

ARTWORK

Why can't you use my file?

PDF – this means portable document format. It does not mean your art is necessarily any of the following file types when it is opened. It is whatever file type it was created as – Vector or bitmap

We can't use Bitmap images that have a fixed resolution and cannot be resized without losing image quality. Most known bitmap-based formats are e.g. **JPG**, (JPEG), **GIF**, **TIFF**, **PNG**, **BMP** (bitmap images) (or raster) images are stored as a series of tiny dots called pixels. Each pixel is actually a very small square that is assigned a colour, and then arranged in a pattern to form the image. When you zoom in on a bitmap image you can see the individual pixels that make up that image. If you have a small file e.g. under 200kb, then you have not many dots! And the image size will be small. To print an A4 page without seeing the pixels/squares of colour, the file needs to be over 2Mb.

Vector images are not based on pixel patterns, but instead use graph-like points and formulas to create an image. **AI or EPS** files tell the computer "start here and move in that direction, till you get to this point, then do this...". The file size can be quite small, but it can be printed very large, using the same set of vector instructions.

Unfortunately, vector formats are not well supported on the web. Most are turned into Bitmaps or Jpeg formats for use online.

Whilst a very large Bitmap file *can* be used for screen-printing, it cannot be used for vinyl cutting or heat press short run work. It must be redrawn into vector artwork.

Some programs allow you to save Bitmaps into vector files (file.AI or file.EPS or file.CDR) This does not make them instantly vector files. They are just masquerading as vector and will still need to be redrawn.

A further complication arises when an inexperienced person creates vector files. The image may look great when printed on paper but the layers of the file may hide all sorts of shapes and cut lines that can't be used for heat press short run media.

Photoshop files are not vector and even when saved to a vector format they are not scalable and need to be redrawn.

If you have paid for artwork, make sure your artwork is supplied to you in true vector format. And please don't be offended if artwork you supply is not to the standard needed for printing on fabric.

EMBROIDERY FILES

Embroidery is a very specialised form of vector file. You need specific software. Not only does it tell the computer where to sew, it tells it the length of the stitch, the angle and lots of other sewing instructions. A detailed embroidery files take a while to setup and test. Most embroiderers do not fully recover their costs in setup for embroidery, and for this reason, embroidery files are not shared unless a customer pays full for the time to set them up.

