Problems with images

Images in PDF files

The most common problems identified when receiving images in PDFs are:

• Resolution of a grayscale or colour image is lower than 144 dpi.

• Resolution of a lineart image is lower than 600 dpi.

• RGB (or other wrong colour space) is used.

• OPI comments are used.

In a busy design environment the last thing anyone needs on press day is a request from the printer to resupply pages based on the types of problems listed above. It is important therefore to ensure that the images being placed in the artwork are correct before assembling the document and making the PDF.

Follow these simple guidelines:

Common colour problems include:

• RGB - Please convert to CMYK before submitting to Press

• LAB/ICC Colour - Please convert to CMYK before submitting to Press

• Index Colour - Please convert to CMYK before submitting to Press

RGB and incorrect colour spaces should be corrected before taking images into the design document. These can be converted on the fly when the PDF is made but you will have greater control if this is done prior to document assembly. It is important to setup your application to ensure that you are using the correct working space for your requirements. The following are recommended for conventional cmyk printing.

• RGB - Adobe RGB (1998)

• CMYK - Coated Fogra 39 (ISO 12647-2:2004)

Resolution

Image resolution is probably the most confusing of all. Just because an image has a high dpi (ppi) content, it does not necessarily mean that the image quality is good. A poor 72dpi image that has been resized to 300dpi in Adobe Photoshop does not magically improve the quality of the image. Resolution however is a useful guide as to the printability of an image. The more dots that are available potentially the sharper the image will be in the printed process. Recommended resolutions are:

• 300 dpi/ppi for grayscale and colour images

• 600-1200 dpi/ppi for lineart images

Creating images in excess of these values will not necessarily improve the quality of the printed product, but will considerably increase the size of the PDF created. This could then impact on time spent delivering files through the internet.

• If you are in any doubt about the suitability of your image, check the PDF at a size of between 150-200% in Adobe Acrobat. If you are happy with the quality of the image on screen then you may proceed to submission to press.

OPI

OPI (Open Pre-press Interface) was a standard introduced by Aldus as a means of making DTP more efficient. Basically it means that instead of embedding the entire high resolution eps into the page make-up a low-resolution thumbnail is inserted instead. The original linked hi-resolution is then held elsewhere on your system, allowing your application to work more efficiently. With the introduction of faster hardware and larger disk storage, OPI is now rarely used in magazine

production. Applications such as Quark and Indesign still have the OPI tabs within their setup though and these should be deselected before producing your PDFs.