

## WHAT'S THE DIFF BETWEEN A JPEG AND A TIFF?

You've just scanned a photo into your computer. Now you need to save the image. You click on File > Save As... > and up pops a window with a menu of obscure acronyms: GIF, JPEG, BMP, TIF, EPS, PSD, PDF and more. What do they mean? What difference does it make?

**GIF.** The letters "GIF" stand for "Graphics Interchange Format". It is a low-resolution graphics file format for use on the Internet, often used in simple animated graphics. Images copied from the Internet are either GIFs or JPEGs and are almost always 72 dpi (dots per square inch). These low resolution graphics should NOT be used for high-resolution printing.

**JPEG or JPG.** The letters "JPEG" stand for "Joint Photographic Experts Group". It is a standardized image compression format that makes files smaller for quick transfer over a network and for display on the Internet. Most JPEGs are saved at 72 dpi, too low for high quality printing. The JPEG file format is acceptable as long as images are saved at 300 dpi or higher. (NOTE: Many digital cameras record photos as large 72 dpi JPEG images - anywhere from 8x12" up to 24x36". In PhotoShop, they can be "resampled" to a smaller size and a higher resolution in order to create 300 dpi images.)

**BMP.** The letters "BMP" stand for "bitmap", a file format best suited for "line art" (i.e. images that do not have a dot-pattern or screen). Cartoons or drawings should be scanned at 600 dpi or higher and saved as a BMP in order to preserve sharp lines and shapes.

**TIF or TIFF.** The letters "TIFF" stand for "Tagged Image File Format". TIFFs can be universally placed into most programs on a MAC or PC. The TIFF format works well with photos and graphics that have dot patterns or screens. For quality printing, they must be scanned and saved at 300 dpi or higher. HOWEVER, if you plan to include TYPE together with the image, a TIFF will discard the font information and rasterize the typeface and give it a grayscale dot pattern. Images that mix pictures and type should be saved as EPS.

**EPS.** The letters "EPS" stand for "Encapsulated PostScript". This is by far the best format when combining photos together with type. The EPS will "embed" the screen-view of the font into the file - but it will NOT include the printer-font information. When saving a file that includes fonts as an EPS, you MUST either change the font to "curves" or "paths" (this can be done in Illustrator, Freehand, and InDesign), or you MUST send the font files along with your EPS files. EPS graphics should be saved at 300 dpi or higher.

**PSD.** The letters "PSD" stand for "PhotoShop Document". This is the way you should save the working copies of any files you are working on in PhotoShop. As long as you DO NOT FLATTEN LAYERS, saving as a PSD will preserve your font information and all the layers you have created, even when you reopen the file. PSD files can be placed directly into PageMaker 7.0, Quark XPress, Freehand 9+, Illustrator 9+, and InDesign 2.0+.

**PDF.** The letters "PDF" stand for "Portable Document Format", an increasingly popular way of preserving and transporting large, complicated files. Fonts, graphics and colors are "embedded" in the file, compressed, and viewable by other users. Viewing a PDF requires a FREE downloadable copy of Acrobat Reader available from Adobe.com. Creating a PDF, however, requires the purchase of the Acrobat Distiller program from Adobe.

**Still have questions?** The team at American Printing is here to assist. If you need help with any project you may be working on, give us a call at 253-395-3349.