

Flash File Import Formats

Flash can recognize a variety of file formats when importing graphics.

Native Format:

Shockwave Flash (SWF)

This format preserves all gradient and layer information. (If you have gradients in your file and cannot use SWF format, remove the gradients and re-create them within Flash.) Can be exported from Freehand, and also from Illustrator using Macromedia's FlashWriter plug-in.

Bitmap formats:

GIF

Also known as "CompuServe GIF" (Graphic Interchange Format), this is one of the standard formats used on the Web. All browsers understand GIF format without using a plug-in. All major bitmap graphics editing programs can export in GIF format. In general, GIF is a lossless format, preserving all data and compressing only sequences of identical pixels.

Animated GIF

A special form of GIF file in which multiple frames are contained in a single file. This file animates through its frames as soon as it is displayed in a browser. Most bitmap graphics editing programs can export in animated GIF format – GIF Builder, ImageReady and Fireworks are the most user-friendly for this.

JPEG

Joint Photographic Experts Group format. Developed to optimize the appearance of photographic or other continuous tone images with many colors. Far superior to GIF for such images. Offers a range of quality settings, with the highest quality making the largest files. Still, even medium-quality JPEGs are often significantly compressed in size without a dramatic loss in image quality. JPEG compression intelligently discards data, so it is considered a "lossy" format. The degree of loss depends on the image quality setting selected.

PNG

Portable Network Graphics format is a recent innovation and has not fully caught on. It aims to bridge the gap between GIF and JPEG in terms of file size and quality, as well as universal compability.

BMP

Windows Bitmap format, considered the native format for images in Windows 95/98/2000/NT. Similar to PICT format for Macs, offering minimal compression, and no loss of information.

Vector (object) formats:

Illustrator 88, 3.0, 5.0 and 6.0

Native Adobe Illustrator vector file formats.

PICT

Mac Picture format, considered the native format for images in the MacOS.

Other formats:

QuickTime

Apple's time-based media format used for video, audio, MIDI and other data.

AutoCAD DXF release 10

Common vector-based drawing format for 3D objects.