

THE ULTIMATE IMAGE FILES CHEAT SHEET

Can't remember the difference between an EPS and PNG file? We've got you covered. Tack this cheat sheet up by your desk for quick reference while you work with photos and other graphics.

For more design tips, visit us at weareamenable.com!



JPG/JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)

Lossy (compressed) files, which means they are one of the smallest file formats and lose quality each time they are saved or shared in an email, PowerPoint, Word doc, etc.

Have non-transparent (white) backgrounds.

Use for photographs that don't need to be opened and re-saved often. Can also be used for website/social media photos or simple DIY printing projects with white backgrounds like flyers, handouts or meeting notes.



SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics)

Designed for use on the web, the scalability of SVGs allows web developers to create designs that scale dynamically based on the size of your browser—whether on a computer or smartphone/tablet.

Like EPS files, SVGs never lose quality, no matter how large you scale them.

Use for graphics like logos, illustrations and charts that are going on a web page.



EPS (Encapsulated PostScript)

The most common vector files.

Best used for anything that will be professionally printed, because they are universally beloved and retain their quality regardless of the size at which they're printed.

Use for print pieces, swag designs, signage, and package design.



PDF (Portable Document Format)

Brings together vector and raster files in a universal file format that can be opened by anyone (regardless of software functionality) for print or sharing digitally.

File size depends on the final use—if you're just sharing it via email, it will be saved at a small file size, whereas if you're printing, it will be saved at a large file size to ensure proper print quality.

Use for forms, brochures, reports, books, posters, flyers and digital marketing.



GIF (Graphics Interchange Format)

Has become synonymous with funny memes from our favorite shows, but was originally used to save images because of the small file size.

Old logo files were commonly saved as GIFs because of file size.

No longer used in design because file size isn't an issue and GIFs are low quality with a very limited color palette and tendency toward low resolution.



PNG (Portable Network Graphics)

Lossless (uncompressed) files, which means they never lose quality and tend to have large file sizes.

Have transparent backgrounds.

Use for any digital projects—PowerPoint, social media, website, Google docs, etc.



TIFF (Tagged Image File Format)

Lossless files, meaning they never compress and lose quality.

Although once the gold standard for printing rasters, they are now rarely used—their huge file size makes them bulky, difficult to work with, and impracticable for online use.

Use for high-quality photographs or images you need to edit in Photoshop or a similar image-editing software.



WebP

A relatively new file format, Google WebP files help high-quality images load faster.

The WebP format reduces the size of the file with only slight loss in quality.

Can only be used for images shared on the web.



Color Codes Matter

Pantone files should be used for professional offset printing.

CMYK files should be used for both professional and in-house/nonprofessional printing.

RGB/Hex files should be used for online and digital communications.

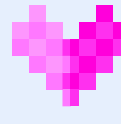


Vector Images

Images based on mathematical equations.

Can be infinitely resized bigger and smaller without any distortion in their resolution.

Use for logos and brand elements, which should always start in a software like Adobe Illustrator, Sketch, or Affinity Designer.



Raster Images

Made up of pixels with a set number of colors in a grid pattern that make up the image your eyes see.

Can be made smaller, but will become pixelated when sized up.

Use for digital or online content like websites, social media or PowerPoint graphics, as well as some print contexts like photographs, small graphics or DIY printing on flyers or brochures.