

DIGITAL TUTORIALS

Creating Acrobat Documents from Graphic Applications

This document describes considerations when Saving documents in an Acrobat PDF format from within Illustrator InDesign, Photoshop and Quark.*

PDF stands for **Portable Document Format**. PDF-formatted documents can be opened, viewed and printed on most computers regardless of operating system—so long as Adobe's Acrobat Reader is loaded. This document reviews some important considerations when creating a PDF from graphic applications.

- ▶ PDF documents do NOT necessarily offer ALL the features found in the creator application, so be sure to save a copy of your source document, and all the files related to the source document for later editing. For example, save your Photoshop file with all its layers in a format that preserves all the layers.
- ▶ **When preparing your PDF, check the OPTIONS settings.** The DEFAULT settings for PDF files is to compress the image files (web). This means that low-resolution files are embedded. Screen resolution is about 1/8 that of print resolution (on a 600 dpi printer). This means that while a file with web settings might look fine onscreen, it may not look good at all when printed at 600 dpi or higher. *When sending PDF files to Kinkos or other press facility, web resolution is NOT a desirable option.*
- ▶ **Check Font settings!** Embedding fonts prevents font substitution when a PDF is read or printed. Font subsetting ensures that all the specific font version information is embedded in a PDF. Checking both these items can increase file size *HOWEVER, leaving these unchecked can cause a file NOT to print as it was created, and can prevent minor font edits within the PDF file.*
- ▶ **Check your document file BEFORE you create a PDF!** Before creating a PDF, perform a **Collect for Output** in *Quark* or a **Preflight** in *InDesign*. These are similar actions and each checks a document to be sure all image and font files are current and correctly linked to a layout. If any font or image errors EXIST in a document, these need to be corrected BEFORE creating a PDF. For example, if image files are flagged as missing or modified, the resulting PDF will have image errors.
- ▶ **Print your document BEFORE creating a PDF.** This not only allows you to thoroughly proof the hard copy, but any print errors can be detected. Sometimes printing problems in the creator application are passed along to the PDF. Checking first prevents problems later.
- ▶ Large source files can create LARGE PDF files. Sometimes overly large files cannot be formatted into PDF files. To reduce file size, first SAVE an interim copy of the source file, then perform any or all of the following as is relevant before creating a PDF:
 - Remove unused layers, empty layers and/or flatten all layers from any file format (this is NOT reversible so always work on a copy)
 - Release type to outline paths in Illustrator (outlined type will not be subsequently editable).
 - Remove unused or hidden items (items obscured by others which are viewable). For complex items in Illustrator, the Pathfinder tools can be used to 'break' shapes into parts and remove hidden parts.
 - Remove objects on the 'pasteboard' space in Illustrator, InDesign or Quark files.
- ▶ **Check your creator document's Print Settings. Page Setup and Printer settings affect the orientation of the subsequent PDF.** Select the desired orientation and paper settings for the subsequent PDF and save the settings.
- ▶ **After creating a PDF, Print that PDF and check it again!** This is ESPECIALLY important when sending your file to Kinkos. You will be billed for files that are printed so this last check could help avoid extra output costs.

*A separate help sheet is available for creating PDFs from Microsoft Word documents.

For questions on these or any digital topics, see Carol Zen, Fridays at the Computer Labs from 10 AM to 2 PM, or send questions via email to carol@cva.edu.