



OPI™

**Open Prepress Interface
Specification 1.3**

22 September 1993

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This document is provided for developers intending to implement OPI conventions.

Aldus welcomes your feedback. If you have comments or suggestions regarding OPI, please contact:

Developer's Desk
Aldus Corporation
411 First Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98104-2871
Tel: (206) 628-6593
Fax: (206) 343-4240
Internet: dev-desk@aldus.com

Printed in U.S.A.
Part Number 993-798

Table of Contents

Changes from Version 1.2	4
Introduction	5
How OPI works	5
The Details	6
Terminology	6
General Requirements	6
References	7
The OPI Comments	7
Example 1	13
Example 2	14
Appendix A: Creating a PostScript Transformation Matrix	15

Changes from Version 1.2

- New: %ALDImageCropFixed gives partial-pixel cropping information.
- New: %ALDImageColorType describes whether an applied color is Spot or Process, for B&W and grayscale images.
- New: %ALDImageTint contains the tint percentage for Spot colors, for B&W and grayscale images.
- New: %ALDImageOverprint gives the knockout/overprint setting for B&W and grayscale images.
- New: %ALDImageAsciiTagNNN displays the contents of all ASCII tags in a TIFF file, for additional pass-through flexibility.
- %ALDImageID is recommended again, to simplify the task of finding the correct high resolution file.
- Guidelines for clipping to an arbitrary shape have been included. See the end of the section on %ALDImageCropRect.
- The examples have been updated to use the new comments.
- The notation has been updated to conform to the Adobe Document Structuring Conventions, Version 3.0.
- Support for %%BeginData/%%EndData has been added.
- A number of sections have been clarified.

Introduction

The Open Prepress Interface (OPI) is a collection of PostScript-language comment conventions that allows a page-layout program to use low or medium resolution TIFF images for layout and proofing, and have a prepress system or OPI server automatically substitute a high resolution TIFF or other image when the final film or plates are generated. Both desktop prepress software and high-end prepress systems can use OPI comments to minimize network traffic and image storage requirements.

How OPI works

OPI comments describe the placement and size of scanned images, as well as cropping information and any adjustments to the size, brightness, or contrast.

For example, when you lay out a publication in Aldus PageMaker, you use the standard tools to place, re-size, and crop scanned images (usually, TIFF files that are lower resolution versions of a high resolution scan). When the layout is complete and you are ready to print separations, you print a composite PostScript file to disk using PageMaker's "For separation" or "EPS" option. PageMaker embeds the OPI comments (specifying the name and position of each scanned image, cropping information, and any adjustments to the size, brightness, or contrast) in the PostScript file. This file is comparatively small since it does not normally include any scanned image data.

The PostScript file can then be sent to a prepress system or OPI server where the OPI layout information is extracted and used to find the high resolution image and insert it the image data into the PostScript print stream to the imagesetter.

OPI does not require that the image be pre-separated. Conversion from RGB to CMYK can take place "on the fly" during the final printing process, if the OPI Server is able to perform such conversions. This approach has two advantages: it requires much less disk space, since a high-resolution CMYK version of the image is never stored on disk; and it gives greater separation flexibility, since it allows the image to be stored in the more device-independent RGB form during the entire prepress cycle.

The PostScript file containing OPI comments should be either an EPS file or the multi-page equivalent of an EPS file (see PageMaker's "For separation" print option.) As

such, it should be a composite color file, not a separated file. The reasons for discouraging the use of OPI within the context of separated files are:

- There are no Adobe conventions covering the use of separated PostScript files as an interchange format, and currently every application does it differently.
- In theory, PostScript Level II RIPS will be where we ultimately do our separations. To make this happen, we will be feeding these RIPS composite, not separated, PostScript streams.
- Trapping programs like Aldus TrapWise can operate much more efficiently by operating on composite PostScript streams instead of separated streams, since a composite stream is much smaller, the resulting display list is much smaller, and the output frame buffer can be created in one pass.

If you must use separated files, be sure to at least follow the existing de facto %%PlateColor convention, so that the OPI consumer can at least know what the current separation is. (To create separations directly from Aldus PageMaker 5.0, choose "Separations" in the Print/Color dialog.)

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