

# Files for print

For all the words that have been written on the subject, delivering finished artwork files for print (offset or digital) remains one of the critical issues for designers.



Any hiccup in the files that are presented can and often does result in a less than acceptable finished product, badly damaged reputations, arguments with your client and loss of business. But even worse, you may not actually get paid for the work and in some situations can be responsible for the costs of the printed job.

Although the process shouldn't be taken lightly, have no fear as many have walked this rocky road before you.

Below is a 'to do' list for supplying files for print, that we hope you will find useful.

## Bleed

All artwork for print should have bleed, simply because all print will either be trimmed on a guillotine, stitched or perfect bound. The bleed in your document allows for any movement in these processes and will avoid any thin white lines on the edges of a finished product.

Make sure that a minimum 3mm bleed is applied in the document setup under 'Bleed'. Guides will indicate bleed area outside the trim.

## Margin

While some design rules are becoming a little blurred, allowance for margin inside the trim area is always a good idea. The reason is that, like bleed, there can be movement in the finishing process so any text, logos or images close to the edge can get cut into or chopped off. Sometimes the creative is designed to deliberately cut off and while that is quite reasonable, even more care and attention must be paid to the finishing. The degree of difficulty is increased. Also consider that this approach can make text hard to read or understand.

Leave an appropriate amount of margin inside the trim area, to be sure.

## Colour

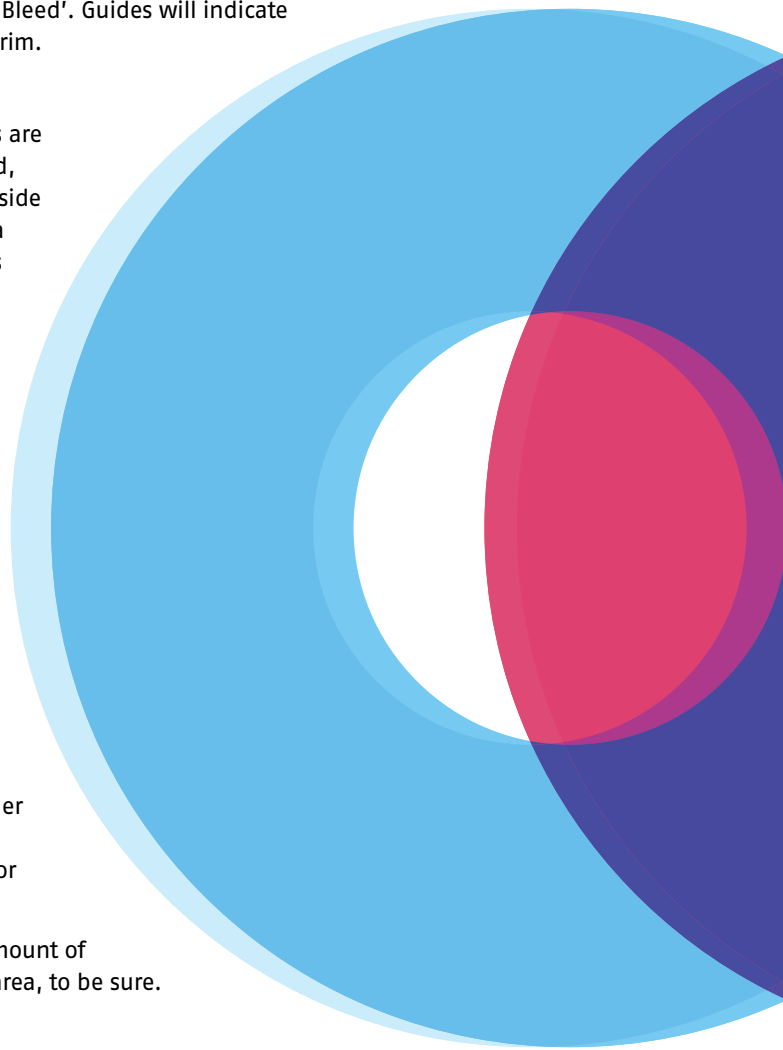
Colour is without doubt full of traps and pitfalls, but the most important point is the issue of calibration.

If you're serious about design and are likely to work with print, invest in software that will calibrate your monitor, printer and even scanner. You want the best results, right? So make sure you're viewing the work in the best possible light.

In terms of processing files here are some important recommendations.

Convert all spot colours to CMYK if the job is to be printed CMYK, as this will help prevent white boxes appearing near a transparent object. Save mono images (saved in RGB or CMYK) as greyscale, otherwise they will print with unwanted colour.

Convert RGB images to CMYK mode.



## Text

Preparing text appears simple, given all the other issues you have to think about, but be careful of the following issues.

Avoid four colour black text at all cost, as it can cause serious registration issues on press, given that what you are attempting to do is to print them over the top of one another. When converted to print, a good black will have 100% black with small percentages of the other colours. Most standard settings produce blacks with 400% ink coverage, which is just too difficult to print and for ink to dry.

Move text to be the top layer in InDesign as it will help prevent type from fattening on proofs. If a text box is sitting underneath a picture box, any part of the text that touches the picture box will trap, causing that particular part of the text to fatten. To avoid this place the text box above the picture box in the 'layers' pallet.

When printing black text over a background image or colour, set it to overprint. This will result in the text being added to the colour underneath. As a result, if there are any registration issues the text won't have a white drop shadow.

If a lighter colour text prints over a darker background, make sure the text knocks out the layers underneath. Make sure all fonts are embedded into the PDF, although you have two choices. Embedded fonts makes the file larger in size, but allows for any 'editorial' type changes to the PDF.

Embedded subset fonts maintains only the font characters used within the document when a PDF is created. The advantage is that it reduces the PDF file size. However, the disadvantage is that it locks the file from being edited and prevents making changes to the PDF, but still maintains font integrity.

### Resolution

When producing work for print, the general rule for file resolution is the higher the better. Most offset printing is produced at 200 line screen so files must be at a minimum 300 dpi.

A scan resolution that is too low results in a low quality image. A resolution that is too high increases the file size and processing time, without increasing the image's quality. Remember images

downloaded from the Internet do not print clearly as the resolution is way too low (72–100 dpi).

### Good practice

If you're still delivering files on disk, supplying hard copy laser proofs helps us spot potential problems, as does supplying both high resolution PDFs and native files with all the associated links such as images and fonts. If for some reason there is a problem with one type then the other is a good second option.

After copying files to disk always open files again and cross check to make sure all necessary pages, images or whatever open correctly. A common problem is that often files are incomplete or corrupt.

## Digital Print

Essentially delivering artwork files for digital print is the same with a few additional guidelines.

You can download general instructions for digital print from [www.finsbury.com.au](http://www.finsbury.com.au) >Digital Print

### Rip it good

Most printers these days prefer to have artwork delivered as a high resolution PDF.

You can download our settings from [www.finsbury.com.au](http://www.finsbury.com.au) >PreMedia which can simplify the process and removes the need to send fonts and images with your page layout document.

Alternatively you can upload your documents to our File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site, but ask your Finsbury Green Account Manager for details.

But better still you can upload via [printeagle](#), our high end, online preflight, correction and data conversion application that seamlessly flight checks and creates optimised, high resolution, print ready PDFs and is probably the fastest and smartest way from artwork to print.



To find out more about printeagle go to [www.finsbury.com.au](http://www.finsbury.com.au) and check out the Fact Sheets.

### Conclusion

Delivering files is one of the critical issues for all designers, and while these tips are not the exhaustive list, they will significantly reduce your exposure to many kinds of errors.

Remember, not only is it about 'getting it right' for your client, but these tips will also reduce the time and hassle you may otherwise experience with us.

