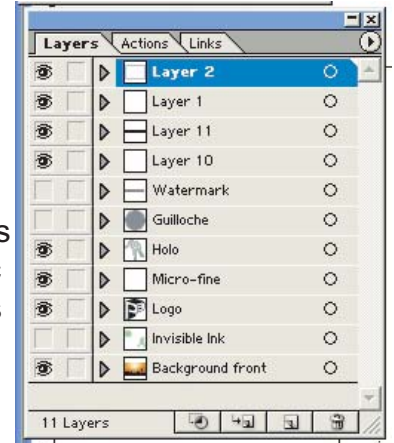


Native files vs. Flattened Files

Why is this such a big deal?

The biggest delay in plastic card manufacturing is artwork. This PDF will give a brief overview of how and why we need "native files."

A native file simply means leaving the file in its original format. If the file was developed in Adobe Illustrator, we would like the file sent in an .ai extension. To the right, you will see a layer pallet that shows how a simple card design includes multiple layers, in which P3 can control color density, make ink cut backs (plastic is non-porous) and adjust when there are requested changes down the road. As you can see in the card below and from the layer palette to the right, there are layers not showing. The guilloche pattern, invisible ink and watermark are not visible. The card is show below with and without the layers showing.

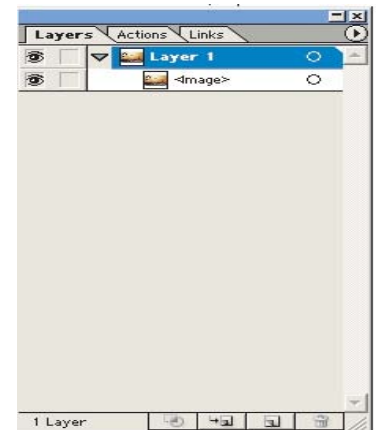


Receiving a native format also means that the file is high-resolution being that the entire card was created electronically via a graphic software.

Below I will illustrate exactly how the same image appears in .jpg form.



Please notice how the dots have spread and the image appears fuzzy and distorted. Also, all layers are now flattened into one whole image. Please see the same layer palette to the right. At this point we cannot help improve the image in any form because every element has been flattened into one layer. Did you know that every time you open a .jpg the resolution decreases?



Illustrated below is exactly how the same image appears in .gif form.



Graphics Interchange Format files are used strictly for viewing. GIF's are condensed RGB file formats that have decreased file size so that web pages are loaded and viewed quickly. Also, please notice the difference in color compared to the .jpg! At P3, we print in CMYK or Pantone. All GIF files are saved in Red, Green & Blue. Next, please look at the area around the sun. There appears to be a banding effect that has occurred when saved to a GIF.

On the next page, Photoshop issues.

Native files vs. Flattened Files

Why is this such a big deal?

Photoshop is a wonderful program used to manipulate or retouch artwork. Below is one of the issues that often occurs when art is submitted. Please review why we recommend placing artwork done in Photoshop into another program, such as Illustrator to incorporate typesetting.

Photoshop type

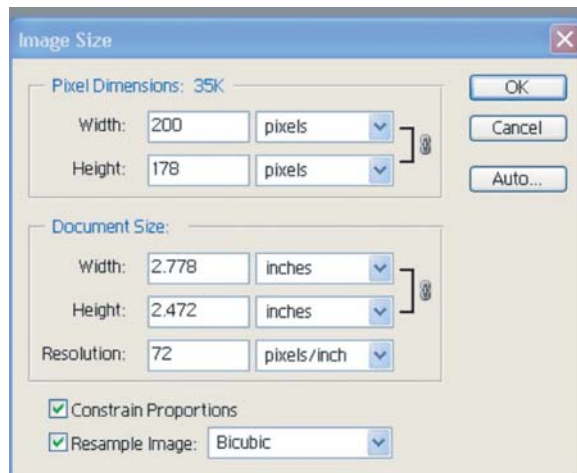
Illustrator Type

Plastic Printing Professionals, Inc

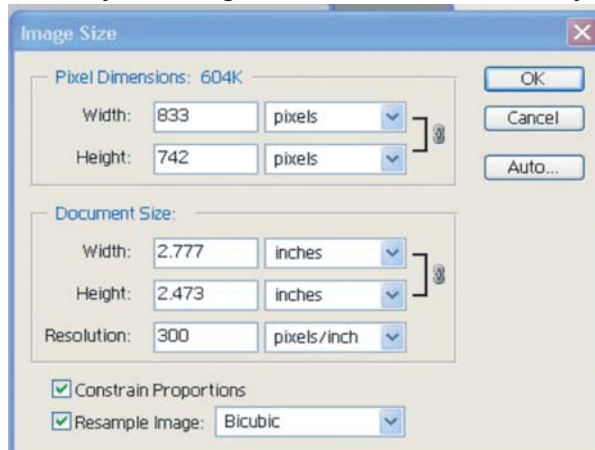
Plastic Printing Professionals, Inc.

Please notice how the Photoshop type has a faded color and jagged edges. This is obviously not what was on your monitor when you were designing it! However, this is how the type will print on our press. We recommend saving the image (without typesetting) in Photoshop as a .tif (tagged interchange format), opening Illustrator, and placing the image into a new document. Please embed image under the Links tab. In this document, we recommend typesetting.

Unfortunately, another "trick" attempted is changing the resolution in graphic design programs. Let's take this image below as an example. The image is 72dpi (dots per inch).



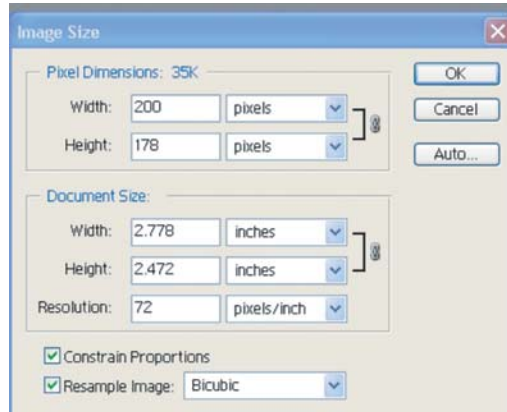
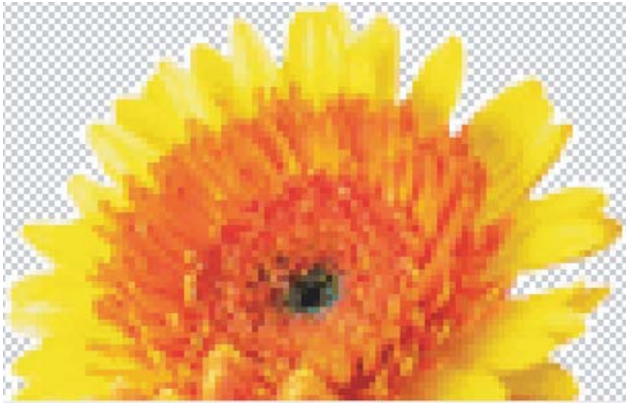
In Photoshop, under the Image tab, there is an option labeled "Image Size." In this option, image resolution is also listed. How wonderful are these program developers? They gave us the opportunity to improve our resolution! Not so fast..... Above you will see that the resolution is listed at 72 dpi, while the image size is listed at 2.788' x 2.472. Below you will see what "really" happens when you change the resolution. *Hint* Pay attention to the pixel dimensions!



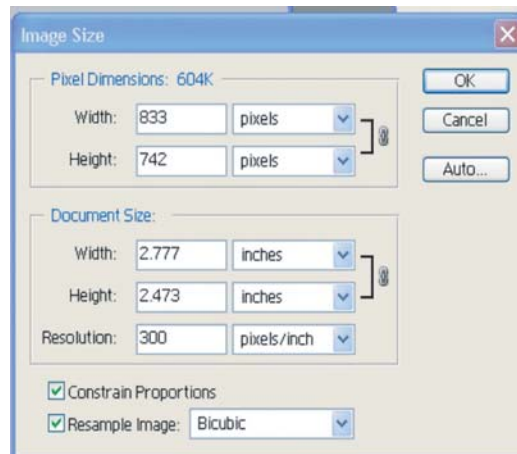
Native files vs. Flattened Files

Why is this such a big deal?

Let's take a closer look at what your eye can't see during this resolution "improvement." I have zoomed in on the image from the previous page. The first image was set at 72 resolution and had pixel dimensions of 2.778' x 2.472. Below you will see the Image size tool and a zoom in at the yellow flower.




Below you will see the 300 resolution adjustment and what really happens to the pixels when zoomed in.



Can you notice a difference? Come on, look hard.....

No. You are not losing your mind. There is no significant difference other than confusion in our pre-press department. Please do not change resolution in this manner, it doesn't help the print quality.

Our objective is to print at the highest standard possible and we are more than happy to return your art via email or Fed Ex provided you supply us with your ship account number. 

Native files vs. Flattened Files

Why is this such a big deal?

We can work on all of the major graphics programs on the market, but if you have familiarity with multiple applications, we do have our favorites. The following programs are listed in order of preference:

TITLE	PUBLISHER SOFTWARE	CATEGORY	SAVE AS
Freehand	Macromedia	Vector Drawing	.fh
Illustrator	Adobe	Vector Drawing	.ai
Quark Express	Quark	Page Layout	.qxd
Corel Draw	Corel	Vector Drawing	.cdr
PhotoShop*	Adobe	Raster Image Editing	.psd

Please remember to send or outline your fonts. Also, embed your images or send the links.

*PhotoShop is great for photographs, and may be acceptable, but call for special instructions.

Generally, we work on Mac platforms, so Mac files are preferred, but we do have fully loaded PC graphic workstations capable of processing non-Mac files. Depending on the simplicity of the art the non-native formats may work just fine, however, it is always worthwhile to send as many types as possible.

If you have any further questions pertaining to graphics and or art submission, please contact Hieu La at 415.585.9600 x 105 or hla@plasticprintingprofessionals.com. Also, artwork can be sent to 5955 Mission Street, Daly City, CA. 94014.

Plastic Printing Professionals looks forward to turning your concept into a masterpiece!



Security. Innovation. Vision.