

Artwork Submission Guidelines

The first thing to consider when receiving/submitting electronic artwork is that in order to print a high quality piece, a high quality file first needs to be created. It is very important that all images, logos, photos used in the art file are of good quality. The two main programs used for creating artwork files are Adobe Illustrator(.ai file extension) and Adobe InDesign(.indd file extension). Both excel in different areas in terms of design capabilities. There are two main types of files that are used within an art file, raster and vector.

Common raster files are .jpeg, .tif, .png, .bmp. These files are created and used in photo editing software, Adobe Photoshop being the most common. Raster files are mainly photographs or other images. Logos are sometimes created in a raster format, but that is not preferred. The size and quality of raster images is directly dependent on the resolution they were created in. The preferred resolution of a file is determined by how the file is to be used. A file that will be used for a website will have a lower resolution than a file meant for printing. Raster files are limited in their ability to change the scale/size of the image without significantly impacting the image quality of the file. The standard for raster images when used for printing is 300dpi or dots per inch. Anything under this threshold may not appear as a nice clean image when printed. Anything over this threshold typically gets down-sampled to 300dpi when creating a press/production file to be used for printing. Typically when dealing with raster artwork you are limited to printing in rgb, cmyk or black(grayscale) only. If spot printing is desired, there is additional work involved in modifying the artwork so it can be color separated to print in separate spot channels.

Vector files are different than raster files in that there is no resolution involved. Vector files can be scaled to any size, larger or smaller, without impacting the quality of the file. Common vector files are .eps, .ai, .pdf. Adobe Illustrator is the most common vector drawing program. Corel Draw and Macromedia Freehand are two other vector drawing programs that were used in the past and may still be used. Vector files allow for easy use of spot pms colors, or process color. Most artwork files used for printing are in vector format. A vector art file can contain raster images, such as photos or images. Logos are also preferred in vector format.

The preferred file format when submitting electronic artwork is by a press or production quality pdf. A press or production quality pdf needs to contain any necessary bleeds and typically includes crop marks. By submitting this type of pdf a lot of typical artwork submission issues can be avoided, including fonts errors, missing links, etc. These pdfs must be created using the proper settings (may vary by program). Both Illustrator and InDesign make it very easy to save a file as a press quality pdf and allow for elections of bleeds, page spreads, etc. Other programs sometimes used, such as Quark Express, Corel Draw, etc., also contain options to create a pdf of this quality.

In lieu of a press/production pdf, we would prefer the native art file, which must be properly packaged. When a file is “packaged” all of the fonts and links (photos, logos, images) used within the native file are collected and placed in a separate folder. This must be done because when a logo or a photo is used in art file, the program creates a link or “preview” image of that file in order to save memory. When needed, such as when saving or printing, the program retrieves the necessary information from the separate original logo or photo file. Common mistakes made when supplying a native art file are not including all of the necessary fonts or links, as well as font errors. Sometimes fonts act differently on different computers and not all fonts types are able to be loaded on every type of computer. If a native art file is supplied without the proper fonts or links it cannot be used.

QT2 primarily uses the programs in the Adobe Creative CC Suite, Acrobat, Illustrator, InDesign and Photoshop. We are also able to accept Quark XPress files (.qxd or qxp file extensions). We can accept Microsoft Word(.doc file extension) and Publisher files(.pub file extension) if needed, although art charges may apply in order to make those files print ready.