

Perhaps in our last section you noticed the importance of recognizing file extensions used in transferring large portion of data online therefore we are including a handy reference chart for all the File Formats you will need to recognize and understand when you transferring (sending or downloading) files online.

File Formats *(all of these file formats begin with a dot or period before the file type for example a typical word processing document is .doc)*

Image	Text/vector/code	Audio	Video	Compressed	Program
JPEG or jpg	Txt	WAV	AVI	ZIP	Com
GIF or .gif	Doc	MID	MOV	Lzh	Exe
TIFF or .TIF	Pdf	VOC	VOC	GH	Bat
BMP	PS	AU	MPG	Z	
ART	RTF				
PIC	HTM				
PSD	HTML				
	ASCII				

Understanding file formats are critical when transferring files. There are several variables you will need to consider for example:

1. Will the file open cross-platform? Can I create a file on a PC and will the file format I have chosen open on a MAC?
2. Will the file format I have selected keep the page layout and styling *exactly* the same across platforms AND software versions?
3. Will the user of my file have the correct software necessary to OPEN and VIEW my files?

As an educator there is one thing I have noticed that students sometimes have difficulty with, that is distinguishing between vector and raster based software.

Therefore, while this maybe a CD about the Internet I have included a copy of an article on this subject that I have written for TechExchange.com

http://www.techexchange.com/thelibrary/software_fundamentals.html

Kindly refer to it as a needed tutor or refresher on the subject.

Image File Formats at a Glance

TIFF: Tagged Image Format

Characteristics include:

- Versatile
- Reliable
- Support Bitmap including full-color
- Can contain multiple images
- Great for scanners, frame grabbers and paint/image editing programs
- Transfer cross-platform

PICT: This picture format is native to a MAC.

Characteristics include:

- This format is used with Bitmap
- Object-Oriented Drawings
- Great for Raster Printers

EPS: Encapsulated PostScript

Characteristics include:

- Cross-Platform: Mac and PC
- Great for High Resolution PostScript Illustrations/VECTOR IMAGES
- Files can be imported into other documents

- Can be scaled and cropped
- May not be editable beyond scale and crop
- Requires a PostScript printer for output
- Bitmap Images may require tracing to convert images.
- Vector Images compress well in this format

BMP: A file format for Bitmapped Images

Characteristics include:

- Stored in *Windows* as grid of dots or pixels
- Important for color information /color coded as 1, 4, 8, 16, 24 bits, which means a 24 bit image can contain more than 16 million different colors!

JPEG: Joint Photographic Experts Group

Characteristics include:

- Interchangeable format is great for photos working with layers
- Each layer is independent of the others, which means each layer can be edited and individual layers can be preserved for additional editing
- Designed for compressing up to 1/20th of files original size.
- Designed to be used for full color, grey-scale and real-world images.

Several popular **Native File Formats** include:

- Adobe PhotoShop = psd
- CorelDRAW = cdr

- Adobe Illustrator = ai
- Metacreations Painter = Rif

Common word processor file formats:

- Microsoft Word = .doc
- Microsoft Works = .wks
- Universal word processor file format = Rich Text Format or .rtf or .txt
- Adobe Acrobat files will be labeled as = .pdf

The following are questions you might need to ask before using vector or raster programs:

- **What is the task you will need to accomplish?**
- **What tools would you choose if you were doing this manually?** Will your files be text, raster images or vector images or presentation style?
- **Who will ultimately view this work?** The Design team, Production, Marketing, Management or the Consumer?
- **What kind of output devices will be used for this work?** Virtual – online web pages, hard copy, or for professional marketing materials completed by a service bureau or Printing or In-house.
- **What constraints must you consider?** Budget and Time. You may be spending too much time on an image that can be done for less time and money for in-house use.