

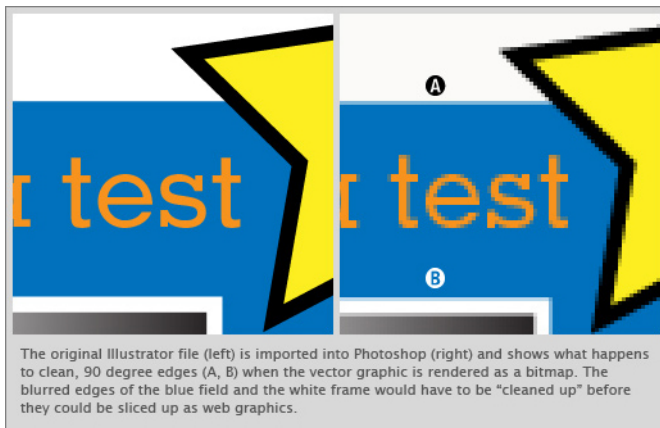
Design Guidelines for Agencies, Part 2: What's So Great About Photoshop?

by Justin Kerr, August 2008

Newfangled works with many [advertising and marketing agencies](#) and we love to provide their clients with well-designed, highly-functional web sites. However, some of the art files we receive from agencies are less than optimal for our purposes. Photoshop is Newfangled's standard for creating web page layouts but we've received layouts in many formats including PDFs, Microsoft Word documents, Illustrator files and even PowerPoint slides.

One of the key reasons we create layouts in Photoshop is the ability to build a 1:1 representation of what the final page will look like in a browser, right down to the individual pixels. The difficulty in translating a file from any other program is that it requires practically rebuilding the layout from scratch in Photoshop, using the provided file as a rough guide.

Adobe Illustrator is a great program for building precise, vector-based artwork but it comes up short as a tool for building web pages. The issue lies in importing an AI file into Photoshop and how differently the two programs render artwork. Illustrator is a [vector-based](#) program and Photoshop is a [bitmap-based](#) (or raster-based) program. If you open an AI file in Photoshop, Photoshop attempts to translate the vector artwork into a bitmap image. This rasterization creates blurred lines along horizontal and vertical edges which can make slicing up the layout accurately for web application difficult, if not impossible.



We encourage our agency partners to provide us with layered Photoshop files whenever possible. This is not because we're a bunch of whiny prima donnas, but because Photoshop provides the best platform for creating accurate web page layouts and the results save time and money for us, for our agency partners and for the agency's client.

Note: *This post is a reworking of an [October 2007 article](#) in which I recommended a solution for successfully importing Illustrator files into Photoshop for the purposes of web page layout. After further research, I discovered the solution is incomplete and not adequate for Newfangled standards.*

Next time: **How to Set Up a Photoshop File for Web Design**