

Printing in the Digital Age
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Summary by Emily Mathews

Digital printing has come into the fashion industry hard and fast. Introduced in the 1990s, digital printing is the present and the future of applying prints to textiles. Brooks explained that in most cases digital printing is easier and faster than older methods of printing such as roller printing or screen printing. One of the advantages of digital printing includes being able to use a multitude of colors. With screen printing, you have to have one screen per color and screens can cost upwards of five hundred dollars each. Another advantage is that virtually anyone can print digitally. There are websites that anyone can upload their pattern to and the company will print it on your choice of fabric for a fee. This is possible because there is little to no minimum amount necessary. This also makes it easier for small-scale designers who might not have a large order. Of course there are going to be downsides to this technology as well. Digital printing requires specialty fabric. This fabric is expensive and has a shelf life. Because of this, it is not always readily available. It is also limited to a specific width. These printers are only 45-52 inches wide.

Even with these disadvantages, the digital printing market is expected to grow. More advanced technology with digital printing such as printing different finishes on fabrics will expand the market. Within the next decade, it is estimated that ten percent of fabrics will be digitally printed.