

Tips and Tricks

By Katie Mann

Saving Files

If you need to preserve transparency, png is still one of your best bets. Be aware though that if you share a png file through many Microsoft products (Internet Explorer, Outlook, etc), it will not show up with a transparent background, but with a gray one. If you save the file, it will still work correctly in most photo editing programs.

Don't keep saving and resaving your jpg images. The jpg file type saves as a smaller file type by losing some pixels. Each time you resave in this format you lose more pixels. You may not notice a difference resaving 1 or 2 times, but do it too many times, and you won't recognize your own children.

Did you know that most photo developers will develop photos that are saved in .tiff format, and that this is actually the preferred file type for many of them? This file format will also preserve layers, and in much smaller file sizes than Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro file types. A great way to share a layered graphic without losing data.

Getting Great Printouts

How to get the best printed layouts possible.

Calibrate your monitor. To get the best clue of what your completed prints will look like, calibrate your monitor. There are many programs that can help you do this painlessly. Some of the on-line resources that I like for this are:

<http://pages.prodigy.net/ecmorris/tips/monitor.htm>
<http://www.netcorridor.yellowpipe.com/monitor.php>

If you're printing your layouts at home, invest in a finishing spray to help preserve those prints as long as possible. Krylon makes a wonderful preservation spray that comes in both matte and glossy finishes, and can be found at many large craft stores.

If you're printing your layouts on-line, do a little price comparison first. Some of the membership stores will print 12x18 prints for less than your local super store. And the bonus of a 12x18, is that if you do a template in your photo program, you can slip 1 12x12 and 2 6x6 layouts into the space, and have a large one for yourself and 2 copies for friends or family.

Using What You Have

Do you have the perfect background or element, but it's the wrong color? You can easily recolor monochromatic items in your editing program using your hue and saturation settings. Adjust the hue until it's the color range that you like, and then adjust your saturation and lightness settings to get the specific shade.

Do you have a 12x12 page set, and want to make a smaller sized album? Don't resize your backgrounds, as this can distort the pattern or create printing problems, simply use your crop tool to create the size you need.

Working on a smaller album? Don't create it in 12x12 and resize it. Create your layout at the intended size to start with. This will keep your elements life sized and the correct proportion for your smaller layouts.