

**Technical Data:** Since I put in a new toner cartridge in my laser printer, I've had more problems with splotchy prints than before. At the same time, I've noticed that outputs from b&w copiers seemed to print better. Also, I continue to struggle with the Artwork Cleanup Paper, sometimes getting great results and other times not.

So in an effort to see if there's a way of having more control of this, I did a side-by-side comparison, and the results are...inconclusive! But read on, here's what I did, and it may give you some ideas on what to try for yourself.

I compared outputs from my laser printer with outputs from a b&w copier at a commercial copy place (Kinko's), and I also compared using the artwork cleanup procedure vs. not using the cleanup procedure.

For the laser printer output, I printed 2 sets of text and solids at 100%, 75%, and 50% black; 1 set was flashed as it was, and the 2nd set was flashed after I used the artwork cleanup procedure. For the b&w copier output, I chose a copier that could print a normal output (the dark-light setting set to the middle), and at least 2 levels lighter and still give me a solid black. Again, I printed 2 sets – one set was flashed as it was, a 2nd set was flashed after using the artwork cleanup procedure.

The cover text was divided into 4 more or less equal quadrants:

- 1) Top Left: b&w copier output, 1 level lighter than normal, no artwork clean procedure.
- 2) Top Right: b&w copier output, 1 level lighter than normal, artwork cleanup procedure used.
- 3) Bottom Left: laser printer output, 60% black, no artwork cleanup procedure.
- 4) Bottom Right: laser printer output, 60% black, artwork cleanup procedure used.

On the actual printed cover, you can vaguely make out a white line dividing the left and right sides.

The back side is as described on the print itself. The left column has not gone through the artwork cleanup procedure, and the right column has. The 2nd row (B&W copier lightest) was made with the copier at 2 levels lighter than normal.

I printed the issue with the red ink, and then again with the black ink (just the back side). These 2 inks are very different in consistency, the red being very loose and the black is stiff.

**Evaluation:** With the looser red ink, the left side (without the artwork cleanup procedure) looked pretty good for the most part. With the stiffer black ink, the splotchy look becomes more apparent on both sides. In both cases, the left side looked better, EXCEPT – note that the laser printer output at 100% black, the right side was better (the side with the cleanup procedure); this is the most obvious on the copy printed with black ink.

So, am I removing too much toner with the cleanup procedure?

I posed my questions to Simon, and he offers several ideas on what might have gone wrong. In most cases, I did as he described, with one exception – after using the artwork cleanup procedure, the extra toner has been removed, and I no longer need to use the blue filter to flash my screen. This I did not know, and since I've pasted all my different outputs onto a single sheet to flash, I flashed everything with the blue filter.

Of his various suggestions, I believe this is the most probably cause of the problems. I will continue to experiment with this, both in my own work, and in future issues of Pudding.

**Coming Attractions:** I would like to see if using the fun foam will improve my results, even with a splotchy screen. So for the next issue, I will use the same screen from the back side, and printing it again with the red and black inks in conjunction with the fun foam. I will also try not using the blue filter, and see what happens there.

Shu-Ju

shuju@fivebats.com  
fingerstothebone.com