - a graphic effect that eliminates or softens the jaggedness of low-resolution images. The jaggedness is reduced by surrounding them with intermediate shades of gray colour which cause the eye to believe the edge is smooth.

Lossy - a data compression method characterized by the loss of some data. *(Ex. Jpeg file).* It is usually used to make the file smaller and eliminate unnecessary information. However, some valuable image information may be lost in the process and causes unwanted dots to appear in the file. Lossy files are commonly used on the Web.
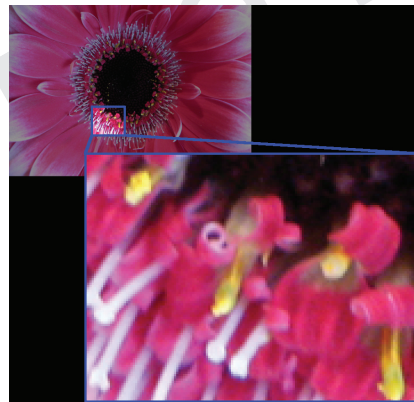
Lossless - refers to a type of data compression in which no information is lost. *(Ex. Tiff file).* These files are generally larger than a lossy file and quality is preserved. A lossless file is a good choice to send to the local printer.

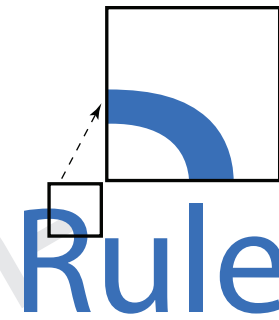### Pixels Per Inch (Resolution) - also known 5 (ppi)

as PPI, this refers to the resolution measurement of the image. For example, 300ppi would be 300 pixels by 300 pixels. A low resolution would be 72ppi which is what is seen on the computer screen. A good quality image in a document that will be printed by a print house should be no less than 300ppi. This is considered a high resolution.

Raster - refers to a photograph or image that contains pixels or little coloured dots. As you enlarge the image you can see the dots more clearly and the image becomes more blurry or pixilated.
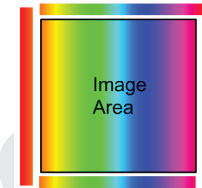
Vector - an image that is created in a drawing program; examples are type or a logo. You can make the object any size you like and it will always maintain its smooth curves. The edges never lose their shape or become blurry.

Additional work done by a PrePress person

Bleed - images and/or page data that extends beyond the trim marks on a page. When the data extends beyond the page on all four sides this is know as a "full bleed". The excess bleed is trimmed away to make it appear that the page data extends across the full page. If bleed was not used when the page is cut on the trim marks, a small white gap on the edge might be seen. A ¼″ to an ⅛″ bleed is generally used. *Bleed*

Burn - to expose an image onto a plate using either a contact frame or a computer to plate device *(See CTP)* and a light source or laser. The negative image which is on the film is placed onto the plate in the contact frame. Both have punched holes at the bottom for better alignment. After the film and plate are placed on top of each other the glass of the contact frame is brought down for an air tight seal. Then air is sucked out. Next timer and specifications are set, a curtain around the contact frame is drawn closed, and the plate and film are exposed to ultra-violet light. The light causes the clear area of the film to leave an image on the plate. In the areas where the light cannot pass through "opaque", the coating of the plate is not exposed or burned. After the exposure the curtain is pulled back and the air is let back into the contact frame. The glass of the frame is lifted and the plate and film are removed. The plate is then sent through a cleaning device to remove any excess coating that is not needed and then it is ready for the press. *Burn*

Colour Bar - also known as a control strip, a printed strip with various colours used to control print quality, such as trapping, ink density, dot gain and print contrast. This strip is usually placed outside the "trim" area of a project, as a guide and visual aid for the pressman. One of the many "printer's marks". *Colour Bar*

Crop Marks (Trim Marks)- Printed short fine lines used as guides for final trim of pages within a press sheet. Usually found at the corners of the page about a ¼ inch to an ⅛ inch away from the page's image edge. *Crop Marks*
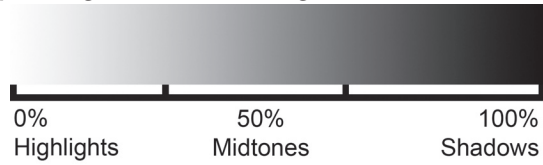
Computer to Plate (CTP) - a device used to produce printing plates directly from computer output without going through the film process. In this case a laser is used to burn the image onto the plate. No contact frame, Imagesetter, or film is required. *CTP*
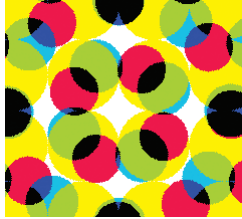
Density - The ability of a material to absorb light or block light. In film, it refers to the opacity of a specific area of the image. For example, because film is a negative, 100% black would be white area when printed and a clear area on the

film would be 100% black when printed.

Halftone - an image generated for use in printing in which a range of continuous tones

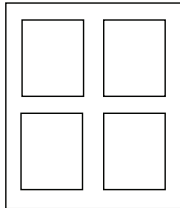0% Highlights   50% Midtones   100% Shadows

is simulated by an array of dots that create the illusion of continuous tone when seen from a distance. Halftone dots vary in size to create the illusion of tone, AM Screening. Halftone dots are arranged in a form of the rosette pattern or screen angles to avoid Moiré. *(See Moiré)*

Imagesetter - a device used to output high resolution images and text onto film. It uses a laser, exposes the film, makes the image areas clear and the non-image areas black. The film is then used to burn an image onto a plate. *(See Burn) Imagesetter*

Imposing - the arrangement of pages on a printed sheet. When the sheet is finally printed, folded and trimmed, the placed pages will be in the correct order. There are several different layouts. Example: sheetwise, work and turn, or work and tumble. *Imposing*

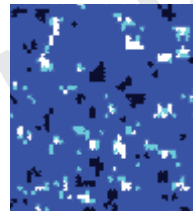**Moiré** - an interference pattern caused by the out-of register overlap of two or more regular patterns such as dots or lines. In the process of colour printing, screen angles are selected to minimize this pattern. This produces a checker board pattern if the screen angles are incorrect. (Example: Image of Brick wall).

Registration - for alignment of plates on a multicolour printing press so that the images will superimpose properly to produce the required composite layout. This is also aided by various printer marks which guide the pressman and help him insure that the colours are lining up and that both sides are even or back up. Registration marks are similar to crop marks, they are used for alignment and later for trimming. Printers marks are given a registration colour which is the four process colours CMYK, this aids the pressman when he checks the colour alignment. *Registration*

Stochastic Screening - a method of halftone creation in which the size of the dots remains constant, but the dot's randomness or closeness together varies. Also know as Frequency-modulated or FM Screening. This form of dot is becoming more popular because the dots are smaller (measured in microns), uniform (reducing dot gain), and screen angles can be eliminated and moiré is reduced. (*See Moiré).*

Stripping Film - to manually assemble individual film negatives into flats for printing. The individual film pages or one big sheet is stripped and placed on the back of a carrier sheet such as golden rod which may have a grid; this grid is use in conjunction with the crop mark on the film and a light table to align the film correctly on the golden rod. After the imposition is correct, a hole or window is cut (for when the image and film are together for imaging in the contact frame) in the carrier sheet and any imperfections are covered with an opaquing ink. This procedure is also known as film assembly. *Stripping Film*
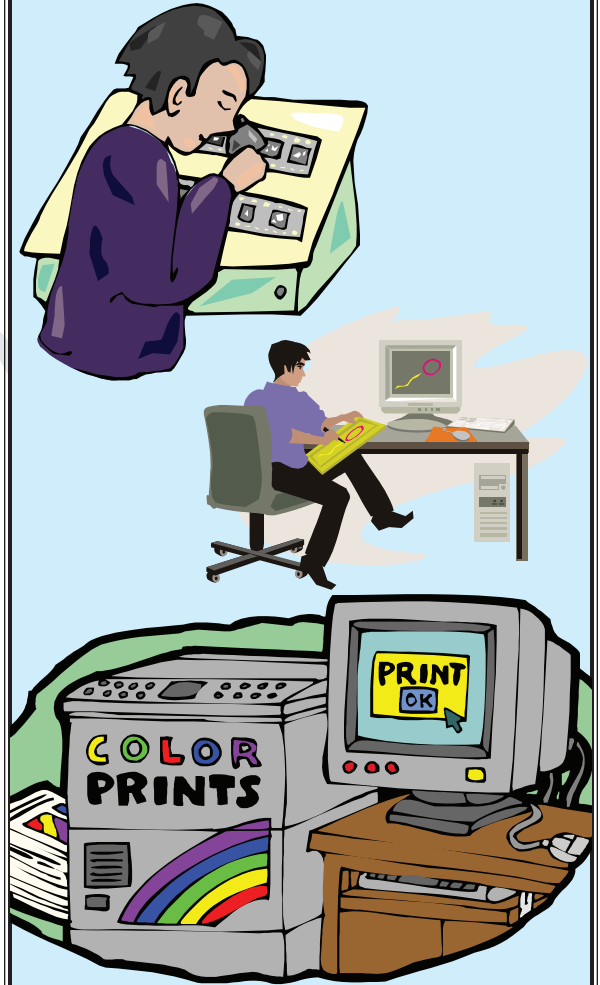
For Part 2, see the next brochure:

"Printing Jargon, Understand the Vocabulary of the Press Person."

For further definitions of Printing Jargon words visit www.theinkrag.com

Printing Jargon

Understand the Vocabulary of the PrePress

Definitions of words used in the PrePress Department On screen and in the PrePress Area

Produced by The Ink Rag