



File formats... **TIF** **EPS** **PDF** **Illustrator** **Photoshop** **JPG** **Coreldraw**



All Printers as well as Designers and Pre-press houses are now faced with receiving numerous files of various formats from clients and it is important that we minimise potential problems that can occur saving our clients time and money.

At Paul M Ltd, we output CTP plates on a daily basis and certainly appreciate it when PDF files arrive that are "Press Ready". It makes for a smooth and efficient work-flow. Knowing what to ask for is half the battle.

This info will help and provide you with basic information about PDF files, which will help provide a faster and more hassle free turn around for your business.

Often a disk or CD just arrives on your desk or through email, so effectively you have to manage with what you are given. However, if you are fortunate enough to have been asked what type of file you prefer, as a general rule say PRESS READY PDF, with bleed and trims.

A Press Ready PDF (Portable Document Format) is basically a file that can be created from many *programs (MAC or PC) and contains all the fonts, and high resolution images that we need to output at high quality.

For example, your client creates a brochure with lots of scanned photos and typefaces using Adobe Indesign (or similar program) and "Exports" it as a PRESS READY PDF. The PDF file is all you need. If they were to give you the InDesign file instead, you would then need to ask them for all the fonts, linked photos and so on. You then have to open and print the file which is when problems can arise with elements moving.

All of the professional publishing programs support exporting to a Press Ready PDF. There is no reason why your client should supply you with anything other than a PDF file, unless they want you to make major changes to it.

When exporting to PDF, most programs will also support adding trim marks and bleed. This is also important and will save time and money.

PDF files are used for many different purposes. For example, they are commonly used on the Internet because they can be small in size and therefore downloaded quickly. These small PDFs are created in the same way as I have explained, except SCREEN, SMALLEST FILE SIZE or STANDARD settings are used instead of PRESS when exporting. This makes the file small, but with low resolution images, usually no fonts embedded (included) and RGB colours (no SPOT or CMYK colours). Obviously no good for us! This is why "PRESS" settings must be used when exporting to PDF format.

Another thing to consider is if your client may have started with a file that contains low resolution images in the first place...so creating a PRESS READY PDF from this file will still result in images that are low resolution. If you have poor quality to begin with, the PDF will also be poor quality....garbage in, garbage out.

PDFs can be changed with the right software, but this is limited. Our most common change we have to make is with PDFs from Microsoft products, that have black text in RGB, which when exporting to a PDF, separates on all four CMYK colours. This is the sort of thing we check for, and can convert the text to 100%K (black). Small type changes are also usually possible, however not always. This depends on the fonts and other factors. All this takes time to fix which pushes your costs up.

If you are not sure if a PDF is PRESS READY or not, just email it to us and we will be happy to check it for you. We have software that can check the resolution of images and colour separations. If you have any problems, please phone us.

* Programs eg. Adobe Indesign, Adobe Illustrator, Quark Express, Coreldraw, Freehand