The Comic Creation Process (Part 2)

The following pages are from the book, “How to Self-Publish Your Own Comic Book” by Tony C. Caputo. In the book Tony Caputo shows how comics were made at Mars Comics, the comic book company that Tony started. In this handout we will take another look at coloring comics. This time, we’re going to take a look at *old-school style* color application.

- Fig. 1. Shows a painted comic page called a **Blueline**.
- Fig. 2  This is the completed **Full-color page**.

The color looks a bit different from the computer colored page, doesn’t it? This probably looks more like the kind of comics your Mom and Day may have read. The process used here is called **Four-color Printing**. This process is long and complicated, and Tony explains it much better in his book than I ever could, but here’s the general idea:

An inker redraws the **Finished Pencil Page** to produce an **Inked Page** just like in computer processing. Then a copy of the inked page is made replacing the black ink with light blue. That’s why it’s called a **Blueline**. The colorist then paints right on the blueline to produce an image like the one in Fig. 1. Finally, the inked page (with all of the white parts removed) is laid over the blueline, and a final picture is taken. That’s the **Full-Color page**.
Hand painted blueline page
The blue tints on the blueline serve as a guide for the colorist. Note that the black areas and lettering are separate; they will be filled in by the printer using the same black negative film that was used to produce the blueline. If you compare this blueline with the image opposite, you can see how it will look with the black ink.
Hand painted blueline page with black film overlay.

In the printing process, the cyan, magenta, and yellow inks reproduce the images on your painted blueline, while the black areas and lettering come from the black (negative) film overlay. (See chapter 4 for more information on the four-color printing process.) This overlay guarantees rich solid blacks that are not diluted (or mixed) through a scanning process.

Fig. 2