

aPrintis

Print Ready File Submission for Magazines: Guidelines and Instruction

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Introduction

The objective of this document is to make the process of Print Ready PDF submission as seamless as well as quick to turn around as possible. **Please help us turnaround your PDFs more quickly by encouraging your editors to follow EACH of the guidelines/instructions in this document. Not doing so directly affects how quickly we can submit your file to print and adds to the printing turnaround of your file.**

Below is a list of areas that require special attention to ensure print readiness:

- **Templates** – use aPrintis templates to import project settings. [Pg. 5]
- **One PDF vs individual pages** – please submit as one pdf file to minimize delay. [Pg. 9]
- **Profiles** – use aPrintis pre-flighting profiles file (aPrintis.idpp) to check for errors before submitting for review. [Pg. 10]
- **Bleeds** – bleed setting instructions. [Pgs. 5 and 12]
- **Color** – color density of black text and backgrounds/graphics requires particular attention to avoid smudging during the print process. [Pg. 7]
- **Photo resolution checking** – always check image resolution in Photoshop before importing into InDesign. [Pg. 8]
- **Exporting** – even after setting everything right, if exporting is not done correctly, the pdf can't be printed. [Pg. 12]
- **Turnaround** – note the time of submission deadline and how it affects turnaround. [Pg. 4]

Thank you for your support. We are dedicated to continuously improving your print services experience and we look forward to your feedback/suggestions to help us achieve that.

Thank You!
aPrintis Graphics Team

Print Ready PDF Submission Process

File Submission Process

1. Submit PDF to aPrintis by creating an account as managing editor at aprintis.com/onboarding, creating a publication entity and uploading the PDF.
2. aPrintis graphics pros review your PDF for print readiness – check bleeds, image resolutions, margin overruns, text & image color densities etc.
3. You will be notified about any changes that are needed prior to submission. The closer the document is to being ready to print, the quicker we can submit your file. Following the guidelines and instructions in the following pages will help tremendously
4. If no more changes are needed, aPrintis notifies you and submits your file for printing
5. The turnaround countdown starts after the PDF is submitted for printing.

Print Turnaround

Turnaround: We try our best to deliver the publication within **7 Calendar Days** (includes weekends but not National Holidays).

Ready-to-print File Submission Cut-off Time: 2pm EST/1pm CST/11am PST

Note: Ready-to-print refers to a file that has been approved for printing by the aPrintis graphics team. A submission after the above cut-off time ends up being considered a next day submission.

Best Practices for Quick Turnaround

- 1. Ensure that every editor/collaborator follows directions in this document**
- 2. Submit your file at least a day before your desired final submission date;** If there are any changes that need to be made, you can make them on the morning of
- 3. Plan for submission early in the week.** If submitted late in the week, and if there are changes needed in the file, you might run into the weekend and become even more delayed
- 4. Plan conservatively for distribution before holiday breaks.** While we try our best to meet every turnaround, weather, holidays or other logistics emergencies can occasionally delay our mail carriers (Fedex)
- 5. Share your publication schedule with aPrintis in advance.**

Creating and Setting Up the File

Setting up individual InDesign pages

All pages must have the correct document size and bleed settings. Each page should have the same document size

- e.g. for 8.5 x 11 trim, 0.125 in bleed is required on all sides, the PDF should be 8.75 x 11.25
- Bleed needs to be set even for pages that do not have objects in the bleed area to ensure each page has same document size

Use aPrintis template to set up page correctly

- While optional, use of aPrintis templates for page setup will help import correct settings for page size and orientation, bleeds, and margins.

How to set up page using aPrintis template

1. Download an aPrintis template file (.indd) from templates
2. Open the template file and save it as a document with a new name.

How to set up page without aPrintis template

1. File → New → Document.
2. Do not use the Page tool to define page size – use the Document Settings.
3. Make sure “Facing Pages” is checked. DO NOT use 11x17 spreads.
4. For “Page Size,” choose “Letter”
5. Make sure the orientation is “Portrait”, not “Landscape”.
6. Set margins to at least “0.25 in” on all sides.
7. Set bleed to “.125 in” (0p9) on all sides
8. Save your settings as a **Document Preset**, so you can reuse them.

Content Guidelines

Text and Rule Sizes

Use for best readability:

- All text larger than 6 pts. Headings: larger than 16 pts. Rules (narrow lines, frames around pictures or other objects): larger than 0.25 pts.
- Light text on dark backgrounds (“reverse text”), should be slightly larger and/or bolder than otherwise.

Make sure fonts are embedded and avoid using free fonts from the internet

How to make sure fonts are embedded

1. Always make sure any fonts used in your document are installed on the computer you use to export the document, otherwise they will not be embedded.

Margins

All text must be inside the 1/4” margins on every page, even the covers.

- Text includes headings, page numbers, folios, etc. Basically, anything that uses a font.
- Images may extend past the margins, but if they do, they must extend all the way to the bleed line.
- Leave at least a gutter of 0.1875 in between content and ads. Include a line border around ads for cleaner look
- Ads that don’t extend to the bleed area need to be reduced to fit inside the margins. Even if an ad is all one image, any text in it needs to stay away from the edge of the page or it might be trimmed off.

How to make sure all text is in margins

1. No easy way to do this during construction – need to check every page for margin overruns.
2. The purple line in your InDesign file is the margin line. You may set margins to be larger than 0.25 in but they must be at least 0.25 in
3. When you preflight your document, it will warn you if it finds text outside of the margins.

Colors

The entire magazine must be in CMYK unless it's black and white, in which case it should be grayscale.

- Please convert RGB or spot color files to CMYK in Photoshop before placing them in InDesign.
Note: Images sourced online from the web are usually RGB
- Black text smaller than 30 points and black rules narrower than 2 points must be in **Process Black** (c0m0y0k100).
- Black text larger than 30 points must be **Super Black** (c50m40y40k100).
- Black backgrounds or large black areas must be in **Super Black** (c50m40y40k100).
- **These rules also apply to any images created by magazine staff in Illustrator or Photoshop.**

DO not use spot colors

NOTE: If the above steps are not followed, due to excess color density print ink can get smudged and pages stick to each other. More critically, the pdf will fail in quality control process.

How to identify RGB content and convert it to CMYK

1. Open the image you want to use in Photoshop.
2. Go to Image → Image Mode.
3. Select “CMYK” unless the graphic is mostly shades of gray, such as a drawing or a table. Then select “grayscale.”

How to convert black text to Process Black

1. In InDesign, click on the object you want to make Process Black to select it.
2. Go to Windows → colors.
3. If the color window doesn't show four boxes for CMYK percentages, click on the menu button at the top right of the color window (it looks like a triangle next to several lines).
4. Select “CMYK”.
5. Make sure the fill is selected, not the frame, at top left.
6. Type “100” in the black percentage box, or click the black box under it.

How to convert headlines to Super Black

1. Follow steps 1-5 above.
2. Type “50” in the cyan box, “40” in the yellow and magenta boxes, and “100” in the black box.

How to make a swatch

1. Go to Windows → Swatches.
2. With the Super Black object still selected, make sure the fill (not the frame) is selected at the top left of the Swatches window, and then click the “New Swatch” button at the bottom.
3. A new swatch will appear with the CMYK percentages for a name.

Content Guidelines

4. You can leave it as is or change the name to “Super Black.”

How to use a swatch on any object:

1. Select the object
2. Open the Swatches Window
3. Choose the fill or the background
4. Click on the swatch you want

Image resolution

Avoid image pixelation. Make sure images are at least 300dpi.

- All images should be 300 dpi and bitmaps below 600
- Expanding images decreases resolution of the image. Do not stretch or expand images beyond their original size unless they are of much higher resolution. NOTE: Artificially setting the resolution of an image in Photoshop to 300 dpi without resizing it does not improve the resolution.
- DO NOT bring Images, logos etc. from the internet. They are often only 72 dpi – it is best to use high res images taken from camera
- Do not use layered tiffs with extra channels, RGB or Index color.
- Do not create silhouettes by “deleting” to a white background unless you intend a pure white background – use a clipping path instead
- All images must be available to the computer that is used to export the pdf. The InDesign file only contains a low-res preview of the image.

How to check image resolution in Photoshop

1. Open the image in Photoshop
2. Image → Image Size. The window that pops up will tell you what resolution your image has and at what size. You could change the resolution in this window and force Photoshop to keep the image the same size, BUT that will require Photoshop to make up a lot of new pixels, and make the pixels it has larger. The result is a file that may technically show a high resolution, but will be rendered just like a low-resolution file that has been blown up.

Exporting to PDF

Step 1: Combining pages into one PDF

All pages must be submitted together as one PDF file.

- Pages should appear individually, not in 11 x 17 spreads, and should be in logical order rather than printers' spreads.
- Do not submit your document one page at a time.

3 options to combine pages into single PDF

- Create a "Book" to combine multiple pages – best option if document has multiple contributors
- Combine pages by hand, and dragging in the page elements
- Use Adobe Acrobat to combine pages.
- Do not use the Mac program called Preview to combine files - it will remove the bleed area.

How to create a "Book" from individual pages

1. Make copies of your original page/document by using the "Save As" feature and saving with different names.
2. Create a new book. File → New → Book. A book panel opens. Give your book a name. The book file is not a document, but a list of files. It has the extension .indb.
3. Click the plus sign at the bottom right of the book panel to add files to the book.
4. InDesign will assign page numbers in the same order as they appear in the Book panel. You can drag them into new positions to get the right order.
5. Save your book file. Saving the book file does not save any document; you will have to save them separately.
6. Remove files from the book using the button at bottom right that looks like a minus sign. Read more about book files on the Adobe Help site: <http://help.adobe.com>

Step 2: Preflight Your Document

Preflight your document before exporting

- Preflighting in InDesign checks for RGB or other prohibited colorspaces, unlinked images, image resolution, non-proportional scaling, minimum stroke weight, margins, missing text, minimum type size, bleed and more.

How to load the aPrintis preflight profile (if not already done)

1. Download the profile file (aPrintis.idpp).
2. Open the Preflight window. Window → Output → Preflight.
3. From the Preflight menu (click the button at top right of the panel that looks like a triangle with lines next to it), choose "Define profiles."
4. Load the aPrintis profile. At the bottom left of the Preflight panel, there is another menu button.

Exporting to PDF

Click it and select “Load profile.” Navigate to the folder where you saved the profile and select it.

5. The profile should now appear in the list above the menu button in the “Define Profiles” window. Click “ok”.
6. Close the Preflight window.

How to preflight your document

1. With your document open, apply the aPrintis profile. At the bottom of your window, there is a small green or red button that says “no errors” or “(a number) errors.” Click the triangle on the left of the green or red button. Select “aPrintis” from the list.
2. If the button is red, click the arrow to the right of the error button and select “Preflight Panel”.
3. The top window says “Error” and the bottom says “Info.”
4. Click the triangle next to your document in the top window. A list of errors will appear in the top window.
5. Select an error. An explanation of the problem will appear in the bottom window, including brief instructions for fixing it.

How to preflight a combined book document.

1. In the book window, open the book menu by clicking the icon at the top right.
2. Select “Preflight Book...”
3. In the Options panel that appears:

Step 2: Set Document for Export

Export your “Book”

- Exports all documents in the book as a single pdf file.

How to export your “Book” document

1. Make sure none of the individual files in the book window are selected.
2. In the book window, open the book menu by clicking the icon at top right.
3. Select “Export book to pdf...”
4. Choose where to save your pdf and give it a filename. If you are using InDesign CS4 or earlier, make sure “Adobe pdf” is selected.
5. Click “Save.”
6. A new window opens called “Export Adobe PDF.” If this window does not appear before the document exports to pdf, open the “style guide” file in your book and export it according to the steps below. Then start again at Step 1 above.
7. If you are using InDesign CS4 or earlier, choose “Press Quality” for “Adobe PDF Preset.”
8. If you are using InDesign CS5 or later, choose “Adobe pdf (print)” from the “Save as type” menu (“Format” menu if you’re using a Mac).
9. Select “All Pages” and “View PDF after Exporting.”
10. DO NOT include Printer Marks and Bleed Marks

How to export a single document:

1. File → Export
2. Do Steps 4-10 above.

Exporting to PDF

Step 3: Set Compression

High resolution images should be downsampled for print to avoid huge file sizes, which cause delays and even failure at print stage

How to compress very high res pics to 300 dpi:

1. In the upper left, there is a mini-menu in a box. Click on "Compression"
2. Under "Color Images" and "Grayscale Images," it should say "Bicubic downsampling to 300 dpi for images above 320 dpi."

Step 4: Confirm Bleeds

NOTE: *even if you set your bleeds correctly when setting up your pages, this step is necessary for bleeds to be set in your exported PDF*

How to ensure bleed is set in PDF at export stage

1. In the menu at the left, go to "Marks and Bleeds."
2. Make sure none of the boxes under "Marks" are checked.
3. **Check the box under "Bleed and slug" that says, "Use Document Bleed Settings."**
4. Make sure "Include slug area" is NOT checked.

Step 5: Export & Verify

It is important to verify image resolutions and bleed after export because even if set properly, it may not follow through at export

- To avoid delays in turnaround, confirm that the bleeds were indeed set properly on all pages
- Confirm that your print ready PDF has images at the right resolution
- Look at the file size of your document. If it is less than 8 megs in size, it may have been exported for the web, not print quality

How to verify print readiness after export

1. Click Export
2. Open the document in Acrobat or Acrobat Reader.
3. At the bottom left of the viewing window, the document dimensions appear (you may have to hover your cursor over it). If the dimensions do not say, "8.75 x 11.25," review your page size and bleed settings.
4. View each page of your PDF at 300 Zoom level on your desktop. If any of the images show pixelation, the images are low resolution. Either replace the images by high res images or shrink the image size and repeat the Export process.