# FACTSHEET

*Victoire*
think print

# PDF preparation
## – getting ready for print

This factsheet is intended to provide basic guidance on what to bear in mind when creating a PDF document to print with Victoire, and to save time and money in the print process. It is written for general guidance, rather than for seasoned design professionals. If you have any queries at all, you can find our full contact details at the end of the factsheet.

This factsheet by nature contains some technical terms. If you would like to find out more, please see our complementary glossary of print terms, which is available for download from www.victoirepress.com/factsheets.php

Many printers – including Victoire – encourage customers to submit their print jobs in PDF format. If done correctly, delivering documents as press-ready PDFs should cut the lead time and reduce errors; however producing PDFs can be problematic for many businesses, and can cause further problems.

This factsheet covers some of the main do's and don'ts of creating and delivering press-ready PDFs.

## What is a PDF?

Most of us are familiar with the PDF format from the web, where documents (such as this one) are often downloadable in PDF format.

PDF stands for portable document format, and was originally developed by Adobe. To help keep the PDF as a standard format for electronic documents, Adobe has since opened up its licensing regime so that anyone can produce software for creating and editing PDFs.

## Why PDF for print?

Some of the main advantages in delivering press-ready PDFs include:

*Embedded fonts*

All your fonts can be embedded in the document, so you don't need to send them separately to the printer, and you don't need to worry about different versions of the same font displaying differently.

*Embedded images*

All images can be embedded, so – again – there's no need to supply them separately.

*Stability*

Some document formats (such as word processing packages) will re-flow when opened on each occasion. This means that the printer might see a slightly different layout than the designer intended, which can lead to errors. PDFs are set in stone, so the layout you deliver is exactly what will be printed.

*Cross platform compatibility*

PDFs are platform-independent, which – in English – means that you can open them on PCs and Apple Macs, and they still look exactly the same.

*Electronic delivery*

The file size of a PDF document is normally (but not always) smaller than the size of, say, a Quark document plus all associated font and image files.

This makes it quicker to deliver electronically (for example, by email or FTP), and it's also much easier to deliver one file than a whole bundle.

*PDFs on the web*

Press-ready PDFs are unsuitable to the web because they are much too high quality (and are therefore big files).

However, PDF-producing software can normally output a lower-resolution version for the web, which means that you have more flexibility in distributing your document.

## Tip for the non-technically minded

PDF creation and delivery does need a certain amount of technical understanding. If you're completely at a loss, try and get an IT support person involved (if possible), or give Victoire a shout!

## Common problems

Depending on the default settings in your design application, just clicking Export to PDF may produce a PDF file that would be fine for website viewing or emailing, but is not properly saved for print.

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Some of the main problems in delivering PDFs to printers include:

- Fonts are not embedded.

- The resolution is too low (often because the PDF has been created for the web and not for print)

- There are no bleeds (see our jargon buster!)

- The colour settings are wrong (for example, the PDF has been output to RGB rather than CMYK).

And there are other equally typical issues, such as the use of too-thin hairline rules, the misnaming of spot colours, and imported nested graphics with their own vector files.

## How do I make PDFs?

Because PDF is a common document format, there is a dazzling array of tools and software available, of varying functionality and quality. And more and more software (e.g. Quark 7, Adobe InDesign, Open Office, etc.) comes with built-in print to PDF functionality.

Popular software that will allow you to generate PDFs from any application includes the following:

- Adobe Acrobat

- Jaws PDF

- Nitro PDF

But there are many more. To look around, try:

www.planetpdf.com

www.pdfzone.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_PDF_software

## Top tips for generating print-ready PDFs

1) Make sure your font and colours are embedded

2) Check that the resolution of your PDF is 600 dpi (dots per inch) or higher

3) If you need a Bleed check you've added it before creating the PDF

4) Check if your print driver is a direct to PostScript driver or a direct to PDF driver

5) If you are still unsure then call us (see below). We are happy to help and a good print-ready PDF helps us to give you the best results.

## Help!

Victoire will be more than happy to help you get your PDF creation workflow setup - we can even visit your premises for training if necessary.

For more information, please call us on 01954 781919.