

## 5.5 Print processes

There are many print processes available. Selecting the most appropriate largely depends on:

- budget available
- number of copies required
- physical size of media
- print quality.

The common print processes employed in home, office or bureau are listed below:

- **Inkjet printing** is mainly aimed at the home user. It is relatively cheap to set up although costly to maintain. The print quality and resolution can be outstanding. A4 and A3 are the common print sizes although A2 is also available.
- **Laser printing** is best suited to offices as printers are larger, and designed for multiple users via a computer network. Their main advantage is double sided printing (in some cases) and the number of A4/A3 copies they can output quickly.
- **Digital printing** is carried out within a bureau. The machines used are generally too large to sit within offices and require specialist operator knowledge. The print quality and resolution is very good. Printing larger than A3 is easy and can be finished in various ways (coating, binding etc).
- **Lithographic printing** is also undertaken by a bureau. The quality is generally excellent but because of the high set up costs, it is best suited to documents that are required in large quantities.
- **Inkjet large format** can be carried out by both offices and bureaus. They are best suited for large format such as posters, presentation drawings and exhibition materials.

Printing in colour is more complex than modern computer printing technology might suggest. With the number of print processes available and the choice of file types to print from, there are many variables that need to be considered. Working with your printer should help you overcome any difficulties.

PROCESS	QUANTITY	TURNAROUND	QUALITY	SIZE	UNIT COST
Inkjet	1-25	Minutes	Very good	A4-A3+	High
Laser	1-50	Minutes	Very good	A4-A3+	Medium
Digital	1-500	1-2 days	Very good	A4-A3+	Medium
Litho	500+	5 days	Excellent	A4-B1 roll	Low
Inkjet large format	1-25	Minutes	Very good	A2-A0 roll	High

The table above is a general guide for the commonly used print processes