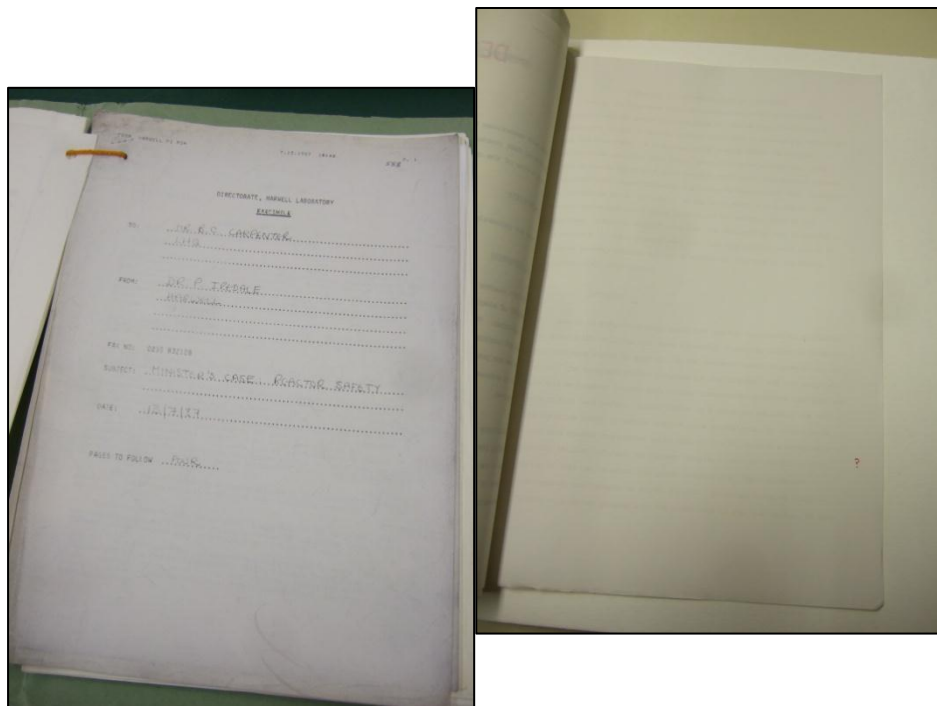


Identifying Thermal Paper

The National Archives seeks to preserve the information recorded on all records regardless of the material or format. Some materials pose a greater risk of information loss, particularly thermal paper popular in offices from 1969, since the text copied on this paper can disappear within a period of only a few years. To mitigate the loss of information, records created on thermal paper should be photocopied.

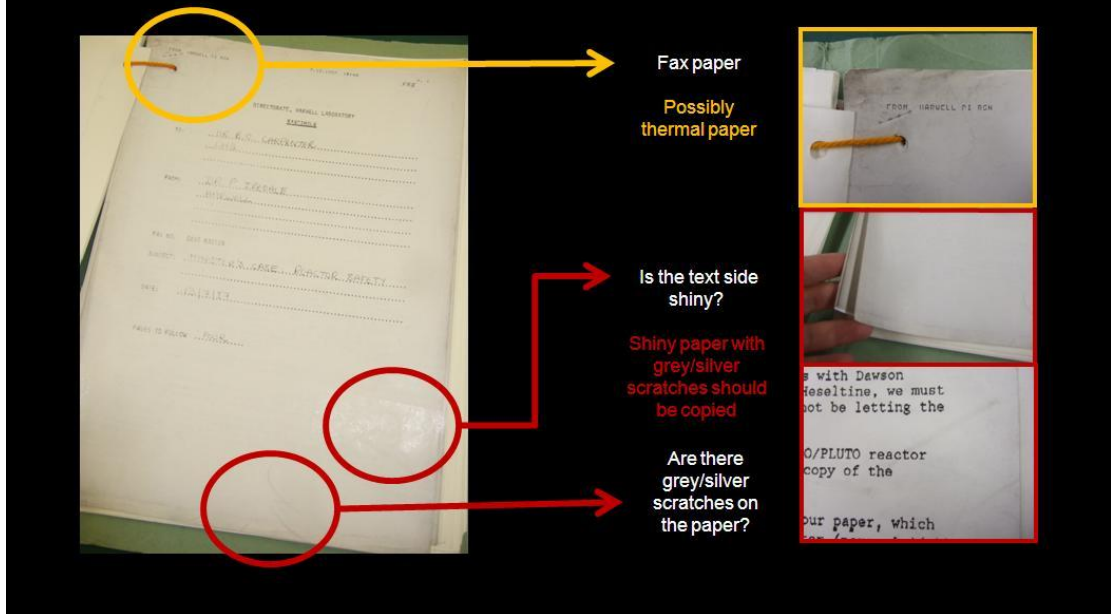


Example of a thermal paper document (above left) and an example of a document on thermal paper where text has disappeared (above right).

Thermal printing paper was most often used to create facsimile (fax) copies; however, not all fax paper is thermal paper. A few helpful hints for identifying thermal paper include:

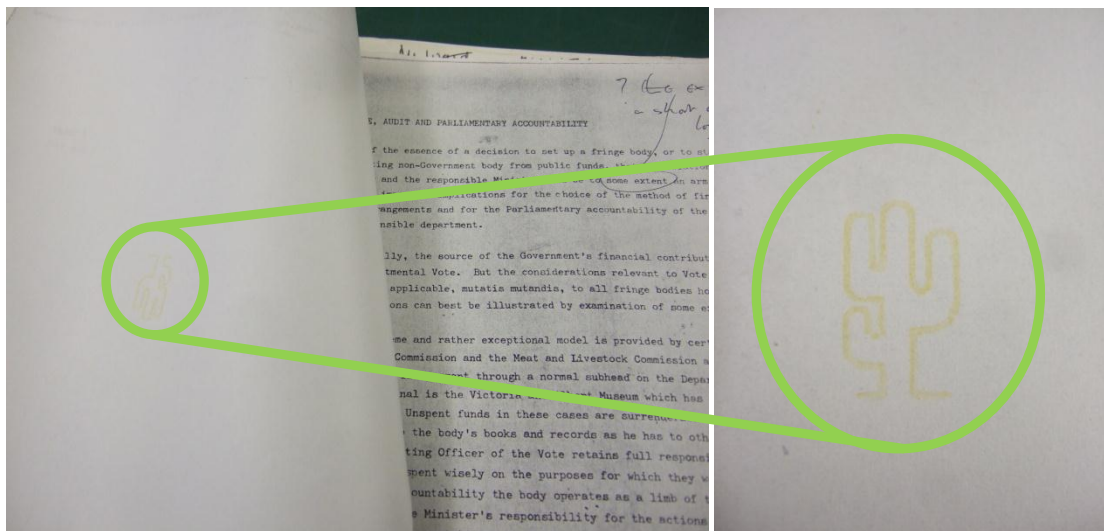
- It has a smooth, shiny surface on the printed side.
- Grey or silver lines are obvious where the surface has been scratched or abraded.

Three Thermal Paper Identification Factors



Thermal paper fax document, with the three identifying elements highlighted

However, paper that has a cactus logo on the back of it **does not** need to be copied since this logo proves the copy was produced through an electrostatic process called Electrofax and exhibits much greater long-term stability.



Electrofax document with a cactus logo on the back of the paper (above left) and cactus logo in detail (above right).

If in doubt, please copy.