



## **FILE FORMATS**

### **What are file formats?**

This is the computer data format used to supply or retain your designs, and is probably best illustrated by example...

If you have a picture on your computer from your digital camera, or perhaps taken from a website, it is likely to be a *BITMAP* Image - made up of lots of little dots (pixels). These tend to be in file formats such as .BMP / .JPG / .PNG / .GIF etc

This type of image is how photographs etc are held on your computer or the internet.

If you have a scaled architectural drawing of your planning application for a new house, it will likely be created on a special CAD program and be in what is called a *VECTOR* format. Vector formats are really mathematical descriptions of lines and curves. Common file formats are likely to be .DXF / .AI / .SVG or specific formats used by those specialised programs like AutoCAD for example.

The main difference is that *BITMAP* formats will be a certain size when created. If you scale them - i.e. make them bigger or smaller, you tend to lose detail and it may look worse than the original. This is because you are literally “stretching” the little dots (pixels).

However, *VECTOR* formats can be scaled up or down with absolutely **NO** loss of detail. Because the data is held mathematically, it simply “redraws” the design as you scale it... with perfect clarity.

*There is a list at the end of this document of file formats and types we can handle. Be aware it is not an exhaustive list so do not despair if you can't see your format there. You may not even know the format, but if you tell us the Program / Application used to create your designs, we can work it out from there...*

### **So, can we work with either VECTOR or BITMAP formats?**

Yes. The general rules of thumb are:

- (1) BITMAP Images are best for ENGRAVING
- (2) VECTOR formats are better for CUTTING

### **Can you turn a VECTOR into a BITMAP or vice-versa?**

Not always, no. It IS possible, but results vary. We can “trace” images to create a basic “vector” version. It is also possible (and much easier) to turn VECTOR into BITMAP pictures.

As always, talk to us and we'll gladly help you sort through this computer minefield. It's what we excel at.

Common File Formats we can accept..

File Type	Vector / Bitmap?	Common Programs that use this format...
.JPG / .BMP / .PNG / .GIF .TIFF / .RAW	Bitmap	Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Paint, Paint Shop Pro, Coreldraw, General Web Design Programs, Digital Cameras
.DXF / .DWG	Vector	AutoCAD, Alibre, almost all CAD Programs as it is a common “ <b>Drawing eXchange Format</b> ” Also GIS programs may use this format, as does Adobe Illustrator, CorelDraw etc
.AI	Vector	Adobe Illustrator
.CDR	Vector / Bitmap	CorelDraw - handle both Vector and Bitmap formats, although often the sister program Corel Paint is used for Bitmaps  Coreldraw .CDR files are a preferred format because we tend to use this program to speak directly to the Laser Machine

This list is NOT exhaustive, and we can handle virtually ALL file formats once we know what the program application / format is. Talk to us.