

With so many ID card printer options on the market, deciding which one is right for you can be daunting. Use these **TIPS** to help you make an informed and *wise choice*

HOW TO CHOOSE an ID CARD PRINTER



How many cards do you need?

Consider how many cards you'll print **PER SESSION** and **PER YEAR** on average.

<1,000 annually =
Small batch/low volume

1,000 - 5,000 annually =
Medium batch/standard volume

>5,000 annually =
Large batch/high volume

STANDARD VOLUME PRINTING
Evolis Primacy



TIP Unless you will be using your printer everyday or need high-level security features, you can save quite a bit by purchasing a less expensive entry-level **low volume** or mid-level **standard volume** card printer. **It works in 80% of card print situations.**

MODULAR DESIGN
 Fargo DTC4250e

TIP Have the power you need now and **into the future.** Luckily, several card printers offer a **flexible, modular design.** If your card print needs will increase over time, make sure to get a printer that can be **upgraded easily.**

TIP Look at a printer's **input and output hopper size AND the ribbon capacities** to see what print volume it can handle.

Don't buy a printer that has too small of a hopper and 100 qty ribbons if you have heavy print volumes. But if you need to print one card at a time, a **single-feed printer might be all you need!**



SINGLE FEED
 Magicard Pronto

What will your cards look like?

Will you need **SINGLE- OR DUAL-SIDED** card printing? **FULL- OR SINGLE-COLOR** printing? What level of image quality? Give yourself options - don't limit the possibilities.

SINGLE SIDE

\$-\$

- Can print both sides if run through 2x - works if your cards have fixed data on one side
- Sometimes field upgradeable, but costs more after initial purchase
- Great for basic photo IDs, membership cards & loyalty cards

DUAL SIDE

\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

- Use for collating front/back ID data on cards
- Costs \$500-1000 more than single side at initial purchase
- Great for cards that require variable data on both sides like employee ID badges

MONOCHROME

\$\$

- Prints single color only
- Often not much different \$\$ from full color printers
- Great for high-style color cards



FULL COLOR

\$\$\$

- Prints full color (YMCKO)
- Also able to print monochrome
- Great for an ID card or badge

EDGE TO EDGE

\$-\$\$\$\$

- Direct-to-card Printers
- Common card printing technology
- Standard printer ribbon supplies
- Many of these cards look as good as borderless
- Great for most ID cards

BORDERLESS

Retransfer Printers \$\$\$\$

- High-tech printing process
- Requires extra retransfer ribbon
- Offers higher durability & tamper-resistant cards
- Great for high-security ID badges

TIP Some single-sided printers are **"field-upgradable"** to a dual-sided capability. If you are not sure if you will need to print both sides of your cards and want to save some money on the initial purchase, you may be able to **upgrade without replacing** your printer if you buy an upgradable single-sided model. However, the **upgrade will typically cost more than buying a dual-sided printer at the outset.**

TIP **Monochrome printers** are typically used in specialized situations. For example, if you are integrating your printer with a mainframe type system it may require use of a monochrome printer. **Otherwise, it is almost always more practical to purchase a color printer.**



FIELD UPGRADABLE
 Magicard Enduro

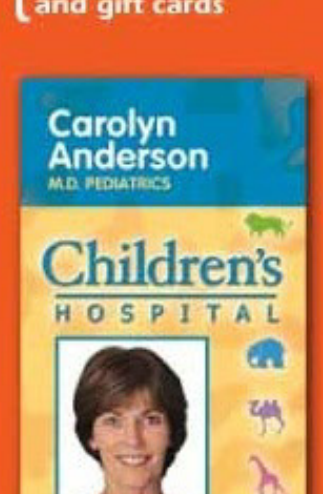
TIP **ASK FOR SAMPLE CARDS!** This is a great way to see how your ID cards will look before you make the commitment to buy a specific printer

What level of security?

BASIC \$

PHOTO ID CARD

- Visual identification
- Standard PVC cards
- Use any direct-to-card printer
- Great for loyalty cards, membership cards, student IDs and gift cards



LOW \$\$

MAGNETIC STRIPE CARD

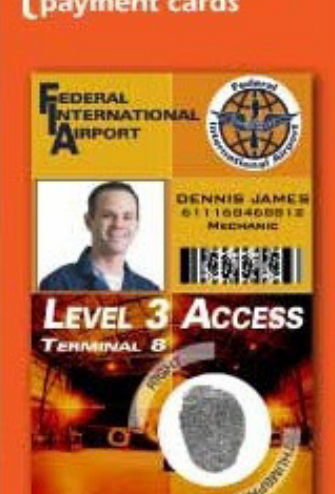
- ID data swipe
- PVC cards with mag stripe
- Add mag encoder to most DTC printers
- Great for loyalty cards, hotel keycards, time cards and gift cards



MEDIUM \$\$\$

ACCESS CARD

- Contactless access
- Proximity cards
- Add Smart Card encoder to many DTC printers
- Great for access and kiosk payment cards



HIGH \$\$\$\$

LAMINATED CARD

- UV or holographic authentication
- Composite PVC cards
- Add Lamination Module to some high-end printers
- Great for high security access, drivers licenses and rugged-use cards



TIP It is important to decide up front whether you will be using **encoded information** on your cards, as many printers are **not designed to support an encoder upgrade.** Also, in order to be able to use these features, you must have **card stock designed for your encoding technology.** While magnetic stripe cards are not much more expensive than plain cards, **"smart cards"** can cost considerably more.