

Adobe Illustrator Poster Tips

First

Set document size to final print dimensions. File>Document Setup. The Encad Plotter can print on paper up to 60" in width.

Cutting lines

Make a rectangular border without fill the size of the final poster dimensions to be used as a cutting line after the poster is printed. This line can be cut off so that it does not have to be part of the final poster design.

Content

Do not include too much text on your poster. Time yourself reading through your poster content and ask yourself if this is a reasonable amount of time to expect a person to stand in front of your poster. Consider simplifying your poster content and making handouts with additional information for those people who seem more interested.

Layout

Determine poster layout so that graphs, images, and text blocks are layed out in a neat and sensible way. Rows, columns, and bordered boxes often aid in a clean layout. Don't be afraid to use blank space.

Remember that size is important for both text and images. Generally, the greater the area allotted to a piece of information, the more importance it is given. Utilize titles and subtitles, and ask yourself what you want people to see from across the room. How close will they have to stand to read everything?

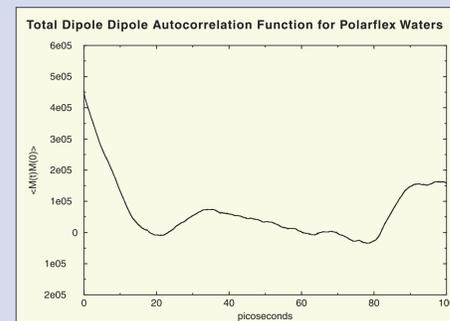
Use the rulers within Illustrator to get an idea of the final print size. If you are still having trouble visualizing the final print size, print a small portion of your poster at 100% magnification.

IMAGES

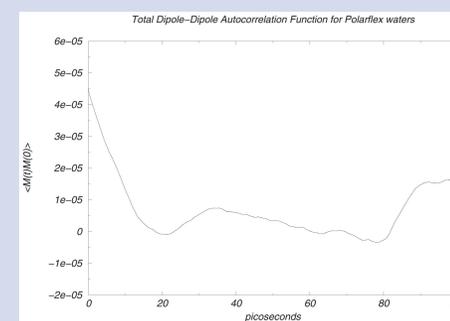
Resolution When using bitmap images, try to use images with a resolution of at least 100 dpi. For logos or graphics with gradients try to use an even higher resolution as the Encad prints 300 dpi.

Inserting Images Place images rather than pasting them. This creates links to external files, decreasing file size and allowing images to be updated in your poster if changed in other applications. File>Place . . . Be sure to move these linked files when moving your Illustrator file.

Images with Text Try not to use bitmap images (JPEG, GIF, PICT, TIFF) with text elements or captions. Graphs in a bitmap format can be problematic. Save images with text in either an eps or postscript format to improve the quality of printed text and lines and to allow modifications to be made within Illustrator. Zoom in to see example below.



EPS Graphic This graph in eps format allows changes to be made within Illustrator such as color, text, and line thickness. Individual elements can be selected with either the direct-selection tool (white arrow) or the type tool. (Try it) When printed, all text and lines will appear to be sharp.



Bitmap Graphic The only change that can be made to this graph in JPEG format is size. The text and lines will appear jagged and or spotty when resized or printed at a large scale.

Resizing Images To constrain the proportions of images while resizing them, hold down shift as you drag one of the corners with the selection tool (black arrow).

Color For the best representation of how colors will appear in bitmap images when printed, convert RGB images to CMYK in an application such as Photoshop. This will give you an opportunity to lighten them should they become too dark when converted.

Be selective in your use of color in regards to text, borders, and graphics. Color should not be a distraction from your presentation.

Text

Either type captions in a word processing program and paste them into text boxes or directly type captions in Illustrator. Do not use text bitmaps already attached to images. As mentioned earlier, bitmap text will appear jagged when printed at a large scale.

When adding text, understand the difference between text blocks and text strings. The title on this page is a **text string**. It was formed by clicking once with the type tool ("T"), and beginning to type. These instructions are typed in **text boxes**. To form a text box click and drag with the type tool before beginning to type.

Text string

Formatting text in a string becomes difficult if you want to change the shape of a caption or edit the text because carriage returns must be entered at the end of each line.

Try resizing me. Try adding text in the middle of this text string.

Text box

To make things easier on yourself, I recommend using text blocks for captions and large sections of text. Text blocks allow text to wrap at the end of a line. Also, boxes can be linked so that text flows from one into another.

Try resizing me. Try adding text in the middle of this block.

Finally, Illustrator has a spell check. Type>Check spelling.... Don't be afraid to use it!

Preview

Before printing on the plotter, print a small version of your poster on an 11"x17" sheet for proofreading. 11"x17" printouts are \$1 per page versus \$8 per square foot on the plotter. Ideally, you would review this printout overnight, making any corrections and/or improvements before printing your final poster.