



DIGITAL PRINTING FILE PRIMER

PDF files prove to be the most reliable for use in the print industry. When preparing files for print production, you might wish to use this reminder to save time and effort.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Be sure to use a true design software when making documents or other print pieces. Typical programs of this type include: QuarkXPress, InDesign, and Adobe Illustrator. If possible, avoid using programs such as Microsoft Word or Publisher. These types of programs are mainly suited for the role of word processing. When used in digital printing, these programs can frequently lead to reflow, or misplaced text, on the document. When a designer sends the document to a printing device, the measurements of the fonts used in the document are usually based on the properties of that output target printer. To make good PDF files, it's best to select Distiller/Adobe PDF as the default printer on the computer so all documents are saved according to Distiller's font metrics. Doing this will help the text and graphics stay where they are intended to be on the page during a print production.

PDF CHECKLIST

1. All fonts are fully embedded or subset to have only characters used in document. Use the "Document Properties" option on Adobe Acrobat or Reader to verify if fonts have been embedded into the file. If a font is listed as "embedded subset", only the characters used in the document will be embedded and editing will not be possible unless others have that font. Convert type within an EPS file to curves to avoid the need for that font.
2. Images are saved at high resolution. An image at 300 d.p.i. sized to the actual output dimensions is a good practice in most cases. The use of low resolution pictures from the Internet is not recommended.
3. Illustrations are encoded as vector data and not converted to bitmaps when saved. If possible, do not use PDFWriter or the "Save As PDF" option because they convert all EPS graphics to low-res bitmap images. A better method is the "Export as PDF" option with all the correct settings.
4. Colors are specified in the color space of **CMYK**. Do not use RGB. Microsoft Word is one of the main causes of conversion to RGB. Include files for all graphics saved in an EPS format. At the print or export PDF boxes, choose "preserve **CMYK** numbers". On-screen colors are usually not accurate, so use a PMS color key book for coated or uncoated stocks to designate the right colors for your printed piece according to the stock to be used.
5. Layout maximizes number of finished size pieces on a run sheet size (i.e. 2-up on a 12"x18" sheet for two 8.5"x11" sheets with bleeds). Dimensions of page sizes in file match the size of sheets being printed while taking into account bleeds, crop marks, and other finishing needs. Incorporate a bleed, the use of color to the edge of the finished piece, beyond crop marks (cut lines) by 0.125 inches or 1/8". Images and text are not too close to edge for finishing piece with folds or cuts. Images are not downsampled, compression is not added, fonts are embedded, registration marks turned on, flatten transparencies, settings to Press Quality.



How to Create a PDF

- ☑ Select Print.
- ☑ In Print dialog box, select the Adobe PDF driver as the name of the printer.
- ☑ Select Print to File or Save as File on Mac platforms.
- ☑ Click on the Properties button.
- ☑ Select the Layout tab.
- ☑ Click on the Advanced button.
- ☑ Under Graphic Options/True Type fonts, select Download as Soft Font.
- ☑ Click the OK button.
- ☑ Now you're back to the Adobe PDF Document Properties box.
- ☑ Select the Adobe PDF Settings tab.
- ☑ UnCheck the "Do Not Send Fonts to Adobe PDF".
- ☑ Click the OK button. Now you're back to the Print dialog box.
- ☑ Click OK or Print
- ☑ Now the Print to File box or the Save PDF File As box shows.
- ☑ Type in a name for the file; this will be a Post Script file ending in ".prn".
- ☑ Click the OK Button.
- ☑ Now launch/open Acrobat Distiller.
- ☑ In the Distiller window, select the Press Quality setting.
- ☑ Drag the Post Script file icon you just named into the open window.
- ☑ Drop it in the Current File Information area of the window.
- ☑ Distiller will now make and save a press-ready PDF file.
- ☑ Now click on the new PDF file and open it in Adobe Acrobat.
- ☑ In Acrobat, choose Document Properties under the File menu.
- ☑ In the Document Properties window, click on Fonts.
- ☑ If you see "Embedded" or "Embedded Subset" next to every font listed, you have succeeded in creating a press-ready PDF file!

OTHER TIPS AND REMINDERS

Be sure color files have consistent color assignments. Frequently, files will have specific PMS colors used along with custom mixes of **CMYK**. If a match is required on a piece, don't mix custom colors to achieve PMS colors. Just use one or the other.

Also, make sure PMS colors are consistently designated for coated or uncoated stock. Use the color that matches to the type of stock to be printed. Uncoated colors will not appear as intended on a coated stock like gloss covers, text, or laser papers. Refer to the PMS color code books for coated or uncoated stock to accurately assign colors to your file.

For the complete read on PDF information, enter the following on your Internet address bar:
http://partners.adobe.com/public/asn/en/print_resource_center/Acrobat6PrintPress.pdf