printer

In computing, a printer is a peripheral which makes a persistent human readable representation of graphics or text on paper or similar physical media. The two most common printer mechanisms are black and white laser printers used for common documents, and colour inkjet printers which can produce high quality photograph output.

The world's first computer printer was a 19th-century mechanically driven apparatus invented by Charles Babbage for his difference engine. This system used a series of metal rods with characters printed on them and stuck a roll of paper against the rods to print the characters. The first commercial printers generally used mechanisms from electric typewriters and Teletype machines, which operated in a similar fashion. The demand for higher speed led to the development of new systems specifically for computer use. Among the systems widely used through the 1980s were daisy wheel systems similar to typewriters, line printers that produced similar output but at much higher speed, and dot matrix systems that could mix text and graphics but produced relatively low-quality output. The plotter was used for those requiring high quality line art like blueprints.

The introduction of the low-cost laser printer in 1984 with the first HP LaserJet, and the addition of PostScript in next year's Apple LaserWriter, set off a revolution in printing known as desktop publishing. Laser printers using PostScript mixed text and graphics, like dot-matrix printers, but at quality levels formerly available only from commercial typesetting systems. By 1990, most simple printing tasks like fliers and brochures were now created on personal computers and then laser printed; expensive offset printing systems were being dumped as scrap. The HP Deskjet of 1988 offered the same advantages as laser printer in terms of flexibility, but produced somewhat lower quality output (depending on the paper) from much less expensive mechanisms. Inkjet systems rapidly displaced dot matrix and daisy wheel printers from the market. By the 2000s high-quality printers of this sort had fallen under the $100 price point and became commonplace.

***Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printer\_(computing)***