

# What is the Difference Between Direct Thermal and Thermal Transfer Labels?

*Northern Label Systems, specialists in supplying high quality labels explain the differences between Direct Thermal and Thermal Transfer Labels*

PRESTON, LANCASHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM, March 16, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Northern Label Systems](https://www.northern-label-systems.co.uk), specialists in supplying high quality labels explain the differences between Direct Thermal and Thermal Transfer Labels.



Thermal Transfer printing uses an ink ribbon to transfer the printed image from the heated printhead of the label printer onto the surface of the label while Direct Thermal printing transfers the image directly onto a heat sensitive material.

“

If you are in any doubt as to the type of label you require for your printer, just visit our website <https://www.northern-label-systems.co.uk> and fill in an enquiry form”

*Simon Brown*

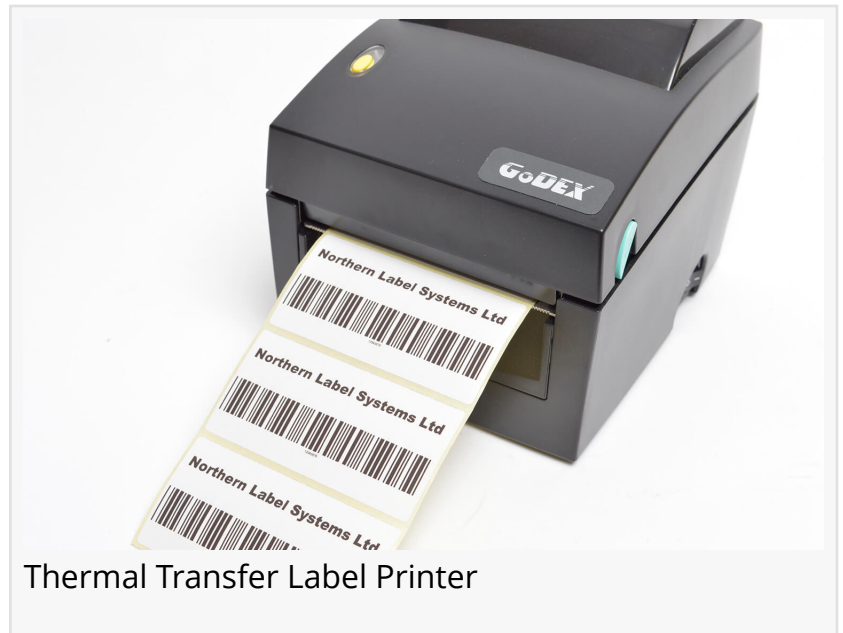
There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods. Direct Thermal label printing does not require a label printer that uses an ink ribbon, therefore making it a cheaper label printer. However, the labels are generally slightly more expensive. This said there is no ink ribbon cost, so the actual printed label cost is remarkably similar. Direct Thermal label printing also requires the label printer's printhead to be in direct contact with the label itself. If you are printing high volumes of labels you will find that the printhead wears out quicker than one used

for Thermal Transfer label printing. This should be a major consideration if printing in volume as printhead life will be reduced by between 24% and 51%. The cost of a printhead varies but is usually around 40% – 50% of the cost of a small desktop label printer and 16% – 26% the cost of a mid-range or industrial quality label printer.

The printed label will also be different in terms of quality. Direct Thermal label printing is usually only used for labels that will have a short shelf life such as shipping labels, packaging labels and

best before dates. This is because the heat resistant labels used generally fade in daylight over a few weeks or months depending on the level of UV light. Even when the labels are in an indoor office environment the label will generally start to fade after 12-14 months.

[Direct Thermal Labels](#) with a 'Topcoat' are available to ensure more resistance to UV light, though this means an increase in label price. Most Direct Thermal labels are the uncoated type and are used for short term labelling solutions.



Thermal Transfer Label Printer

Thermal Transfer label printing uses the same method of printing for example heated elements heating up and cooling down very quickly on a thermal printhead.

However, with thermal transfer label printing an ink ribbon is used to transfer the printed image onto standard paper labels or synthetic labels. The result is a printed label that will not fade in sunlight and will generally be readable for many years. Because an ink ribbon is used this acts as a 'buffer' between the printhead and the label itself leading to increased printhead life.

Thermal Transfer label printing can be used to print paper as well as synthetic type labels including polypropylene, polyethylene, vinyl and polyester in both matt and gloss.

The disadvantages of Thermal Transfer label printing is that the label printer required is slightly more expensive. However, Thermal Transfer [label printers](#) can be used to print Direct Thermal labels too by simply removing the ink ribbon. Just remember though, because you may use an ink ribbon to print there is one more thing to run out of!

Northern Label Systems was founded in 2003 by Simon Brown who started working in the label industry in 1988 when he was a field service engineer for Toshiba which involved the on-site repair of label printers in the south east of England. He then went on to manage the label printer repair facility at Toshiba in Preston in 1992 and after three years there worked in several positions as label printer installation engineer then sales account manager for a global label systems provider. As managing Director of Northern Label Systems Limited Simon uses his many years of experience in the label industry to ensure that only the highest quality products are sold.

Northern Label Systems has been built on a reputation for supplying high quality labels at the

best possible prices. They supply label printers by Zebra Technologies, Citizen and Toshiba TEC, as well as self-adhesive labels available in a wide variety of sizes, colours and adhesive types to suit all label machines and applications, making it effortless to print your own labels!

Their products can create Address Labels, Iron-On Nametags and Accessories which include Dispensers, Unwinders and Rewinders. These useful tools are designed to make label processing more efficient.

Northern Label Systems Limited  
495 Holly Place  
Walton Summit Industrial Estate  
Preston, Lancashire PR5 8AX  
Tel: 01772 817546  
Email: [info@northern-label-systems.co.uk](mailto:info@northern-label-systems.co.uk)  
<https://www.northern-label-systems.co.uk/>

media information <https://www.piranha-solutions.com/contact-us/>

Simon Brown  
Northern Label Systems  
1772817546 ext.  
[info@northern-label-systems.co.uk](mailto:info@northern-label-systems.co.uk)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/536976508>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2021 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.