Guide to Print File Preparation

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Early in 2002 Allen Press made the transition to being filmless and all digital, from file submission through digital plate making. As desktop publishing continues to evolve, Allen Press will endeavor to keep you up to date. This guide is provided to you with the latest guidelines for file submission of your project.

If you understand desktop publishing and want to create your own page files, we welcome the opportunity to work with you to help translate your efforts into high-quality printed material. We also want to meet your expectations in terms of quality, cost, and schedules. That is why this guide was written and why it approaches desktop publishing from the printer's point of view. It contains practical advice about ways you can ensure that the progress of your page files from disk to printed pages is as trouble-free as possible.

Please contact your Account Manager for more information.

PDF Files for Output

Our preferred format for file submission is PDF. We will be glad to work with you or your suppliers to test and correctly configure your PDF files for proper print production. Contact us with as much lead time as possible to allow for testing before you submit your job for production.

Application Versus PostScript™

Allen Press will still accept native application files (e.g., InDesign), but we are encouraging PDF submissions made from these native application files. Should you choose to submit application files, please remember to package all files and printer fonts that support your layout file. Failure to include these files will delay the processing of your job until the files are received. We prefer for you to submit PDF or PostScript files. You may find information within this document that will help you in the creation of press-ready files, or you may contact your Account Manager with questions.

Page Layout Applications

Our preferred page layout applications are Adobe InDesign®, QuarkXPress®, and Adobe® PageMaker®. We are capable of working both with Mac and PC versions of each application. Whatever you use, your digital files should be accompanied by a final hard copy output at 100%. This may seem redundant, but it assures us that your files are printable. If your laser printer will not print them, ours probably will not either. Your proofs will also show us what your files are supposed to look like. It is also a good idea to send us a preliminary test file for a sample output so that we can evaluate it for potential problems in advance of sending the entire job.

Proper Page Setup

Set your page or document size to the trim size (the final size) of your publication. This is important: If you set up your pages as "facing pages," put even-numbered pages on the left, and odd-numbered pages on the right. Make sure that your margins are consistent from file to file. Use master pages for positioning of running heads/feet so they are always in the same place.

Bleeds

If you wish to print an object that extends to the edge of a page, a "bleed" is necessary. Extend the edge of the element 9 points or 1/8″ past the edge of the page.

Fonts

Allen Press must have the identical fonts you have used to construct your page files. We ask that you send copies of those fonts along with your job. You should create a folder called "job fonts." Place copies of your fonts in that folder and send it along with your page files. *Please send both printer and screen fonts for Adobe Type 1 fonts.*

We recommend using Adobe Type 1 fonts or OpenType fonts. Adobe no longer supports Multiple Master technologies, and neither does Allen Press. TrueType fonts are single files; the screen and printer information is contained in a single scalable font file. Other versions of fonts can be identified by the different icons that will appear in the printer font file. Selecting "Get Info" on a chosen printer font file will usually identify the manufacturer.

Macintosh screen fonts are either loose or in a suitcase; if they are loose, the Finder calls them "font" in the window under "kind"; if they are in a suitcase, they are called "font suitcase." Printer fonts are never in suitcases; they are always individual files and are called "PostScript font" in the Finder window.

Avoid system bitmap fonts. These are fonts designed strictly for your computer screen or dot-matrix printer and do not yield good results on an imagesetter. Macintosh Bitmap fonts are normally named after cities (e.g., Geneva, Monaco, New York, Chicago), which makes them easy to identify. Windows fonts can be examined in the Control Panel under "Fonts." The font listing will describe the font in brackets at the end of the name/size description. Fonts described as a monitor standard (EGA, VGA, 8514) or a non-PostScript printer standard (Plotter) are bitmap fonts.

Do NOT use style menu for styling! When formatting your text for italic or bold typefaces, select the bold or italic typeface in the font family, such as Times Bold or Times Italic, rather than selecting Times and then assigning it a bold or italic style from the style menu.

Avoid placing type in a graphic that is then placed inside another graphic that in turn is imported into your page application file. The imagesetter will have a difficult time locating this font.

Finally, if you have included text in an EPS graphic file, we must have the screen and printer fonts for that text before we can correctly produce your graphic. If possible, convert the text in EPS graphics to outlines, or make sure to embed all fonts when saving as an EPS. This will eliminate the need for the fonts.

Font Icons

Font Suitcase
Contains the screen fonts for the family

Screen Font

TrueType Font

Open Type Font

Adobe Printer Font

Printer Font

Rules and Lines

Our presses can print a rule as thin as 0.3 points; do not use rules any thinner than 0.3 points. "Hairline" setting (0.004) is thinner than 0.3 points and will print inconsistently, or not at all.

When working with graphics that have rules or keylines applied to them in the page layout application, be sure to view them at a high enough magnification to ensure that the graphic and the rule are touching each other. A gap between these elements will not always be visible when printed to a 300 or 600 dpi laser printer, but it will show when printed in high resolution. This also applies to rules coming together at corners and any rules that are meant to be touching a graphic.

Trapping

Trapping and RIPing are completed by our Prinergy prepress system. Prinergy examines the content and decides the best way to handle the trapping. If special needs are required, we will make the necessary modifications to the post-RIPed file and not to the native application or PDF file.

Images and Graphics

Creating high-quality, printable graphics and placing them correctly in your page files can be complicated and a difficult part of desktop publishing, especially when it comes to halftones and color. Unless you understand the issues of tonal range, dot gain, and the relationship between line screen value, dpi, and shooting percentage, we suggest that you let us scan, digitize, and send you your images to be placed within your final files.

You may, of course, do your own scanning and assume responsibility for the quality of the output. If you are scanning and/or placing artwork in your layout files, call us in advance and allow enough time for testing one of your files. Also, refer to the **Adobe Photoshop** notes below.

Text in an EPS graphics file requires that we have the font file for that text to print properly. Better yet, convert the text to outlines first or embed the fonts to avoid problems later. See "**Fonts**."

There are many graphics formats, but only a few tend to be reliable. Stay with EPS, TIFF, and JPEG on Mac and PC. Using other file formats can be unpredictable. Test your files to make sure they print properly before committing to them, and call us if you have any questions.

Digital Photography

If you will be using a digital camera to capture images for print production, you must use the highest resolution setting option with the least amount of compression. Digital camera manufacturers use many different terms and file formats when capturing high-resolution images, so please refer to your camera's manual for more information.

A Few Tips About Graphics

- PICT and PAINT files are low-resolution bitmap files and will not improve in appearance even if imaged at high resolution. If they look jagged on your 300 dpi laser printer, they will also look jagged at 2400 dpi.
- JPEG is a lossy compression that removes pixels from an image, reducing the image quality.

Adobe Photoshop

- RGB and Indexed Color images need to be converted to CMYK so that we can separate them properly. (Photoshop—Image—Mode—CMYK.) ***Color shift will occur when they are converted to CMYK***.
- Color (CMYK) images should have a resolution of 300 to 350 ppi. Anything less than 300 ppi starts to degrade, and more than 350 ppi is overkill (the extra resolution no longer improves the image quality and it unnecessarily uses up disk space). Grayscale images should have a minimum of 200 ppi for proper reproduction. To fix an image that has too much resolution, go to "Image—Image Size"—be sure "Resample Image" is checked—and in "Print Size" change the ppi to 350. ***Unfortunately, this does not work the other way; you can't give it more resolution and hope to have a better image. It must be scanned with enough resolution to begin with.***
- A scanned image should be placed in a document at 100%. It can be enlarged up to 110% without noticeable loss of image quality. The image will degrade if enlarged greater than this. If you want to reduce the image to 80% or less in your document, open it in Photoshop and reduce it there instead, then place it into the page layout program at 100%. (Photoshop—Image—Image Size—be sure "Resample Image" is checked—and in "Print Size" change the units to percent and enter the desired percentage.) ***Unfortunately, you can't enlarge an image above 100% in Photoshop and have it retain resolution.*** It must be scanned at the correct larger size from the beginning. (This does not apply to Illustrator EPS files that DO NOT have an image embedded within the graphic. They can be enlarged or reduced as much as you want, because they are rendered from mathematical formulas and not pixels, as Photoshop files are.) ***If your EPS file has an image included within the graphic, the same steps apply that apply to a Photoshop EPS file.***
- Line art images (black and white images lacking screens or halftones) should be sized as close to 100% as possible, and they should be bitmap images (Photoshop—Image—Mode—Bitmap).
- If Bitmap is not a choice, choose Grayscale first, then Bitmap will be available. The best resolution for line art is 1200 ppi.
- Duotones should be created in Photoshop. With any specific colors, they should be named in Photoshop exactly as they are named in the page layout program, including Pantone and process colors.
- Clipping path flatness within Photoshop and Illustrator should be set to a flatness of no greater than 3.

Nested Graphics

If you place a graphic within a graphic that is then placed in your page layout program (e.g., you place a Photoshop TIFF file into Illustrator, then place the Illustrator file into QuarkXPress), the graphic may not print correctly.

If you do nest graphics, be sure to send us the nested graphics also ***(i.e., in our example above, send us the Photoshop file as well as the Illustrator file)***, and embed the graphic in the EPS file.

Adobe Illustrator

- Fonts—It's best to convert the text in your files to outlines before sending them in order to avoid font problems. If you choose not to convert them, we will need fonts used in your graphic.

Data Transfer

Files may be sent to Allen Press electronically. Large files or complete projects can be uploaded to the Allen Press FTP site or MassTransit. Small files can be sent as email attachments. We will also accept files on CD or DVD.

For further information on using FTP and MassTransit, please see the Guide to File Transfer. For assistance with setup or uploading, please contact your Account Manager.

Blueline Corrections

Pages that require a correction are called "Blueline Correction." Make corrections and send in ONLY those pages that must be replaced.

Archiving

We assume that you maintain copies of the files that you send to us. If you have sent us files on disk, we will return them to you just as we received them. We will not save or store these files at Allen Press after printing. If, however, you have asked us or we have found it necessary to create or enhance artwork, place scans, or in any way modify or add to your files, we will copy these files to the media of your choice and return them to you for a fee that covers labor and materials. Call us for a quote.

The Most Important Advice to Follow

The most important thing you can do to ensure success is to communicate. Let us know what you intend to do before you do it, especially if it involves changing procedure, software, fonts, computers, or anything else that could impact the nature of your work. Remember, we see many files in different formats on a regular basis. We are aware of potential problems and can help you avoid them. Ask questions. Ask to speak with the people who will handle the work whenever you have a technical question. By staying in close communication with us and proceeding carefully, your work will go more smoothly, with fewer delays and problems.

Preparing PDF Files for Allen Press

When creating a PDF for Allen Press, please refer to the Guide for PDF Creation from Native Application Files. If other questions arise, please contact your Account Manager for assistance.

Glossary

ASCII file—A text file containing only the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) characters.

Bitmap fonts—Low-resolution fonts designed for the computer screen only (e.g., Chicago, Geneva, New York).

Bleed—An image or color that extends past or "bleeds" off one or more trim edges of a page.

CMYK—Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black. The four "process" colors used in printing to reproduce full-color images.

DPI—Dots Per Inch. Describes the resolution of an output device.

DTP—Desktop Publishing. Refers to typesetting done on computers and low-end scanners using off-the-shelf page layout and scanning software.

EPS—Encapsulated PostScript. A file format that stores outlined images in PostScript language commands. This is the best format for high-resolution color and black-and-white line art.

FPO—For Position Only. Refers to low-resolution graphics to be replaced with high-resolution graphics later in the production process.

JPEG—Joint Photographic Experts Group. Standard file type for color and grayscale image compression.

LPI—Lines Per Inch. A unit of measurement for halftone screens.

PostScript™—A page description language developed by Adobe Systems, Inc. and used by many laser printers and imagesetters.

PPI—Pixels Per Inch. Describes the resolution of an image in Adobe Photoshop.

Prinergy RIP system—The processing system that Allen Press uses to process its Hi-res printing files. These are sent directly to our platesetters.

Process color—See CMYK. RGB—Red, Green, Blue. The primary additive colors used in color computer monitors.

RIP—Raster Image Processor. Hardware and/or software that translates images to the platesetter. Allen Press is a computer-to-plate (CTP) printer.

RTF—Rich Text Format. A generic word processing format that uses codes within an ASCII file to preserve formatting.

Spot color—The use of one or more extra colors on a page, usually referred to as PMS (Pantone Matching System) color.

TIFF—Tagged Image File Format. A high-resolution image. The preferred format for color and halftones.

Trapping—The printing of one ink on top of another to achieve a third color, or to overlap for registration.

Type 1 fonts—Adobe Postscript font that includes a Printer and Screen font.