

For Printer Service requesting jpeg format

Read info on printer service web site for format and print sizes

Finish photo editing in RAW format

Crop image to print size you want ratio of height/width only

Vignette if you want
Set luminosity for full dynamic range

Sharpen for size of print.

Convert to jpeg 10

Send file to Printing Service

Printer wants crop to fit printer paper size. That means ratio correct and pixel number largest they will take

Luminosity can be set without proper monitor calibration by using the white/highlights sliders to set pure white and the black slider to set the black end of the histogram. Histogram is independent of monitor brightness so will set your file for the full 256 luminosity levels.

Other Considerations

- 1 Print size is a false dilemma. NEVER think of your file in inches. The important variable is the crop ratio. A 4 by 5 ratio in crop will be what you want for an 4x5, 8x10 or 16x 20-inch print. A 4000 x 5000-pixel file is the same thing.
- 2 Go to printer web sites and determine the size of prints they will provide and how to send images (Jpeg vs Tiff color space etc.) Also, you should have in mind the printed media. Do you want canvas wrap (lower resolution and color brilliance), metallic paper (very nice but you don't get true whites since the paper is light pearl gray, not white. Luster vs glossy or a metallic print which is usually glossy +
- 3 After this you can crop or resize your digital file.

Color management considerations

1. Best to ask printer service if they can prove you an ICC profile for their printer
2. Also ask what color space they will accept. If it's a jpeg file the answer will be sRGB
3. If you plan on doing lots for prints you should calibrate your monitor with a colorimeter such as a Spyder or ColorMunki.
4. Some printer services offer free proofing 8x10s so you can compare your monitor to the returned print. If you chose to do this, provide them with a file containing blacks, pure whites and lots of vibrant colors. It would also be good to send in a human portrait file so it can verify skin tones.

Luminosity

Luminosity is usually the biggest problem. Many photographers complain that their prints are too dark or too light. It's not the fault of the printer or the printer service. It's your monitor's fault. If you have your monitor really bright and you edit the file the result will be a dark print. A dark monitor will yield a washed-out light print.

Regardless of your monitor you can use your editor's histogram to determine the files actual luminosity, independent of your monitor. The easiest way to adjust your picture file is to open it in Lightroom or Bridge and use the highlights/whites sliders while holding down the alt/option key. This will show you the true luminosity of your image. Adjust with the sliders so you just lose all the color. Any color will be the blown-out areas. On the black slider end any color will indicate a blocked black area. You can leave small specks of blown out highlights or blacks but no area with texture should ever be blown out. Also, some images should not have the full dynamic range. A foggy overcast day will yield a limited range of luminosities as it should.

File preparation (for print services requiring jpeg)

- 1 Crop your photo (don't resize since it will lower the resolution)
- 2 Leave your image in TIFF/DNG/RAW while editing.
- 3 Load the printer service icc profile and set it as a proofing profile. (This is only for your editing, not for submission to the printer service.) Edit with this proofing profile active.
- 4 Set the luminosity as explained above.
- 5 NOW convert to jpeg 10 with color space sRGB Never use other color spaces on jpegs. Never send an image without the color space specified. The printer service might default to sRGB since jpegs are all 8 bit. There is no such thing as a jpeg with a Adobe1998 colorspace.

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Definitions

- 1 Some printer companies offer inkjet printing vs standard printing. What's the difference? Inkjet is more expensive and is either dye or pigment inks (Pigment is longer lasting) Inkjet printing allows you to send 16 bit AdobeRGB files vs standard services that ask for 8 bit jpeg sRGB files.
- 2 Which is better? Inkjet is better with a larger color space and more colors. But you might not be able to tell the difference when you get the print.
- 3 What is an ROES. Its an interface to the print service that allows you to prepare your image (cropping and batch image selection)
- 4 Canvas wraps and metal don't need matts or frames since they are ready to display when they arrive.
- 5 Should you buy your own printer?
 - a. We live in a dry climate so inkjet nozzles tend to clog up. Printers with air compression that put the ink under pressure have less clogging problems, but are more expensive.
 - b. Do the math. I found if I sent in 50 16x20 printer to an inkjet or Giclee service that was enough to justify buying my own printer...a good one

- c. Printing your own is more complicated since you must choose different papers.
- d. What are the costs? I have calculated that ink costs about \$1 per square foot. So a 16x20 is about 2.2 square feet so I use \$2.20 worth of ink. Paper is whatever you can find. A box of 17x22 paper from Redriver (50 count) runs about \$75 on sale. So about \$1.50 per sheet. Total cost of a 16x20 is \$3.70 without considering the printer cost itself. Print services cost around \$20.00 plus shipping. Again if you print 50 16x20s the difference above is about \$800 or the cost of a good printer.