



Print-Ready File Setup

We accept files from the following programs:

Illustrator, .ai file with embedded images and outlined fonts. We will accept .eps but these will raster transparency and blends.

InDesign, .indd files must include linked images and fonts used.

Photoshop, .psd file, if using fonts, it is best to export as a PDF file this will retain the vector format of the text producing clear and sharp text.

PDF file is the #1 preferred format from any application. Be sure to export PDFs at High Resolution and **include .125" bleed** outside the die-line or trim area.

Canva Files, Select Share from the editor menu bar. On the file type dropdown, select PDF Print. For bleeds and crop marks, tick Crop marks and bleed. Optional: To optimize your PDF print file, tick Flatten PDF.

It is best not to supply .gif .png .jpg or .bmp files these tend to be low quality images used for websites.

Images, Text, Colors, & Resolution

Color and Gray scale Images should be supplied at **300 DPI at 100%**. If the images are scaled up this will lower the resolution proportionally reducing the quality of the image. Low-resolution images may be flagged during initial preflight, possibly delaying your project.

Line art or Logo files are best supplied in vector format, if supplying raster image files these are best when supplied at **1200 DPI at 100%**. Submit your artwork in CMYK as we will print your job printing in CMYK.

Avoid using **Pantone solid colors** and converting them to process, this will yield unreliable results. If you would like color swatches you can import them in from the Pantone process coated library and these will be CMYK already. **Spot color jobs** should be set up with their intended spot color names.

When using **large solid areas of black** we suggest you use a **4 color black mix** (50C, 40M, 40Y, 100K) this will ensure project is printed as dark as possible.

Setting up a file for digital printing involves several key steps to ensure high-quality results. Here's a basic guide:

1. **File Format:** Use a print-friendly format such as PDF, TIFF, or high-resolution JPEG. PDFs are often preferred for their ability to preserve layout and quality.
2. **Resolution:** Ensure your image resolution is high enough for printing. Typically, you should aim for 300 DPI (dots per inch) at the final print size.
3. **Color Mode:** Convert your file to CMYK color mode, as this is the color profile used in most digital printers. RGB colors can look different when printed.
4. **Bleed:** Add a bleed area of at least 0.125 inches (or 3mm) around your design. This extra margin ensures that there are no white edges after trimming.
5. **Margins and Safe Zone:** Keep important elements, like text or logos, within the safe zone, which is usually about 0.25 inches from the edge of the document. This prevents them from being cut off.
6. **Fonts and Text:** Convert text to outlines or embed fonts to avoid font issues. If you're using vector graphics, make sure they are also outlined.
7. **Proofing:** Create a proof of your design to check colors and layout. Many print shops provide proofs to ensure everything looks as expected before the final print.
8. **File Size:** Ensure the file size is manageable for your printer's capabilities, especially if dealing with large-format prints.
9. **Compression:** Avoid excessive compression that can reduce image quality. Use lossless formats like TIFF or maximum-quality JPEG settings.
10. **Check for Errors:** Review your file for any errors or inconsistencies, such as incorrect colors or pixelation, before sending it to the printer.

By following these steps, you'll set up your file in a way that maximizes the quality of your digital print job.

Vector files are essential for high-quality printing, especially when scaling images up or down. Here's what you need to know about vector files:

What is a Vector File?

- **Vector Graphics:** Unlike raster images (which are made up of pixels), vector graphics use mathematical equations to create shapes and lines. This means they can be scaled to any size without losing quality.
- **File Formats:** Common vector file formats include:
 - **AI (Adobe Illustrator):** The native file format for Adobe Illustrator.
 - **EPS (Encapsulated PostScript):** A versatile format supported by many design programs.
 - **SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics):** A web-friendly format that maintains scalability.
 - **PDF:** Can contain both vector and raster elements; useful for print and digital use.

Benefits of Vector Files

- **Scalability:** Can be resized without loss of quality, making them ideal for large-format printing.
- **Editability:** Easily editable in vector-based design software.
- **Resolution Independence:** Maintains crispness and detail at any size.

Preparing Vector Files for Printing

1. **Convert Text to Outlines:** This prevents font issues by converting text into vector shapes.
2. **Use CMYK Colors:** Convert colors from RGB to CMYK to ensure accurate color reproduction in print.
3. **Check for Strokes and Fills:** Ensure all strokes and fills are defined correctly, as they might appear differently in print.
4. **Simplify Paths:** Reduce the number of anchor points and complex paths if possible to avoid printing issues.
5. **Add Bleed:** Extend your vector artwork beyond the trim line by at least 0.125 inches (3mm) to ensure there are no white edges after trimming.
6. **Embed Images:** If your vector file contains raster images, ensure they are embedded and not linked, as links may be broken or not included in the final file.
7. **Proof Your Design:** Review and proof your vector file to ensure all elements are correctly displayed and formatted.

Software for Working with Vector Files

- **Adobe Illustrator:** Industry standard for creating and editing vector graphics.

By ensuring your vector files are properly prepared, you'll achieve high-quality, professional results in your digital prints.

While Microsoft products like Word and PowerPoint are great for creating documents and presentations, they aren't usually the best choice for commercial printing due to several limitations:

Limitations of Microsoft Products for Commercial Printing

1. **Resolution:** Microsoft Office applications are not designed for high-resolution output, which is critical for commercial printing. They often default to lower resolutions suitable for screen display.
2. **Color Management:** Office applications use RGB color mode by default, which is not ideal for print. Commercial printing typically requires CMYK color mode for accurate color reproduction.
3. **File Formats:** Microsoft files (e.g., .docx, .pptx) may not be compatible with professional printing workflows. Formats like PDF, TIFF, or high-resolution JPEG are generally preferred.
4. **Vector Graphics:** Microsoft products don't handle vector graphics as well as dedicated design software. Vector graphics are crucial for scaling and maintaining quality in prints.
5. **Design Flexibility:** Applications like Word and PowerPoint have limited design and layout capabilities compared to professional design software like Adobe Illustrator or InDesign.
6. **Proofing and Prepress:** Office applications lack advanced prepress tools and proofing options that are necessary for preparing files for commercial printing.

Better Alternatives for Commercial Printing

1. **Adobe InDesign:** Ideal for creating professional layouts and multi-page documents. It offers robust design tools and precise control over typography and color.
2. **Adobe Illustrator:** Perfect for creating vector graphics, logos, and illustrations that can be scaled to any size without losing quality.
3. **Adobe Photoshop:** Useful for image editing and preparing raster graphics, but files should be high-resolution and converted to CMYK.

For the best results in commercial printing, using dedicated design software will provide you with the necessary tools and flexibility to create high-quality, print-ready files.

Canva is a web-based design tool that allows users to create a wide variety of graphics, including social media posts, presentations, posters, flyers, and more. It's known for its user-friendly interface and a vast library of templates, images, icons, and fonts. Here are some key features and uses of Canva:

Features of Canva

1. **Templates:** Canva offers thousands of pre-designed templates for different types of content, such as social media graphics, marketing materials, and presentations. This helps users quickly create professional-looking designs without starting from scratch.
2. **Drag-and-Drop Interface:** The platform uses a drag-and-drop design interface, making it accessible to users with little to no design experience. You can easily add and arrange elements like text, images, and shapes.
3. **Customizable Elements:** Users can customize templates by changing colors, fonts, and images to match their brand or personal preferences. Canva also provides a range of design elements, such as icons, illustrations, and charts.
4. **Collaboration:** Canva supports real-time collaboration, allowing multiple users to work on the same design simultaneously, which is useful for team projects.
5. **Stock Assets:** Canva includes a library of stock photos, videos, and illustrations. While many assets are free, some premium items are available through Canva's paid plans.
6. **Brand Kit:** For businesses, Canva offers a Brand Kit feature to store and apply brand colors, logos, and fonts consistently across designs.
7. **Download and Sharing Options:** Designs can be downloaded in various formats (e.g., PNG, JPG, PDF) and shared directly to social media or via a shareable link.
8. **Canva Pro:** A subscription service that offers additional features like access to premium assets, more templates, and advanced design tools.

Uses of Canva

- **Social Media Graphics:** Create eye-catching posts, stories, and ads for platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.
- **Marketing Materials:** Design brochures, flyers, posters, and business cards.
- **Presentations:** Build visually appealing slideshows and presentations.
- **Resumes and Portfolios:** Design professional resumes and portfolio showcases.
- **Event Invitations:** Create invitations and other event-related materials.

While Canva is great for creating a variety of design projects, it may not offer the advanced features and precision of professional design software like Adobe Illustrator or InDesign, especially for high-end commercial printing. For most digital and small-scale print projects, however, Canva provides an easy and effective solution.

PDFs (Portable Document Format) are a widely used file format for sharing and printing documents. They are designed to present documents consistently across different devices and platforms, preserving the layout, fonts, and images. Here's what you need to know about PDFs:

Key Features of PDFs

1. **Consistent Layout:** PDFs maintain the exact layout, fonts, and images of a document, ensuring it looks the same regardless of the device or software used to view it.
2. **Cross-Platform Compatibility:** PDFs can be opened and viewed on various operating systems (Windows, macOS, Linux) and devices (PCs, smartphones, tablets) using free PDF readers like Adobe Acrobat Reader.
3. **High-Quality Printing:** PDFs are ideal for printing because they preserve high-quality images and vector graphics. They can include embedded fonts and images to ensure the document prints exactly as designed.
4. **Security Features:** PDFs can be secured with passwords, encryption, and restrictions on editing, copying, or printing, providing control over document access and modifications.
5. **Interactive Elements:** PDFs can include interactive elements such as hyperlinks, forms, and multimedia content, enhancing functionality for digital documents.
6. **Compression:** PDFs can be compressed to reduce file size while maintaining quality, which is useful for sharing and online use.

Creating and Working with PDFs

1. **Creating PDFs:**
 - o **From Applications:** Most modern applications (e.g., Microsoft Word, Adobe Illustrator) allow you to save or export documents as PDFs.
 - o **Online Tools:** There are various online tools and converters that can create PDFs from different file types.
2. **Editing PDFs:**
 - o **Adobe Acrobat Pro:** Provides robust editing features for text, images, and layout. It also allows you to combine, split, and rearrange PDF pages.
 - o **Online Editors:** Tools like PDFescape or Smallpdf offer basic editing capabilities online.
3. **Viewing PDFs:**
 - o **Adobe Acrobat Reader:** A free and widely used PDF viewer.
 - o **Web Browsers:** Most modern web browsers (e.g., Chrome, Firefox) have built-in PDF viewers.
4. **Optimizing PDFs for Print:**

- o **Resolution:** Ensure images are high-resolution (300 DPI) for quality printing.
- o **Color Mode:** Convert colors to CMYK for accurate color reproduction in print.
- o **Bleed and Margins:** Include bleed areas and check margins to avoid cut-off issues.

5. PDF Standards:

- o **PDF/A:** An archival standard for long-term preservation of electronic documents.
- o **PDF/X:** A standard used in the printing industry to ensure that PDFs are print-ready and meet specific requirements.

PDFs are versatile and widely used for both digital and print documents due to their ability to maintain document integrity and formatting across different platforms.