

A GUIDE TO FILE EXPORTS IN ILLUSTRATOR

When you're creating collateral in Illustrator, you'll eventually have to export it to something other than an AI format — especially if you plan to use your graphics on the web. Here is a handy guide to all your export options and file choices.

KNOW YOUR FILE FORMATS!

There are three file format types that you'll likely have to use on the internet, and each has a specific purpose.

JPG (.jpg or .jpeg) is the most common file format for images on the internet. Most photographs are in this format, as it provides the best compression without losing quality.

PNG (.png) is also used on the web but with one major difference — it allows for transparency. If you have a logo or a cutout and you want a transparent background, you'll want to export as a PNG to keep that transparency. If you created a logo in Illustrator and export it as a PNG, it will export with a transparent background unless you did an image trace and forgot to delete the background (then you'll see the background square/rectangle and a bunch of transparency behind the square/rectangle if your dartboard was larger than the square/rectangle).

GIF (.gif) is used for animated gifs mainly. GIF files have transparency too, but limited color rendering, so the quality isn't great.

The other file format you'll also use a fair amount is a PDF, which is helpful if you need to send samples to clients or proofs.

All of these file formats can be exported out of a single AI file.

EXPORTING IN ILLUSTRATOR

To export to these different file formats in Illustrator, go to File > Export > Export for Screens.

You'll see this menu:

The screenshot shows the 'Export for Screens' dialog box in Adobe Illustrator. It has a dark gray background with white text and controls. The 'Select:' section at the top has three radio buttons: 'All', 'Range:' (selected), and 'Full Document'. The 'Range:' button is followed by a text input field containing the number '1'. Below this is a checkbox for 'Include Bleed', which is unchecked. The 'Export to:' section has a text input field showing a file path: '/Users/jenndelafuente/Dropbox/File requ'. To the right of the path is a folder icon. Below the path are two checkboxes: 'Open Location after Export' (checked) and 'Create Sub-folders' (unchecked). There are two radio buttons for 'Scale' (selected) and 'Format'. The 'Export PDFs as:' section has two radio buttons: 'Single File' and 'Multiple Files' (selected). The 'Formats:' section at the bottom has tabs for 'iOS' and 'Android', and a gear icon. Below the tabs is a table with three columns: 'Scale', 'Suffix', and 'Format'. The 'Scale' column has a dropdown menu showing '1x'. The 'Suffix' column has a dropdown menu showing 'None'. The 'Format' column has a dropdown menu showing 'JPG 100' and a close button (X). Below the table is a button that says '+ Add Scale'.

Select:

☐ All ☒ Range: 1

☐ Include Bleed

☐ Full Document

Export to:

/Users/jenndelafuente/Dropbox/File requ

☒ Open Location after Export

☐ Create Sub-folders

☒ Scale ☐ Format

Export PDFs as: ☐ Single File ☒ Multiple Files

Formats: iOS Android

Scale	Suffix	Format
1x	None	JPG 100

+ Add Scale

Make sure "Include Bleed" isn't checked. (Otherwise, if you have items extending beyond the artboard, they might accidentally come along for the ride.)

You can export all your files to a specific folder, which is helpful if you're doing multiple exports. You can leave "Open Location After Export" if you want to check your files after export or rename them after exporting.

Under "Formats", you can ignore the first two fields. Under "Format", you'll see several options.

JPGs should be JPG 100 (this means 100% quality).

PNGs should be just PNG (do not use PNG 8).

You can also export a PDF from here too. You can choose whether your PDFs are a single file (with multiple pages) or multiple individual files.

If you need a GIF, you'll have to go to File > Export > Save for Web (Legacy). Choose GIF from the format selection (you could also export as a JPG or PNG from here too, but the Export for Screens option is preferred.)