

## Graphic Design 101

Creating effective and professional-looking designed materials can be challenging. Here are some other tips for reference.

### FONTS

- ▶ **Limit a document to two fonts.** Also, it's best when the two fonts do not look much like each other.
- ▶ **Avoid fonts that are decorative, casual or hard to read,** such as: Papyrus or Comic Sans.

### FILE TYPE TERMS

**Raster vs. vector:** Raster graphics are made up of pixels, while vector graphics are made up of lines and curves. This is good to know when working in larger formats, such as signage or producing T-shirts or other promo items. Vendors often will need “vector art” for such things, which our office can provide.

**.JPG:** A common raster image format used for photos or graphics. Compatible with most graphics software.

**.PNG:** Another common format used for images and graphics. Especially helpful if you need an image that has “transparent” elements to it.

**.PDF:** A format design to be easily shared or printed from computer to computer, without having the same software in which the document was created.

### LAYOUT TIPS

- ▶ **Use templates.** MU Extension has an assortment of themed templates available on the Communications and Marketing webpage. Go to [muextensionway.missouri.edu](http://muextensionway.missouri.edu) and search for “communications and marketing” in the website’s search box. There are also templates within Word or Powerpoint, or online at [Canva.com](http://Canva.com).
- ▶ When using Word, don’t forget to **use the Styles Pane** to quickly format text.
- ▶ For documents with a lot of text, **consider using columns** to shorten the length of each line of text and make it easier to read.
- ▶ Don’t be afraid to **leave blank space in a document.** Filling every corner is not necessary.

- ▶ **Use MU colors.** For the classic black and gold or even secondary colors, go to: [identity.missouri.edu](http://identity.missouri.edu)
- ▶ **When resizing a logo or graphic, hold down the shift key** to maintain proportions.

### PHOTOS/IMAGES/CLIPART

- ▶ **Check photo resolution.** It shouldn’t look blurry or pixilated. Make sure file size is over 1Mb. Images that are posted online can be a bit smaller.
- ▶ **Take your own photos.** If you’re taking photos for use in a document — make sure there’s plenty of light in the room or use a flash. Also, in lower light, hold the camera very steady or use something to stabilize it. You might be surprised how much better the photo quality is.
- ▶ **Use clipart or stock photography.** Using clipart or stock photos is never ideal but sometimes necessary. A site called [pxhere.com](http://pxhere.com) is a good resource for free images. If you have more specific needs, let us know and we may be able to provide you with the image you need.

### DIY PRINTING

- ▶ **Avoid standard copy paper** for marketing materials. The ink is liable to make the paper buckle. Keep a supply of higher quality (heavier) paper, such as 28 lb., for such situations.
- ▶ **Use a copy center.** It might not feel like it, but paying a copy center isn’t much more expensive than using up the ink in your office printer.
- ▶ **Don’t use bleeds or heavy color.** Office printers generally aren’t equipped to do this well.

### Have more questions? Need help? Contact:



**Laura Lindsey**, Strategic  
Marketing Sr. Coordinator  
[lindseylau@missouri.edu](mailto:lindseylau@missouri.edu)