Adobe℠ Customer Services

Using the EPSF Riders File

The EPSF Riders file is a file that can modify documents created in Adobe Illustrator. Although the user's guide and the notes in the EPSF Riders file recommend that the Riders file be edited only by experienced PostScript™ language users, several code fragments included in the file can be easily modified to create commonly requested effects, such as modifying the flatness, line screen, and screen angles of documents. You can also use the Riders file to add a text line to the bottom of document pages. Riders file modifications are not visible in the preview of the document but appear in the printed copy if the Riders file is in the Plug-ins folder (for Adobe Illustrator version 5.0 and higher) or the application folder (for Adobe Illustrator 3.x).

CREATING OR MODIFYING RIDERS FILES

You can create more than one Riders file to generate different effects for documents. In Adobe Illustrator 5.0, you can use the RidersMaker™ plug-in filter to create Riders files; in versions of Adobe Illustrator earlier than 5.0, you can use any text editor to create or edit a Riders file. Save each Riders file you create with a unique name; then rename the file *Adobe Illustrator EPSF Riders*, and drag it to the Plug-ins folder (for version 5.0) or the application folder (for earlier versions) when you want to use the file with a document.

Note: If the EPSF Riders file is not being used, it should be removed from the Plug-ins folder or the application folder because it can slow the program's performance. In addition, line screen frequency and angle settings contained in an active Riders file override those settings in Adobe Separator™.

EDITING THE RIDERS FILE IN ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR 5.0

Adobe Illustrator 5.0 includes a third-party plug-in called RidersMaker, which automatically generates PostScript code for the Riders file.

To create a Riders file using RidersMaker:

1 Open the 3rd Party Utility folder in the Separator & Utilities folder, and locate the RidersMaker plug-in filter.

2 Drag the RidersMaker plug-in filter to the Plug-ins folder; then double-click the icon to start the Adobe Illustrator program. The RidersMaker plug-in filter is added to the Filters menu.

3 To create a customized Riders file, choose Riders/Make Custom Riders from the Filter menu. The Custom dialog box appears with the list of available Riders file options.

To enter a value for an option, make sure that the option is selected, click the Setup button next to the option, and then enter the value in the dialog box. See "Riders File Options" later in this technical note information on the options.

4 When you have selected all desired options, click Make in the Riders File dialog box. The Save dialog box appears.

5 If you are creating more than one Riders file, give each file a unique name, and click Save. When you are ready to use the file, rename the file *Adobe Illustrator EPSF Riders*, and drag it into the Plug-ins folder.

EDITING THE RIDERS FILE IN ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR 3.X

By default, the lines of code in the EPSF Riders file are disabled. To enable an option, you must remove the %• at the beginning of each line of code pertaining to the option. (The bullet is only a visual aid to show you where the sections of code begin and end; it is created by holding down the Option key and pressing 8 on the keyboard.)

The Adobe Illustrator EPSF Riders file is located in the Riders Folder within the Adobe Illustrator folder.

To enable and edit the EPSF Riders file:

1 Make a backup copy of the uneditied Adobe Illustrator EPSF Riders file.

2 Open the file in a text editor, and remove the %• symbols from the lines you want to enable; then edit the values in the lines you want to modify. See "Riders File Options" later in this technical note information on the options.

3 Save the file in text-only format. Be sure to name the file Adobe Illustrator EPSF Riders.

4 When you are ready to use the edited EPSF Riders file, drag it into the folder containing the Adobe Illustrator program.

RIDERS FILE OPTIONS

Screen Frequency. The screen frequency, also called the *line screen*, determines the size of the halftone dots used in the printing process. Halftoning is the process of using varying sizes of black dots to simulate shades of gray or color. A low number, called a *coarse screen*, creates a larger dot; a large number, called a *fine screen*, creates a smaller dot. A smaller halftone dot creates a more realistic representation of continuous-tone images. When the screen frequency and screen angle lines of the EPSF Riders file are disabled, Adobe Illustrator uses the default frequency and angles of the printer.

To change the screen frequency using RidersMaker using RidersMaker, enter a value between 1.0000 and 999.0000 in the Setup dialog box. To change the screen frequency using a text editor, find the line that contains the text string "set screen frequency," remove the %• from the next three lines, and then replace the value in line 2 with with the desired value.

Screen Angle. The screen angle determines the angle of the rows in which the halftone dots are printed. For example, entering a value of 0 prints the rows of dots vertically, and entering a value of 90 prints the rows of dots horizontally. Typically, for black-and-white printing, the angle is set to a value that is not horizontal or vertical to make the rows of dots less conspicuous.

To change the screen angle using RidersMaker, enter a value between 0 and 360.0000 in the Setup dialog box. To change the screen angle using a text editor, find the line that contains the text string "set screen angle," remove the %• from the next three lines, and then replace the value in line 2 with with the desired value.

Spot Function. The spot function determines the shape of the halftone dot. For example, using the Round spot function creates round halftone dots. The shape of the halftone dot can affect how well gradients blend, the quality of the midtones, and other variables of halftone screening. Different dot shapes can also be used for special effects.

To change the spot function using RidersMaker, choose a dot shape from the pop-up menu in the Spot Function dialog box, or import a dot pattern using the Import function. An imported spot function must be correctly formed and formatted Postscript. For more information about writing a spot function using a text editor, see the *Adobe Postscript Language Reference Manual*, published by Addison-Wesley.

Flatness. The flatness setting determines the accuracy with which curves are drawn. All curves consist of small line segments; the smaller the line segment, the more accurate the curve appears. However, if a curve consists of a great number of line segments, it may be too complex to print and your printer may return a PostScript error. Increasing the flatness setting decreases the number of line segments used to draw a curve and therefore may simplify a very complex curve enough to make it printable. The higher the flatness, the less accurately the curve is drawn, but the more likely the curve will print without returning a PostScript error.

The flatness setting in the Riders file is applied to all curves in a document. In Adobe Illustrator 5.0 or higher, you can also set flatness for a single object using the Output Resolution setting in the Attributes dialog box under the Object menu.

To change the flatness setting using RidersMaker, enter an integer between 1 and 5080 in the Setup dialog box. To change the flatness setting using a text editor, find the line that contains the text string "2setflat," remove the %•, and then replace the 2 with with the desired value.

Annotation. You can enter an annotation of up to 254 characters, which will appear at the bottom left corner of the document page. To add an annotation using RidersMaker, choose a font from the Font pop-up menu and a font size from 4 to 30 points in the Annotation dialog box; then type up to 254 characters. To add an annotation using a text editor, find the line that begins with /PrintX and remove the %• from the entire section (12 lines)and from the following section, beginning with /annotatepage and ending with }def. Then replace the line containing the words ("From the desk of. . .) with up to 254 characters.

Error Handler. The error handler function prints error information if a PostScript error occurs. If you are using the LaserWriter 8.0 or PS Printer driver, which includes error handling capabilities, use the error handler in the printer driver instead of the Error Handler in the Riders file. If you are not using LaserWriter 8.0 or PSPrinter, you can turn on the Error Handler using RidersMaker.

WORKING WITH CUSTOM SCREENS

Adobe Illustrator 5.0 allows you to print using custom screens, which enhance the output of gradients to low-resolution printers. You turn on the custom screens by unchecking the Use Printer's Default Screens option in the Document Setup dialog box. The custom screens contain settings for screen frequency, screen angle, and spot function. If you plan to use the Riders file to set the screen frequency, screen angle, and spot function, make sure that the custom screen option is turned off (leave the Use Printer's Default Screens option checked).