

T-shirts From Your Printer

At a recent conference, I ran into a new (for me) way of using computer graphics to decorate T-shirts. This involved creating a graphic and printing it on standard paper on a laser printer (or ImageWriter, then duplicating the result with a copy machine) and running it through a thermofax machine sandwiched in a specially prepared "thermofax paper". This paper has plastic over fine mesh. The thermofax process melts the plastic in places determined by the graphic design, leaving the open mesh which determines the pattern of the paint on your T-shirt.

The result can be used to screen print T-Shirts in the usual fashion (Check with your art teacher about this part). We saw several examples and the results were very nice! (The presenter didn't even use a "press" as is usually done with screen prints. He just held the t-shirt tightly to the table.) The "screens" can be used to print lots of T-shirts.

The necessary material is available at the following address. The usual screen printing supplies can be used, but you need the special "screen" for the thermofax, available from this company. We understand the cost is about \$2.00 per screen in boxes of 20. A trial kit is available for under \$20.00.

THERMO SCREEN PRINTING

Screen Print Materials for Thermofax using copy machine or Printer output. Ask about trial kit!

WELSH PRODUCTS INC.

P.O. BOX 845

BENICIA, CA 94510

(707) 745-3252 (800) 745-3255 Fax: (707) 745-0330

INSTRUCTIONS FOR IMAGEWRITER II HEAT TRANSFER RIBBON

As you probably know, this involves printing your design or slogan onto paper which is then ironed onto a t-shirt. Some programs, such as BannerMaker, Print Shop for the Mac and others allow for reverse printing of designs. Whatever you printed on the paper is flipped over when ironed onto the t-shirt. Words, for example, will be backwards unless they are backward on the paper.

1. Using a 50/50 T-shirt will probably (?) work best.
2. Print out on regular computer paper, using a program that will reverse the design for transfer. (Bannermaker, Print Shop of the Mac, SuperPrint, MacBillBoard.)
3. Put the iron on the highest setting, and press the transfer onto the T-shirt. Do not rub iron on as this could result in smearing.
4. Turn the T-shirt inside out before washing. Handwash in cold water, adding a small amount of vinegar to set the design.

Four-color heat transfer ribbons can print between 8-20 transfers depending on the size and intensity of the graphic. (Each transfer can only be used once.)

I've been told these ribbons can gum up your printer head and may necessitate cleaning.

Black and white heat transfer ribbons are as cheap as \$9.00 and four color ribbons average \$14.00.

One good source for these ribbons and lots of other material is

Educational Resources

1550 Executive Dr.
Elgin, Illinois 60123
1-800-624-2926

Imagewriter II 4-color heat transfer ribbon.....\$15.95
black heat transfer ribbon..... 8.95

Some of their prices are a little high but they are very reliable.

I trotted back to my school with the first idea (I assumed everyone had heard of the heat transfer ribbons! They hadn't! Several of the teachers in my building were excited until one of them said they had a relative who could get printed t-shirts or \$3.00.

I guess there's always a cheaper way, but none of my relatives can help with this. If your's can't, I hope this will be useful. Besides, I was inspired by a Ziggy cartoon and made myself a t-shirt that says "AS IS" in a fancy font.