

Graphic File Formats

- BMP Windows Bitmap** – the native image format for Windows systems. Not generally cross-platform compatible, but some Windows programs can read this format.
- EPS Encapsulated PostScript** – format which contains a description of the image expressed in Adobe's PostScript language. A strength of PostScript is in its ability to describe graphics in vector format, allowing scaling, rotation and other transformations without any loss of quality.
- GIF Graphic Interchange Format** – originally developed by CompuServe many years ago, GIF is a standard format for image files on the Web. The GIF file format is popular because it uses a compression method to make files smaller. This "run length compression" method is a "lossless" compression scheme which preserves the original image in its entirety.
- JPEG Joint Photographic Experts Group format** – JPEG is a popular method used to compress photographic images, or others with a lot of fine color gradations. Most Web browsers accept JPEG images as a standard file format for viewing. JPEG is a "lossy" compression scheme allowing various compression levels in exchange for different levels of quality. JPEG actually discards data using a complex algorithm to achieve its compression, but at the higher quality levels, the compressed image is nearly indistinguishable from the original.
- PICT Mac Picture** – the native image format for Mac systems. . Not generally cross-platform compatible, but some Mac programs can read this format.
- PNG Portable Network Graphic** – a newer format intended for portability (multi-platform compatibility) on the Web. It has yet to gain wide acceptance.
- TIFF Tagged Image File Format** – one of the oldest image file formats, TIFF provides some compression with no loss in quality. Recognized by Mac, Windows, and UNIX platforms, it is a good format for file transfer, but is not recognized by Web browsers.