

Files & Fonts

What Formats are Correct?

Preparation is key when you send images and documents to a local print house. A customer should collect the images and files together into folders on their computer before they are placed on a CD or DVD. It's important to know what items to include such as images with the correct resolution, types of document formats and correct fonts. This brochure explains which types of fonts to include and which file formats are appropriate to use for any printing job.

Type of fonts

Whether on your home computer, a CD or the internet there are numerous fonts available in a variety of styles. However, not all types of fonts are Cross Platform. For example, if your prepress person at the local print house uses a Mac computer for his work and not a PC, the fonts in your document could be unusable. First, I'll discuss the types of fonts; then possible solutions to this dilemma.



My Font MM

Multiple Masters MM

A legacy font technology that allowed you to create new fonts based on an existing font, by adjustment of the character's width and thickness of to suit your needs. Today, they are rarely used in the printing industry; however, they can be used in a program like Adobe Illustrator.



TrueType .tff

This font comes as one icon and generally works well on your at-home computer system. However, you can only use PC TrueType on a PC platform and a Mac TrueType on a Mac platform. TrueType is generally not acceptable in the printing industry because it's a larger file and some Imagesetters

and older PostScript laser printers disagree with its configuration. Some TrueType fonts are also poorly built and should be limited to home and office use.

Type1 (PostScript Font)



This font comes with two icons, a screen font and a printer font. The screen font helps describe what we see on the screen and the printer font gives a description to the printer to upload and print. These icons should always go to a printing service together and never be separated. This type of font has been, up until recently, an acceptable font by printers because it works well with a PostScript laser printer and Imagesetter. Unfortunately, like TrueType, it can only work on the computer platform it was assigned to (*See TrueType*) and is nearly phased out. Thankfully, OpenType has eliminated much of this problem. (*See OpenType*).

Open Type .otf



This font can be used on both Mac and PC computer platforms, so there's no need to convert the font file. They can also store more characters and have become a popular font choice in the printing industry.

It should be also noted that a number of fonts are now being called TrueType/OpenType, these are fonts that are OpenType with TrueType outlines. They are like OpenType which has postscript outlines. However, you should check with your prepress person to make sure their devices will accept this technology. *See www.adobe.com for further details on this topic.*

Possible Solutions for Font errors

Suppose that the document you have created contains TrueType fonts that your print house's programs cannot accept. Here are some possible solutions if the job has a set deadline.

1. Search in your computer data base for an

OpenType font that has a similar look and size as the original.

2. Check sites such as adobe.com or veer.com or a CD for other OpenType fonts.

3. If you have a small amount of type in the document, save a new copy and in the new file convert the area that contains the TrueType font to outlines. If you are unsure of how to do this consult your program's help section.

4. Convert the file to a PDF. This will embed the font into the document and may allow the file that contains the TrueType font to be processed. Consult with your prepress person if this is a possible solution.

Now you're aware of: the types of fonts that are available, which are acceptable and the options you have.

File formats

At the start of your project you may have organized your images in a folder labeled Images. Inside are TIFFs, JPEGs, AI and EPS files. Which ones are appropriate to include on the CD or should they be in another format? The following information explains file formats to make the choice easier.

.ai (Adobe Illustrator or AI)



A file that can be opened in the Adobe Illustrator program. Example: myfile.ai. Its program tools allow you to create drawings or graphics with your hand on the computer mouse or a digital stylus. These files can be sent to a print house. However, it's better to convert the file to an .eps in order to keep formats consistent.

.eps (Encapsulated PostScript)



A file that is used to transfer data within compatible applications. It is similar to an AI file and a PDF file. The file contains a preview image and contains

vector art work (scalable artwork), text, and colour information. Example: Myfile.eps. This artwork is made up of smooth lines and curves. It's not bit-mapped (rasterized), and is used in most print houses. You can embed a photograph within an EPS file which an AI file cannot do, and unlike a PDF, the graphics and fonts remain editable.



.psd and .psb

PhotoShop Document (.psd) or PhotoShop Big (.psb for files over 2 gigabytes) are file formats used by Adobe PhotoShop. They are often used in the creation of complicated photograph images which appear as surreal imagery or for the restoration of recently scanned photographs. This type of file stores a lot more information than any other image file. In most cases it is used only by the PhotoShop program or in other cases a legacy program like Adobe ImageReady. This file format is good for image creation, but it is often too large to send to a print house. A copy needs to be flattened and saved as a TIFF (.tif) or high quality JPEG (.jpg) file to create a smaller format.

.tif or TIFF (Tagged Image File Format)

A commonly used format for scanning or creation of bit-mapped images. It's used in the print industry because of its lossless compression and file stability and maintains good colour quality. (See *Lossless Compression*). It can be used with a number of platforms and programs. Example: Myfile.tif

.gif (Graphic Interchange Format)

A bit-mapped file format that is found on the Web. It displays a maximum of 256 colours which is ideal for websites. However, for print this low amount of colour would be unacceptable. Example: Myfile.gif

JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts)

A file format with a compression algorithm that reduces the file sizes of bit-mapped images using a "lossy" compression method. (See *Lossy*) This file is ideal for pictures on the web or to send as email attachments; however, its quality is generally unsuitable for print house standards, due to visible image degradation. Example: Myfile.jpg

PDF (Portable Document Format)

Developed by Adobe systems and read by Adobe Acrobat Reader. This file has become the standard used by most print houses and web. It's able to have text, colour, vector and bitmap images and contain multiple pages. This document can be viewed independently from the original layout program (Microsoft Word, InDesign, QuarksXPress) it was created in. Its file size is also relatively low. If you have the program Adobe Acrobat Distiller you can convert most files to a PDF. Example: Myfile.pdf. See *Industry Standards and ICC brochures' details on Layout Program files*.



Levels of Compression

Lossless

Refers to a level of data compression in which no information is lost. These files are generally larger than a lossy file, and quality is preserved. A lossless file is a good choice to send to the local printer.

Lossy

A data compression method characterized by the loss of some data. It is usually used to make the file smaller and eliminate unnecessary information. However, some valuable image information may be lost in the process and cause unwanted dots to appear in the file. Lossy files are commonly used on the Web.

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Use & Understand the Correct Formats

Types of Fonts
File Formats
&
Levels of Compression

Produced by The Ink Rag