

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 reflowed 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/Acrobat 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 the print process.

pdf checklist

1. Be sure 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 file.
2. Are all images saved at high resolution? An image at 300 dpi 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. Check that illustrations are encoded as vector data and not converted to bitmaps when saved. If possible, do not use PDF Writer 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 should be specified in the color space of **CMYK**. Do not use RGB. Microsoft Word is one of the main causes of conversions 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 swatch book for coated or uncoated stocks to designate the right colors for your printed piece according to the stock to be used.
5. Does your layout maximize the 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 should 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". Be sure images and text are not too close to edge for finishing piece with folds or cuts. And finally, double check that images are not downsampled, compression is not added, fonts are embedded, registration marks turned on, transparencies are flattened and settings are clicked to Press Quality.





how to create a pdf

1. Select Print.
2. In Print dialog box, select the Adobe PDF driver as the name of the printer.
3. Select Print To File or Save As File on Mac platform.
4. Click on the Properties button.
5. Select the Layout tab.
6. Click on the Advanced button.
7. Under Graphics Options/True Type fonts, select Download as Soft Font.
8. Click the OK button. This will return you to the Adobe PDF Document Properties box.
9. Select the Adobe PDF Settings tab.
10. Uncheck the "Do Not Send Fonts to Adobe PDF".
11. Click the OK button to return to the Print dialog box.
12. Click OK or Print.
13. The Print to File box or the Save PDF File As... box will appear.
14. Type in a name for the file; this will be a Post Script file ending in ".prn".
15. Click the OK button.
16. Launch/open Acrobat Distiller.
17. In the Distiller window, select the Press Quality setting.
18. Drag the Post Script file icon you just named into the open window.
19. Distiller will now make and save a press-ready PDF file.
20. Click on the new PDF file and open it in Adobe Acrobat.
21. In Acrobat, choose Document Properties under the File menu.
22. 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!



You can then go to www.flexpress.com and click on the Upload Files button to complete the process.

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.

PMS colors should be consistently designated for coated or uncoated stock. Use the color that matches 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