graphics

glossary of terms

CMYK
Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black

Printing colours, for full colour process print output (offset, press, 4 colour printing). Values 0% - 100%, the lower the percentage the less ink used, the higher the percentage the more ink used and the darker the coverage.

RGB
Red, Green, Blue

Light emitted screen colours, for monitors, electronic displays, web, mobile devices, etc. Values 0 - 255, the lower the number the darker, the higher the number the lighter.

HEXADECIMAL
eg. #000000

Web hexadecimal html colour code, for website development. Hash tag with 6 numbers.

PMS
PANTONE Matching System

Spot colours, specialty ink mixed for exact colour matching - print output.

Raster
Pixel Based Graphics - Bitmap Images

A raster graphics image is a dot matrix data structure or map, generally represented in a rectangular grid of pixels (square dots or bits). These pixels are assigned a colour and are arranged in a pattern to form an image - viewable via a monitor or other display medium. Raster images are stored in image file formats, such as: JPG, PNG, GIF, etc. Raster images are great when saved at the correct resolution and will display clearly. If a raster image is made bigger than its original size, it will become blurry, as more pixels are added to try and fill in the blanks.

JPG
Joint Photographic Experts Group

JPG or JPEG, is one of the most common low resolution raster file formats for digital images used for web, microsoft office (word, powerpoint, etc). They use 'lossy' compression, which means image quality is lost as file size decreases. Not ideal for print, unless optimised correctly at 300dpi CMYK. They do not support transparent background functionality, generally the background remains white unless a colour is set as the background. Generally RGB colour format.

PNG
Portable Network Graphics

Raster file format that supports lossless data compression. PNG images support transparency, which allow the surrounding bounding box background to be transparent (unless a background has been set). Primarily low resolution used for web, microsoft office (word, powerpoint, etc) - not ideal for print. Generally RGB colour format.

GIF
Graphics Interchange Format

GIF is another lossless file format for raster image files primarily used for web - that support both animated and static frames. They contain a maximum of 256 colours, and are therefore best for images that contain simple shapes and a limited colour palette. Small snippets of video or animated content can be exported as a GIF, keeping in mind the duration and amount of detail. The longer and more detailed a GIF is, the less the quality will be (very pixelated, grainy) and the higher the file size will be, unless prepared and exported correctly. GIF's are slowly becoming more popular in email marketing, to add brief snippets of movement to an email as video is still not compatible with most email browsers.

TIF
Tagged Image File Format

TIF or TIFF files hold transparency and editable layer capabilities. Ideal for photography and the preparation of raster images for high quality print output. Ideally all promotional photos / images should be optimised as CMYK 300dpi TIF.

Vector

AI (Adobe Illustrator)
SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics)
EPS (Encapsulated PostScript)
CDR (Corel Draw)

Vector graphics use geometrical elements such as points, lines, curves and shapes (polygons). Vector formats are perfect for logo design as they can be scaled to any size without loss of quality. CMYK vector formats are ideal for print as they remain super sharp and will print perfectly. SVG vector format tends to save in RGB and is ideal for responsive web design, allowing logos, icons, etc - to appear super crisp on all screen sizes and devices.

DPI

Dots Per Inch

Resolution term: the higher the (dpi) the higher the resolution (and file size) and the higher the sharpness and detail in the image. For printing purposes, the higher the better, optimum resolution is 300dpi. For web output: 72dpi - 96dpi. To tell whether an image is low resolution: the image size will be very low, under 1MB. If you wish to provided high resolution images, make sure they are a couple of MB in file size, the higher the better. Do not try to email a large number of high resolution images, either send them via DropBox or WeTransfer.

Trim size / trimmed area

Print term

Is the final trimmed size of a printed item. For example a standard business card trim size is 90mm (wide) x 54mm (high), once it has been printed and then cut to size.

Bleed

Print term

Is an extra assigned amount which bleeds out from the trimmed area. For example: a standard business card 90mm (wide) x 54mm (high), may require 3mm of bleed, which means 3mm extra is added around the entire trim size. The final bleed size would then be 96mm (wide) x 60mm (high). This allows any artwork which sits along the trim area to overflow into the bleed area, to help eliminate any noticeable trim mishaps when the final printed items are cut.

Crop marks

Print term

Are thin lines / reference markers which are placed on the corners of finished artwork and sit offset on the bleed area. These help indicate where the paper should be trimmed after printing. Sometimes referred to as trim marks.

Outlined text

Print term

To help reduce font issues when sending finished artwork to the printers, it is best to convert all text to outlines. This means the editable text is converted into shapes and will not accidentally change and throw out the artwork. Most printers highly recommend converting all text to outlines. Unfortunately if a file is saved with outlined text, you cannot undo it and turn it back into an editable font - you would have to painstakingly recreate all of the text with the original font used. Best practice is to save a separate file for outlined text, or have text outline automatically when exporting final artwork (that way the original working file has always got editable text).