

Digital Guidelines

File Prep for Lambda, InkJet & Film Output

software

Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Illustrator
Adobe Pagemaker (not preferred)
Adobe InDesign
QuarkXPress
Macromedia Freehand
Corel Draw (not preferred)

supported media

Iomega JAZ Drive (1 and 2 GIG)
Iomega ZIP Drive (100 and 250 MB)
DVD
CD-ROM

file types

Raster files (Photoshop, TIFF, etc.) are composed of individual dots called pixels, which result from scanning an image. The resolution, pixels per inch (ppi), determines the image quality at a given size. Vector files (Illustrator, Freehand, etc.) and page-layout files (Quark, InDesign, etc.) are composed of a group of mathematical expressions (vectors), but may contain raster elements. The vector elements are not referenced by pixels per inch because vectors can be mathematically interpreted to any resolution. The raster elements are subject to the same rules as raster files.

document setup

- If your graphic contains only photos, set-up your document as a raster file in Photoshop format. Do any manipulation of the file using layers and, if possible, send the layered file.
- If your graphic contains photos as well as logos, copy or line-art, set-up your document as a vector or page-layout file using Illustrator, Freehand, Quark or InDesign.
- Always link (never embed) raster elements in vector files and include linked files with the job.
- Where possible, use low-res images in your layout and send us the originals to scan and substitute as high-res images. This will provide the best quality and easiest work flow.
- Set-up all large multi-panel graphics on one page, not separate pages.
- Include "bleed" on all sides of the image when possible. Bleed is extra image (1/2" at final size is sufficient) outside the crops to allow for alignment and assure a clean trimmed edge.
- Files may be created at any scale in any of the acceptable software programs as long as the proportions are correct.

color management

Understand that color is device dependent, i.e., the same digital color will print differently on different devices. We can best allow for these differences under the following rules.

- Set-up all raster files in Colormatch RGB color space, but do not convert files originated in a different color space.
- Do not make color corrections to files, if you can avoid it. If you need to make corrections, use an adjustment layer and send the layered file.
- Use the desired PMS (Pantone Matching System) number for specifying vector file colors. We will make the necessary adjustments to print as close as possible to your requested color.

raster file resolution

- Resolution specifications apply only to raster files and raster elements. Vector data is resolution independent because the resolution is mathematically interpreted as needed.
- Higher scan resolution will usually result in higher quality but will mean larger files. However, don't "res-up" files by interpolating additional pixels, as that will not improve quality.
- The following rules require that resolution be calculated at final output size. Recognize that 100ppi at final output size is 400ppi at 1/4 scale, or 800ppi at 1/8 scale, and all numbers must be adjusted accordingly.
- Set-up raster files and elements for Lambda printing at 100 to 200ppi at final output size consistent with a reasonable working file size.
- Set-up raster files and elements for InkJet printing at 75 to 100ppi at final output size.
- Set-up raster files and elements for film recording at 750 to 1000ppi at a final output size of 7" high by 9" wide.

final steps

- Always include the screen and printer fonts with every file.
- Always include a printed copy (in color, if possible) of your final document. Note all required PMS colors and any other important specifications.
- Always open files after you have copied them to your transport media, to see that they have not become corrupted.
- Always include a printed directory of your files with supporting or placed files highlighted. Whenever possible, avoid sending extraneous files that are not needed for the job.