



Your Website Coach



DPI, RGB, CMYK and More! – 7/5/07

Often, business owners will have their website developed first and then they decide to have their brochures and other printed materials created based on the look & feel of the new website. Flowing in this direction is fine, but it is important to understand the art that is used in web and the art that is used in print must be in *different* formats if you want polished results.

When you begin creating images for the web using a tool, you'll find that the image is automatically set to 72 dpi or Dots Per Inch. DPI refers to the number of dots that are used per inch to define the graphic image. On the web, it actually doesn't *have* to be 72 dpi; that is a number that has kind of been grandfathered in as the "magic number". Your monitor doesn't really care what dpi is being used, it will display the image the same if it is 72 dpi or 150 dpi. Bear with me, this all will mean something in a moment. Another factor specific to the web is the RGB (Red-Green-Blue) color mode. RGB refers to the three primary colors used to create all permutations of color on a computer. Now the RGB color mode **is** important because that is the way your photos and graphics are described on the web.

Now when we speak of printed materials, most print shops request printed materials in 300 dpi. In print, the dots per inch do make a difference – it results in a crisper resolution. Some places are fine with 150 dpi, but the resolution begins to get a bit grainy. The color mode used in print is called the CMYK (Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Black) mode. An image created in RGB *does not* directly translate to CMYK. There is actually a science behind how the RGB colors work on a monitor and CMYK colors work in print and there truly is a reason "why" you can't swap one for the other. If you are really interested in the particulars, you should be able to do a search on "RGB,CMYK" and turn up some answers.

Comprehending these concepts helps you to understand why grabbing your logo from your website and throwing it into an online print shop like VistaPrint, so you can create business cards and brochures, generally results in poor quality materials. **Solution:** Initially create your branding (logo & associated art) in 300 dpi. You can then use an imaging package like PhotoShop to convert it to CMYK mode. Now you are ready to submit your art to VistaPrint. From that point, you can also go on to build your website.

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