

Making a Press-Ready PDF File For High Tech Printing

It is not a mystery, nor is it difficult, to make a press-ready PDF file for CMYK printing on High Tech Printing's advanced Computer-to-Plate (CTP) system and Komori 5-color press.

It simply takes ATTENTION TO DETAIL. Anyone can do it.

We have made it a bit easier for those customers who might have less experience in making press PDFs by making job options files available for the different versions of Adobe's Distiller software. But utilizing these job options files are really closer to the last step in making a press-ready PDF file than they are to the first step.

1. CHECK YOUR FONTS.

The first step is to make sure you have all the fonts needed by your document properly loaded in your system. A good way to confirm this is to print out the document to laser proofs before you make the PDF file.

This is a desirable step anyway, since laser proofs (or a screen-resolution PDF) are REQUIRED by High Tech Printing to check your job before we proof and print it. If the fonts look correct on your laser proofs, they are loaded correctly in your system.

If they do not print out correctly, you may have a font conflict. If you cannot sort out the problem yourself, we advise you to choose another font that does not have a problem. We cannot resolve font conflicts over the phone, and we have no staff to send to your place of business.

2. CHECK YOUR IMPORTS.

The next step is to make sure that ALL your color bitmap images and vector imports into the program you are using for layout are CMYK—not RGB, LAB, or any other color space.

If you are using Word, PowerPoint, Publisher or any other program not directly intended for use as a layout program or that does not support the import of CMYK files, skip this step and give us a call about any production charges that may be necessary to prepare your job for printing. Quark, PageMaker, InDesign and FrameMaker are all industry-standard layout programs that support CMYK imports.

Make sure ALL colors used in your document are CMYK. If the document is an Illustrator or other vector file, you must set it up as a CMYK document or Convert/Colors to CMYK (under the Filter menu) after changing the Document Color Mode (under the File menu) to CMYK.

For most standard paper stocks, use 92% black and 300% total ink coverage for your separations from RGB. If you are using a nonstandard stock, check with us for custom ink coverage specs.

These settings are adjustable in Photoshop in Color Settings under the Edit menu. When the dialog presents itself, choose Emulate Photoshop 4 under Settings. Then, under CMYK, choose Custom CMYK and set gain at 15%, separations as UCR, black at 92 percent and total ink at 300 percent.

If you do not understand what to do here, call us and we'll help. If you are unable to perform separations to these standards, talk to us about the production charge involved to have us do the work. For a nominal charge, we can do the separations and add some minimal color correction or other image processing to boot.

NOTE: Illustrator 9 and 10 both have adjustments under Document Setup that **MUST** be saved as well. In the Document Setup dialog under the Printing & Export tab, type 2400 in the dpi blank under Paths/Output Resolution. Under the Transparency tab, set Raster/Vector Balance under Flattening Settings to 100. Save your Illustrator files as EPS, not as .AI. In Illustrator 9, also make sure that when you Select All and inspect the Attributes window, Output Resolution is set to 2400. If these settings are not made before your document is saved, talk to us about the production charge we may have to make to correct the files.

3. SAVE A POSTSCRIPT (.PS) FILE.

If you have the full version of Acrobat, you have Distiller. If you have Distiller it is best to use it rather than Create a PDF or any of the various other shortcuts Adobe has implemented in the past. Choose Acrobat Distiller as the PPD and set your application print dialog to print to file instead of to your printer.

Set your Postscript Level to Level 2 and 3 and set the file to Embed All Fonts. If the file is being made on a PC, choose ASCII as the File Format. If the file is being made on a Mac, choose Binary as the File Format.

If crop marks are available in your application, please turn them on and make sure your page size is one inch larger in both dimensions to accommodate them. Now go ahead and Print to File as composite—NOT as separations.

4. LOAD ONE OF OUR CUSTOM ADOBE ACROBAT JOB OPTIONS FILES.

If you have Distiller, here is where the custom Acrobat Job Options files available from High Tech Printing's web site enter the picture. Four files are available—Versions 4 and 5 for the PC and Versions 4 and 5 for the Mac.

ACROBAT VERSION 6 HAS A BUILT-IN, STANDARD JOB OPTIONS SETTING FOR PDF/X1A THAT SHOULD BE USED TO PREPARE ALL YOUR PRESS-READY PDF FILES IF YOU HAVE VERSION 6 FOR MAC OR PC.

The Job Options files for Mac have been compressed using Stuffit. Stuffit Expand is a free utility available under Downloads from www.aladdinsys.com. The Job Options files for PC have been compressed using Zip. WinZip or PKZip are shareware utilities available under Downloads from pkware.com or from www.winzip.com.

On the Mac, the uncompressed Job Options file must be placed in the Settings folder inside the Distiller folder in the Acrobat folder in your applications folder. The name of the file will be High

Tech Press v4.joboptions for Version 4 of Distiller, or High Tech Press v5.joboptions for Version 5 of Distiller.

On the PC, the uncompressed Job Options file must be placed in the C:/Program Files/Adobe/Acrobat (4.0 or 5.0)/Distillr/Settings directory. The name of the file will be High Tech Press v4.joboptions for Version 4 of Distiller, or High Tech Press v5.joboptions for Version 5 of Distiller.

Make sure you restart Distiller after placing the High Tech Printing custom Job Options file in the appropriate directory/folder.

5. NOW DISTILL YOUR FILE.

Now choose High Tech Press under Job Options in Distiller and drop the postscript file you made in Step 3 onto Distiller, or use the File/Open dialog to bring in the file. Send us the resulting PDF file. Depending upon the job, the file may be too large to email. If your file is over 5MB, please use our ftp site to send us your file.

6. IF YOU DON'T HAVE DISTILLER.

If you don't have Distiller you can't use our job options files. If you have one of the many shortcuts Adobe has implemented in the past for making PDFs or if you can only make a PDF using the Save As function of an application, make sure you look for options or properties when you begin making or saving your PDF. Choose Embed All Fonts, but do not subset any fonts. Choose 2400 for resolution, with NO resampling of images and NO compression. Choose leave color unchanged and make sure your imports are all CMYK. If your file is over 5MB, please use our ftp site to send us your file.