



.DOC and .DOCX

The standard format for a Microsoft Word document. This format can be edited by anyone who opens it, and they can see your formatting mistakes. Only send these documents to people who need to make edits. Keep in mind that documents can look different on different machines or programs.



PDF

PDF stands for Portable Document Format. It was created so that files would appear the same way on every machine. This is the ideal format for sending finalized documents that don't need to be edited by the recipient. PDFs can also be used for creating fillable forms.



.EXE

This is the default format for a Microsoft Excel document. Excel documents are useful for creating large tables of data & formulas, and this file type will also save your formatting, but as with Word docs, different computers may show it differently.



.CSV

CSV stands for Comma Separated Values. These are like Excel documents in that they contain tables of data, but CSVs don't save formatting. This is useful if you are transferring data between programs, such as moving contact lists from Outlook to Google.



.JPG or .JPEG

This is a pretty standard image file. Because JPGs are pixel-based and have a set size (number of pixels), trying to make them larger will result in poor image quality. JPGs are good for photos, but not good for things like logos which are used in environments with wildly varying sizes.

Guide to Common File Types



.PNG

Like a JPG, this is an image file that has a set size. The difference is that a PNG supports a transparent background. This can be good for things like logos that may need to be overlayed over different backgrounds, but be sure to have a high quality file, because enlarging PNGs will result in poor quality.



.GIF

GIFs are used only for the web. They have an extremely small file size, support transparent backgrounds, and support animation. However, they have a limited color palette.



.AI

This file type can only be opened by Adobe Illustrator. However, it is extremely useful for saving editable, scalable files. If you have a logo, you might ask your designer for the AI file, because it's much easier for printers and designers working on your projects.



.PSD

This is an image file that is editable by Adobe Photoshop. However, unlike Illustrator files, PSD files are not scalable, i.e. they have a set size.



.PUB

This file type is created by Microsoft Publisher. Like other MS Office programs, it handles formatting in a way that doesn't transfer to other programs. You should only use this file type if you are the only person that will be editing the file. Once the file is complete, save it as a PDF to send to the printer.



.INDD

This file type is created by Adobe InDesign. InDesign is the program used by professionals to create multi-page documents with complex layouts, like newsletters, booklets, etc. INDD documents can only be opened by InDesign, so like .PUB documents they should be saved as PDFs for transporting.