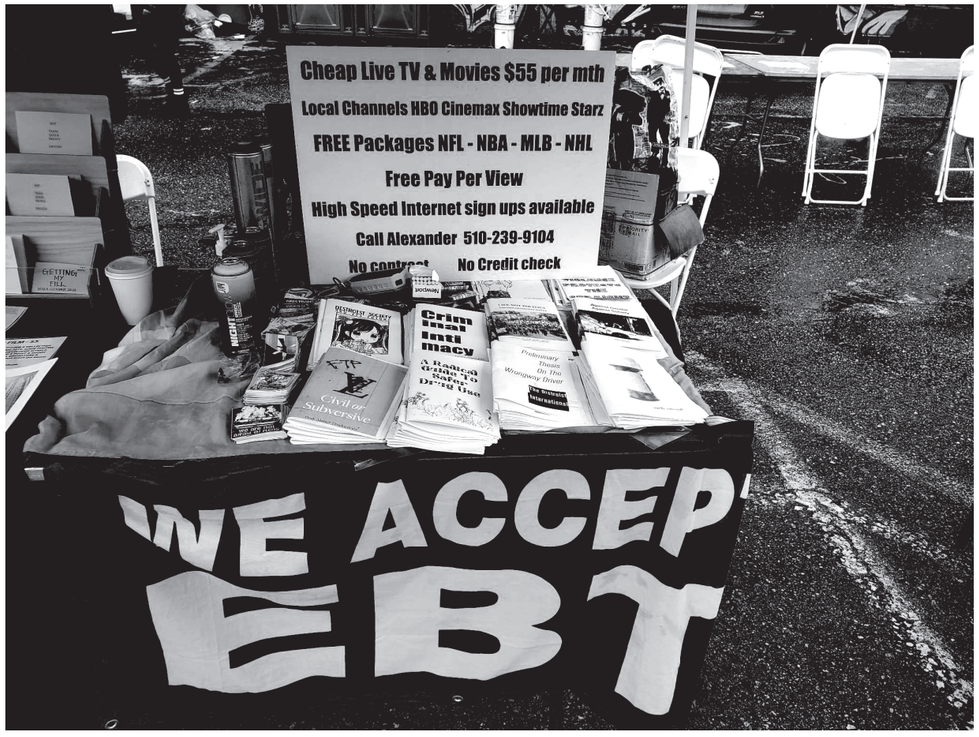
The Distroist International

HOW TO START A 'ZINE DISTRO

The possibilities for distro chaos are endless: a prank flyering campaign that aims to close down local fast-food chain drive-thrus, fake coupon books hand delivered to rich white neighborhoods, global guerilla mini-manuals for young punks, hacking how-tos that come with raspberry pi zeros, a wheatpasting campaign aimed at harassing city officials & the mayor, leaving organizing zines inside of striking coffee shops and dropping off thinly veiled threats as handbills inside of apartment leasing offices. With just a printer and paper you can do a lot of damage. The time to act is now, do it your fucking self!



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13.) Spreading Distro Chaos

You will need to think deeply at the beginning and throughout the project about you and your groups needs/desires as well as a larger strategic framework that you fit into.

"In short, anarchist projectuality is the practical recognition in one's life that anarchy is not just an aim for the distant future, an ideal that we hope to experience in a far away utopia. Much more essentially, it is a way of confronting life and struggle, a way that puts us at odds with the world as it is. It is grasping our own lives as a weapon and as a stake to be played against the existence that has been imposed on us. When the intensity of our passion for freedom and our desire to make our lives our own pushes us to live in a different manner, all the tools and methods offered by this world cease to be appealing, because all that they can do is adjust the machine that controls our lives. When we make the choice to cease to be a cog, when we make the choice to break the machine rather than continuing to adjust it, passivity ceases and projectuality begins."

— **Wolfi Landstreicher**

This will not be a program that can be copy&pasted into every other context. Strategy is fluid, and our enemies are constantly changing how they operate. We live in a world of complexity, and an inert strategy or singular program will not work. The 'zine distro fits into this, offering the ability to mutate&shape shift into what is necessary to fit the goals within a insurrectionary network. When we take control of information and memory as a weapon we can begin to wage war on this prison society.

"A graffiti crew, an urban garden, an anti-fascist patrol and workout schedule, an electronics repair workshop, a social center, a variety of accountability models, an Addicts Autonomous of sorts, an anarchist distribution center, a weekly prisoner correspondence night, several counter-repression projects and firearms trainings, many attempts at collective living, bursts of short-term direct action groups, a squatters' network and tool-share, a dumpster CSA, a successful (though unpublicized) rent strike, a compost pick-up & drop-off site, a weekly poetry workshop, several food distribution networks and groups, a recording studio, a neurodivergent support group, an insurrectionary study and research group, a begaydocrime sex worker crew, a homeless shelter, a traveler kid rest stop…"

— **a filler kid**

collages, this is basically the same thing.

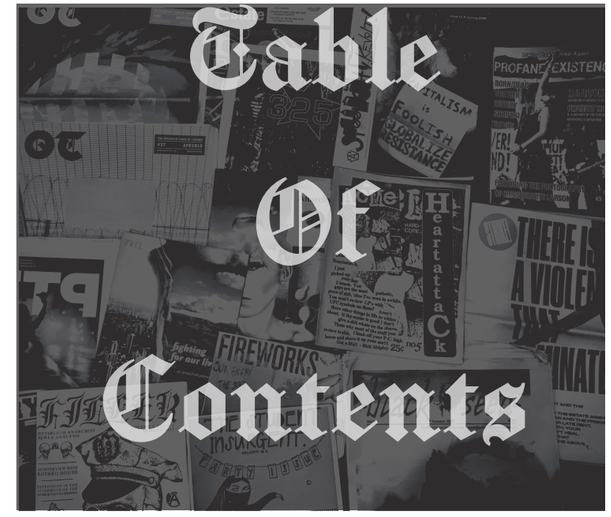
For this you will need to find all of your source material to put into the (original) copy of the 'zine. This means magazine/newspaper cutouts, printed text and hand-drawn illustrations.

Once you've decided what's going into the zine, you can start worrying about making up your pages. You don't have to make the pages in the correct order, but you do need to make them the correct size. Make up a bunch of "flats" (base pages you glue everything up on) -- you can use any kind of paper for this. (If you are doing a full-size zine you might want to consider a heavy paper, like card stock, for the base.) Make the pages the size of your zine pages -- if it's a half-size zine just cut 8-1/2" x 11" paper in half, and so on. Number the pages on the back or right on the flats if you want page numbers in your zine. When that's all done, you can paste up anything you want onto the pages. (Keep in mind that a Xerox machine will cut off about 1/8-1/4" on the edges, so don't put anything important too near the sides.)

Next figure out how many pages you're going to have, and start working out what you want to put on each page. If your zine is full size, it's pretty simple, but if it's a half-sized zine, you're going to have to lay them out and copy them in the right order for them to come out the way you want. The easiest way to do this is to make up a blank zine, the length that yours is going to be. Fold the pages in half and make it the same size as yours. Go from front to back like you're reading it, and number the pages as you go. You can also make notes on what you want to put on each page. When you're finished making up all your individual pages, you can take it apart, and just glue the flats down on the blank numbered pages wherever you want them to go. Now you have a double-sided original, which will make it easier to remember how to Xerox them.

Once your originals are completely finished, you can go get your double-sided copies made. (If you do not have double sided originals, be very clear when placing your order if you don't do the copies yourself.) Do as many as you think you'll need, but don't feel like you have to make too many. You can always get more done. Plus, it's easier to collate smaller numbers at a time. Once you've got your copies back, you need to collate them (put them in order), and fasten them somehow. You can staple them together, leave the pages loose but folded in the right order, punch holes in the center and tie them together -- or come up with something entirely new. (A lot of people ask how you staple a big zine right in the center -- the secret is a long-reach stapler that is at least 12" long. A lot of copy shops have one available for people to use, and if you're going to be doing a lot of zines, you can find them at any big office supply place.) All done? Voila!

Of course, you will want to also scan all of your pages too. Save the scanned 'zine pages as a PDF for easy duplication & sharing.



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1.) Why start a 'zine distro?

It's no secret that print media is becoming somewhat niche, especially in political contexts. Why read a paper book about theory when you can look at Instagram infographics or Tiktoks that summarize the content? This is always a tempting way to engage with ideas in the 21st century, however long-form text can bring nuance and analysis that does not come from simple explanations.

Enter the anarchist 'zine distro: 'zines are smaller than books but larger than pamphlets. You could fit just enough information on 8.5" x 11" folded paper to spark a conversation about strategy, or teach someone a new skill. 'Zine culture grew out of a DIY culture in the 1980s-1990s that involved the creation of fanzines and the riot grrrl movement in North America. This was a way to spread information all over the country with very little resources (only supplies needed: original paper copy, library xerox copier, paper and staples). This was very important for punk and DIY movements, but in the late 90s it proliferated in North American anarchism thru collectives such as Crimethinc. Prior to this, books and newsprint were the preferred print medium for anarchist publications (think Love & Rage Federation or AK Press).

So why start a 'zine distro in the 21st century? Simply put: we need to take more time to slow down and think about how & why we do what we do. The surveillance apparatus known as the internet is part of the attention economy. Data mining and outrage clickbait media pollute this digital landscape. By controlling our own print media, we can bypass this walled garden that is offered to us via social media. This could mean printing duplicates of writing that you love, or writing your own zines to distribute! This is an avenue for anarchist affinity groups to fund raise, start reading groups, engage in mutual aid, spark relationships with strangers, or to simply spread chaos...

Oh yeah, we think of distros as giving you an easy point of intervention in any situation or scenario.
Like there isn't a single thing we've been to or participated in that we haven't thought of ten ways printing could have been leveraged there...

reportbacks, fanzines about local bands, poetry, etc. Once you release your new unique 'zine you can have a 'zine release party to distribute it!

So there are basically 3 methods for formatting and designing a 'zine to print.

For the first method of designing a 'zine we will explore the easiest digital method. This involves using a service such as TheAnarchistLibrary or lib.edist.ro

You will need to add a text by clicking the + icon on the homepage. If you have an account log in, otherwise answer the security question. On the next page you will need to enter all 'zine submission metadata (title, subtitle, author(s), etc.) before adding the body text. You can also link to images when editing the submission on the next page. When submitting the 'zine to the site it will take some time for it to be linked onto the site, you will receive a link via your email address. In order to get a print-ready version of what you submitted on the link click on the 'Letter Imposed PDF' icon 2nd on the right under the submission metadata. That will be your 'zine PDF available for printing and distributing.

For the second possible method of designing a 'zine we will explore the more difficult digital method. This involves designing a 'zine from scratch using software.

The easier way to format this is to design it for read-friendly format first. This means designing it page-by-page, and also designing the cover page separately. You can use free & open-source (FOSS) software such as GIMP, Scribus & Inkscape instead of paying for Adobe projects. Of course you can always get Adobe software by torrenting it instead. When preparing to deisgn a 'zine you will need to decides which font families and subsequent fonts to use in the design process. This is assuming you already have the text & images chosen and organized in the 'zine project folder. A great website to find free fonts is DaFont https://www.dafont.com/

When the font is printed on the paper it is called a typeface. Make sure to use youtube to learn how to troubleshoot the design software you have downloaded when you run into issues. Try not to create walls/mountains of text, learn to separate paragraphs neatly. Look at the 'zines that you already love and copy the format style. Remember to save/output the PDF as a printer-friendly PDF to get the correct color output. After designing the read-friendly (web) version of the 'zine, use a booklet conversion tool such as Bookletify to get the imposed version. You will have two separate '**firstzine_color_cover.pdf**' and a '**firstzine-imposed_color_10pages.pdf**' files in addition to the web version of the PDF.

For the third and final possible method of designing a 'zine we can do it DIY (cut+paste). This is the old school punk method for creating a zine. You can scan and/or photocopy the pages for distribution. If you like making

11.) Social Media and websites

Having a social media presence is totally optional. There are some 'zine distros that have a minimal presence on social media sites, or even none at all. There are advantages to leveraging social media but it can also suck up your time if you aren't careful. Twitter and Instagram are where most 'zine distros are active online. Mastodon is ideal if you would prefer data privacy & non-censorship.

More ideal is using a free blogging service such as Noblogs or Neocities. This way you can host all of your original distro PDFs available to download.

https://noblogs.org/
https://neocities.org/

Of course if you have even minimal HTML coding skills a free DigitalOcean droplet can be used to host a static webpage that links to PDFs hosted for free on archive.org
https://www.digitalocean.com/products/droplets
Gitlab pages is another avenue for this.
https://docs.gitlab.com/ee/user/project/pages/

12.) How to design & format your own 'zines

Eventually you will get tired of printing other distro's zines. After all, why let someone else control the narrative? There is so much to be said about a localized context. Many cities do not have a distro project active within it, or have not had a 'zine culture active for several decades. There are many 'zine topics that you could choose to publish, such as: computer hacking, NLG legal aid/know your rights, local anarchist history, police crowd control methods, graffiti, local protest

2.) Glossary of terms

'Zine--- An inexpensively produced, self-published, underground publication. Not the same thing as a magazine but the same amount of pages.

Pamphlet--- A single page bifold/trifold printed two-sided to condense simple information.

'Zine Distro--- An informal group or affinity group that facilitates the distribution of free 'zines.

Distroism--- Doing being totally ignorant.

Affinity Group--- A small, tight-knit group of 2-5 people determined to act anonymously and effectively via direct action. This group assembles based not on a formal name or leftist political tendency but shared ideas, goals and ethics.

Scams--- Means of tricking corporations into giving you shit for free/cheap. The FedEX Print code scam is a good example of one. You will eventually find your own scams as you begin to really explore your environment.

Racking--- Stealing or shoplifting. Remember that "stop!" means run...

DIY/DIT--- Do It Yourself///Do It Together

Direct Aid--- Providing direct supplies and assistance to homeless residents in a city. An anarchist endeavor for sure but not necessarily the same thing as mutual aid.

Projectuality--- Anarchist projectuality starts with the decision to re-appropriate life here and now. It, therefore, immediately and forcefully exposes and challenges the process of dispossession that this society imposes and acts to destroy all the institutions of domination and exploitation.

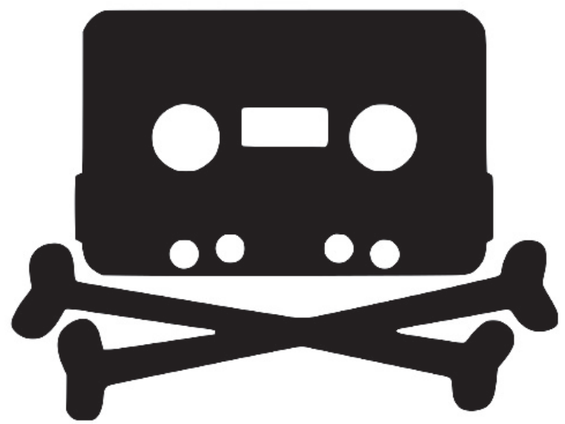
Font--- Refers to the computer software file which contains information regarding the display and output of a typeface. You choose a font from the typeface menu. Fonts only exist on a computer.

Fontface--- (somewhat interchangeable with typeface) the face of the type family. For example Bold or Italic are a face where as Helvetica would be the family. Referencing "font", font face specifically refers to the software used to render a particular face of a family - You may have Helvetica bold as a font face, but not Helvetica italic.

Typeface--- The specific weight or instance of a particular family. I.E. Bold, italic, oblique are all typefaces. Typeface is generally referred to by family + face. For example Helvetica Bold Italic would be referred to as the typeface where Helvetica is the Family and Bold Italic is the face.

Type Family--- The design of all the characters comprised of a family and all its encompassing faces. Helvetica is a type family. Helvetica Condensed is a type family, Myriad Pro is a type family, etc.

Scribus--- An open-source alternative to Adobe Indesign. This will be used to finalize all 'zine formatting.
GIMP--- An open-source alternative to Adobe Photoshop. Perfect for raster-based photoediting and image manipulation.
Inkscape--- An open-source alternative to Adobe Illustrator for vector-based images. Great for creating custom logos and manipulating different fonts.
Torrenting--- Peer-to-peer (P2P) filesharing on the internet. Typically you would use a torrenting client such as Deluge to manage torrent downloads, and a VPN client such as ProtonVPN to hide your activity from your internet provider. This is the easiest free way to get Adobe software from torrent websites such as 1337x.



3.) Choosing a distro name

If you wish to attach a name to your group's project, this is where you can get creative! any name that you feel fits in with your affinity group's interests works best! You can also get very wacky with it, no need to be super serious (for example "Fugazi Distro", "Clowncore Distro", etc.). This allows you to really present yourself in a way that feels natural. Of course, not every 'zine distro has a formal name. Freak it how you feel it.

initially. Try to see how little you can spend. You can get free staples and paper from an office or library. If there are other 'zine distros in your city/area, ask them for help!

10.) Online mail orders

Handling online mail orders is another potential avenue for continuing the fundraising for a distro project. This way you can keep things somewhat sustainable while handing out free literature at in-person events. There are different ways to do this. The easiest means to setup an online store would be a service such as Bandcamp, Etsy or Storenvy. The ease of use is great for distro collectives that are not super technically inclined.

Of course there are some more DIY approaches. You can setup your own static website with (anonymous) Paypal buttons on it. A great example of this HTML code is below:
https://github.com/ftpdistro/ftpdistro.github.io/blob/master/index.html

You will need to set up a PO Box for (semi) anonymity. For full anonymity you will need a Paypal Business account set up. It is ideal to find the cheapest option available for USPS (or any other national postal carrier). In addition to this you will want to setup an account on the website PirateShip
https://www.pirateship.com/
in order to save on shipping costs. The site makes it easy to save templates for shipping the same weighted products. Then you can print the label on an Avery 27901 blank shipping label. You can also purchase a cheap/used thermal label printer for this purpose (these can also be used to make cheap stickers).

When offering mail order zines it is best to offer a bundle of zines rather than individual zines. This way you can ship out 5-20 zines at a time and make it feel worthwhile for the person buying it. On the return address do not use your real name (Jane/John Doe). You need to account for shipping and production costs, as well as other costs (repair, money for other groups, etc.). Some of us have used online mailorders to help fund local groups such as Food Not Bombs.

8.) Other items that you can table

You don't have to limit yourself to tabling political zines! Some of us have tabled various types of hacking, poetry and art 'zines. You can also table miscellaneous free items to distro alongside literature, such as: graffiti markers, sex toys, lube, condoms, narcan, earplugs, weed, posters, wheatpasting kits, alcohol, drugs, menthol cigarettes, umbrellas, shields, KN95 masks, hand sanitizer, water, snacks, candy, spray paint, pepper spray, knives, (scam) coupons, gift cards, laser pointers, lock-pick sets, USB drives, blank stickers, "bump" keys, or poppers. Keep it wild!

9.) Fundraising

Fundraising to kickstart a distro project can be tricky. Usually the most expensive thing is the printer + toner/ink.

There are some obvious ways to fundraise. Starting a Gofundme campaign is the easiest avenue if you or others in the group are social-media savvy. However there are some ways to do this by leveraging other skills (bake sales, bootleg cassette tapes, linocut print patches, selling various crafts on etsy, t-shirt screen printing, busking, boosting merch, scamming rich liberals, various means of cash theft, etc.). Once you get your distro up and running you can also try to sell your 'zines to the local punk record stores for cash.

It isn't ideal, but there is always the possibility of eating your own money and/or collectively pooling it together when starting a project, however it is recommended that you don't spend that much money when doing this

4.) Finding Others

This can be the tricky part for people who are maybe sort of new to anarchist or radical leftist spaces. How do we find each other? This can be a never-ending question, since actual networks are often more complex and difficult to navigate and penetrate at first. Public events are the best way to do this. You can find out protests or direct aid events in your area via Twitter/Instagram. The Slingshot Organizer has an index of radical spaces in each major US city. If you already know people in the local scene (and you should if you are doing this), don't be afraid to ask around! Someone in your Signal group chat will know when/where these events are, and you can then assess how much to print and what you would like to distribute for the event. If you are already down with the local punk & DIY scene you can always ask permission to table at shows too!

One of the more brave ideas is tabling events that would not usually have anarchist political content at it, such as liberal rallies, tourist areas, local farmers markets, conferences, or city approved festivals. Oftentimes this means tabling without permission and thus risking some level of confrontation with the event attendees or managers. Usually they will just tell you toleave if this happens. Tabling zines is always a trial and error event, but pushing the limit is never a bad thing!

Finding other people to table with is also tricky. Some people like to read print media and 'zines, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they are ready to take a lot of time to table and distribute zines on a (semi)regular basis. You will need to find other people that share an affinity for print media, ideas and the curation of anarchist content. This will take some time, and many 'zine distros start out solo. In some cases people will weave in and out of the project, this is fine too. For your own mental health's sake you will also need to think about your own capacity and limitations. Take some free time for yourself to relax! If you feel burnt out it is okay to take a break from tabling. When it stops being fun, call it quits.

Binder clips are best for weighing down zines. They aren't rocks that go over the whole ass cover so you can't even read it and have to move the rock to see and a lot of people don't wanna make that effort. In rainy/snowy weather you can use huge ziplock bags to protect the zines on the table.

Also fuckin uhhhhh not just tabling events but like random places is great. Distro outside the EBT offices, distro your local skatepark, distro outside of temp agencies, distro outside the mayors house, distro inside Safeway, etc.

5.) Curating content

The following links below are where you can find 'zine PDFs for free online:

https://archive.org/details/misczinesanarchism
https://theanarchistlibrary.org/
https://lib.edist.ro/
https://fillerpgh.wordpress.com/
https://untorellipress.noblogs.org
https://www.littlemouse.fun/
https://uprising2020.noblogs.org
https://warzonedistro.noblogs.org
https://counterflow.noblogs.org/
https://fugitive.keybase.pub/
https://friendship-as-a-form-of-life.tumblr.com/download
https://ftpdistro.noblogs.org/
https://www.prole.info/
https://1312press.noblogs.org/1312-published-titles/
https://azinelibrary.org/
https://detritusbooks.com/collections/products-pamphlets
https://belliresearchinstitute.wordpress.com/pdfs/
https://antistatestl.noblogs.org/resources/
https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/

7.) Other Supplies

When it comes to paper, we just go for the cheapest kind that can be purchased in 8/10 ream boxes at once. Walmart has some good deals on printer paper (staples will try to scam you). If you are printing out zines or anything that you need to staple, you should purchase a long stapler. This will come in handy for printing large batches of zines.

If you would like to create a check boxed supply list before starting this is recommended, but the basic supplies would be the following:

-A printer
-Ink/toner
-Paper
-A stapler & staples
-A portable and foldable table or a picnic blanket to layout in a public park.

You can also forgo getting your own printer and instead figure out a library/university printing scam thru a friend. There are many other different ways to cut costs, such as racking some of your supplies.

You can get free USPS stickers from any local postal office, just look where they keep all of the free shipping supplies. These are great for printing/drawing on to create custom stickers to table.

A painted banner on a bed sheet or canvas cloth can add some extra swag to your table. You can also create a small custom cardboard sign taped to your table.

If you are running mail orders then you will need the appropriate shipping supplies (stamps, blank labels, label printer(s), bubble mailers).

Regarding cost, you will want to think about choosing a black & white printer over a color printer, or even purchasing both. One of the advantages to this is having a backup printer in case one of them needs repairs. You can also make zines look better by printing out color covers with the 'zine content printed in black & white. This can be easier to pull off with even a low budget ($500-$600) if you are purchasing used printers. We use one B&W printer and it is the Brother HL-L2395DW Laserjet. It was less than $200 new and still works, although we had to eventually replace the drum. One of the nice things about brother printers is the ability to reset factory settings and override the normal firmware protections that try to prevent 3rd party toner/ink. In some cases you will refill the toner/ink cartridge but the printer will say that it is empty. All printers have different ways around this and you will have to diagnose the issue with youtube (get used to this btw) There is a way to reset this in a video below: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6lsUBu1TDg

Regarding printer repair, this is something that we have not yet dealt with. However, replacement parts exist from 3rd party sellers and you can find instruction guides regarding repair on youtube/google. Just be sure to specify the printer make/model when searching for the part(s). This can cut costs significantly.

An older method of getting cheap bulk printing is via Fedex Print. You will need to go to the front desk and ask for what is called a unique "convenience code" This will only allow you to print out $25 worth of printing at a time. This works like a tab. You will also have to read out the following discount code to them to get the employee discount:

0476403286-0000
Then you will punch this assigned convenience code into the printer kiosk when printing your PDFs (these will be kept on a USB stick inserted into the printer kiosk). This method is not exactly easy but it will get you free cheap printing if you don't have access to free printing.

https://ruinsofcapital.noblogs.org/
https://crimethinc.com/zines
https://deletia-distro.tumblr.com/
https://no-new-ideas-press.tumblr.com/
https://libcom.org/search?search_api_fulltext=zines
https://rosecitycounterinfo.noblogs.org/category/zines/
https://north-shore.info/publications/
https://tension.noblogs.org/
https://civfucks.noblogs.org/
https://oplopanaxpublishing.wordpress.com/
https://mongoosedistro.com/print/
https://personsunknown.noblogs.org/publications/
https://darkmatter.noblogs.org/dark-matter-publications-pdf-downloads/
http://www.anti-politics.org/distro/2006.html

You will need to find the imposed (print-friendly) PDF links. Save them to a folder on your device and create backups (USB stick or detachable hard drive). Something that helps when (ref)naming a PDF is including the amount of pages in the filename. For example you would name the PDF something like **'24ABonnano_ArmedJoyColor.pdf'**.

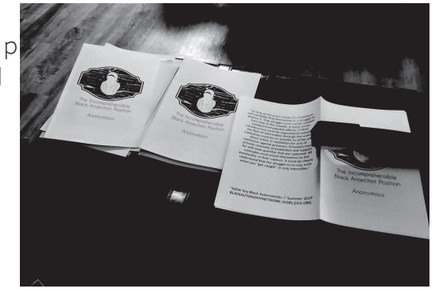
This allows you to know the author, title, whether it is color or black and white, and the resulting number of printed pages.

There are also means to covert single-page (read-friendly) PDFs into zine-format. The website https://wieke.gitlab.io/bookletify/ allows you to upload a read-friendly PDF and convert it automatically. Another way to do this involves a python command line program (also named) Bookletify https://github.com/johannesCmayer/bookletify. You will need to have Python 2/3 installed and the required dependencies. Example:

>bookletify.py inputfilename.pdf outputfilename.pdf

Folding & stapling zines is a fairly simple process. The standard 'zine format (8.5" x 11" Letter) is folded hamburger style and staples into the middle of the paper. The easiest way to do this is to use a long stapler. You can sometimes find a long-stapler at a thrift-store. This is essentially how to fold and staple all 'zine formats, unless you are printing a special type of folding mini-zine, or printing a tri-fold pamphlet. Get a set of blank pieces of paper and practice this to get fast at it. Once you figure out the best layout of supplies/paper on your surface and find a rhythm you can crank out 100+ zines in a night.

6.) Printing



When printing out standard size (Letter) zines print in landscape and double sided collated, flip on the long edge. Make sure that nothing is faded or smudged. If you are printing out covers separately, use color paper covers for black & white ‘zines.

For 'zine stapling you have 2 different options. Centerline staplers are simply oversized (long) staplers which can reach the booklet spine from the correct direction to orient a staple. Rotating-head staplers are shorter, but have a stapler arm that can rotate to apply the staple with the correct orientation. Either variety is suitable for 'zines. Make sure that all the pages are in order and that the paper is evenly aligned before inserting into the stapler. Decide how many staples are required down the spine of the booklet. Usually one will suffice (this is standard) but depending on the size of your 'zine, one staple may suffice or you may need two or three. With practice, this will likely become easier. Position your 'zine with the outside cover facing upwards. Place it into the specialized stapler so that the center portion is aligned underneath the stapling mechanism. Make sure the booklet is aligned with the stapler, and that the margins on either side of the stapler are as close to the same width as possible. Push the stapler arm down on the spine where you want to place each staple. Once the stapler arm is aligned, push down on the end of the upper arm until you hear the staple go through the paper. Repeat the process above to align your stapler on a different place on the spine, and staple until the booklet has as many staples as you choose. One or two staples are generally enough. Check that all staples have been properly inserted and sit flat. If any of them failed to puncture the paper, or did not close properly, remove them so you can try again. Do this by carefully unbending each arm of the staple until it is straight, then pushing it out through the hole made by the stapler.

When looking for a printer to purchase, do not price out a printer based on the machine alone. You absolutely need to price in the toner as well since that will be your primary expense. Look on/in craigslist, facebook marketplace, flea markets, ebay, garage sales, thrift stores, random apartment complex garbage bins (seriously). Protip is to find something where you can refill the toner and buy the toner dust on ebay, but at least for the first while of having your printer that will be your major expense so toner toner toner

Also don’t buy HP or Xerox unless you want to be the wrong kind of destitute...

Learn the actual part numbers of things on your machine because it's way easier to find compatible or off brand versions of parts or toner that way. For example don't search "**Ricoh Aficio MP2300 Toner**" search "**Ricoh 5-4k-T**" or whatever random ass parts number it is. It yields 10x the search results.

Second thing is when pricing a printer, search for Drums and Fuser Units because if you're running off a lot of stuff, especially zines and posters and especially things with black toner, you will burn through that part a lot quicker than it's intended

So, we always make sure to ask the print count (You can get about 100,000 prints out of these things, which for a true distroist is not that much) and price out the fuser units and drums ahead of time. If you can somehow work it into your initial budget, purchase a backup drum. This will come in handy when the original one wears out.

Some machines, like Ricoh/Lanier you can replace these relatively cheaply, and the same goes for *some* black and white Toshiba machines, and some Brother (maybe others but we haven't looked) but we know for a fact that Xerox, HP, and Most Toshiba machines it will be cheaper for you to replace the entire printer most of the time.

Also availability is weird everywhere, but some of us finally hit upon a place called *Tom's Copier Outlet* which was this place in West Phoenix with this literal 90 year old dude who did Typeset at one point in his life selling copiers in a room with like 1 dude who delivers them. That place was our best friend. So finding a spot like that to get your stuff is crucial cuz if things go wrong they'll also know how to fix it usually or at least whats wrong.

So basically when you purchase a printer you will have to think about your budget. We would recommend getting an affordable used printer instead of a new one. Facebook marketplace, craigslist, & ebay are all good sources to find one. You will also want to account for reams of paper & toner/ink. We generally prefer laserjet printers to inkjet printers because inkjet can make the page feel soggy. Regardless of whether you choose to get inkjet or laserjet, you will have to think about ink/toner refills when you are printing large quantities. We do DIY refills of my printer toner using this product: https://www.aaatoner.com/blbotoon.html

There are some guides on youtube on how to refill toner cartridges yourself, such as this one: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbmbDjm_HhA&t=24s

Be sure to wear gloves and eye protection when refilling toner, and be sure to work in a well ventilated place (the toner dust can affect your lungs if breathed in). after refilling the toner be sure to wipe down the cartridge and working area/desk too. Une a funnel to refill the toner dust and take your time.