

Two-Sided Printing

On Roll-Fed Media



The ColorSpan Legacy Solvent and UV-curable series of printers have both roll-fed and rigid stock capability. A frequently-asked question concerning roll-fed media is how to print on both sides of the material. This document expresses HP's formal position on the subject of two-sided banner printing using these printers.

Official Position on Double-Sided Roll-Fed Printing

Printing on both sides of a roll-fed material is not officially supported on the HP Scitex FB910 (ColorSpan 9840uv), HP Designjet H35000/H45000 Printer series (ColorSpan 5400uv Series), or any ColorSpan legacy printer. The printer has no provisions in hardware or software to accommodate this workflow and it is not recommended.

The remainder of this document offers some general remarks that explain the difficulties surrounding this workflow and the rationale for this position. HP is not responsible for any application of these remarks toward attempts to implement a two-sided workflow.

Printing on both sides of a rigid media is fully supported. Please see Tech Note 2730, Straight Through Paper Path: A Handbook for Users, for additional information on this workflow.

Chief Obstacles to Two-Sided Printing

The primary obstacle to printing on the second side of a roll-fed (flexible) media is aligning the second side to the first. In and of itself this is not that difficult. The printer begins printing at a predictable position on the platen, which could be identified by making a mark (with an ink marker, tape, etc.) on the platen. A system would need to be invented by the user to transfer the location of the leading edge of the image on side one to the blank media of side two. This transferred location marker on side two could then be aligned with the reference mark on the platen and printing of side two then begun.

Of more difficulty is the issue of following an identical process between side one and side two. If, during printing of the side one prints, any off-line prints must be made (prime bars, jet mapping, media feed calibration), then the exact same sequence of prints must be made on side two. Should the printing of side two need to be interrupted by any off-line prints that were not needed on side one, then at minimum one print would be lost. Realignment of side two to an appropriate starting point with side one would again be necessary, as described above.

When printing side one, the media is presumably being unspooled from a factory-wound roll of media. The factory wrap of the original supply roll will almost undoubtedly differ from the wrap that is produced by the automated takeup system on the printer. When the takeup is filled by the side-one prints and transferred back to the supply position to become side two, the rate at which the media will unwind from the roll will therefore be different from the original supply rate, and so a change to the media advance calibration for the printer will likely be necessary. This will require, at minimum, the sacrifice of some amount of media during recalibration of the printer.

Concerns specific to Solvent Printers

The solvent printers use a system of contact heaters to accelerate drying of the printed output. Many media, particularly banner vinyls, feed in one manner when the un-inked side is in contact with the heaters during the printing of side one and in a different manner when the already-printed side one is in contact with the heaters during the printing of side two. It would likely be necessary to completely turn off the printer heaters during printing of side two. Without any additional dryer heat, side two of the print may require additional time to dry or mechanical arrangements to accelerate drying. See also the remarks about changes to the media advance rate between side one and side two.

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