



# File Types Explained

Format	Characteristics	Best Uses	Special Notes	
Screen/Online Only	<b>GIF</b>	<p>Bitmap/raster Image format</p> <p>Supports basic transparency</p> <p>Supports Frame Animations</p> <p>Limited to 256 colors only</p>	<p>When animations are needed, or limited color graphics such as logos on the web.</p> <p>Never for print.</p>	<p>Can contain anywhere from 2–256 colors. Colors can be dithered to simulate complex transitions.</p> <p>Limiting total number of colors does save file space.</p>
	<b>PNG</b>	<p>Bitmap/raster Image format</p> <p>Supports Alpha Transparency with 256 levels of transparency</p> <p>8-bit and 24 bit color possible</p>	<p>Web use only where high quality and transparency transitions are needed, or where limited colors helps keep the file size low.</p> <p>Never for print.</p>	<p>Can contain anywhere from 2–16.7M colors</p>
	<b>SVG</b>	<p>Vector Graphics for web.</p> <p>Small file sizes, usually.</p> <p>Resolution independent.</p>	<p>Great for logos and other illustrations that are rather simple to medium complexity.</p>	<p>Widely supported, but not universal support.</p> <p>Can use CSS and/or JavaScript to animate elements within the SVG graphic.</p>
Print media only	<b>JPG</b>	<p>Bitmap/raster image format.</p> <p>24-bit color is the norm: 16.7M colors</p> <p>Supports 4-color process*</p>	<p>General Image Sharing on-line. Website use.</p> <p>Sometimes off-set printing, but not common.</p> <p>Photo printing via ink jet printer.</p>	<p>Supports variable compression ratios for saving file size at the expense of image quality.</p> <p>*CMYK files are not usable on-line.</p>
	<b>TIFF</b>	<p>Bitmap Image Format</p> <p>Supports layers and Alpha Channels</p> <p>Very similar to PSD format</p> <p>Supports masks.</p>	<p>Printing via off-set press</p> <p>Photo printing via ink jet printer.</p> <p>Flexible color modes from Bitmap to RGB, CMYK and more. 8-bit or 16-bit per channel supported.</p>	<p>File size limitation of 4GB</p>
	<b>PSD PSB</b>	<p>Photoshop specific file format.</p> <p>Very similar to TIFF for most purposes. Supports layers.</p>	<p>Most popular for original compositions and working with photographic artwork.</p>	<p>PSD has 2GB and 30K pixel limit. PSB for oversized needs. (Max size, 4M TB!)</p>
<b>AI PDF</b>	<p>AI specific to Adobe apps.</p> <p>PDF nearly universal document format for sharing all types of documents.</p> <p>Vector based graphics, supports importing raster images.</p>	<p>AI for custom illustrations.</p> <p>PDF for document sharing and production, from one sheet designs to books.</p>	<p>Same “language” is used in PDF files as in AI files.</p> <p>AI for editing, PDF not for editing. PDF can be securely locked preventing changes.</p>	