



**THE COMICS BAKERY PRESENTS...  
OUR GUIDE TO STUFF  
PART 1**

**PRINTERS FOR COMICS  
(UPDATED APRIL 2009)**

**OFFSET PRINTING**

*Considered the traditional means of "professional printing," Offset Printing is the way most magazines and catalogs are produced.*

*Most print shops use offset printing to produce large volumes of high-quality documents.*

*Although the equipment and set-up costs are relatively high (especially compared to Print on Demand), the actual printing process is relatively inexpensive. You will pay less per book but have to print at least 1,000 books to make it worth it.*

**Lebonfon** (They used to be owned by a big printing company called Quebecor, but are now a separate company)

Phone: (514) 494-5443      Fax: (514) 648-9450  
8000 Blaise Pascal Ave. Montreal, Quebec H1E 2S7  
www.lebonfon.com

[patrickj@lebonfon.com](mailto:patrickj@lebonfon.com)      Patrick Jodoin (Regional Sales Director)

**\*\*RECOMMENDED**

We've used Lebonfon/Quebecor to print most of our individual self-published issues of *Quicken Forbidden*, which are 24-page standard size comic books (known as pamphlets or floppies). They also print the perfect-bound *Jax Epoch and the Quicken Forbidden* trade paperback collections that are published by AiT/PlanetLar and the *Agnes Quill* graphic novel that was published by Slave Labor Graphics.

We also used Quebecor to print the *Friends of Lulu Broad Appeal* books (perfect-bound with nice matte finish covers). They were really helpful about making that book happen with a super fast turnaround, while still producing beautiful-

looking books. They are one the biggest printers in the world, and are based out of Canada. They publish all of DC's comic books, Slave Labor, AiT/Planet Lar and even stuff like *Nickelodeon Magazine*.

Lebonfon/Quebecor certainly aren't the cheapest, but you are guaranteed quality books, printed fast, with professional blueline proofs. If you are going to distribute your comic or book through Diamond (the largest comic store distributor), they offer great shipping deals to the Diamond Shipping centers that could save you money.

The people at Lebonfon/Quebecor are really good about getting you price quotes by fax right away.

Figure it will cost you about \$1,308 for 2,000 copies of a 24-page B&W book with a color cover. But your price will vary depending on your paper stock and how you want the books shipped. There are lots of choices, from newsprint to glossy, and everything in between. For single issue comics we use: 50 pound offset for interior and 70 pound gloss for covers.

In May 2005 we got the following quotes for the last single issue of *Quicken Forbidden*:

1000 books: \$1192.00 (plus shipping)

1500 books: \$1248.00 (plus shipping)

2000 books: \$1308.00 (plus shipping)

A woman named Olga used to be the best person at Quebecor to talk to, because she knew all about the cool printing techniques and alternative paper stocks that the Top Shelf (Goodbye, Chunky Rice) and Highwater Books (Cave In, Kissers) guys use. But I don't know who the best contact is for the trickier comic projects now. Oni Press (SoulWind, Blue Monday) also used them to print a lot of their most popular graphic novels and trade paperbacks. I asked Jaime Rich (Oni's editor-in-chief at the time) about what stocks they use. He wrote the following:

*We print at Quebecor. The specs for most of our books is: offset 50 lbs. interior paper, and Cornwall 1s 10 pts. Cover stock with a matte varnish.*

Of note: Since Quebecor is a French Canadian company, there is a chance you might not get someone who speaks English the first time you call!

**Transcontinental Printing**

Contact: Andre Martin  
Comics & Roleplaying Games Market Team  
93 Champlain Street  
Bromont, Quebec  
Canada  
J2L 3A8  
Toll free: 1-866-534-1076  
Phone: 1-450-534-1076  
Fax: 1-450-534-0972  
E-mail: [martina@transcontinental.ca](mailto:martina@transcontinental.ca)

<http://www.transcontinental-printing.com/en/Capabilities/default.aspx?idmenu=58>

Based out of Canada, they've kind of grown in the major player in comics printing over the past few years. They print most Marvel, Dark Horse and Viz books and often sponsor the NY Comic Con and other industry events.

Johane Matte used them to print her HP Fanzine, and Water Tribe books. The quality of which was very good. Prices seem comparable to Lebonfon and Brenner.

**Brenner Printing**

1234 Triplett  
San Antonio, Texas 78216  
877.349.4024 toll-free  
Fax: 210.349.1501  
<http://www.brennerprinting.com/>

We printed the first 2 issues of the *Quicken Forbidden* comics through Brenner. The quality of the books was good (and the cover stock is a bit thicker), but they made a lot of production mistakes and we received very little compensation for them. This was back in 1995. Over the years I've heard they've gotten better and I would certainly try them again for the right project.

They offer the same Diamond Shipping deal as Quebecor and also specialize in poster printing, magazines, and pamphlets. If you call them, you can probably convince them to print anything.

**Morgan Printing**

02 Hill Ave. Grafton, ND 58237  
Voice: 701-352-0640 Fax: 701-352-1502  
[gary@morganprinting.com](mailto:gary@morganprinting.com)

<http://www.morganprinting.com/>

A small printer that prints lots of regular-size comics.

I've met a few self-publishers who've printed through Morgan, and they have no real complaints. They seem like a really hands-on, small-knit operation that genuinely wants your business.

They also are doing a lot of on-demand digital printing, which can be a good option if you need low print runs at affordable prices.

### **Webcom**

Rep: Susan Ginch

[Susang@webcomlink.com](mailto:Susang@webcomlink.com)

Toll Free 1800-665-9322

<http://www.webcomlink.com/>

Webcom prints most of the manga-sized books for Tokyo Pop.

They specialize in trade paperbacks. Their quality can vary. But the people I've talked to at Webcom all seemed friendly and willing to help. I would certainly consider using them in the future.

### **Small Publishers Co-Op CURRENTLY OUT OF SERVICE??**

<http://www.spcop.com/>

(772) 287-8117

Very good prices, because they "gang-up" press runs to achieve volume discounts. 1,000 16-page books for \$299!

But the quality sucks pretty badly on their "standard books." It's a dirty-feeling newsprint, often associated with "zines." Everyone in the world of alternative comics knows a Small Publishers Co-Op book when they see one. But if you just want to get your work out there, like as a freebie or a handout, it makes sense to use them. Also, they do have choices for slightly better paper, and that can make a big difference.

I've never used them myself, but know that several of the School of Visual Arts comic zines like Inkstains and Dead Air used to be printed through them.

### **Harold Buchholz Print Services**

<http://www.icomics.com/hbps/>

**Order as few as 50 copies with full-color covers!**

## Prices starting at \$219

Harold was one of the first guys to make printing trade paperbacks available to those who might not be ready for Quebecor's prices. He's a much smaller operation, but is super-honest and helpful. Plus, he's just a good person to talk to and get advice from.

We printed our first *Quicken Forbidden* trade paperback through Harold, and it turned out to be a very profitable experience. The cost per book was something like \$5 each, and we sold them for \$15.

On the downside: you get what you pay for, and many of those trades that we printed through Harold have started to fall apart over time (covers falling off etc.). The standard (i.e. cheapest) books also have covers that are laminated on both sides. This is not the end of the world, but does call attention to the way the book was printed. But ultimately you can't go wrong with using Harold to print your first book and get your feet wet.

Last time we did a book through Harold they didn't do digital to plate---so we had to send hardcopy (print out) masters for them to print from. I'm not sure if this has changed or not.

Also, because Harold gets so much business (because he has some of the best prices around), he has made a personal decision to only print books that would be considered "all ages." Obviously what that means can be left to interpretation, since the *Quicken Forbidden* book did feature a guy getting his arm violently ripped off, dogs with decapitated heads, skyscrapers being blown up, etc. But don't be offended if he thinks your book has too much "adult content." It's his choice, and there are other options.

## **PRINT ON DEMAND/WEB PRINTING**

*Extra fancy photocopies that are made on someone's expensive machine and then folded, stapled, and cut down to size for you! "Web printing" can sometimes mean they print your books on a digital fiery (a really expensive color copier).*

Print on Demand allows creators the opportunity to print their comics in quantities as low as one single issue for decent prices. The quality can vary but are usually several steps up from what most copy shops can produce. In the past year or so I've seen Print on Demand books that certainly rival book printed by offset printers.

Some Print on Demand/Web Printing services usually ask that you sign up for some sort of membership before printing your book. But I haven't heard any reasons to be nervous about that. But if that does scare you keep looking, there are new places popping up all the time.

The main thing to know about most Print on Demand services is that they will expect you to provide your book as an all-in-one digital PDF file. You'll want to make sure you read up on how they specifically want their files because it tends to vary from how you would normally lay out your book [in Quark or InDesign] for a traditional offset printer. Don't be afraid to email questions to the printer and ask tech-savvy friends for help!

Cost per book is usually more than traditional printers but you can order a lot FEWER books--which is good if you aren't confident your book will sell 2,000 copies.

**ComiXpress**  
**Contacts: Jodi and Logan DeAngelis**

<http://www.comixpress.com/>

**\*\*RECOMMENDED**

Tell them Dave Roman sent you!

ComiXpress is one of the more popular Print on Demand services that specialize in comics. Products they print can be listed in the ComiXpress online store, with each copy printed and shipped directly to the reader when they place an order.

Because they are so popular they are usually very backed up with orders and sometimes can't make any guarantees on turn-around time. But they say as much on their website.

I used ComiXpress to print my *Astronaut Elementary* mini comic collections, which have full color covers and black & white lineart comic pages that printed nice and crisp. I also produced 100 copies of a book using grayscale-toned interiors and those reproduced perfectly. If you compare all the books in the box the cropping can vary a bit, with some looking sloppier than others. But with

mini-comics I'm a lot more forgiving about stuff like that since it's still a huge step above photocopying, stapling, and cropping the books down to size myself.

They offer a deal where, if you run a full-page ad for their services, they give you a discount. Seems worthwhile if you plan to have a blank page in your book.

The best thing about ComiXpress is their friendly, well designed website, which you can use to get instant price quotes. Since they offer limited options on size and page count it's easy to formulate a plan of action based on their templates.

I've printed mini comics that were saddle-stitched like traditional comics and mini-comics that were perfect bound like tradepaperbacks. Both turned out really nicely.

Comixpress will also sell your books through their website for you!

My only warning with ComiXpress (and most Print on Demand places) Sometimes even 2 months in advance is still not enough time to get your book printed by a specific date! So get your quote and advance proof copy in way sooner than you think you need it.



\*Cover of the first *Astronaut Elementary* mini-comic printed by Comixpress.

**Lulu.com**

**(not to be confused with comic book activists: Friends-Lulu.com)**

A company I actually haven't used yet but have heard good things, especially in regards to their full color comics.

They seem to have much better price points on their tradepaperbacks and graphic novel size books. Prices on shorter comic books actually don't seem like such a good deal. Similar to Comixpress you can also sell your books through their website.

**Kablam**

<http://www.ka-blam.com/>

Another popular Print on Demand place that focuses on comics.

Their rates seem pretty good and they have no set up fees.

I'm a bit of a paper snob and I wasn't crazy about the books I've seen printed by them (mostly traditional sized comics). But that doesn't mean they aren't worth looking into.

## PHOTOCOPIES

Indie-comix at its purist state.

Never rule out printing mini-comics on a copier at your (or a family member's) office! You can't beat those prices. Just make sure to buy a long-neck stapler!

When I was a kid I used to draw comics on 8x11 paper that my mom brought home from her office. And then I'd give the pages back to her and she'd photocopy them on her lunch break and bring them home for me to collate and staple. This was a great learning experience for me as I went through the steps in figuring out how to keep improving the quality of the books I made. Graduating from single sided copies to double-sized...going from stapling the sides of the books to discovering some copiers could print on 11x17 Ledger size, which meant I could fold the books and then staple them in the middle binding with a longneck stapler...investing in color copies for the covers, using paper-cutters or exacto-blades to crop off the white border around the copies to make the books look more professional...it's a hands-on evolution that comes from doing it yourself. All cartoonists can benefit from producing at least one mini-comic or zine in their lifetime. It's a great way to get a sense of process and realize the different possibilities for the kinds of books you can create. Making my own comics as a kid even got me a high-school job working at the Staples copy center because I knew how to do more with the machines than the people working there!

### **Kinko's**

Kinko's are on the more expensive end of the copy shop chain. Mainly because they charge tax on all their copies, and sometimes, additional fees just to use their card system. But being able to use a credit card or ATM on a Self-Service machine can be convenient if you are short on time and aren't the type to carry around a lot of small change. On the plus side, they are usually staffed with at least 1 person who knows how to fix the self-service machines and whose job it is to maintain them.

If you'd rather pay someone to do the copying for you, they usually insist you drop them off and come back later. And they will probably add on service charges that may not be worth it unless you are doing something complicated or fancy. I imagine some people just don't have the patience to do it themselves. And certainly, after working your butt off at the drawing desk to meet a deadline, being able to come back to pre-folded mini-comics can be a well-deserved treat.

## Office Supply Superstores (Office Max, Office Depot, Staples)

The copy centers can vary from store to store, but in my experience, usually they are at least decent. Even though they often have fewer machines available, the prices are almost always better than Kinko's, especially on the self-service machines (which either are coin operated or work on a "trust system").

Most of these stores offer frequent-customer rewards. Sign up for a rewards card, and present it every time you buy paper, make copies, or buy office supplies. Rewards checks and coupons will show up in your mailbox—and you can use them to make more copies!

Since they usually work in shifts at the copy center and alternate between other parts of the store, the staff at Office Supply Superstore copy shops are less experienced with complicated jobs and don't maintain their self-service machines as well. The plus side to this can be that they also pay less attention to what you are doing on the self-service machines (*wink wink*).

## Internet Specials

If you Google "printing" or "copies," you'll get links to tons of places like [www.PrintingForLess.com](http://www.PrintingForLess.com) that will do color copies for like 5 cents each and ship them to you (sometimes for free!) I imagine there is a risk factor, but it's certainly worth a shot if the price is right.

## INK-JET PRINTERS

Most printers for computers these days should be able to do double-sided printing on the right kinds of paper. Experiment with yours and see what it can do. Use standard paper for the insides and a thicker or glossy stock for the covers. I've seen some really amazing looking mini-comics that were produced on people's home computers. It's worth it even to just do a test book before sending files off to a professional printing service.



At one point I was obsessed with making my own videogame system. I spent hours dreaming and planning how it might work.

Places I haven't used

### **Books Just Books**

<http://www.booksjustbooks.com>

Lots of people are starting to experiment with services like web printing and print on demand. I haven't seen too many examples of books printed on demand, but I imagine it can't be worse than Small Publishers Co-Op. The prices alone make it worth investigating. And often you can get full color covers pretty cheap.

My friend Joe Hart had this to say about Books Just Books:

*"They specialize in self-publishing, and low quantity projects. I do not recommend them. They are extremely hard to communicate with and seem incompetent (especially if you have an image heavy project)."*

### **Berryville Graphics**

<http://www.opm.com/>

Mainstream book publisher specializing in publishing everything from *Harry Potter* and John Grisham hardcovers, to the *Lord of the Rings* and Danielle Steel softcover paperbacks. They can handle print-on-demand, which means they can do very small print runs. You can get a price quote right off their Web site, which states "If you want to have as few as 20 or as many as 1500 books printed, we make it cost effective and easy."

I've never used them, but they seem very helpful and professional. Worth looking into.

REMEMBER: These opinions are ours alone. Everyone will have different experiences both bad and good.

For more information, email us at  
[info@comicsbakery.com](mailto:info@comicsbakery.com)  
[www.comicsbakery.com](http://www.comicsbakery.com)