

Graphic Design Check Off List

Project Name and Number _____

1. Print Dimensions _____
2. Color (Spot, CMYK) _____
3. Bleed _____
4. Fonts _____
5. Graphics Software _____
6. Live Area
7. Screen Frequency
8. DPI 300 dpi minimum except of course vectored art
9. Bitmap Black and White TIFF must be 1200 dpi
10. Paper Type _____
11. Quantity _____
12. Finishing _____
13. Cover _____

14. Proofs (kind) _____
15. Varnish _____
16. Logos included
17. Fonts included
18. Packaged
19. Crops
20. PDF



Eco Design Guide for Graphic Designers

2008

What is this guide?

This Eco design guide for graphic designers has been prepared by the Centre for Design at RMIT University and provides a rough guide to reducing the environmental impacts of the design and publishing of documents. The information provided here is intended as a guide only and is designed to be used by: project managers, graphic designers, and desktop publishers as a reference to reducing the environmental impacts of their design. There is also an eco design quick guide that accompanies this document.

Why eco design?

All products and services have some impact on the environment. This may occur throughout the product's life cycle, from the sourcing of raw materials to manufacturing, distribution, use and disposal at the end of life. Many environmental impacts are not clearly apparent during the use, making it difficult to identify them. This is why it is very important to analysis the hole of life implications so that the most effective way to reduce environmental impacts can be identified.

The design, printing and transportation of publications involves the use of paper, inks, solvents, and in many cases plastic or paper wrappers for packaging purposes. Energy and resources are used in the manufacture of these products resulting in the release of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change¹. All of these stages have an impact on the environment, including increasing the carbon footprint of the organisation requiring the printing. One of the biggest environmental impact associated with the graphic design industry is the use of paper. Anyway that paper usage can be reduced, is positive for the environment.

The design and printing of documents generates a wide range of environmental impacts including:

1. The use of paper based products that are often from virgin fibre sources and from non-sustainably managed forests;
2. The use of energy and water for the printing process;
3. The emission of volatile organic compounds (VOC's), which are contained in inks and glues (during use VOC's are emitted into the atmosphere and contribute to climate change);
4. The use of paper and plastic packaging; and
5. Transportation of good to market;
6. The generation of large quantities of waste.



This logo indicates that the product has been made with recycled content or is recyclable. Below the logo there should be a written indication as to what the product contains. Use this to communicate to your clients.



Summary

The major environmental impacts associated with publications can be collated into the following sub categories, each impacting at some point during a publications life cycle:

- The design stage/ layout
- Printers and printing
- Paper
- Inks
- Post press techniques
- Packaging
- Transportation

The major focus of this 'guide' is focused around the pre-print and design stage of a publication. The following information will assist you in making decisions to reduce the environmental impacts of printing and publications.

How to use this guide:

1. Identify the design or decision stage that you have influence over. Perhaps you are the type setter or you are deciding on the layout of the document, or the type of printing, each design stage has the potential to contribute to environmental impacts.

2. Go through the design considerations of the design or decision stage that you are responsible for and identify actions you can take.

In some cases this will involve many aspects of the design process and in others it might just be one stage, it is important to be aware of the potential impacts associated with the different stages of the design process and be aware of ways to reduce these impacts.

3. Endeavour to incorporate as many of the design considerations as possible. Highlight the considerations that you can employ to reduce your designs impacts

4. Communicate your eco design considerations to your client so that they are aware of your design decisions

Reduce impacts through aesthetics:

Consider how the aesthetic style can be optimized to include environmental options.

Save paper, reduce white space

Avoid the use of blank space, whilst keeping the layout legible and well designed

Reduce the page header and footers to an appropriate amount for your presentation

Avoid blank pages by trying alternatives such as having the contents on the front page under the heading

Consider page bleeds and how they may affect recycling. Don't bleed all the way to the edge unless absolutely required.

Avoid spaces between headings and block text

Always use both sides of the paper

Layout:

Consider sheet size and dimensions. Can a smaller size be used to achieve the same quality design and save paper?

Consider legibility and length of lines, consider breaking up the document into 2-3 columns, if lines of text exceed 100mm (4 inches)

Minimise the use of paper by minimizing spaces in conjunction with the use of suitable margins: try 0.375 in on either side

Designing to multiples of four pages, to reduce impacts of different binding techniques.....

Design size, layout and formats:

Tables

When formatting tables; always set your font to 2 points smaller than onscreen font. Use sufficient spacing around the table and larger spacing within the table

Typesetting

Condense the space between words, incorporate denser spacing as part of the design, fit into restricted spaces and tie up words hanging out alone: try 0.4pt

Don't overdo the heading size: try 20 – 25 for main title, 15 for section headings and 12 for subsections. Alternatively try using different font types in smaller sizes as headings to make them stand out

Keep spacing between sentences to a minimum: try 1-1.5pt

Text and fonts

Fonts

Choose font types which are legible whether published onscreen or designed to print: try Serif fonts for printed works & San Serif for online work... (*easier to read at 72 dots per inch*)

Design using smaller font size: try keeping reports and documents to font size 10, while minimizing business card and book font to sizes 8-10

Less is more – reduce the amount of color

Minimize the number of colors used in a design, remembering that the inappropriate use of color can be disastrous to the application from a graphic/visual perspective.

Consolidating the use of color to black, not multiple colors which make up black (rich black)

Design for monochrome, then add color if absolutely necessary
Avoid using block colors as these require much more ink to produce.

Consider making maximum visual effect with the least amount of ink and color.

Colors

Try alternatives techniques to color

Try not using color at all and use alternative techniques

Try using one color and making advantage of the negative space between the color, but still being conscious not to waste paper.

Only print what is needed

Assess your job, with distribution and audience in mind and only do what is absolutely necessary.

Reduce waste by only printing what you need or consider doing smaller print runs

Consider sending to smaller solicitations, yet a more effective audience; have updated client information on your database

Organizing the print run

Design to use all the paper specified and minimize printers' off cut waste. Get your printer on board...

Book time with your printer, and communicate quantities and paper well in advance to stop emergency transport of materials,(especially if buying special order recycled paper)

Use a printer that has certifications or ask your printer to get them. These can include FSC, ISO 14001, EPA and waterless.