Resolution

72 dpi VS 300 dpi

When you’re designing for web, your images are usually 72 dpi (Dots Per Inch), which is standard for screen resolution. For most print projects, you’re going to need more than 4 times that resolution: 300 dpi. If you try and print your files at 72 dpi you will end up with blurry, fuzzy pictures, and you want the highest quality, right?

One drawback to printing at such a high-resolution is that it can be taxing on your computer, especially for larger documents. Saving, moving layers and adding effects can become cumbersome. When this happens, it’s best to split the file you’re working on into parts and save them out as separate, smaller files, linked to the larger Photoshop file. A great way to utilize this effectively is through the use of Photoshop’s smart objects. If your design is made up of 100% vector elements, you shouldn’t have this problem as long as the file is saved out properly in Illustrator, as a vector EPS, AI, or PDF.

RGB, CMYK, 100K Black & Rich Black

As a web designer, you’re probably used to seeing your work rendered on your monitor in millions of colors, in RGB format.

There aren’t millions of colors in printing, so your work must be created in CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black) format. This is because we use Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black inks to reproduce your artwork. If you convert a vivid RGB image to CMYK you can see that a lot of the colors become muted and washed out. CMYK doesn’t quite have the same reach in the color spectrum as RGB.

In CMYK printing, values can be measured in percentages of C, M, Y or K much like RGB values can be measured in amounts of R, G and B.

100K Black is created using, you guessed it, a mixture of 0% Cyan, Magenta and Yellow, with 100% Black. For large areas, 100K Black would just look gray. For small text, it helps keep the text crisp since the printer only has to worry about lining up one color instead of four.

To create Rich Black, you can use a mixture of 30% Cyan, 30% Magenta, 60% Yellow and 100% Black. Rich Black is best used for larger areas of black, and not on thin lines or text (text over 34 or 36pt is OK). If you use it on small body text or thin lines, the inks could saturate and blur the artwork.