Tips on Preparing Documents for Printing on the HP 1055cm Plotter

Plotter Tips

The Basics:

You will create your design so it will fit "regular" size paper. The plotter print drivers enlarge the document to poster size.

Before you begin designing your poster, start by going to Page Setup in your software and

If you want to create a 24" X 36" poster
- set the paper size of your original to 7.32" X 11"
- set the margins to 0.25" on each side
- STC staff will print by enlarging to ArchD

If you want to create a 36" X 48" poster
- set the paper size to Letter (8.5" X 11")
- set the margins to 0.25" on each side
- STC staff will print by enlarging to ArchE

If you want to create a 36" X 72" banner
- set the paper size to 9" X 18"
- set the margins to 0.25" on each side
- STC staff will print by enlarging to Custom 36X72

Make sure to use high-resolution graphics or Microsoft clip art.

Zoom your screen display to 400% to get an idea how your design will look on large paper. If it does not look good on screen at 400%, it won't look good when printing.

Please avoid dark colored backgrounds. Dark backgrounds use much more ink which greatly increases the cost.

Plotter print charges are 50¢ per square foot.

For more info, contact the STC staff at ext 1991 or the Library Automation Services staff at ext 1969.

Plotter FAQs and Tips

What's a plotter?
A Plotter is a wide carriage printer. The HP DesignJet 1055cm is capable of printing full color up to 36" wide. While based on ink jet technology, the resolution is close to laser quality.

Who can use the plotter?
Del Mar College students have priority, but anyone may request prints from the plotter. Due to the expense of the unit, paper and ink, requests must be made to the STC staff who will assist you.

What formats will print?
Any file type that is supported by software on the STC staff computers may be printed. Files created in almost any STC supported software can be printed on the plotter. Macintosh files cannot be printed on the plotter. Feel free to ask the STC staff about specific software compatibility.

What can I print?
One copy of any prepared document may be printed with the plotter. Requests for multiple prints will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Be aware that the **Del Mar College Acceptable Use Policy** as well as copyright law and any other relevant local, state or federal statutes apply when using the plotter.

How long does it take to print?
Setup and printing time varies according to the project. Depending on the resolution and size of the project, print time can take as little as 15 minutes or as much as several hours. Please plan ahead and, when possible, schedule plotter print services after 1:30 PM weekdays or regular library hours on weekends.

Is there a cost?
Yes. The charge is 50¢ per square foot. For a standard poster (24" X 36"), the cost is $3.00. STC staff will provide you with a charge slip that must be paid at the Access Services Desk.

Will the STC staff design my poster for me?
No. The STC staff can assist you with using software applications as time allows. There are also applications reference books on reserve in the STC. However, the design process for any poster is your responsibility.

How do I set up my page to print to the plotter?
Before you start designing your document, set up your page size to be compatible with the plotter. To produce a standard 24" X 36" poster, start by setting your page size to 7.32" X 11" and setting your margins to 0.25" top, bottom, left, right and if applicable header and footer. If you get a message, such as in MS-Word, saying your settings are not compatible to the attached printer choose "Ignore" or choose not to let the computer autoconfigure the margins. When you print to the plotter, the special print drivers "blow up" your design to fit the appropriate page size for the plotter paper.

If you need other sizes not mentioned on the first page of **Plotter Tips**, please consult with the STC staff for assistance.

Larger banners are possible, but become a little trickier to set up properly. You are limited by the maximum paper size allowed by your application. This is also sometimes controlled by the maximum size that your default printer can accommodate. For a rule of thumb, the largest size you can print is 4 times the size of your maximum page of your application. Using the "4 times" rule, one of you page dimensions cannot be bigger than 9" as 36" is the largest paper we can use.

What if I already designed my document and it's not one of these sizes?
Some software applications have a print option that allows the STC staff to select an option to "fit to page." In this case, the computer will configure the print to fit the document as close as possible to the desired finished product size. If the original document and the selected

finished size are not proportional, the finished product will likely have unwanted white space on one of the sides.

Can I set my application size to actual print size?
Yes, some applications will let you create your design at full plotter size. This is useful when creating complex drawings in Visio. However, most applications have a maximum page size smaller than the plotter paper.

Can I print anything I want?
No. The **Del Mar College Acceptable Use Policy** and copyright law apply to the use of the plotter.

The **Del Mar College Acceptable Use Policy** restricts the types of material that can be printed and the way the printouts may be used. See the policy posted in the Student Technology Center, in the Library Handbook, in the Del Mar College Catalog or at http://www.delmar.edu/webaup1.html for more information.

Copyright law restricts the use of copyrighted materials. Copyrighted material may be used within "Fair Use." See http://www.cetus.org/fairindex.html for more information**.**

From a technical standpoint, can I print anything I want?
Sorry, the answer is still no. In the "What formats will print?" section on the second page, some limitations based on available applications and the fact that we don't support Macintosh files was covered. Beyond that, some things enlarge better than others.

Graphics based on small originals or low-resolution originals tend to pixelate and probably won't provide satisfactory print results. For this reason, many graphics downloaded from the web may not provide satisfactory results.

Another problem is that font styles used are limited to those available on the staff computers. While we try to have a wide range of fonts available on these computers, if your specific font is not available, the font may be different. Different fonts frequently require reformatting material on the page.

OK, then what does work well?
Among the best results come from creating a poster in Microsoft Word using True Type fonts and Microsoft Clip Art or Microsoft Word Art. Many techniques, such as using multiple text boxes or layering objects, can create professional looking results. Microsoft's Design Gallery Live is a wonderful source to download compatible clip art. Click on the globe icon on the Microsoft Word clip art screen or http://dgl.microsoft.com to get there.

Microsoft Visio has excellent results in printing large, complex plans, drawings and charts. Adobe Acrobat and Paint Shop Pro are among the file types that have printed successfully.

How can I tell if my document will print well?
If you have created your document with the suggested page settings, set your application screen zoom to 400%. If the contents looks fuzzy or pixilated or you can see actual squares of color, your document won't print satisfactorily. If your document is pixilated, you must choose higher resolution graphics or a smaller poster size to improve the output.

When you are satisfied with your design contact the STC staff, and they will print your work.

Plotter Tips was created by the Del Mar College Library Automation Services Department