

Image File Types

How to Distinguish Between Them

JPG/JPEG: JPGs are used for images and graphics. Most digital cameras and phones will default to JPG files. They are compressed to obtain small file sizes, but can lose quality and become lossy* (pixelated, low resolution). JPGs work for web and print.

Best uses: Photos, graphics, web, Microsoft Word & Powerpoint, printing.

GIF: GIF files are intended for web use. They display less colors and detail than other file types and are good for graphics. They may also include transparent sections and animation.

Best uses: Graphics, web, Microsoft Word & Powerpoint.

PNG: PNG files are great for web use. They offer lossless* compression and the ability to add transparency to images.

Best uses: Photos, web, Microsoft Word & Powerpoint, printing.

TIFF/TIF: TIF files offer the highest quality image resolution, and don't have the compression or lossy* issues of JPG files. They are larger files, and intended for high quality work or large prints.

Best uses: Photos, graphics, high quality printing, or web.

RAW: RAW files come from digital cameras. They are uncompressed image data. These files must be processed through specific programs like Adobe Photoshop and then saved as JPG/PNG/TIF.

Best uses: Adobe Photoshop or other Raw processing program.

PDF: PDF stands for Portable Document Format (PDF) and are typically used to distribute read-only documents that preserve the layout of a page.

Best uses: Manuals, eBooks, application forms, and scanned documents.

*Lossy: Lossless compression means that you may reduce the size of an image without any quality loss.