

TIPS FOR CREATING GOOD PDF'S

IN ORDER TO SEND YOUR FILE OUT TO GET PRINTED

A PDF (Portable Document Format) is the universal standard for sending digital documents. A PDF takes a snapshot of your file and most anybody with a computer can then open the file and look at it on screen or even print it. Most commercial printers now use PDF as the standard for receiving work from customers.

There are job options when creating a PDF, these vary depending on the method of creation and the software that you utilize to create the file. Adobe Acrobat utilizes Screen, Print, Press, PDF X1/a, ebook and several others. If you intend a commercial printer to utilize your file to output your work for you, follow the following guidelines:

Distill using the "Press" job option. Do not use the "Print" job option. The "Print" option generates a lower resolution (150 dpi) RGB PDF, and it is intended for files being sent to a laser or inkjet printer, not an offset printing press.

Always Embed all fonts. If you anticipate your commercial printer doing any type corrections, do not subset fonts when you embed them. Sub-setting eliminates characters not used in the original document that may be needed when doing corrections.

Make sure that PDF files intended for offset printing have all graphics embedded and are in the correct color space. Convert all of your images and graphics from RGB to CMYK before distilling your files. PDFs that are sent to commercial printers as RGBs can often be converted to CMYK using Adobe Acrobat or Enfocus Pitstop. However, this process is time-consuming and will incur significant up charges.

If the intended use is to create a PDF for proofing purposes only, here's another smart tip:

Use the same guidelines as those above, but reduce the resolution from 300 dpi to 150 dpi to make the file smaller and easier to transmit.

If the intended use is to create a PDF for the Internet:

Use the "Screen" job option that will create a 72 dpi RGB file, which is very web friendly.

If you follow these guidelines, about 50 percent of the issues surrounding customer-supplied PDF files will disappear.

There are many free PDF generators available now. The industry standard program is ADOBE ACROBAT. When you download the free version of ACROBAT READER from www.adobe.com – you DO NOT gain the ability to generate PDF files – you need

to purchase ADOBE ACROBAT which will enable you to generate proper PDF's. This may be the single most important piece of software you purchase and is generally available in Canada at about \$150.00.

You can go to www.pdf995.com and obtain either a free version of a very good PDF generating program – or pay a small fee to get a version that does not have advertising in it when you go to use it. We have processed many PDF files generated using this software and they have worked fine.

Some software is now being delivered with the ability to generate PDF's right from the program you are working in – basically the same tips apply although you will have to spend some time figuring out how to set these options properly – use the help section in your software to do this.