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Digital Dreamers

Your Guide To Digital Design File Formats

If you're not in the business of digital design, file formats can be confusing! But running a business means having an online presence – and maintaining that presence is easier when you have a basic understanding of the kinds of digital design file formats that are used.

Our handy printable Digital Design File Formats Guide has been created just for you. Any time you're unsure, refer to our list of commonly used file formats for brief and easy to understand descriptions.

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Which file format is that and what does it do? Keep this guide on hand to stay across the file formats most commonly used in digital design.



1.

AI: Adobe Illustrator

AI files are vector (image) files used by designers and commercial printers. The files are small but the images themselves are infinitely resizable which makes them ideal for logos and icons. AI files can only be opened using Adobe Illustrator and may be created in layers. An AI file is one of the most preferred formats by printers, promotional product companies, silk screeners, banner and sign companies, and other third-party creatives.



2.

EPS: Encapsulated Postscript

EPS files are most commonly used by designers to transfer an image or artwork, generally a vector file, into another application. Vector-based EPS files are scalable to any size. EPS files can be opened using Adobe Illustrator, Freehand, or Adobe Photoshop. Designed to produce high resolution graphics for print, a vector EPS file is one of the most preferred formats by printers, promotional product companies, silk screeners, banner and sign companies, and other third-party creatives.



3.

PDF: Portable Document Format

A PDF is a compressed document file used for photos and web graphics. It's a universal file format that preserves/embeds the fonts, images, layout and graphics of any source document, regardless of the application used to create it. PDF files can be shared, viewed and printed by anyone with the free Adobe Reader software. Some PDF files can be used for commercial, digital and/or desktop printing.



4.

PSD: Photoshop Document

The PSD file format, usually a raster format (graphics composed of pixels), contains graphics and photos created in Adobe Photoshop image editing software. Most commonly used by designers and printers. PSD files can only be opened using Photoshop and may be created in layers.



5.

JPG: Joint Photographic Experts Group

A JPG file is a compressed image file that does not support a transparent background. The level of compression in JPG files can vary in resolution with high quality for desktop printing, medium quality for web viewing and low quality for email. When compressed repeatedly, the overall quality of a JPG image is reduced.



6.

GIF: Graphics Interchange Format

GIF files are low resolution files most commonly used for web and email purposes. Almost all browsers can support the use of GIF files, which use a compression scheme to keep the file size small. GIF files can be created with a transparent background.



7.

TIF: Tagged Image File Format

The TIF/TIFF file format is most commonly used for storing images, photography, or art, typically in professional environments and for commercial printing. The TIF format is the most widely supported format across all platforms. It is the standard format for high quality images. Though large in size, TIF formats are considered to be the most reliable format for high quality images.



8.

PNG: Portable Network Graphics

The PNG file format is most commonly used online and on websites due to their low resolution. PNG files are bitmap images that employ lossless data compression, and like GIF files, PNG files can be created with a transparent background.