tcprint SOLUTIONS

GENERAL GUIDE TO FILE TYPES AND FILE USES FOR TCPRINT SOLUTIONS

NOTE:
THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED FOR GENERAL PURPOSE INFORMATION AND IS NOT MEANT TO COVER THE BROAD SPECTRUM OF FILE TYPES OR USES.
THIS INFORMATION WILL HELP TO DEVELOP VERY GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF FILE TYPES AND THEIR USES.

IMPORTANT TERMS

VECTOR
An image or graphic that uses mathematical points to create lines. These images can be made into any color needed and enlarged to any size. These are the preferred file types for logos and spot color jobs. These are not measured in DPI.
File types: .ai
              .eps (in most cases)
              .pdf (in some cases)

RASTERIZED (OR FLAT IMAGE)
An image that stores data inside of pixels. A rasterized image is measured in DPI. These are limited in the amount they can be enlarged. If enlarged too much, blurring will take effect. A rasterized image can be four-color, grayscale or spot color if properly applied. The color of the image cannot be changed drastically. The text in a rasterized or flattened file cannot be edited.
File types: .tiff
              .jpeg
              .png
              .gif
              .psd
              .eps (in few cases).pdf (in some cases)

DPI
Dots Per Inch. This is used to measure rasterized images. The minimum for print use is 300 dpi. Lower than 300 dpi can be printed, but quality loss will be noticeable in many cases. Pulling images or logos from websites will NOT work. These images are 72 dpi and will not be print quality.

PDF
Portable Document Format. This is the most widely used print format. This is the type that we use in prepress for preparing files for print.

CMYK
Cyan/Magenta/Yellow/Black. This is the most commonly used color combination for printing. All four-color graphics sent in to TCPrint Solutions need to be set as CMYK.

RGB
Red/Green/Blue. This is the color mode used for web design and typical computer monitor viewing. This is NOT used for print.

SPOT COLOR
This is a specific color named in the particular file. The most commonly used naming convention for spot colors is written by PANTONE®. These will not be using a four-color mix such as CMYK, but instead use a specially mixed color to achieve a solid look instead of a mixture of CMYK.

GRAYSCALE
This is the color mode used when there will only be black ink used in the printing.

FILE TYPES

IMAGES

.TIFF
Highest quality
Largest file size
Usually cannot be emailed
Usually a four-color image
Usually NOT a spot color
A "rasterized" image
Color and type can SOMETIMES be manipulated.

.JPEG
Lower quality
Smaller file size
Usually can be emailed
Four-color image
NOT a spot color
A "rasterized" image
Color and type cannot be manipulated.

.PNG/GIF
Very low quality
Tiny file size
Can be emailed
Four-color image
NOT a spot color
A "rasterized" image
Generally used for web viewing, not print.
Color and type cannot be manipulated.

.PDF
High quality
Large file size
Usually can be emailed
Four-color or SPOT color image
Can be "rasterized" or "vector".
Color and type can SOMETIMES be manipulated.

.EPS

if rasterized:
High quality
Large file size
Usually cannot be emailed
Color and type can SOMETIMES be manipulated.
Four-color or SPOT color image

if vector:
Best quality
Small file size
Can be emailed
Four-color or SPOT color image
Colors can be manipulated.

.AI
Best quality
Small file size
Usually can be emailed
Four-color or SPOT color image
Colors can be manipulated.

.PSD
High quality
Large file size
Usually cannot be emailed
Four-color or SPOT color image
Color and type can SOMETIMES be manipulated.

PRINT LAYOUT

.INDD
InDesign file
Layout only
Will not include images. Images are "linked" to the file.

.QXD
Quark file
Layout only
Will not include images. Images are "linked" to the file.

.PUB
Publisher file
Not optimal for print use
Used mainly for monitor-based presentations or interoffice productivity.
Will include low quality images
Will most likely be four-color, not SPOT color

.DOC
Microsoft Word document
Not optimal for print use
Used mainly for text printouts or interoffice productivity
Will include low quality images
Will be four-color, not SPOT color

ARCHIVED

.ZIP
Windows or Mac-archived file
It will contain multiple files all "packaged" within one.

.SIT or.SITX
Mac-archived file
It will contain multiple files all "packaged" within one.

.RAR
Windows or Mac-archived file
It will contain multiple files all "packaged" within one.
It is NOT as widely used as .zip and .sit(x).