

Digital Image File Formats

File Format	Description	When to use
Jpeg	Joint Photo Experts Group Is superior for storing full-color or grayscale images of realistic scenes or images with continuous variation in color. Works well for scanned photographs and artwork. Do NOT use for illustrations, cartoon, lettering, images with sharp edges. Support 24 bit/millions of colors. Does not support transparency.	Photographs
Gif	Graphics Interchange Format It is one of the popular formats for web graphics. It supports transparency. Supports 8 bit/256 colors.	Illustrations, drawings, few colors Web Graphics
Tif	Tag Interchange File Format The TIFF format is complex and thus the files are very large. Files take longer to open.	Professional printing
BMP	Bitmap. BMP files are usually not compressed, so they are typically much larger than compressed image file formats for the same image. They are generally unsuitable for transferring images on the Internet or other slow or capacity-limited media. Can display millions of colors. It is supported by several programs.	It is an extremely practical file format to use when you are providing an image to someone who may not have the program in which you created the image.

Action	BMP	GIF	JPEG	PNG	TIFF
Post an image on a Web page		X	X		
Export easily to other computer imaging programs	X				X
Compress a large image to create a small file to send in e-mail		X	X		
Use transparent areas in images		X		X	
Create animation files		X			
Decompress images without loss of quality		X		X	
Create highest quality images (for publishing, etc.)					X
Display millions of colors in an image	X		X	X	X
Retain image quality through numerous saves	X	X		X	X

Note The formats that are generally used for Web pages are GIF and JPEG. When you add a graphic other than a GIF or JPEG to a page and then save it, FrontPage automatically converts the graphic to a GIF if it has 8 bits of color or less, or to a JPEG if it has more than 8 bits of color.