

Also, printing of the image directly onto the passport page can simplify the labour intensive procedure currently used in gluing the photo onto the page.

A great variety of printer types exist today - details of each are discussed in Appendix B.3. They include black & white laser printers, colour laser printers, black & white and colour ink jet printers, die sublimation printers and colour thermal transfer printers.

Printer technology is being driven by the PC/workstation/LAN market and the users' need to have low cost, high quality output that is comparable to the screen output available on PCs and workstations. The current technological standard of 300 dots per inch (dpi) has proven satisfactory for output of printed text and line drawings, however, 300 dpi is generally not suitable for high quality image output where subtle shadings are required - this can be overcome with greater density of dots, or with continuous tone techniques (e.g. die sublimation).

Current trends are:

- The cost of colour printers is rapidly being driven downward by new developments and by market demand.
- Costs of B & W laser and ink jet printers have probably levelled off since there is little room for further decreases with prices now in the \$1,000 to \$3,000 range.
- Quality of image output is increasing with most manufacturers now offering 300 dpi minimum and many providing higher densities (400, 600 and 1200 dpi).
- The cost of special coatings and ribbons for colour printing is quickly dropping as quantities sold allow economies of scale. (Current costs can