

ELECTRONIC PREFLIGHT CHECKLIST

A few things to check over while you and your file are both still on the ground.

QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU PREPARE THE FILE...

- Is your service provider's hardware and software (including versions) compatible with yours?
- Does the output that can be provided meet your needs?
- What different types of media can the service provider support?
- Does my service provider have specific instructions for online job transmission, including a job ticket or order form? If you are sending files to an FTP site, be sure you have detailed instructions.
- What compression programs does the service provider support?
- What font libraries does the service provider support?
- Should the service provider, or I, do the trapping on files?
- Should the file be prepared as printer or reader spreads?

PROOFS

- Supply a composite proof (either laser or color) of the FINAL file provided for output.
- For color jobs, in addition to a composite proof, also supply separated laser proofs of each color and indicate color identification on each sheet created by the application.

ACCEPTABLE GRAPHIC FORMATS

- Submit only TIFF or EPS file formats regardless of platform.
- Convert color graphics files from RGB to CMYK, including any nested or embedded elements.
- Unacceptable file formats for imagesetter output: PICT, PAINT, RGB TIFF, RGB EPS, Quick Time, Single file CMYK EPS, Native PowerPoint, GIF, JPEG.

NOTE: Embedding unacceptable formats in an OK format does not make the resulting file OK. Also, duotones and files with clipping paths must be supplied as EPS.

- Check with your vendor for distillation instructions if you want to send files as Adobe PDFs.

AM I SURE THE FILE FOR OUTPUT IS COMPLETE AND CORRECT? HAVE I...

- Included all the application files and source files, including EPS and TIFF files?
- Included all display and printer fonts used in the file?
- Removed any extraneous versions or files from the medium that don't pertain to the job being output?
- Included complete fonts for typefaces I've modified from library faces and given them a different name from the library font?
- Named all FPO images for APR with the same names as the scanned images?

FILE PREPARATION CONSIDERATIONS...

- In draw programs, have I limited anchor points to the smallest number possible?
- Have I incorrectly used the "Style" menu for type styles (bold, italic, etc.), rather than correctly using the actual font in "Font" menu?
- Have I established crop marks correctly from the page setup or preferences and not placed them manually?
- Have I included overwork for bleeds outside of crop area?

HAVE I FORGOTTEN ANYTHING?

- The service provider's job sheet with the submitted file showing...
 - applications used (also version number)?
 - file names? • directories? • fonts used?
 - due date? • contact name, including the business AND after-hours phone numbers?
- Do I have the rights on all the copyrightable material I've used in the file?
- Did I make backup copy and retain file?
- The savvy thing to do is run preflight software before submission.

SOME THINGS THAT DON'T ALWAYS APPEAR AS THEY SEEM

- Laser proofs of the same file do not always output the same way on an imagesetter or platesetter.
- Monitor images do not match the hard proof images.
- All digital proofing devices do not output color hues and values the same way.

RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES: FILE ORIGINATOR

- Provide complete files that can be run within acceptable RIPping times.
- Provide all necessary information that permits efficient running of files.
- Provide ease of contact with originator and service provider or printer should problems arise.

RESPONSIBILITIES: SERVICE PROVIDER

- Establish norms for RIPping times for various jobs as a benchmark.
- Establish costs for author's alterations done at the customer's request.
- Establish procedures for calling customer promptly when problems are discovered.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

WHAT IS USUALLY INCLUDED IN THE SERVICE PROVIDER'S BASE COSTS?

- Installing fonts listed on order form and included with job.
- Setting up applications to run customer file based on client supplied information.
- Cursor file examination (look for obvious problems that show up when file is viewed on the monitor).
- Quality control to meet printing requirements.
- Final image output.
- Redo due to vendor error.

WHAT IS NOT USUALLY INCLUDED IN THE SERVICE PROVIDER'S BASE COSTS?

- Trapping Scanning
- File editing including conversion of RGB to CMYK.
- Creating laser proofs if not supplied with file.
- Extra time associated with jobs containing incomplete/missing elements.
- Color proofing of final film or output.

This Preflight Checklist was developed through a consensus of PINC members – people who deal with electronic mechanicals on a daily basis.

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