

Preparing your advertisement for newspaper reproduction

Please follow these simple steps for the best reproduction of your newspaper advertisements. If you have questions please feel free to email our Systems Manager at rxs322@psu.edu. You will end up with two advertisement files: one that allows you to retain full editing abilities and one file that you will send off to the newspaper. The resulting files are collectively referred to as your creative.

Images

Embed them in your Illustrator, Word, CorelDraw or other graphic application creative. Some graphic applications only link to your image which can create problems.

Keep your images at 200 dots per inch resolution. Higher resolution photos will only increase the file size and not result in better printing. Lower than 150 images will generally reproduce poorly. Web images, 72 or 96 dpi, reproduce exceptionally poor.

Color

If your advertisement is running without color then all artwork and colors should be black and shades of gray. If your advertisement is running with color then all artwork and colors should be black and shades of gray and utilize the CMYK color model. The Collegian does not offer spot (Pantone) color reproduction. Make sure that no RGB color exists anywhere in your creative.

Contrast

For newspaper reproduction your images will typically look “blown out” to the point of losing the finest of detail.

Maintain a 20% difference in shades of black for reproduction. Particularly if your creative is a “dark-on-dark” design scheme.

If your advertisement is color consider creating a temporary creative version that converts all colors to grayscale. Then check for that 20% difference.

Flatten

Adobe Illustrator CS6 warns you when the creative contains transparencies or contains artwork that requires flattening. Transparencies do NOT reproduce well. Flatten your artwork to reduce or eliminate as much transparency as possible.

Flattening can create unwanted visual artifacts. Consider converting those objects to an image (or rasterize complex objects).

Outline Text

Fonts vary from computer to computer and can easily change in appearance – compromising your visual design. Convert all textual objects to complex shapes (called Outlining in Illustrator).

6 Foot Rule

With your creative on monitor and zoomed to 100% lean away from the monitor 3 to 6 feet. Is your message clear? If not consider a redesign. Limit the number of distinct fonts in your creative.

LCD Monitors

Turn down the brightness of your monitor when designing creatives for newspaper reproduction.

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Design Considerations – Design for your output medium, an offset web press¹.

- **Avoid type less than 6 points in size** – Small type may not reproduce well. Particularly if that text contains any colors other than black or a shade of black.
- **White text in CMYK color model** – The way that color is reproduced can detrimentally affect the visual result. Ink is applied one plate at a time with black being the last. White text over a CMYK background can end up looking ‘fuzzy’ due to misalignment of the web of paper as it prints through the press.
- **Fonts composed of very thin strokes** – may not reproduce well. The thin strokes can appear to fill in. Some of the fill in, when on a dark background, can be attributed to an optical effect.
- **Rich Black²** – The trick with rich black is to know when to use it and when to avoid it. Rich black should be used sparingly in any full color creative. Adobe Illustrator may default to using rich black for black. In newspaper printing you generally only want to use rich black to avoid traps³ in color reproduction. Also see the note above on “White text in CMYK color model.”

The percentage values of CMYK when added together should not exceed 220%.

Utilizing rich black to produce a deeper black in reproduction is strongly discouraged.

- **Reversed Type⁴** (Knockouts) – can be tricky, hard to read, and sparingly used. White knockouts over a non-uniform CMYK background is asking for reproduction trouble.
- **Advertisement size** – Check the vertical and horizontal measurements of your advertisement before sending it in. Measurements are generally expressed in the fashion of ‘number of columns’ by the inches decimal depth of the advertisement.

Color Consideration – Design for your output medium, an offset web press.

At the approximate speed of 120,000 pages per hour newspaper presses print color one plate (or primary color) at a time and then print the key color, or black. The press is constantly manipulated throughout the run to maintain tension on the web of paper and the corresponding registration of color. It is an unfortunate truth that color registration – how those separate printings of primary colors on the paper line up – may go “out of whack.”

Design your color with this in mind. Keep critical message areas of your advertisement clear of traps. If possible avoid rich black in those critical message areas of your advertisement.

¹ Wikipedia talks about offset printing at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offset_printing.

² Rich Black: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rich_black.

³ A brief talk of color trapping and the CMYK printing process. <http://brianfies.blogspot.com/2008/08/cmyk-and-trapping.html>, but this Wikipedia page is quite good http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trap_%28printing%29.

⁴ Read about Knockouts <http://desktoppub.about.com/cs/intermediate/a/reversedtype.htm>.