

Vector vs. Raster



Vector Art — PDF, AI or EPS



Raster Art — JPG, TIFF or GIF

Images from the Web

Images taken from web sites typically NEVER work for high end output. Web images are usually an inch or so in size and only 72 DPI. The lowest resolution that can be used for offset printing is 300 DPI.

A good rule of thumb for image size is to avoid artwork that is only a couple kilobytes (i.e. 36 KB). Images that are several megabytes usually are ok to use (i.e. 4.5 MB).

What is Raster Artwork?

Raster artwork is made up of many “dots.” The resolution of the artwork is measured by the number of dots per inch (DPI). The higher to DPI, the clearer the image becomes. This type of artwork has the potential to become blurry when enlarged past the ideal resolution size. The most common raster file types are JPG, TIFF or GIF.

Design Specifications

1. Files can be built at either full size or 10% of the actual size.

For example, a file for an 8' H x 16' W banner can be built at either 96" H x 192" W or 9.6" H x 19.2" W.

2. Artwork should be converted into the CMYK color mode.

3. If color accuracy is critical, it is imperative that a PMS color is assigned wherever possible.

*PMS stands for **Pantone Matching System** — a very specific collection of colors that will print the same regardless of the printer. Assigning PMS colors will help production match colors as best as they can when printing digitally.*

Use the PMS solid coated system.

If your school/organization does not have a PMS color, it's best to compare your color to a popular college that may have the same/similar color. For example, rather saying “our colors are orange and white,” tell us “our colors are Texas Longhorns orange and white.”

Artwork resolution guide

Use the following as a guide for proper resolution when building your files are actual size:

Images up to 18 sq. ft., use 150 DPI.

Images between 18 and 30 sq. ft., use 100 DPI.

Images over 30 sq. ft., use 72 DPI.

Should you design at 10% scale, be sure to increase the resolution accordingly.

For example, a 36" x 120" image would be 200 megabytes at 100 DPI. A 3.6" x 12" image (10% scale) would require 1000 DPI to create the same 220 megabyte file.