



HP ThinkJet, 1984

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Take this product for an interactive spin. The [QuickTime](#) plug-in is needed to view this presentation.



This small, rugged printer, dubbed ThinkJet for thermal inkjet, was introduced in 1984. Just as the HP-35 calculator replaced the manual slide rule forever, inkjet technology spelled the end for the noisy dot-matrix printer. Thermal inkjet technology developed at HP was introduced in a high-quality, low-price personal printer.

The invention came about when an engineer working on developing thin-film technology for integrated circuit applications was testing the response of a thin silicon-based film to electrical stimulation. The electricity superheated the medium, and droplets of fluid lying under the film were expelled. An idea was born. What if you could finely control these jets of fluid? Large, industrial inkjet marking devices already existed, but up to this point only crude printing of quite large characters for industrial purposes was practical. Suddenly it looked like this marking technology could be miniaturized—and it had the advantages of requiring very little power to print and being inherently inexpensive to manufacture.

Inkjet technology offered HP the opportunity to replace the least expensive printer in the market—serial dot-matrix printers—with products that were superior in every way. Inkjet had the potential for better print quality, greater font and graphics capabilities, quieter operation, extremely low power consumption and, eventually, high-quality, low-cost color.

Additional information:

- ThinkJet [brochure](#) (PDF, 1.07Mb)
- [Listen](#) to the ThinkJet in action. 

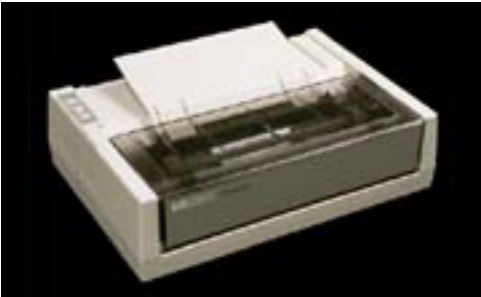
This sound was recorded using the HP 912 digital camera located about 4 inches away from the top of the printer with the lid open so you can hear the inkjet print head move across the paper and the advance of the paper through the printer. Although this sample is relatively loud, during normal use the apparent sound volume is greatly diminished at greater distances from the printer.

To view any of the above PDF files, you need to have the Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. Acrobat Reader is a free plug-in. You can download the [latest version](#) or download a [version with accessibility features](#).

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>> Six views

View this product from six static angles.



The HP ThinkJet was the first mass-marketed personal inkjet printer. Inkjet technology spelled the end for the noisy dot-matrix printer.

