FILE PACKAGING

WHAT IS THIS FILE PACKAGING BUSINESS?

When working in Adobe programs, it's not unusual to import various files into your working file. For instance:

▸ You might import various images into a single Photoshop file to form a collage.

▸ You might download a font from a third-party website and use it in your design materials.

▸ You might import a Photoshop or Illustrator file into an InDesign document.

In all three of these scenarios, you'll need to package your final file so you can hand them off properly.

WHY DO I NEED TO PACKAGE MY FILES?

The simple answer is this: If you hand off your PSD, AI, or INDD file to another person or to a print house, that third party needs to have all the same assets you were working with. Keep in mind that these third parties may not:

▸ Have access to the same photos or photo libraries you were using.

▸ Have the same fonts loaded on their computers.

▸ Have access to the same assets you're using, especially if you're not working in a shared environment (like an agency).

WHY DO I NEED TO PACKAGE MY FILES?

If you sent your Adobe file without packaging it, it's likely the other party is going to get an error message saying something is missing, be it an image, another asset, or a font. And that has some dire consequences!
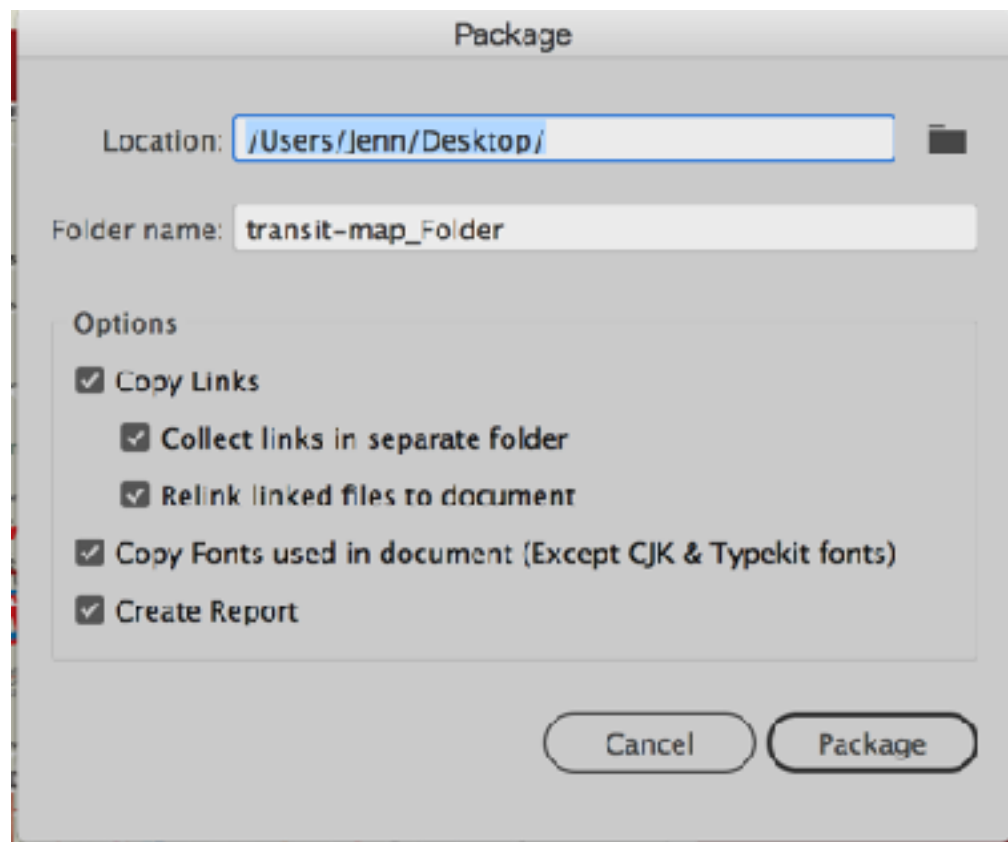
▸ If it's a print house, they may not be able to print your materials, which could delay delivery if you're working for a client.

▸ A third party who you're collaborating with may not be able to edit your text if they don't have the same fonts.

▸ A third party may not be able to view your file properly because assets don't appear or are missing.
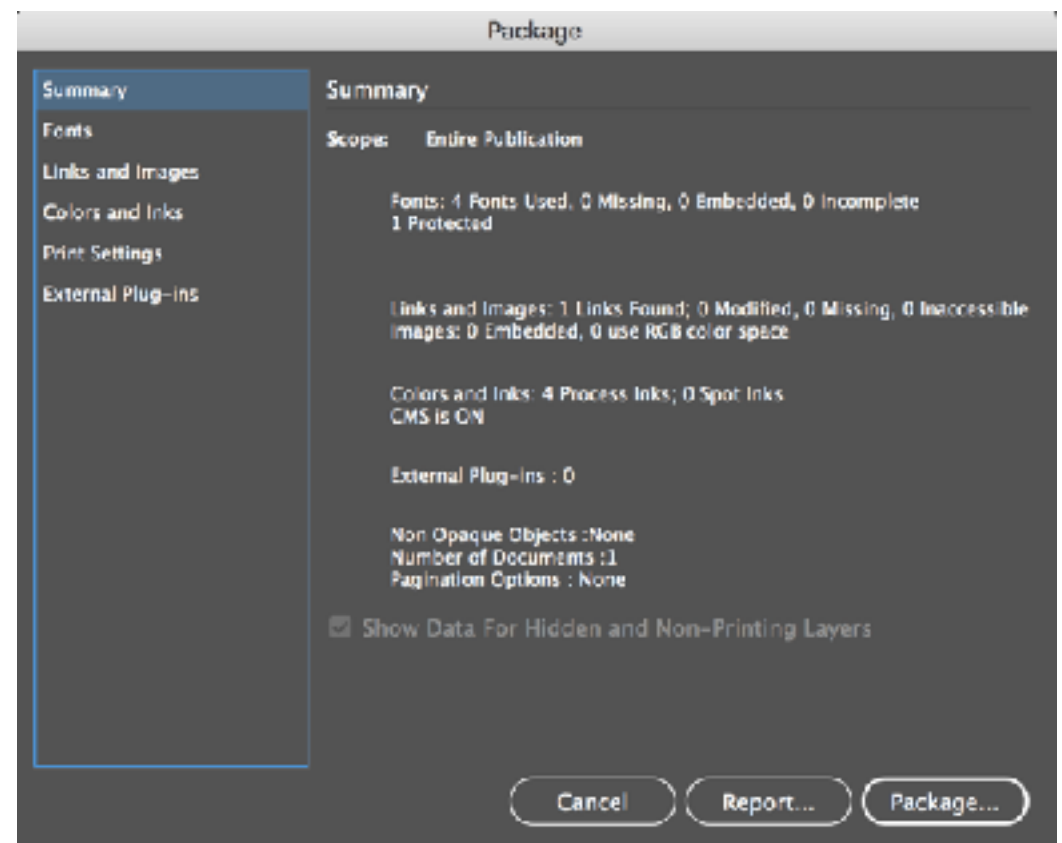
HOW DO I PACKAGE MY FILES?

In Photoshop or Illustrator, you go to File > Package. In InDesign, the process has a few more steps but it's basically the same. You'll see a dialog box:

Photoshop/Illustrator:

InDesign:

HOW DO I PACKAGE MY FILES?

Packaging your files takes all the assets your imported into your Adobe file and puts them in a separate folder called Links. (If you embedded an image into your Photoshop or Illustrator file, then this won't show up in the Links folder, but if you imported say, an Illustrator file into a Photoshop document, then that would show up in the Links folder.)

Packaging also takes any fonts you haven't rasterized (Photoshop) or outlined (Illustrator) and puts them in a Fonts folder. This is so they're available for installation to someone who doesn't have the same fonts as you do.

HOW DO I PACKAGE MY FILES?

You may notice in the Packaging dialog that it asks you where to save a folder and what you want to call this folder. This final packaged folder may include:

‣ Your original Adobe file (PSD, AI, or InDesign file)

‣ A Links folder, if applicable. (Again, if you embedded your images, this folder may not show up.)

‣ A Fonts folder, if applicable. (Some fonts cannot be packaged due to licensing restrictions; this is a rare case and you will see warnings if you're using a font that falls into this category.)

‣ An Instructions.txt file (you can ignore this).

THE FINAL PACKAGE

Sometimes you may go to File > Package and create the folder and realize there's nothing besides your AI or PSD file or INDD file. That's OK! It just means you probably embedded all your images and no assets had to be linked to your Adobe file, and you may not have any fonts that need to travel.

Doing File > Package at the end of creating any Adobe file is a good habit to get into, even if it produces nothing. You'd rather be safe than sorry before turning in your work (for class or to a printer or a third party).

TIPS FOR FINALIZING YOUR ADOBE FILES

▸ When you're done creating in Illustrator, it's a good idea to outline all your text. This avoids any "font can't be found" problems, and also gets around any font embedding issues. To outline text, select any text block with the selection tool, then go to Type > Create Outlines. Keep in mind that once you outline text, you can't edit it normally anymore. Generally, I like to create two versions of a file in Illustrator – one with outlined text (for sending to third parties) and one without (so you can edit text if you needed to).

TIPS FOR FINALIZING YOUR ADOBE FILES

▸ When you're done creating in Photoshop, you can rasterize your text. This is the Type Outline equivalent in Illustrator. To rasterize text, find a text layer in your Layers panel. Right click to bring up a menu, and look for "Rasterize Type" and click that. Keep in mind that once you rasterize text, you can't edit it normally anymore. You can also create two versions of the file in Photoshop — one with rasterized text and one without for text editing.

TIPS FOR FINALIZING YOUR ADOBE FILES

▸ If you're the type who doesn't keep all your work within a single folder (for instance, some of your assets are on your desktop, some got placed in your downloads folder, etc.), package your Adobe file at the end. It will help gather all your assets in one place and save you headaches. This also helps if you have to keep doing work on multiple computers and ensures you have everything you need to work properly.