

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRINT AND WEB DESIGN



In a perfect world, design for Print and Web would be absolutely identical and the files used for each channel would be completely interchangeable. In the real world, logos, images, ads, and even fonts used for web can vary greatly from what can be used in print. This article isn't technical and it won't go deep into the ins and outs of design. What it will do is help you understand the basics and give you a better chance of getting exactly what you need from your designer and your printer.



You may be thinking *“I’m a business owner, I already need to know ten million things. Do I really need to know this?”* It’s like buying a car, you don’t need to know how it was built. Instead, you need to know enough about models, engines, gas mileage, pricing, and financing to be a savvy shopper. It’s the same with design. Understanding the general differences between Print and Web design allows you to:

- **Get Your Money’s Worth** – Know how to ask your designer for what you really need. Ordering an image only to have it designed for print when you need it for web will waste time and money.
- **Protect Your Brand** – Make sure you always get the proper file formats and design codes to match your existing (and future) brand materials and Print vs Web use.
- **Communicate With Your Team** – The clearer you can express your needs to your Designer and Printer, the faster and more accurately they can produce materials to promote your business.

Ready to become savvier about design elements in Print and Web? Read on!

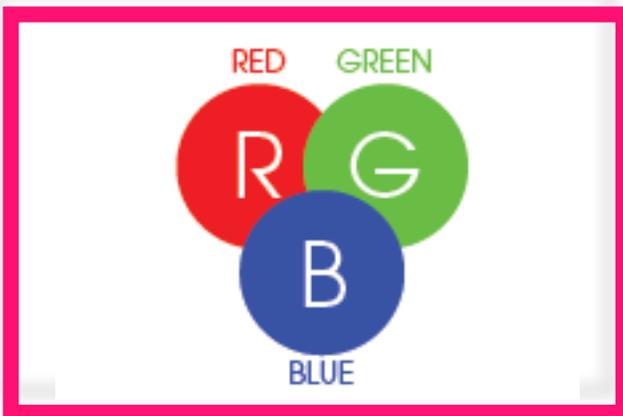
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COLORS

The way color is built to be emitted as light on your screen is vastly different from the blends of chemicals used to create color on printed materials. To the viewer, red is red, but to a web designer and printer, the language of that color is unique.

The foundational colors for print are **Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black**, commonly referred to as **CMYK**. These colors have a dot pattern that makes up an image. Also used for print are Pantone Colors which are an exact color match without a dot pattern.



Colors for Web are **RGB (Red, Green, and Blue)** and are reflective and brighter than print colors. Web also uses hexadecimal (HEX) notation for the combination of Red, Green, and Blue color values, The lowest value that can be given to one of the light sources is 0 (HEX 000 with the highest

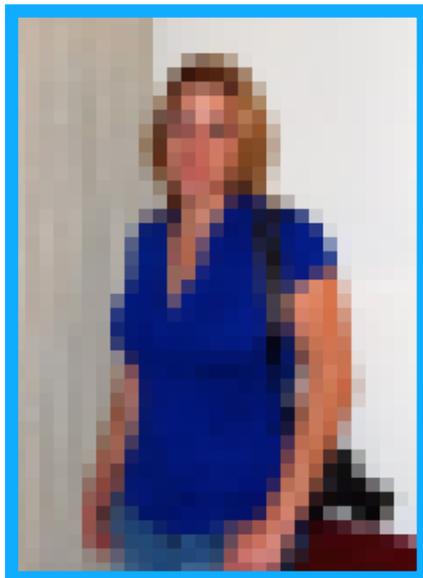
Do you need to learn everything about dots, no dots, and hexawhatami- tals? No, not unless you plan to venture into the world of graphic design or commercial printing. As a business owner, what matters most is that you are aware that there are differences in how your design is created for viewing on the web versus on printed materials.

We do recommend that whenever you have designs created for you, that you secure the CMYK, Pantone, and/or RGB color scheme used by the designer. This will help ensure that all other matters created match the color scheme exactly and best represent your brand.

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Not enough pixels to display image correctly



Correct number of pixels to display image

IMAGES

We've all seen them, pictures that look stretched out, blurry or bit-mapped. It can happen online – on websites, social networks, and digital ads. And we've all seen this on flyers, banners, posters, and more. Imagery is an area where the differences between Web and Print become quite extreme.

A primary measure of image density and quality is **PPI** or pixels per inch. Simply stated, images are made up of many little dots called pixels. The density of those pixels – how many dots are packed together is a measure of the sharpness of the image.

Images for web only need to be **72ppi** (pixels per inch) to avoid pixelating – getting the blurry, stretched out look. Images for print need to be denser in order to print at a high level of quality. In general, images for print need to be at least **300ppi** in order to print without it being fuzzy.

Also important is to make sure that your web images are designed with RGB colors. If the image is to be printed, then the resolution (PPI) needs to be upgraded and the colors converted to CMYK.



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VECTOR

Hard-edged graphics like logos, charts and icons.

WEB USES

Source files for web graphics. The files can be scaled up or down

PRINT USES

Source files for printer to output on paper or any other material

FILE TYPES

.ai .eps .pdf .svg

FILE FORMATS

Think of file formats like different types of baggage. A carry-on bag may be lightweight and easy to carry, but you sacrifice space. A heavy duty, full-sized suitcase can be filled with loads of items, but it will be large, heavy, and a bit unwieldy. Finally, garment bag may be perfect to transport business suits, but will be quite clunky and ineffective at carrying lots of shoes and bulky sweaters.

File formats are similar to baggage. They are a container meant to save and transport data in a specified way. Some file formats are great for big, detailed files. Others are perfect for content that needs to be compressed into the smallest file size possible. To help you understand all the common acronyms, here is an overview of the file formats most likely to be used by your designer for Print and Web files:

Raster Images use many colored pixels or individual building blocks to form a complete image. **JPEGS, GIFs, PSDs and PNGs** are common raster image types. Almost all of the photos found on the web and in print catalogs are raster images.

Because raster images use a fixed number of colored pixels, after a point resizing will begin to deteriorate their resolution. When you stretch a raster image too much, you get those grainy and blurry images. You have probably seen that on Facebook covers or website banners. For best results, always save designs in raster formats in the exact size needed for its use.

Vector images use mathematical formulas rather than individual colored blocks (nerdy, but effective!). This gives them a lot more flexibility when being sized. Vector files include **EPS, AI, and PDF** (actually, PDF and EPS can also be a raster, they are hybrids!) and are better file format options for designs that will need frequent resizing.

For example, company logos and brand graphics usually get uploaded to websites, social networks, digital ads, etc. so they need to be versatile for web use. At the same time, they need to be flexible enough to print on materials of all sizes – from business cards to trade show banners. Having your branding designs saved as a vector master file is a smart idea that can save time and avoid frustration down the road.

RASTER

Photography is the most common raster file.

WEB USES

A photo at exact size can only be scaled down so it will not be bit-mapped and fuzzy. A resolution of

72 ppi is common for web.

PRINT USES

Photography used at exact size or larger with a resolution of 300 ppi will print correctly. If it's smaller it will print blurry.

FILE TYPES

.jpg .gif .png .tif .eps
.psd .pdf



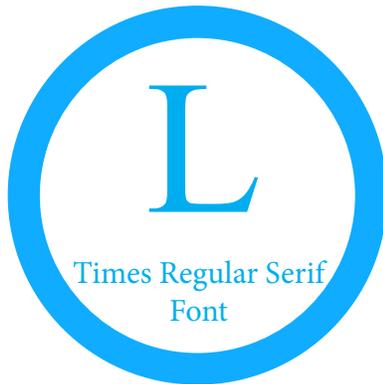
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The basic fonts that are web safe for Mac's and PC's are:

Georgia, Palatino, Times New Roman, Arial, Helvetica, Comic Sans, Lucida Sans, Tahoma, Geneva, Trebuchet, Verdana, and Courier.



If you want to use custom fonts, there are two major techniques for embedding fonts on your website:

- I. **Hosted Font Delivery**
- II. **Self-hosted Font Embedding**

Using custom fonts can really distinguish your website from other sites. It also allows you to keep your branding consistent across all your marketing channels and materials.

FONTS

We are sure that by now you will not be surprised to learn that all fonts are not created equal. There are indeed web-based fonts and print fonts. First, a fun history lesson:

The word font comes from the from Middle French fonte and refers to "something that has been melted; a casting" The term goes back to the days when typesetters would use a foundry to carefully cast every let- ter – capitalized and lower case – in metal to use in the printing process. (Thank you, Wikipedia)

Fast forward to the age of computers and now you have two universes of fonts. Even fonts by the same name vary from web to print version. Fonts intended for use on the web are optimized for easy reading on a variety of devices. This can include a taller height, modified shapes, wider letter- forms, heavier thin strokes and serifs, and more open spacing.

But do not despair! While some fonts may vary from Web to Print, most computer systems come loaded with True Type fonts. When you chose a font to type on your screen, your system knows to feed you the version optimized for web reading. When you print that material, your system automatically sends the print version to your printer. Plus, professional designers make sure your designs have the right font for their corresponding use.



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CONGRATULATIONS

**NOW YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
PRINT VS. WEB DESIGN**

Congratulations! You now have good, basic knowledge of the differences between designs meant for Print versus designs intended for Web use. Make sure you save this article and refer back to it when it's time to work with your Graphic Designer or Printer.

Understanding which colors, images, file formats, and font types are relevant to your project will help you better express your ideas and speed up the process of getting the brand and marketing materials you need to promote your business.