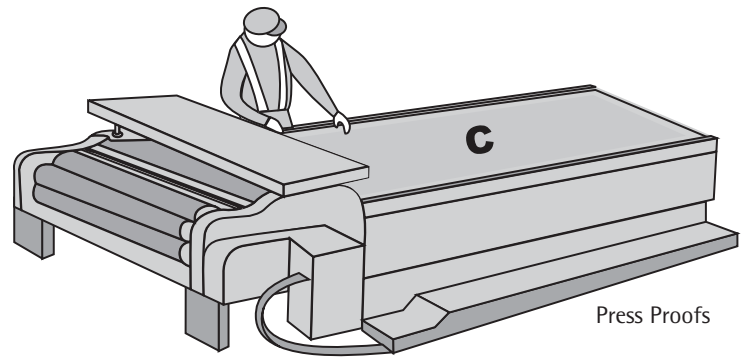
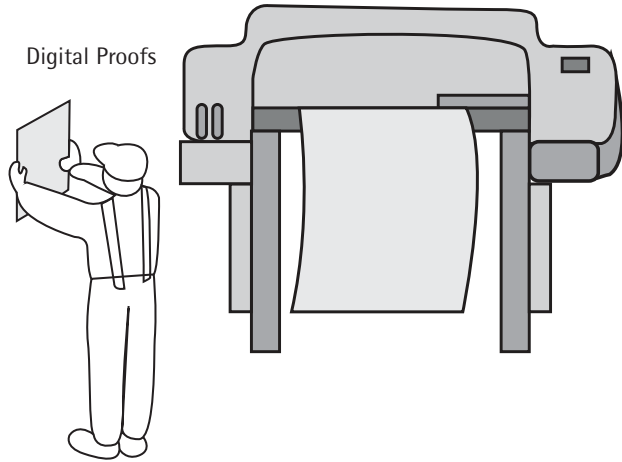


*Digital Proofs vs. Press Proofs*



Press Proofs

### ***☛ What is Press Proof?***

Press proofs are made by specialized printing presses using the actual ink and paper. As a matter of fact, the printing plates used by the press proof will be later used on the actual commercial production of the job. These specialized proof presses are semi-automatic and can only print one color at a time, so to print a standard full-color job, four of these presses are needed. Since the press proof uses actual ink and paper as the real commercial production, the press proof can be finished and bound just like a real piece.

### ***☛ What is Digital Proof?***

Digital proofs come in a wide variety of different flavors. Most digital proofs are produced by inkjet printers. These inkjet printers are not the regular home desktop inkjets; they are professionally manufactured for the graphics arts and printing industry. The paper, ink, software, and hardware used to make a digital proof are much more expensive than a regular home desktop inkjet. Digital proofs come in flats and cannot be finished and bound. They are usually used to make sure the color and other elements are in the proper place.

### ***☛ Which is Better?***

If the files have been proofed for color already (in-house or with your designer) and the contents are not likely to change, a press proof will provide a better sense of how the final product will turn out.

### ***☛ Which is Cheaper?***

If there are going to be changes on the proof, whether another proof is needed or not, the cost of press proof will easily be higher than digital proof. The printing plates used to make press proofs will have to be re-made. While making a small change on one single page may not seem all that big of a deal, it might mean that eight, or 16 pages (depending on the finished size of the job) will be changed at the same time. This is mainly due to the fact that a printing plate (and the paper to be printed on) is many times larger than the finished size of the job; multiple pages are placed on one single plate (and paper) to be printed at the same time.

If there are foreseeable changes on the proof, it will be cheaper and faster to go with a digital proof.

### ***☛ Why Choose Press Proof?***

Press proofs are great for pre-sale, meetings, tradeshow, or demos. Many choose press proof because of its physical resemblance to the final product.

### ***☛ Why Choose Digital Proof?***

Digital proofs are cheaper and faster to produce. For jobs that require multiple rounds of proofing, digital proof

will be the most economical and fastest. Since digital proofs are all software controlled, it has a high tendency to keep the consistency in color rounds after rounds of proofing. For multiple rounds of proofing, digital proof will be the best medium.

### **☛ *More on the Press Proofing Process.***

Press proofs are only made in our overseas factory. It is a very labor-intensive task. The distance and process alone make the turn-around of press proof many times longer than a digital proof.

Press proofs are made by a very different kind of printing machine. Each machine prints one color at a time and is very laborious. To do a 4/C proof, there will be four single-color machines operated by four different teams of press operators - each team/machine handles one of the four colors. This creates a problem when a file has been modified for color values from one round to the next, it'll be very difficult for all four teams and machines to match the colors from the previous rounds.

On a real press, one press operator has complete and exclusive control over all four colors; all four colors are printed on the same machine. Since all four colors are printed in one single pass in less than a second, one single press operator can very easily adjust each of the four colors independently to produce the final collective full color. On the other hand, with press proofing machines, once each color has been printed, it will be impossible for the next press operator to alter the color value that's already been printed. The only way to change it is for the previous press operator(s) to reprint whichever color he was responsible for.

Unlike on a real production press, all four colors are printed by one single press and controlled by one single press operator, the paper is not handled or touched by anybody (except the machine) until the ink is completely dry, the press proofing machine actually lays the paper down one sheet at a time. Not too unlike manual feeder on a desktop laser printer, except on a larger scale. Manually placing paper onto the machine can cause problems in scratches, smudges, fingerprinting, etc., when one press operator hands the printed sheet to the next press operator inline for the next color. This phenomenon has made many customers worry about possible printing defects while there is none.

### **☛ *Conclusion.***

Press proofs are great for jobs where customer needs to find out exactly how the color will look like with real ink on real paper. Something that digital proof still has a little way to catch up. However, press proof cannot compare with the consistency of a digital proof for reproducing the exact same color round after round. However, the escalating cost of press proofing is something to be considered. There had been cases where some customers actually spent thousands of dollars doing press proofs after press proofs. This not only takes up the potential

savings by printing overseas, it also lengthens the overall turn-around schedule by many weeks. Once a proofing method has been chosen, it will not be wise to switch to a different method as this will basically nullify all the color approval progressions from previous rounds of proofs. So, it pays to choose the proofing method wisely before starting a job.

### *Digital Proof vs. Press Proof*

	Digital Proof	Press Proof
Finished and Bound	No. Flat sheets only	Yes
Actual Printing Ink	No	Yes
PMS Ink	No	Yes
Actual Paper Stock	No	Yes
Real Printing Dots and Angle	No	Yes
Consistent Color from One Round to the Next	Yes	No
Cost per Initial Proof	Low	High
Cost per Subsequent Proof	Low	High
Good for Making Changes	Yes	No
Color Accuracy	Simulated; however, it is very close.	99% to the actual printing*
Color Consistency over Rounds	Excellent	Fair
Registration of Colors	Perfect	Fair
Turn-Around Time	3-7 days	10-14 days

### *Common Draw-Backs of Press Proof*

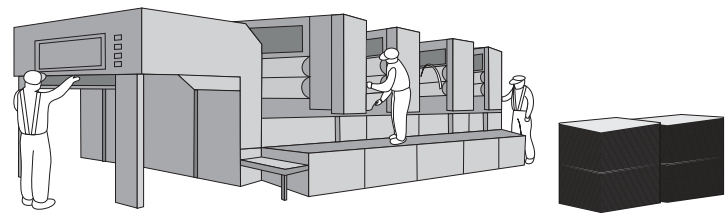
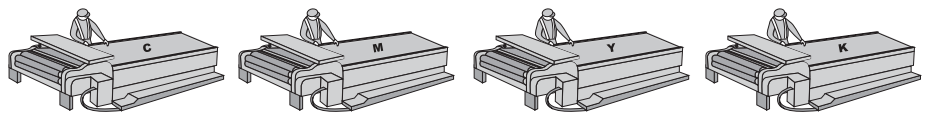
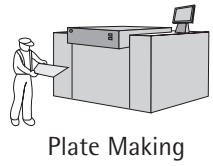
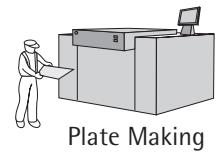
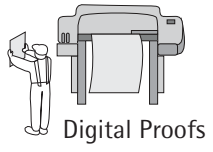
Disadvantages	
Manual Paper Feeding	Pressman can easily cause scratches, smudges, fingerprinting, etc.
Printing One Color per Unit	None of the four pressman will have complete control over the final collective full-color.
Real Printing Plates	Expensive to replace if there are changes to the file.
Binding and Finishing	Hand-made – will be less perfect, less sturdy, and uneven than the actual production piece.

### *Cost Comparison*

	Digital Proof	Press Proof
Initial Cost	\$640	\$856
Cost to Replace One Page	\$10	\$107
Cost to Replace Two Pages	\$20	\$107 to \$214

*Cost estimation is based on 64 page standard size catalog. Price shown here is for reference only and does not reflect actual cost.*

*The Proofing Process: Digital Proof vs. Press Proof*



Established in 1999 and headquartered in City of Industry (Los Angeles County), California, the Beacon Star Company was founded by two co-founders with extensive background in graphics and printing; each of our co-founders has 20 years of printing experience.

Launched in 2002, Cross Blue is a line of services from the Beacon Star Company dedicated to market and service overseas printing (cross = over; blue = sea) in China. The scope of this service unit is nothing short of end-to-end overseas printing service delivered door-to-door to our customers in the States as well as world-wide.

Coupled with our printing knowledge and our partners positioned in various logistics, shipping, and mailing services, we are able to bring our customers in the U.S. a complete line of overseas printing service from prepress in the U.S., printing overseas, export, import, customs clearance, freight forwarding, to world-wide shipping and delivery. In addition, our on-line job tracking service provides up-to-date schedule and details of each job 24/7.

With branch office/operation center in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Taipei, we are poised that our customers in the U.S. will find Beacon Star/Cross Blue the premier service provider for their overseas printing needs.



*Headquartered in City of Industry (Los Angeles County), California*

*For more facts about overseas printing, go to: [www.crossblue.com](http://www.crossblue.com)*



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