Top *10 Most Common Digital Prepress Problems Associated With Supplied Electronic Files

*As identified by the Graphics Arts Technical Foundation (GATF).
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GATF

1. Fonts 22.2%
2. Missing or incorrect trapping 11.5%
3. Files defined with incorrect color, e.g. RGB vs. CMYK 10.9%
4. Scans supplied in wrong file format 7.8%
5. Incorrect page setting or page setup 7.4%
6. Graphics not linked 5.3%
7. Incorrectly defined or undefined bleeds 5.2%
8. No Color or B&W proofs supplied 4.6%
9. Missing Graphics 4.5%
10. Resolution too high or too low in customer supplied scans 3.2%

No.1 Fonts (22.2%)

Fonts have always been a problem especially for printers. They get corrupted, they change over time and they re-flow. The best thing to do is organize your fonts in a secure location, and then back them up in case any of them go bad. Be especially attentive to the font's folder on your Mac or PC after installing new software.

When sending your job to a magazine publisher or printer, send only the fonts used in your documents. It is important that they receive the actual fonts that are being used on your system to avoid getting re-flow problems.

TIP:

Programs like FLIGHTCHECK or FLIGHTCHECK COLLECT from Markzware (www.markzware.com) can help with the font collection process. Another helpful piece of software to manage fonts is Font Agent by Insider Software (www.fontagent.com) Note that the demo version, which is a free download, functions well as a scanner for problems; and the full version adds the ability to fix them.

No.2 Missing or Incorrect Trapping (11.5%)

Trapping is usually handled by the printer, however there is one exception. That is when 100% black type or 100% black boxes partially overlap a four-color element. In this case use a "rich black" which is defined as 100% black and 30%cyan.

No.3 Files defined with incorrect color, e.g. RGB vs. CMYK 10.9%

RGB or indexed color mode graphics won't print correctly and will certainly not look in print like they look on your screen. For example, black type will end up printing in CMYK and result in register problems.

TIP:

Simply go into PhotoShop and choose Image>Mode>CMYK color to fix.

No.4 Scans supplied in wrong file format (7.8%)

GIF'S, JPEGs, CTs,BMPs,WMFs,PICTs, etc are great for screen displays and for use on the Internet. However, they do not fit well in the print production workflow. If you are preparing a color file, then you should convert these graphics to flattened CMYK TIFF's.

No.5 Incorrect Page settings or page setup (7.4%)

The rule is to make your document size your trim size. Don't try to accomodate bleed into your page size: and don't add any grind-off, no change is necessary for live area, spine size or any other factor. Your document

size is your trim size. If thereis a discrepancy, there is no easy fix. Outputting your pages at a percentage won't help, since the bleeds are scaled with the rest of the page, making those pages out of spec. It is important to understand this from the start.

No. 6 Graphics not linked (5.3%)

Fixing a graphic that isn't linked is just as time consuming as fixing a missing graphic. If any art is missing we cannot process your file.

No. 7 Incorrectly defined or undefined bleeds (5.2%)

Bleeds should always be 1/8 inch. Use the measurements window in Quark

No. 8   There is No 4/Color or B&W proof supplied (4.6%)

Not getting a 4/color or B&W proof is a huge problem for us, since we cannot tell if we have the correct materials and that all elements are in the document. It is very important that the proofs be output at 100%. Additionally, the colors used on that page, so that our printer can verify that the printing plates were made correctly.

TIP:

Use Quark's "print styles"m command to ease the printing of your pages at 100% with no-crop marks.

No. 9 Missing Graphics (4.5%)

When submitting files make sure that you include all graphic files with your document.

TIP:

Make sure that you never paste graphics into your document; always use the place command. Also, never place graphics off a zip drive or other removeable media since they will be difficult to locate later.

No. 10 Resolution too high or too low in supplied scans

Resolution should be 300 dpi at final printed size. If you are using PhotoShop, make sure that it is displaying resolution in pixels/inch.