

## CHOOSING FILE FORMATS

To use this chart, first ask yourself “How is my document going to be produced?” If you are going to have a printer print your project on a press, you are in the **COMMERCIAL** group. If you are going to copy the job (either color or black and white) or you will use your own desktop equipment, you are in the **DESKTOP** group. If you are publishing online, you are in the **DIGITAL** group. Move left to right to figure out what file format you’ll need and at what resolution you’ll need.

Also included are average minimum quantities that make a job worth the cost to print it. For example, if you know you only need 50 copies of a document, you should probably not use a commercial printer to do your job.

OUTPUT GROUP	OUTPUT METHODS (AVERAGE MINIMUM PRINT QUANTITY)	TYPE OF ART	APPROPRIATE FILE FORMATS	APROPRIATE RESOLUTION
COMMERCIAL	Offset Press (500-1,000) Digital Press (100-250)	line art	eps	n/a
			tif	800+ dpi
		photos	tif	300+ dpi
DESKTOP	Black and White Laser Printer (1) Color Laser copier (1) Photocopier (1)	line art	tif	600 dpi
			bmp	600 dpi
			jpg	600 dpi
	Inkjet Printer (1) Docutech Printer (30)	photos	tif	150 dpi
			bmp	150 dpi
			jpg	150 dpi
DIGITAL	Internet (N/A) Powerpoint (N/A)	line art	gif	72 dpi
		photos	jpg	72 dpi

### DEFINITIONS

#### DPI

(Dots Per Inch) The number of pixels it takes to make a row of pixels 1 inch long. The higher the number, the denser the image, the better quality the image.

#### IMAGE SIZE

The physical size of an image (can be measured in inches, centimeters, pixels, etc.).

#### IMAGE QUALITY

Image Quality is defined by a combination of resolution and image size. A 300 dpi image that measures 1 inch by 1 inch may not high enough quality to use if the photo needs to be printed at 4 inches by 4 inches. A 72 dpi image that measures 10 inches by 10 inches can easily be reduced to print at 4 inches by 4 inches.

#### LINE ART

An image that has bold areas of colors and/or sharp lines; line art does not have the subtle shading of a photo (examples are logos or bold graphics) Line art needs a higher resolution to look good if it is going to be printed.

#### RESOLUTION

The density of pixels (also called dots) in an image.

### RULES OF THUMB:

*It is usually okay to shrink images. It is usually not okay to enlarge them.*

*As image size decreases, resolution increases. As image size increases, resolution decreases.*

*If a designer ask you for a logo for a printed piece, they want an eps or a high-resolution tif file. They don't want a jpg or gif from your website.*