

Design vocabulary cheat sheet

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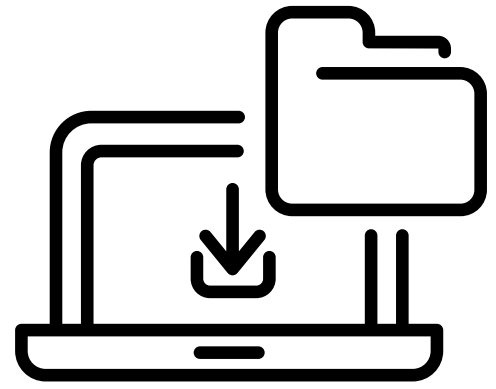
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Files

Knowing what file to ask for or send doesn't need to be complicated



Raster files

Raster graphics use coloured pixels or dots to form a complete image. Almost all photography that you see will be a raster file. They are good for assigning special effects, colour correction and manipulating photos. They are resolution-dependent, which means that images cannot be enlarged without losing quality.

GIF (Graphics Interchange Format)

Raster files that support animation and transparency. GIFs can only display up to 256 colours, allowing for very small file sizes. (PS: It's pronounced, "JIF" as opposed to the widely-accepted pronunciation, "GIF," according to GIF creator, Steve Wilhite.)

JPEG (Joint Photographic Electronic Group)

The most widely used raster file type for web-based designs. JPEGs are compressed files that load quickly. You'll typically see them used for emails, banner ads, online photos, and pretty much anything else online. Unlike GIFs, they cannot have a transparent background (a white background will be added automatically).

PNG (Portable Network Graphics)

A web-based format that does not lose quality when compressed. PNG files were created to improve on the quality of GIF files.

PSD (Photoshop Document)

The uncompressed working raster image file created by designers in Adobe Photoshop.

TIFF (Tagged Image File Format)

A common format for exchanging raster images between applications. TIFF produces a higher quality image than a JPEG or PNG, and is widely used among publishing industries and photographers.

Bitmap image

A graphic image stored as a specific arrangement of screen dots or pixels.

Vector files

Vector files are great for creating graphics that require resizing. Your logo and brand graphics should be created as a vector and saved as a master file so you can use it with smaller items such as your business card and letterhead, but also on larger surfaces, like a conference stand. Fonts are vector files too - no matter how big they get they will be crisp and clear.

AI (Adobe Illustrator document)

This is a file format developed by Adobe Systems to represent single-page vector designs.

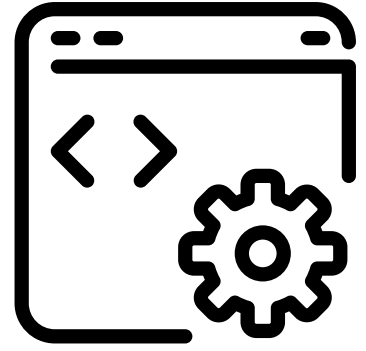
EPS (Encapsulated Post Script)

This is a resizeable file format that is commonly used for vector designs. Due to its high quality, it's commonly used with print elements such as logos, business cards or brochures.

PDF (Portable Document Format)

A format developed by Adobe that can be universally downloaded and viewed by any computer. They keep vector files as vectors, and raster files as rasters. Because of this they are used in high resolution to send files to printers PDFs. Low resolution PDFs are most suitable for sharing previews of work and are universally viewable.

Photography



Things to bear in mind when working with photography

Resolution

The resolution of an image is essentially the amount of detail in it - how many dots or pixels make up the image. The more dots, the higher the resolution. The higher the resolution, the crisper the image will appear.

This is more important when printing. For high-quality printing 300dpi is recommended. So a 300dpi image at 1200×1800 pixels will become a 4×6 inch print.

If you are producing something for screen use it will be used at 72dpi so you can get away with a smaller image.

Do bear in mind that when producing images for use on Retina displays a higher resolution is required.

DPI

DPI stands for “dots per inch,” which is a measure of a printer’s quality. More dots = more detail.

PPI

PPI stands for “pixels per inch,” which is a measure of pixel density used by electronic image devices. You’ll likely see this used with scanners, cameras, TVs or monitors. Learn more about the difference between DPI and PPI.

Photo shoots

When time and budget allow, it is always best to shoot your own imagery. It means you will have unique, on-brand shots to use on all of your marketing materials. It requires an investment upfront, but can save you a lot of time and money in the long run. If you have to try and find a new stock image every time you need to create an ad or brochure the costs can soon stack up.

Stock photography

Stock photos and art are images that are created by a third party and then licensed to you. Using stock images saves on the cost of a having a professional photo shoot, but you may very well see the same image being used by someone else who has also purchased a licence.

Buyout

In order to protect you from this you can opt for ‘buyout’ on an image, which means you will have sole use of it for a set time period. This option is usually so expensive that it is more economical to organise your own photoshoot.

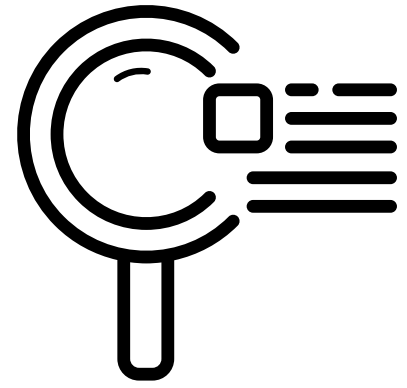
Free stock

If you really have no budget at all, you can check out some of these free stock imagery sites.

Unsplash
Pexels
Canva

But remember these images are free for anyone to use, and have often been downloaded hundreds if not thousands of times before.

Artworking



Artworking is the process of preparing the design files for production. Here are some terms you might hear...

Comps (comprehensives)

A comp is a mock-up which is made to see what a prospective design project will look like. You might comp a logo onto a mug for example, to see what the finished result would look like.

Bleed

Sounds pretty gruesome, but bleed is when a design actually extends past its printed edge so there's no chance of white borders when it's trimmed down after printing.

Trim

Trim size is the final size of a printed piece after it has been cut from its page. Trimming is executed along crop marks that show where to cut.

CMYK

CMYK is a 4-color printing process made up of cyan, magenta, yellow and key (black). CMYK colours in print will never appear as vibrant as RGB colours on screen because CMYK creates colour by adding colour together (making images darker) while RGB colours come from light.

RGB

RGB stands for red, green and blue, the three colours of light typically used to display images on a digital screen.

Pantone

Pantone is the most widely used system for blending 'spot' colours. The ink is mixed before going through a printing press, rather than made up of dots of CMYK. This means you get a more solid and consistent colour. It also means you can use colours that cannot be mixed in CMYK, including metallics and neons.

Stock

When printers refer to 'stock' they are talking about paper.

Uncoated

All paper starts out as uncoated. You might hear it called bond, offset, card, newsprint, etc. These papers are very porous and soak up much larger quantities of ink. Because of this imagery can appear less vibrant and colours a little more muted. Uncoated stocks have a tendency to dry faster to the touch, as the ink is absorbed into the porous paper. They are easier to write on as the surface accepts the ink more readily than a coated stock and come in a variety of textures.

Coated

A coated paper has a coating of white clay or clay and caulk filler, which means that the ink does not sink into it as much. Because the inks aren't absorbed, they stay on the top of the paper, thus looking more glossy. This makes the images, type and photographs look sharper. They come in matt, silk or gloss.

A sizes

A0 841 x 1189 mm
A1 594 x 841 mm
A2 420 x 594 mm
A3 297 x 420 mm
A4 210 x 297 mm
A5 148 x 210 mm
A6 105 x 148 mm

