Simplified Requirements for Creating Proper Press Quality PDF Files

This document summarizes how to create proper press quality PDF files. To create these files requires attention to (1) how the ad copy is created, (2) how the files are converted to PDF (Acrobat is used as an example), and (3) how the fonts are embedded and subsetted.

Tips for Creating the Ad Copy

Document Setup

- In the page/document setup in your design program create your document at the exact actual dimensions of the ad size (see ad contract), not the size of a 8.5″ x 11″ sheet or the pasteboard used in the design program. We reserve the right to squash or stretch copy or to add blank space to any copy not fitting the correct dimensions as we deem appropriate.
- Do not include any white space outside of your ad's borders.
- Do not include crop marks or trim marks around your ad copy unless it is a cover ad which will bleed.
- Color ads should have black text only on the black plate to be sure it will print properly. It is not recommended to use light colored (particularly if thin or small sized) text over a colored background as it may not appear sharp in print.
- Cover ads (live area should measure 6.5″ x 9") bleed and must include an additional ⅛-inch bleed all around the copy outside of your page margins (set your page size to a total of a ¼-inch larger in each direction than the trim size to accommodate the bleed). Keep all essential text and graphic elements including borders at least ½-inch inside the page margins (trim). Any borders which bleed must be a minimum of .5" thick (plus bleed) as trimming is not always precise.
- Borders are strongly suggested for all ads.

Graphics

- All graphics should have resolutions of 600 dpi for monochrome, 300 dpi for grayscale, and 300 dpi for color. Spot colors cannot be used.
- Graphics should be inserted/placed into your file rather than using cutting and pasting.
- Do not use images copied or saved from the web ad as they are too low resolution for proper print output.

Fonts

- The file must use fonts that allow embedding and subsetting (including the base fonts). Failure to embed and subset fonts is the biggest obstacle to PDF compliance. All Type 1 fonts can be embedded. Only some TrueType fonts can be embedded. See below for more information.
- Any font converted to a graphic must be at least 1200 dpi.

Tips for Creating Compliant PDF Files

General

- Do not use password protection or any form of security in the PDF file.
- All fonts, including the standard (base) fonts, must be embedded and subsetted in the PDF.

Software Options

- You can purchase Adobe Acrobat which allows you to convert your documents into PDF. If using Adobe Acrobat, the Job Options settings specifying a Preset of PDF/X-4:2008 with a Standard of PDF/X:2010 and Acrobat 7 (PDF 1.6) compatibility should be used. Any other settings may not create an acceptable PDF.
- You can use software from another vendor or provider to convert your document into PDF. Some of this software can be downloaded for free. Some drawbacks to this approach are (1) quality may not be sufficient (use is at your risk); (2) you may be more restricted as to the means in which you construct your document (i.e., these programs can typically convert fewer formats into PDF than Adobe's software); and (3) their setup and use is not as straightforward as Adobe's. Some may also put a watermark onto your copy. Using non-Adobe software is at the advertiser's risk and the publisher cannot take responsibility if an ad created with other software does not print properly. ***Copy created with Canva (canva.com) cannot be used under any circumstance as it does not embed or handle fonts correctly.***
- If using non-Adobe software, please make sure that your settings are set to downsampling resolution to 600 dpi for monochrome, 300 dpi for grayscale, and 300 dpi for color.

How to Check the Fonts

Adobe Acrobat users can check for font embedding and subsetting by following the steps below. Failure to embed and subset fonts is the biggest obstacle to PDF compliance.

Using the Acrobat or Acrobat Reader

Follow the steps below with either Acrobat or the Acrobat Reader to check if all the fonts are successfully embedded and subsetted. Please note that the free Acrobat Reader is available at https://get.adobe.com/reader/

1. (Skip this step if using the Acrobat Reader) Under the View menu, be sure that "Use local fonts" is not checked.
2. Go to Document Properties > Fonts
3. For Acrobat Reader click on the "List all fonts" button
4. In the Font Info panel, check each font listed to make sure it says "Embedded Subset". Any font that does not show "embedded subset" is not okay, and the PDF cannot be used. These problems most often occur with "freebie" fonts downloaded from the web. Professional quality purchased fonts will usually be fine.

General Information

- If you do not understand or cannot follow these instructions, please contact us and we will refer you to a graphic designer whom you can hire to assist you.
- **Any and all materials submitted are presumed to be correct and in accordance with these stated requirements. It is the advertiser and/or ad provider's responsibility to apply these standards. Advertisers are wholly responsible for the quality of their materials, and the publisher will not be held responsible for printing complications that arise due to nonconforming materials. If these instructions are not followed completely, a $25 processing fee will apply.**