

The following is an item we prepared for a publication to have available for any would-be advertisers or suppliers of editorial. It may be useful to others and you are welcome to adapt it to suit individual needs.

CAN WE GIVE YOU PICS ON DISK OR BY EMAIL?

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The quick answer is "yes" -- but there are several things to watch. If you're in a hurry, just read the final paragraph below. The rest gives a few more details for those who are interested.

RESOLUTION

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The Web and computer screens work on a basis of 72 to 96 dots per inch. Our printing system works on from 150 to 300 dots per inch. Therefore a picture which looks fine on a computer screen could look very dotted or fuzzy in print.

There also needs to be some leeway to allow for reduction that is not in exact proportions to the number of dots.

If you are scanning a picture, it is suggested you scan at from 200 to 300dpi and save as a TIF file. If this is too large for easy transmission by disk or email, the options are to use TIF compression, to compress the file with a program such as WinZip (PC) or Stuffit (Mac), or to use a "lossy" compression format such as JPEG.

Also, if the photo is larger than it will be used, you can reduce the resolution. For example, if the photo is twice the size it will be used, you can halve the resolution.

JPEG (or JPG) files should be saved at a high quality setting and should not be altered and saved again when in that format. As any compression is reapplied when such a file is saved again, there can be a substantial reduction in quality. This is called a "lossy" format because information is lost in the compression; compression as used by WinZip, Stuffit and in the compressed format of TIF compresses by recognising repeated patterns and no information is lost.

Most pictures are scanned in "thousands" or "millions" of colours. However, in producing files for the Web in particular, these can be reduced to 256 or less. We use up to 256 levels of grey even in a "black and white" picture, so you can see that a color photo at 256 colours does not give us any room to move in converting to a greyscale picture (especially as we have to expand and compress certain ranges). Such a picture is even less suitable for color reproduction.

Many domestic digital cameras automatically save in a compressed format. For the reasons given above, it is better to choose the minimum compression and not to work on the photos yourself in any image manipulation program.

Prints on inkjets from scans and digital pictures may look like a photograph, but, if you examine them closely, you will see that instead of the "continuous tone" of a photograph, the image is made up of small dots. When such inkjet photo prints are scanned these dots become more obvious and can clash with the dots which make up our printed image, producing unintended patterns called moiré (We liked one printer's reference to this: "If a dot hits your eye like a big piece of pie, that's a moiré").

The answer is -- don't send us the inkjet print, send us a copy of the file which you used to print it.

FILE FORMAT?

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TIFF and PDF files are the preferred formats. Most other common cross-platform file formats are acceptable: JPG, GIF, etc. With EPS files, please ensure that any fonts or typefaces used are converted to outlines before saving. Depending on the section of the publication, your files may be worked on with PC or Mac.

If created on a Mac, it is preferable to use an extension to the filename which indicates the format: .tif, .eps etc.

Please do not embed pictures in Word or other word processing documents, or, if you do, please send a separate file of the picture in one of the above formats.

If you create an ad layout, we can usually cope with the following: PageMaker (up to v.6.5), Quark XPress (save as version 3), InDesign, Illustrator (up to v.8), FreeHand (up to v.7), Photoshop (up to v.5), MS Publisher (up to v.97). Unless any fonts are converted to outlines, font files should be included (and will be discarded after use). Mac fonts files should be "Stuffed".

If you are emailing as an attachment, remember that many service providers impose limits on attachment size -- which can be as low as 1MB. (We have a separate advice sheet available on using your own web site to transfer larger files).

DISK FORMAT? =====

You can supply pics on IBM or Mac format disks -- 1.4MB floppy, 100MB Zip disk, or CD. However, if you are supplying Mac format files, we prefer you to "Stuff" or "Zip" them (the basic "Stuffit" program is supplied with all recent Macs).

The reason we ask for stuffed or zipped Mac files on disk is because they may need to be transferred via a WinNT or Unix system to reach a Mac. It doesn't usually matter if you are supplying just graphic files (TIF etc) but it does if fonts are included.

QUICK SUMMARY =====

Supply pictures as TIF files on a Mac or PC format disk and we'll usually be happy.

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