

Vector Image File Formats are best used for printing.

Here is some information about the different file extensions, what they are an acronym for and what that means:

EPS - Adobe's EPS format (Encapsulated PostScript) is perhaps the most common vector image format. It is the standard interchange format in the print industry. It is widely supported as an export format, but due to the complexity of the full format specification, not all programs that claim to support EPS are able to import all variants of it.

AI - The native format of Adobe Illustrator is the AI format (Adobe Illustrator Artwork), a modified version of the older EPS format. The AI format is fairly widely supported, but is less ubiquitous than the EPS format, and most programs that read AI can also read EPS.

PDF - Adobe's PDF format (Portable Document Format) is very widely used as a general purpose platform-independent document format. And while it is not exclusively used as such, it is also a very good vector image format.

SVG - The W3C standard vector image format is called SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics). Inkscape and recent versions of Adobe Illustrator and CorelDRAW have good support for reading and writing SVG.

DXF - Drawing eXchange Format. A CAD format from Autodesk, used by CAD tools from many different vendors. Some programs have difficulty reading DXF files with splines (curves), so the Desktop Edition supports line+spline as well as line only output modes.

OTHER FILE FORMATS:

There is an extremely large number of different bitmap formats. Some of the most common include: JPEG, PNG, GIF, BMP, and TIFF. These formats are generally not good for printing unless they were created just for that purpose at the print size.

Broadly speaking, they fall into two categories:

Lossy image formats (e.g., JPEG) have smaller file sizes but do not store a perfect copy of the image. They are best suited to photographs and other images where perfect accuracy is not important. They are also commonly used on the web to save bandwidth.

Lossless image formats (e.g., PNG, BMP, and TIFF) store an exact pixel-by-pixel representation of the image, but require more space. They are more suitable for things like logos. Arguably the best of these formats is PNG. It is widely supported and has very good compression.

Some specific comments on these formats:

JPEG/JPG - One of the most widely-used image formats is the JPEG format (Joint Photographers' Expert Group). This format has excellent compression characteristics and has the nice feature that the user may specify what level of compression they desire, trading off fidelity for file size.

We do not recommend using JPEG files for rasterized vector art, as the compression artifacts substantially degrade the quality of the image near edges.

PNG - The best of the lossless image formats is called PNG (Portable Network Graphics). This format is widely supported by web browsers and image viewers/editors.

BMP - There are actually several BMP formats (BitMaP). Windows and Macintosh have their own formats, both of which are called BMP. Most modern image editing tools are able to read both.

TIFF/TIF - This format (Tagged Image File Format) is used to store raw bitmap data by some programs and devices such as scanners. This format comes in a compressed and an uncompressed variant. The former is comparable to PNG, while the latter is more like BMP.

Please note that saving one format as another format, does not change the type of file. For example, taking a JPEG, which is a compressed image and saving as an EPS does not make the image an EPS. It is a JPEG disguised as an EPS and will not work for printing.