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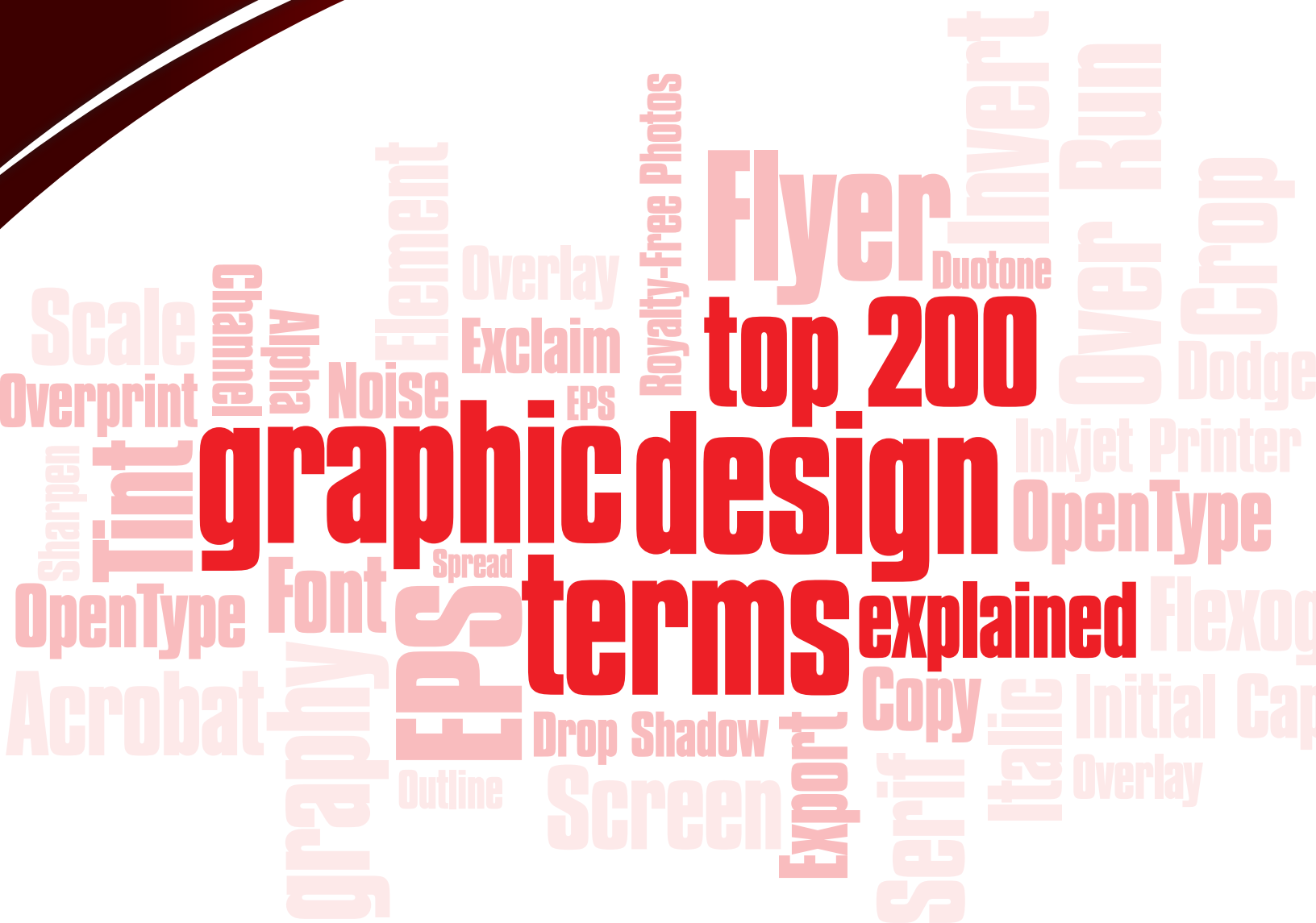

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top 200 graphic design terms explained

"A" graphic design terms from exclaim

Acrobat A software package developed by Adobe to create PDF (Portable Document Format) files. Acrobat is an independent means of creating, viewing and printing documents between computers and operating systems.

Airbrush A propellant using compressed air that to spray a liquid, such as paint and ink onto some sort of canvas. Often used in illustration and photo retouching.

Aliasing In computer graphics, an undesirable effect--also known as "jaggies"--in which the edge of the image or letter is characterized by a stair-step appearance.

Alignment This is the adjustment, arrangement or positioning of text, images or and object; left, right, centered etc...

Alpha Channel This is the graphic process of incorporating an image or object with a background to create the appearance of a partial transparency. Alpha channels are used to create masks that allow you to confine or protect parts of an image you want to apply colour, opacity, also to make other changes.

Analog Proof A type of proof that uses ink jet, toner, dyes, overlays, photographic, film, or other methods to give a an idea of what the finished product should look like.

Anchor points This allows the user to manipulate a paths shape or direction by clicking the point and moving it in a direction. They appear along the path at every curve and at the beginning and end of a path. You can also add or subtract anchor points on a path.

Animated GIF A small animation based on series of continuous GIF images, giving the impression of movement or action.

Animation Generating movement by displaying a series of continuous images using frames.

Aqueous Coating Water-based coating applied by a printing press to protect and enhance the printed surface.

Art Director The individual responsible for the selection, execution, and production of graphic art.

Asymmetrical This is when graphics and/or text are not identical on both sides of a central line.

"B" graphic design terms from exclaim

Bad Break Refers to widows or orphans in text copy, or any break that causes awkward reading.

Banner In typography, any large headline, especially one that spans the width of a page.

Baseline An imaginary line upon which letters sit and descenders extend below the baseline.

Bevel A tool in design software for drawing angles or modifying the surface of work to a certain inclination.

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top 200 graphic design terms explained

Bezier Curve A parametric curve that represents a vector path in computer graphics. They are frequently drawn using a pen tool and by placing anchor points which can be controlled to form shapes or lines.

Bindery The place where books are created and/or bound.

Bitmap A series of graphic bits that as a complete structure represents an image. The colour of each pixel is individually defined.

Bleed When a graphic object extends through another in an unwanted manned. It is then trimmed so there is no chance for a white line on the edges.

Body Type The typeface used in the main text of printed material

Border The decorative design or edge of a surface or line or area that forms it's outer boundary.

Byline In magazine and newspaper publishing, a line added to an article identifying the author (and other contributors) of the article.

"C" graphic design terms from exclaim

Canvas Size Allows you to change the complete size of the document without adjusting the contents of the document

Cast Coated Paper Paper dried under pressure against a heated, polished cylinder to produce a high-gloss enamel finish.

Clipping Path A tool that, or shape used to cut out an image.

Cloning Pixels A function that allows you to replicate pixels from one place to another.

CMYK Colour Model A subtractive colour model used in printing. It's used to create, define, and describe colours. It's based on mixing pigments to make other colours.

CMYK stands for cyan (C), magenta (M), yellow (Y) and black (K)

Coated Paper Paper with a coating of clay or other substances that improve reflectivity and ink holdout.

Colour Palette A set of colours that make up the total range of colours used in graphic computers.

Colour Matching System A set of colour charts and/or swatches--either in printed form or as computer-generated samples--used to compare, match, and specify different colours.

Colour Separation A means of dividing a full-colour photograph into four separate components, corresponding to the four primary colours used in process colour printing - cyan, magenta, yellow, and black.

Comps Comps are made to see what the initial design project will look like before it's printed, showing the layout of the text and illustrations.

Contrast The difference in colour found between the light and dark parts of an image.

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top 200 graphic design terms explained

Copy Copy refers to editorial text supplied (typically from a copywriter) for incorporation into a design or website.

Crop A tool that removes portions of an image. It is usually used on digital photographs.

Crop Marks Lines drawn or printed to indicate the proper cropping of the image or print in question.

"D" graphic design terms from exclaim

Descender The part of a lowercase letter that extends below the body.

Die Cut Is a metal ruler that cut shapes or holes in a wide-range of material.

Dingbat An ornament used in typesetting to add space around an image or a symbol.

Dodge This is an effect employed when you lighten or reduce part of an image by shading.

Dot Gain When the ink hits the paper, it is absorbed and it somewhat spreads out.

Double Spread A double page spread is a layout that extends across two pages.

DPI (Dots Per Inch) A term to describe the measure of sharpness within an image.

Drop Shadow Is a visual effect added to an image or object to give the impression the image is raised above the image's behind by duplicating the image or object with a shadow.

Dummy This is typically a mock-up or display of what the final product will look like.

Duotone A method of printing using two colours, usually black and a spot colour.

"E" graphic design terms from exclaim

Ear The rounded portion of a lowercase letter such as "q" and "g".

Element A distinct part of a layout, such as a logo, headline, images or borders.

Embedding Process of transferring all the data of a font or image into the file itself.

Emboss To give a three dimensional effect to a text or an image by using highlights and shadows.

Engraving To print designs by cutting the surface of a metal plate.

EPS It stands for (Encapsulated Post Script). This is a graphics file format used to transfer PostScript documents that contain an image, withing another PostScript document.

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Etch To imprint a design onto the surface of a plate by using a chemical such as acid.

Exclaim Exclaim is your hard-working Toronto based creative agency driven to provide marketing, print and web solutions that change attitudes, provoke action and improve the businesses of its stakeholders.

Export To save a file in a format usable by other programs.

Extenders The part of a letter which extends above the mid line, such as ‘b” or “d”.

E-Zine Stands for electronic magazine and refers to the name of a website that is represented for a print magazine; an online only magazine that you can subscribe to.

“F” graphic design terms from exclaim

Feathering A tool used in graphic design software like Photoshop that makes the edges of an image appear smoother and softer.

Fill A tool used to fill selected parts of an image with another selected colour.

Filter A filter is a pre-created visual effect that can be applied to images to acquire a new modified look.

Flexography This is a printing technique where printing plates are made of rubber or soft plastic material and is then stretched around a drum on the press that rotates.

Flyer A single sheet of paper handed out or posted on a wall to advertise or announce something.

Foil Stamp The procedure of pressing a heated die on top of a metallic sheet of foil, which press the foil from its backing and attaches itself to a surface.

Folio This is a single leaf of a manuscript or book and also refers to a page number.

Font A complete combination of the various characters and symbols created in a specific type of one style and size. The set of characters in a font entail the letter set, the number set, special characters and marks.

Four-colour A printing technique that creates colours by combining, (C) cyan, (M) magenta, (Y) yellow and (K) black.

Frames Refers to animation, a frame is a single graphic in a distribution of graphic images. The speed of an animation is judged by frames per second.

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"G" graphic design terms from exclaim

Gang To combine multiple jobs on one print plate in order to reduce material, printing and setup costs.

Gamut The range of colours available to a particular output device or a given colour space. If the colour range is too wide for that specific device, it is termed as "out of gamut".

Gatefold A type of fold in which the paper is folded inward to form four or more panels.

GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) GIF images display up to 256 colours. This format supports animation and allows an individual colour palette of 256 colour for each frame.

Gradient A function in graphic software that permits the user to fill an object or image with a smooth transition of colours.

Graphic Design Visual communication using text or images to represent an idea, concept or message. It is also a term used for all activities relating to visual design, including web design, logo design, etc.

Grayscale Images consists of black, white, no colour and up to 256 shades of gray.

Grid Is a two-dimensional format made up of a set of horizontal and vertical axis used to structure content.

Gutter This is the white space formed by the inner margins of a spread near the books spine.

"H" graphic design terms from exclaim

Halo Effect A vague shadow sometimes surrounding halftone dots printed.

Hard Copy This is the permanent reproduction of the output of a computer or printer.

Header The text which appears at the top of a printed page

Headline A large text illustrating the opening statement used in a layout.

Hickey Any printing defect caused by a particle of debris attached to a printing plate.

Highlights Lightest part of a photograph or halftone, as opposed to mid tones and shadows.

High-Res Image An image with an extreme level of sharpness/clarity.

HLS A colour space that's stands for hue, lightness and saturation.

HSB A colour space stands for hue, saturation and brightness.

Hue One of the three primary attributes of colour. A hue is a variety of colour, such as, red, blue green or yellow.

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"I" graphic design terms from exclaim

Image Map An image map is an HTML document containing multiple click-able hyper-links.

Imagesetter Laser output device for producing professional-quality text with extremely high resolution

Imposition A layout of pages on mechanicals or flats so they will appear in proper order after press sheets are folded and bound.

Indents A set in or back from the margin.

Initial Cap Big, capital letters which are found at the beginning of paragraphs or chapters.

Inkjet Printer A printer which tiny ink droplets are spray electrostatically onto paper.

Invert Inversion of the tonal values or colours of an image. On an inverted image, black becomes white, blue becomes orange, etc.

Italic The style of letters that usually slope to the right. Used for emphasis within text.

"J" graphic design terms from exclaim

Jog To arrange sheets of paper into a compact pile.

JPEG (Joint Photographic Electronic Group) A common process for compressing digital images.

Justify To make a line of type a certain length by spacing out the words and numbers.

"K" graphic design terms from exclaim

Kerning Modifying the horizontal space between letters.

Keyframe Any frame in which a specific aspect of an item (its size, location, colour, etc.) is specifically defined.

Keyline A keyline is another name for a rule, line, or even a frame border. Keylines can be set in design software applications to different widths, to be solid or dotted, or even with numerous patterns.

"L" graphic design terms from exclaim

Layers A tool within graphic software that permits the user to gather, organize and re-edit their artwork.

Leading Refers to the amount of added vertical spacing between lines of text.

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top 200 graphic design terms explained

Leaf One piece of paper in a publication.

Legend A table on a map, chart, etc, listing the specific illustrations and how to use.

Letterpress A technique of printing from raised surfaces, either a type of metal or plates whose surfaces have been carved away from image areas. Also called block printing.

Lossless Refers to a form of data compression where the detail is maintained and no data is lost after file downsizing. The lossless compression method is often used in TIFF and GIF formats.

Lossy A form of data compression where detail is deleted as the file size are decreased. A usual lossy compression method is JPEG.

Lower Case The smaller form of letter used in type.
Low-Resolution Image A low-quality scan made from a photograph, or of the like.

Luminosity The brightness of an area arranged by the amount of light it reflects or diffuses.

"M" graphic design terms from exclaim

Magic Wand Tool A tool in graphic software that permits the user to select fractions of an image, such as, areas with the same colour.

Margins Guidelines in page layout software to show the user the body copy areas. It also allows the user to indicate the dimensions. Margins do not print.

Mask See clipping path.

Master Page A property found in page layout software that allows the user to create a constant page layout. Repeating elements like page numbers are created once on a master. This permits the user to stay clear of adding the numbers to each page manually.

Matte Finish Non-glossy finish on photographic paper or coated printing paper.

Mean Line The line on which the top parts of most of the lowercase letters lay. Also called x-height. The imaginary point of all lowercase characters without ascenders.

Midtones In a photograph or illustration, tones composed by dots between 30 percent and 70 percent of coverage, as opposed to highlights and shadows.

Mock Up A recreation of the original printed material and possibly containing instructions or direction.

Modern An altered version of Old Style. these high contrast letters have heavy, untapered stems and light serifs. Originally established by Firmin Didot and Giambattista Bodoni during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

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Multimedia Offering the use of various communications, such as, text,sound, still or moving images.

"N" graphic design terms from exclaim

Neon Glow A Type of glow on a graphic image that gives the appearance of neon lighting.

News Print Paper used in printing newspapers. Not very high quality paper.

Noise Noise is a term used to describe the development of pixels that contain random colours.

"O" graphic design terms from exclaim

Oblique A Roman typeface which slants to the right. Often confused with italics.

Offset Printing Printing method that transfers ink from a plate to a blanket to paper instead of directly from plate to paper.

Old Style A style of type characterized by slight contrast between light and heavy strokes and slanting serif.

Opacity The degree of a colour or tonal value. The opacity of an image or object can range from transparent (0% opacity) to opaque (100% opacity). The ability to edit the opacity of specific objects allows the designer to create images that seem to flow into and through one another.

OpenType New font format created by Adobe and Microsoft. Open Type font can include a set of glyphs defined as True Type or Type 1 curves.

Orphan Line The first line of a paragraph appearing on its own at the bottom on a page with the remaining part of the paragraph appearing on the next page.

Outline This can refer to the outside edge of a font or to the outer edge of a vector graphic image, drawn in a package such as Illustrator or Freehand.

Overlay Layer of material taped to a mechanical, photo or proof. Acetate overlays are used to divide colours by having some type or art on them instead of on the mounting board. Tissue overlays are used to carry instructions about the underlying copy and to protect the base art.

Overprint To print additional material or another colour over a previously printed image.

Over Run Additional printed material beyond order. Overage policy differs in the printing industry, usually within 10% of the original quantity run.

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"P" graphic design terms from exclaim

Page Layout Deals with the setup and style of content on a page. An example of a page layout is the pages in magazines or brochures.

Page Size A setting that allows the user to define the size of the page they are creating their artwork on.

Pantone Matching The Pantone matching system is used for defining and blending match colours. It accommodates designers with swatches of over 700 colours and gives printers the formulas for making those colours.

PDF Stands for Portable Document Format. Developed by Adobe Systems in its software program Adobe Acrobat as a universal browser. Files can be downloaded over the Web and viewed page by page, provided the user's computer has installed the important plug-in which can be downloaded from Adobe's own Web site.

Pica A unit of measurement for type. Commonly used for typewriters.

Pixel The smallest picture content that can be individually assigned a colour.

Plate A Piece of paper, metal, plastic or rubber carrying an image to be duplicated using a printing press.

PMS Abbreviation for the Pantone Colour Matching System.

PNG Portable Network Graphics format. PNG (usually pronounced "ping"), is used for lossless compression. The PNG format displays images without jagged edges while keeping file sizes rather small, making them popular on the web. PNG files are generally larger than GIF files.

PPI Pixels Per Inch. A measurement of the resolution of a computer display.

Primary Colours The primary colours are put together to produce the full range of other colours (non-primary colours), within a colour model. The primary colours for the additive colour model is; Red, Green and Blue. The primary colours for the subtractive colour model is; Cyan, Magenta and Yellow.

"Q" graphic design terms from exclaim

QuarkXpress QuarkXpress is page layout application usually used for magazine and brochures.

Quick Mask A filter in Photoshop in which a translucent coloured mask covers selective areas of an image.

QuickTime QuickTime is developed byApple Computer. It's built into the Macintosh operating system computers used for displaying and editing animation.

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"R" graphic design terms from exclaim

Ragged The imbalanced alignment of text lines. Ragged is the opposite of flush. A text block may be formatted to be evenly flush (align) right and unevenly aligned (ragged) on the left.

Rasterize An image is said to be rasterized when transformed from vector image to a bit-mapped image. When opening a vector image in a bitmap-based editing program, you are generally presented with a dialog box of options for rasterizing the image.

Resample A function accessible in image editing that permits the user to change the resolution of the image while keeping its pixel count in tact.

Resolution The resolution of an image is an important factor in deciding the attainable output quality. The higher the resolution of an image, the less pixilated it will be and the curves of the image will appear smoother.

RGB (Red, Green, Blue) RGB is the colour model used to project colour on a computer monitor. By combining these three colours, a large percentage of the visible colour spectrum can be represented.

Rich Media Rich media are banner ads that use technology more developed than standard GIF animation, for example; Flash, Shockwave, Streaming video etc.

Right Justified Type aligned with its right margin. Also known as "flush right."

RIP (Raster Image Processor) Transfers fonts and graphics into raster images, which are used by the printer to draw onto the page.

Royalty-Free Photos Intellectual property like photos and graphic images that are sold for a single standard fee. These can be used repeatedly by the purchaser only, but the company that sold the images usually still owns all the rights to it.

"S" graphic design terms from exclaim

Sans Serif A style of typeface that means without feet. Usual sans serif typefaces include Arial, Helvetica, AvantGarde and Verdana.

Saturation The Intensity of hue. The quality of difference from a gray of the same lightness or brightness

Scale A design or program is said to scale if it is relevantly efficient and reasonable when applied to larger situations

Screen Printing Technique of printing by using a squeegee to force ink through an assembly of mesh fabric and a stencil.

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Selection Selection refers to an area of an image that is isolated so it can be edited while the rest of the image is protected.

Shadow Detail Shadow detail refers to the amount of detail held in the dark areas of an image. If the shadow is lightened too much in an attempt to expose more detail, the risk is there to reduce the overall contrast of the image.

Sharpen To reduce in colour strength, as when halftone dots become smaller; opposite of thicken or dot spread.

Small Caps Capital letters that are about the same height as the tvpeface's x-height. Some software programs automatically create their own small caps, but true small caps are often only found in expert typefaces.

Spread (1) Two pages that face each other and are created as one visual or production unit. (2) Method of slightly enlarging the size of an image to make a hairline trap with another image. Also called fatty.

Subtractive colour A term defining the three subtractive primary colours; Cyan, Magenta and Yellow. As opposed to the three additive colours; Red, Blue and Green.

Swatch A short form of colour swatch

SWOP Abbreviation for Specifications for Web-Offset Publications, a set of standards for color proofing developed by a joint committee to ensure that colors are reproduced consistently among different publishers and publications.

"T" graphic design terms from exclaim

Template Refers to a printing project's basic details in concernto its dimensions. A general layout.

Text Wrap A term used in page layout software, specifically to the way text can be shaped around the edges of images.

Thumbnail A thumbnail is a reduced-size version of the original image.

TIFF (Tagged Image File Format) A graphic file format used for storing images . TIFF is a commonly used file format for high colour depth images.

Tint A colour is made lighter by adding white, this is called a tint.

Tolerance Tolerance is the range of pixels a tool in graphic software functions in. Or the range of shade or colour pixels a Magic Wand selects, etc.

Tonal Distribution Tones can be redistributed during the scanning or image editing process. To lighten dark images or to darken light images.

Trim Size The size of the printed material in its finished stage.

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True colour System A true colour system is a 24-plane graphics sub-system which composes the entire range of 16.7 million colours.

Typeface A typeface consists of a series of fonts and a full range of characters, such as, numbers, letters, marks and punctuations.

"U" graphic design terms from exclaim

Uncoated Paper This is paper that hasn't had a coating applied to it for smoothness.

Unsharp Mask A method used to heighten the sharpness or focus of images by selecting and increasing the contrast of pixels alongside the edges of images.

Uppercase Also known as capital letters, they are the larger characters in a typeface.

UV Coating A glossy coating applied to the paper surface and dried using ultraviolet light. It is glossy and adds a certain level of protection to the printed material.

"V" graphic design terms from exclaim

Value This refers to the degree of lightness or darkness of a colour.

Varnish This is a liquid coating applied to a surface for protectiong and for a glossy effect.

Vector Graphic Vector graphics allows the designer to expand or reduce the vector graphic in size without any loss in quality using curves, points, lines and polygons.

Verso The left-hand page of a book or a manuscript.

"W" graphic design terms from exclaim

Watermark Translucent design impressed on paper created during manufacture, it is visible when held to light.

Web-Safe colours A colour table containing only 216 out of a possible 256 colours, used to accurately match the colours of graphics and pictures in cross-platform Web browsers.

Weight The range of a stroke's width. Also knows as demibold, light, and bold. Some typeface families have many weights like ultra-bold and extra-light. Associated to the heaviness of the stroke for a specific font, such as Light, Regular, Book, Demi, Heavy, Black, and Extra Bold.

top 200 graphic design terms explained

White Point Is one of a handful of reference illuminants used in colourimetry which is used to define the colour "white". Based on the application, different definitions of white are needed to give sufficient results.

White Point A white point adjustment establishes the amount of highlighted detail in an image.

Width Refers to whether the basic typeface has been lengthened or compressed horizontally. The typical variations are Condensed, Normal, or Extended.

Word Processor A software application package that assists in creating, editing, and printing

Work and Turn This is when you print on one side of a sheet of paper, then you turn the sheet over from left to right and print the other side. The same gripper and plate are used for this process.

WYSIWYG What You See Is What You Get. This is an approximate screen representation of what the final printed image will look like.

"X" graphic design terms from exclaim

X-Height This is the height of the lowercase letters that do not have ascenders or decenders, such as a, c, e and mm.

"Z" graphic design terms from exclaim

Zip Stands for Zone Information Protocol: This is a way of compressing files into a smaller size, so they can be transferred with more ease over the Internet or any other means.

Zoom Most design software lets you zoom in or out on an image to get a closer or farther away look. Zooming in is especially useful when photo retouching or working on tiny details.

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