

# TECHNICAL GUIDE

## TEXTILE PRINTING

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
DIGITAL VS SCREEN

Second Edition

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. Is special software required to print textiles on a digital press?**

Yes...In screen printing, the films used to produce the print form, use a basic raster image processor (RIP), which is not the equivalent to the RIP used in digital printing. A digital production system is controlled with specialist software for the computer operating system, encompassing the application tools, production processes, and including RIP function.

### **2. How can I be sure that the digitally printed textile matches the screen printed equivalent?**

Process control is the only way to do this reliably. Measure colour values for the screen pastes and printed samples. Use this data in your colour management system for the digital output.

### **3. When is the transition from screen to digital printing of textiles likely to occur?**

It depends on the speed of technological developments within the digital printing community. Projections for the digital printing sectors growth are good. Digital technologies address sustainability, production diversity and trends in the commercial behavior of the consumer.

### **4. Why could digital printing be a replacement technology for screen printing in the textile market?**

Digital printing digitizes prepress with no requirement for screens or cylinders. Workflow simplicity makes digital printing extremely attractive for short runs and bespoke textile printing.

### **5. What is the best way to get first-hand experience of screen printing and of digital printing for textiles?**

If you plan to get into this field, visit both types of printing plants perhaps as part of a partnership arrangement. And go to trade shows to see the technology in action, ideally FESPA Global Print Expo.

### **6. Does screen printing of textiles cost less than printing them digitally?**

Dependent on business model, screen printing as an industrial process creates the capacity to print thousands of metres of fabric, but with no diversity. Each have their own economies of scale. However, to print a single metre of fabric using screen printing is too expensive for most situations.

## **7. Can I combine screen printing and digital printing for textiles?**

There is no reason why not, if the application and economics justify the investment.

## **8. How can I exploit screen printing with my web-to-print system and e-commerce site?**

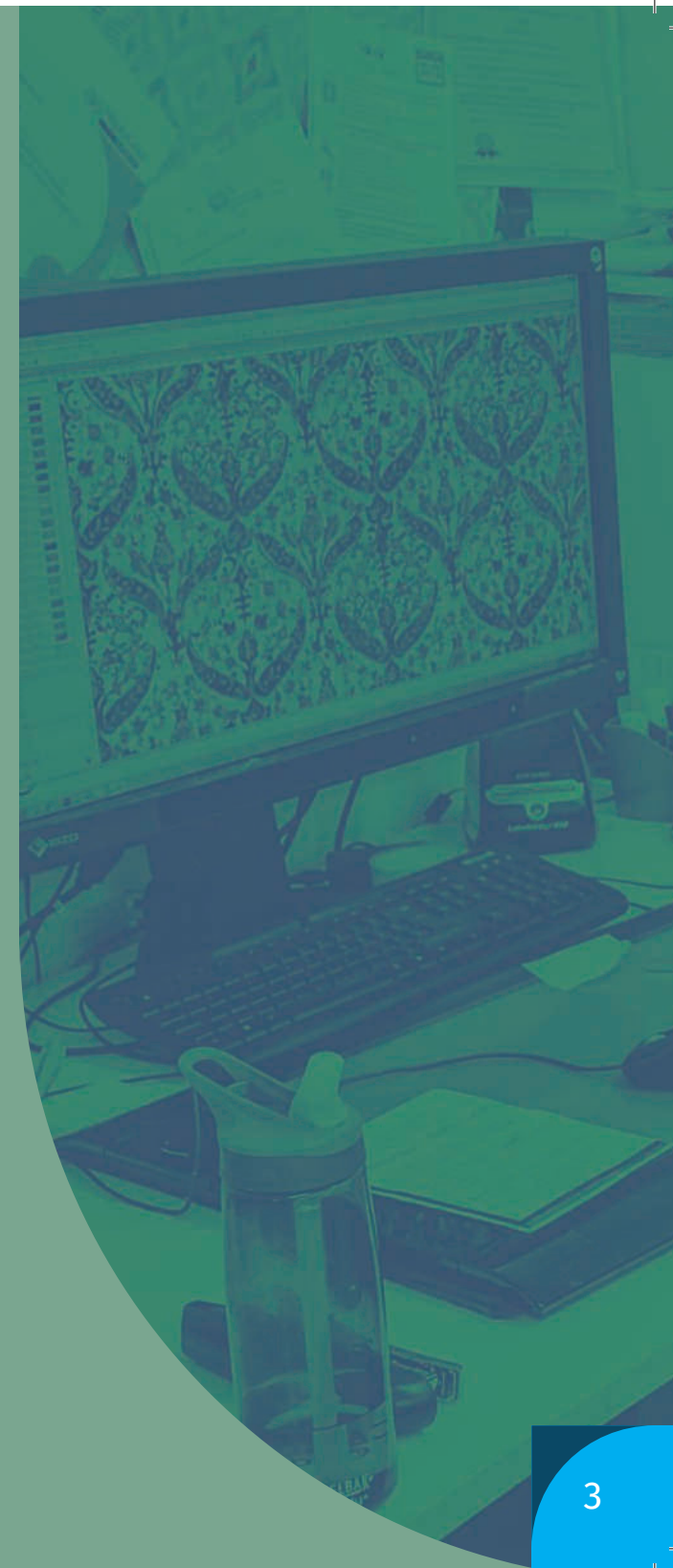
Establish a partnership with a screen printer so that you offer the digital front end system expertise and your partner offers the printing.

## **9. Do digital print companies need to be trained in screen printing?**

Only if they intend to offer screen printing services alongside their digital offerings. That said it is still a good idea to understand screen printing since you are likely to be selling against it, for instance for on demand garment printing.

## **10. Can digitally printed textiles be recycled in the same way as screen printed textiles?**

The final digitally printed output is no different to conventional textiles. If the material itself is to be deinked and prepared for use as a new raw material, there are many developments in the recycling space as options increase in line with the circular economy.



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