

Common Graphic Design File Formats Explained

Typically the file types the average person will not be able to open are the files with the extensions AI, EPS, and PSD. Each of these three file types require a special software program used by designers, printers, signage manufacturers, and promotional product manufacturers.

Here is a quick list of the different file extensions you may come across when working with a graphic designer, what each of them stand for, and how the file format is used.

1. **AI: Adobe Illustrator**

AI files are vector files used by designers and commercial printers to generate files of different file formats and sizes. AI files can only be opened using Adobe Illustrator and may be created in layers. An AI file is one of the most preferred formats by printers, promotional product companies, silk screeners, banner and sign companies, and other third party creatives.

2. **EPS: Encapsulated Postscript**

EPS files are most commonly used by designers to transfer an image or artwork, generally a vector file into another application. Vector-based EPS files are scalable to any size. EPS files can be opened using Adobe Illustrator, Freehand, or Adobe Photoshop. A vector EPS file is one of the most preferred formats by printers, promotional product companies, silk screeners, banner and sign companies, and other third party creatives.

3. **PDF: Portable Document Format**

A PDF is a universal file format that preserves/embeds the fonts, images, layout and graphics of any source document, regardless of the application used to create it. PDF files can be shared, viewed and printed by anyone with the free Adobe Reader software. Some PDF files can be used for commercial, digital, and/or desktop printing.

4. **PSD: Photoshop Document**

The PSD file format, usually a raster format, contains graphics and photos created in Adobe Photoshop image editing software. Most commonly used by designer and printers. PSD files can only be opened using Photoshop and may be created in layers.

5. **JPG: Joint Photographic Experts Group**

A JPG file is a compressed image file that does not support a

transparent background. The level of compression in JPG files can vary in resolution with high quality for desktop printing, medium quality for web viewing and low quality for email. When compressed repeatedly the overall quality of a JPG image is reduced.

6. **GIF: Graphics Interchange Format**

GIF files are low resolution files most commonly used for web and email purposes. Almost all browsers can support the use of GIF files, which use a compression scheme to keep the file size small. GIF files can be created with a transparent background.

7. **TIF: Tagged Image File Format**

The TIF/TIFF file format is most commonly used for storing images, photography, or art. TIF files are most commonly used in professional environments and commercial printing. The TIF format is the most widely supported format across all platforms. It is the standard format for high quality images. Though large in size, TIF formats are considered to be the most reliable format for high quality images.

8. **PNG: Portable Network Graphics**

The PNG file format is most commonly used for use online and on websites due to their low resolution. PNG files are bitmap images that employ lossless data compression, and like GIF files, PNG files can be created with a transparent background.

(Sourced from <http://www.bourncreative.com/common-graphic-design-file-formats-explained/>)