

What's Hot And What's Not... In Plastic Pages

by
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When I first came into the hobby some twenty-five years ago, I don't think anyone was using plastic yet. It was pretty much all paper pages then, either slotted or hand-sewn. A number of clubs acted as outlets, and Sierra-Diablo even produced their own, thanks to master dies hand-made by the late Warren Marshall.

It's 2008, now, and by now the hobby has already made the transition from paper pages to plastic pages, although (with the soaring price of oil) it may turn out that plastic pages price themselves out of the market for most. That, however, is merely a 'maybe', and still remains to be seen, although I've heard rumblings. In any event, show an entrepreneur a niche to be filled and voilá! Plastic pages abound. That's good for the collector in that it affords choice and selection. But...

Call it a result of my 'overly developed' sense of organization, but I want all my albums to be uniform...and I want all my pages to be uniform. And, predictably, it hasn't proved easy to do that. I started off with *Match Caddy* pages, thinking that they were what I was looking for, but after using them for some time I found that they were simply too thick and too inflexible...*especially* in the winter when the pages got cold! That's only my opinion, though. As you'll see, some collectors swear by them.

Eventually, even more choices in plastic page options became available—8 covers per page...10 covers per page...some were slightly wider...some were slightly longer...some were heavier...some were lighter...So, I eventually decided on *Better-View* pages because they are lighter, don't stiffen up so much, and are just more manageable to use. But what are other collectors using? What are their preferences? And why? So, I made that the subject of the next *RMS INSTA-POLL*, and I learned some things about plastic pages, their types and availability. Take a look. [*I've arranged the results alphabetically, by page type; "Votes" refers to how many collectors indicated that this is the page type that they use; prices for the same page vary according to when purchases were made and size of order; do not include shipping*]

AMCCS PAGES: Votes: 1 (but we only had 1 Australian respondent, I believe)

These are available from the Australian club. Cost: \$1@ (Australian). Available in 6, 8, and two types of 10-pocket pages. Available: anytime.

BETTER-VUE PAGES: Votes: 8

These are available from Sierra-Diablo MC, Joe DeGennaro, and Wayne Eadie. Cost: .30¢@. Available in 20, 30, or 40-strike sizes. Available twice a year from Sierra-Diablo, or at conventions and swapfests from Joe DeGennaro and Wayne Eadie. User comments:

- Nice and light; easy to work with;
- Fair (I liked Rogers Coin's pages much better when they were available);
- Still looking for a better page
- Excellent quality, heavier plastic with enough space not to crowd covers

HOBBYMASTER PAGES: Votes: 20

These are available from Hobbymaster, on the web. Cost: .32-.40¢@. Available in 20, 30, or 40-strike sizes. Available anytime. User comments:

- I use inserts with them
- Great! Consistent, durable, cover-friendly, roomy
- Neater in albums and easy to insert into the books
- Good pages. Soft and pliable but sturdy. Flattens matchcovers well. Doesn't become brittle with time
- Don't care for them
- Pockets are a little too loose
- Way too expensive
- Perfect both in fit of matchcovers and allows easy loose leaf style turning
- I really like these pages better than any others I have gotten and they stand behind their product
- Great. No problems
- Great pages - sturdy - archivable
- They are too thin and I have to put a backing sheet in between the covers or they will move too much
- We rank their pages very high because of quality and because we can put Jewels/Jewelites in their 20 strike pages
- They don't curl and are easier to slide covers in and out
- Easy to work with; archival quality; reasonably durable

HOME-MADE PAGES: Votes: 2

The plastic stock pages are available from Staples and Sam's Club. Cost: .09¢@. Available in any size you want to make them. Available anytime. User comments:

- This involves using a food sealer and Staples page protector sheets. I made templates and can make any kind of page - even designed some specialty pages. A couple years ago we bought about 3 cases of the protector pages when they were on sale for a really good price.
- I make my own from Sam's Club clear sheet protectors - 200 for about \$9.50 and an impulse sealer that I bought on ebay for about \$50; the sheets are not as thick as the commercial pages but seem to be working out well

MATCHCOVER CADDY/C.T. COINS PAGES: Votes: 10

These pages are no longer available, as the two companies have gone out of business, but they were one of the earliest types, so many collectors started off with them. Cost: .25-.45¢@. Available in 20, 30, 40-strike sizes. Available: N/A. User comments:

- Too thick; too much PVC
- Very good.
- Best plastic pages I have found. I am sorry they apparently are no longer available
- Still looking for a better page
- Nice thickness, not flimsy
- Too big and too heavy

ULTRA-PRO PAGES: Votes: 16

These are available from hobby stores, flea markets, antique dealers, card shows, Richard Lauck, Columbia Sports Cards (on-line). Cost: .10-.30¢@. Available in 4, 6, 8, 9, 15-pocket pages. Available anytime. User comments:

- The quality was good archival quality plastic. The covers and boxes were easy to insert and take out and didn't stick
- These pages are designed for baseball/hockey cards; no 20-stick size
- Excellent...doesn't stiffen in time; I like to slip covers into baseball card sleeves and these pages hold the sleeves with the covers inside perfectly
- Good clarity, strong, UV Protection
- I use a burning tool to make 8-pocket pages out of the 4-pocket pages [*several collectors did this*]
- They are too thin and I have to put a backing sheet in between the covers or they will move too much
- Outstanding!
- Thinner, but good quality

Conclusions and observations:

Some miscellaneous points first. 10-strike covers are still a problem to deal with, no matter what type of page you use. I don't believe anyone mentioned the availability of 10-strike pages, and I've certainly never seen any.

The Ultra-Pro pages are designed for sports cards, not matchcovers, and they don't offer an 8-pocket page, so a number of collectors use Hobbymaster for the 8 pocket pages and Ultra-Pro for the other sizes.

Collectors obviously have different preferences when it comes to the thickness and thinness of pages. Note the polarized comments about the same type of pages. Some prefer thick; some prefer thin.

One point that was uniform, though, is that collectors do not like pockets that are too big. The covers move around when you turn the pages, and the next time you go back and look at those covers, they're all tilted and askew...not an attractive sight.

The two main points that I was struck with overall were 1) while there are a goodly number of sources for plastic pages, there are only a few actual types available; and 2) [*and I had no inkling of this*] most collectors get their plastic pages from outside the hobby. *See p. 7 for a list of clubs that handle plastic pages.*