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## Understanding Printer Control & PostScript Language

### **Printer Control Language**

Printer Control Language, or PCL, is a common printing language used widely by many different printer manufacturers. PCL is supported by many different operating systems which allows for the same printer to work in many different environments.

PCL is device dependent. This means that the drivers for this language utilize the printer hardware for creating some of the printed data, usually graphics data such as fill areas, underlines or fonts. This allows the computer to process the print job quickly and efficiently. The printer is then responsible to complete the creation and processing of page data.

Individual printers may perform these tasks differently giving you a slightly different output.

#### **Pros:**

Fast print processing.

Widely supported in many different operating system platforms.

#### **Cons:**

The same print job on two different printers may vary slightly.

Quality of graphics is dependent on the print device.

Not supported in most Macintosh environments.



## **PostScript Language**

PostScript language, or PS, is a common printing language also used widely by many different printer manufacturers. It is used heavily in Macintosh platforms and for graphic applications in several platforms. It is a device-independent page description language developed by Adobe, which is used to print and display pictures and text. PostScript 3 includes many enhancements to older versions of PostScript, including improved image quality and color.

Unlike PCL, PostScript is device independent. This means that the PostScript language creates all of the print data and does not rely on the printer for print data. This allow the output to be consistent when printed on more than one type of printer or print device.

Specifically, the graphic objects will be consistent and in some cases of higher quality than PCL.

### **Pros:**

Graphical objects are often more detailed.

The same print file should print identically on two or more different print devices. (This most beneficial when used for printing drafts on one printer then sending out to a printing company for production.)

### **Cons:**

Print processing can be slow.

Not found in as many platforms as PCL.

Print file and memory requirements are larger.

## **NOTES:**

PPD (PostScript Printer Description file) is a file containing information about a particular PostScript print device's capabilities and restrictions. The information in the PPD is presented via the printer driver.

PCL is a trademark of the Hewlett-Packard Company.