

Interactive Project Management

Making Life Easy in a Digital Pre-Press World



Dear Design and Print Buyer Professionals,

At the planning stages of any project, it is important for all of us to communicate regarding any issues which pertain to the production of the job. The one area that is of utmost importance to communicate on is the creation of computer files for digital imaging. Our electronic prepress goals are as follows: improved workflows, less delays, more efficient production, and an overall lowering of costs to you, our clients.

As you know, both of our chosen fields of endeavor have undergone extraordinary changes. The last ten years have seen greater advances in the way printing projects are produced than in the previous fifty. With the advent of the electronic desktop environment and its peripheral support systems, the skill sets between designer and printer now overlap to a much greater extent. As a result, all too often there is confusion surrounding just who is responsible for a projects' many facets, from its creation on a computer, to putting ink on paper. To achieve a smoother workflow, designers need to know how to correctly set up files so that there is as little corrective intervention on our part as possible.

Certain aspects of a job *should* be left to us. Among them: preflight, trapping, imposition, scan art manipulation (if necessary to meet press requirements) and color management. In a perfect world, you supply us with all the page layout, font, graphic and scan art files, with lasers, while we take care of preflighting, formatting, setting traps et al and viola!—we end up with imposed, trapped, high resolution and correctly color broken films ready for plating. The problem is, it rarely happens this way. You can help eliminate many of the pitfalls often encountered in reproducing on the printed sheet what appears on your monitors. The following information is intended to offer some simple guidelines on how to prepare your next project. We hope you find this helpful, and please don't hesitate to call when in doubt!

**The Pre-Press Staff
Atlantic Printing Company, Inc.**

Topics

1. Document Construction
2. Proofs, Lasers, Dummies, Samples
3. File Management
4. Images, Graphics & Links
5. Fonts
6. Color Designation
7. Scanning
8. Bleeds
9. Trapping
10. Binding & Finishing

Let's start with your page layout file. As an example we'll use QuarkXpress as the default. PageMaker users can adopt many of the same practices and principles described below. Many settings and preferences listed here reflect those Atlantic Printing uses in preparing files for output.

DOCUMENT CONSTRUCTION

It is important to provide cover and text pages as separate documents. Please do not create your own "printer spreads". Instead, always provide us with individual pages in consecutively numbered "reader" spreads. Also, provide one document from page one to the end. Do not provide separate documents for different sections. If you do this, we will be unable to output your job in the correct "Printers Spreads". We base our imaging cost on being able to create 2 page "printers spreads" for plating. Remember to check that the document size you specify in the page layout application is the same as the final printed size. When working on a Perfect or Wire-O bound document, please consult us. We may ask you to break your document into sections, based on a printing layout.

PROOFS-DUMMIES/SAMPLES

Please provide up to date, final composite lasers with registration marks, at 100%, or as close as possible to final size. Print a set of color separated lasers. These represent all the plates that will be printing. Before you send them to us, make sure *all* your color elements appear on the correct separations; if they don't, you will know that a correction needs to be made. This will save you time and money in the long run! Supply complete folded dummies or mockups of specialty folded pieces, differing versions, etc. Previously printed samples of a similar project are also helpful.

FILE MANAGEMENT

Place all graphic files in a folder labeled "**Graphics**". Do the same with all FPO's. Also, put all page layout (Quark/Pagemaker) documents in a separate folder labeled "**Documents**". Do the same with all your fonts! (see heading "FONTS"). The more organized a disk is when we receive it, the better!

IMAGES/LINKS

Continuous Tone images or CT's, such as high resolution scans or grayscale images used in Photoshop files require a minimum resolution of 300 dpi when placed at 100% in the page layout application. Of course, you could scan a piece at 150 dpi, place it at 50% and still have an effective resolution of 300 dpi. However, for the sake of argument, a scaling range of between 75% and 110% is reliable in maintaining quality print resolution on press.

If, for example, a 300 dpi image is placed in Quark at 200%, the resulting resolution will equal 150 dpi, which is essentially a low resolution image. Conversely, a 300 dpi image placed at 50% will yield an effective resolution of 600 dpi, resulting in larger file sizes, longer print and RIPping times, and little if any improvement in tonal quality on press.

Rule of Thumb: keep the scanning dpi resolution and placement scaling on a 1 to 1 ratio. Bitmap images usually require a minimum of 600 dpi, and can generally max out at around 900 to 1200 dpi to retain effective resolution. Make sure all the images you place, whether Photoshop, Illustrator or Freehand, are **updated** in the page layout application.

If any rotation of an image is required, perform the rotation in the native graphic file whenever possible. When placing a Photoshop TIFF format scan in Quark, set the picture box background color to "white". A setting of "none" may cause a case of the "jaggies", in which sections or edges of the scan are missing.

Also, provide us with both the .eps and the native file when supplying Illustrator or Freehand files where applicable. Our Scitex system requires us to use only CMYK for imagesetting. We need the ability to change color models of EPS graphics in certain instances. A new .eps file can then be created and placed back in the page layout application.

FONTS

For all projects, always send both the Screen (Font Suitcase) and Printer (Postscript) fonts in a folder labeled "Fonts", along with the rest of your electronic file. It is important that you supply us the fonts for all elements (documents and EPS files), even when you use common fonts that we probably have in our extensive font library. We may have a different version (newer or older) than the one you are using. This can often times cause a problem with kerning (tracking), which can cause line endings to shift. Discuss any concerns you may have about your font usage with your Atlantic Printing representative **before** you submit your disc(s)!

COLOR DESIGNATION

Set **Black To Overprint** in the Edit/Colors dialogue boxes. As for any other colors used, if you are printing in four color process, but using Pantone color models, once you have chosen your Pantone model, change the model type to CMYK and click on **Process Separation**. This applies to any color models printing as CMYK process colors.

Delete any colors not being printed. **Extra colors** not assigned to page elements or imported graphic files are blank plates that are not needed. **Trash 'em**. This also applies to any Photoshop, Illustrator, Freehand, etc. color library files used in your document. Keep the color names the same! If you use PANTONE 185 CV in your Quark file, don't name it PMS 185 or PANTONE 185 CVU in your Illustrator file! They won't link up, and consequently all your PANTONE 185 CV elements won't end up on the same plate.

Remember: keep your naming conventions consistent throughout *all* your linked files. Be sure that your CMYK values created in Quark match those created in your imported graphics. Otherwise, this creates a conflict and may compromise color on press.

If you are printing a combination of PMS and process colors, and your PMS is a screen value, under Edit/Colors, click on the PMS plate, click Edit, and give it a Cyan, Magenta or Black angle under Screen Values. Avoid using the Yellow angle, as it may cause moiré problems. Also, colors assigned to an element in Photoshop, Illustrator or Freehand will automatically appear in your Quark color list palette. Inspect them to verify that they are PMS or CMYK models. Make any necessary alterations.

SCANNING

If you plan to provide us with high resolution scans, whether they are provided to you or are being done by you, please consult us first to ensure your scans will print to their maximum quality!

BLEEDS

Images or page elements that print right up to the trimmed edge of the page have to “bleed” off the edge of the page to avoid any white edge from showing in the final trimming of the printed sheet. Therefore, extending the graphic, tint or type box edge by approximately one eighth of an inch beyond the page edge will insure a proper bleed.

TRAPPING

Trapping settings are best left to the discretion of Atlantic Printing, as there are press conditions that require trapping widths to be customized to meet certain standards. We've seen trap widths range from .144 to .4 (measured in points). If trapping is required in imported graphics created in Illustrator or Freehand, leave these settings to Atlantic also. Overall quality will be assured if trapping is handled by us. However, if you are in a position to set the trap specs either through an agreement with Atlantic or for your own in-house needs, here are a few pointers. In Quark:

- Set Black to **overprint** in the Edit/Colors dialogue boxes.
- Use the “Trap Information” palette when setting traps to specific elements such as type, picture box rules, type box rules, or solid/tint color boxes, with or without rules.
- Avoid using **hairline** rules that require trapping, as the trap width will be reduced, which may be difficult to hold on press. A minimum rule width of .25 is recommended.
- In general, lighter colors will trap into darker colors.
- For light colored type over a darker background, spread the type into the darker color. Conversely, for dark type over a lighter color background, choke the type.
- Avoid using **serif** typefaces in a color(s) that requires trapping to a color background. On press, the type may appear undercut or “thinned out” by the trapping colors. Avoid the use of reversed type in small point sizes, especially when knocking out of solids.
- If you are placing a type box with color type over a solid or tint color background, set the background color of the type box to the same color and tint value as the background over which it is being placed. This will allow you to set a choke or spread trap setting to the type.
- When building traps in Illustrator or Freehand, remember that the size of your trap widths will be affected by the scaling percentage used when it is placed in the page layout application. For example, a trap width of .2pts. set in Illustrator will be reduced to a trap width of .15pts. if the graphic were scaled to 75% in Quark, making the trap very hard to hold on press, depending on press tolerances. Remember the 1 to 1 rule of scaling!

BINDING & FINISHING

Please consult us with any concerns regarding Perfect binding (cover spine, lost area in the gutter due to perfect binding), Wire-O binding (enough margin for the wire hole punching), numbering (enough clear space), drilling (enough margin), etc. so that we may better serve your printing needs.

It is our sincerest hope that you will find these basic procedural outlines to be both informative and helpful. We have included a basic preflight checklist on the next page to assist you in setting up your electronic files and to serve as a tool for documenting and preparing your files for efficient, error-free output. Thank you.

PREFLIGHT CHECKLIST

Before You Send Atlantic Your Next Job, Please Take A Moment To Address These Topics:

- All Text and Graphic Fonts Supplied
- Screen/Printer Font Versions Supplied
- All supplied Hi-Res Graphics Linked and In Position
- FPO's on lasers labeled to indicate placement of Hi-Res scans by Atlantic
- Color Break/Designation Matches Job Specs
- Are Unused Colors Omitted
- Color Names and Models the Same Across All Applications
- Both Composite and Color Separated Lasers Supplied and Checked
- All Color Proofs, Dummies, and Samples Supplied with Job
- Bleeds Checked/Adjusted Rule sizes OK (.25 minimum size)
- Page Count Correct
- Document size OK
- All Fonts, Graphics and Documents in properly labeled folders
- All Files Copied to Disc for Atlantic Printing

Copy this pre-flight check list to use on all your projects!



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