

# DEADSTAR PUBLISHING

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## Delivering a project to us (Comics)

### Overview

Once we agree to publish a project we will confer with creators to determine an approximate release schedule based on the amount of work already completed, along with the rate at which the remainder of the project is likely to be finished at. This schedule also factors in time for us to prepare documents in-house, to arrange for printing and distribution, and a leeway for delays.

Failing to provide us with the files that we require by an agreed date can severely delay a project, so if a creative team thinks they might have difficulty meeting a deadline we encourage them to contact us as early as possible to discuss the matter. We may be able to provide assistance by putting teams in touch with additional members (artists, colourists, letterers etc) in order to bring the project back on track.

What we require can vary depending on the nature of the project. This document is intended as a guide to producing a standard size comic. Other guides can be found on our website dealing with books and graphic novels.

### What's in a comic?

Our comics have 28 pages internally as well as 4 pages of cover material. This breaks down to give the following:

- 1 x Front cover
- 1 x Title page
- 24 x Internal art pages
- 4 x Advert pages
- 1 x Coming next issue/Filler
- 1 x Back cover (often an advert for another Deadstar Publishing product)

Of these, we expect creators to provide (unless agreed otherwise) raw front cover artwork, 24 pages of internal art, and the coming next issue page. We usually prefer to create the finished front cover ourselves using artwork and logo files supplied by the creators. This allows us to ensure that front covers match our style guide. Where appropriate we do allow creators to wholly produce front cover files too. It is our preferred practice to produce title page ourselves, though may request creators provide artwork to assist in this.

**Deadstar Publishing Ltd, 30a Moy Road, Cardiff, Wales, CF24 4TF**

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## **What dimensions should art files be?**

Our standard comic is 177mm wide and 266mm tall. In order to ensure comics print correctly and can be cropped to the desired size once bound, we add a 3mm border around all files taking dimensions up to 183mm wide and 272mm tall. Our production process is geared towards high-quality printing with 300ppi being our standard resolution. With that in mind, art files should be sized at 2161px wide and 3213px tall in total, with a live area of 2100px by 3150px in the centre. Only items within the live area will be printed. Art outside the area is purely to prevent colourless edges on a page in the case of a misaligned print, or incorrectly cropped page. This area of 2100px by 3150px is the absolute edge of what will appear on a page. If you have speech bubbles or other important information that must be seen, please keep it within the centre 2028px by 3080px area (171mm by 260mm). There is a visual guideline to this on our resources page: [comic template.png](#)

Some software from different manufacturers has been known to display a pixel as different sizes. If in doubt use our measurements in pixels instead of our measurements in millimetres.

## **What filetypes should be used?**

Documents should be sent either as .jpeg or as unflattened .tiff files. Pages should be sent individually, not combined into one file. We would appreciate it if you can number the pages so we don't have to work out what page goes where.

Do NOT send us pages in .pdf or other formats unless we specifically request them that way. It is far more difficult (if not impossible in some cases) for us to work with files saved in the wrong format.

## **How to send material to us**

We can accept files in a variety of ways, both from USB data drives, CDs, DVDs etc, as well as by email to [the-team@deadstarpublishing.co.uk](mailto:the-team@deadstarpublishing.co.uk) (provided the total size of the files is below 10MB). If the files to be sent are larger than this then we recommend a service such as [www.mailbigfile.com](http://www.mailbigfile.com) that can be used for free. In the future, we may investigate allowing creators to upload files directly to our servers. This document will be updated with details if that happens.

We cannot accept material for publication that is delivered to us in a physical medium. Please do not send physical artworks to us as we are unable to process or return them.

## **Developing and completing material**

We may skip any or all of the following stages depending on our confidence in the creative team, but the general process we would like to follow is outlined below.

### Scripting:

Keeping us up to date with script drafts as they are written and revised allows us to ensure that the project

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is running smoothly. If concerns arise during the scripting process then we have found it is better to address them early on as waiting can cause worse delays further down the line. We do believe in the artistic integrity of our creative teams though, and prefer not to interfere on a scripting level, except to offer pointers on keeping pacing smooth, ensuring a good balance of dialogue to action etc unless there is a real need for us to do so. Once scripts have been finalised we will sign off on them to show that we are willing for our creative teams to proceed to creating artwork.

A benefit to our having access to scripts from the start is that snippets can often be incorporated into early marketing material and teaser documents.

### Internal artwork:

While we appreciate that not all creative teams work the same way, we prefer where possible to receive roughs/story boards before pencils are begun. Once we have approved those and pencils are completed, send us those too. Again, we like to have colours to check before lettering is completed... and then the final art pages.

As with the scripting process we are unlikely to censor or request changes without reason, but having the files does allow us to check consistency of artwork against other pages, as well as helping us to spot continuity errors while they are still easily correctable. Again, these work-in-progress pieces can also double as bonus and promotional material, as well as being featured in teaser pieces and gathering interest from retailers.

In all cases, we only need copies – there is no requirement to send us the original or only copy of a file. We prefer to work this way because we routinely back up our data and this can help prevent loss and setbacks if a creative team suffers an accident.

### Cover pages:

Developing artwork for cover pages should follow the same general guidelines as developing internal artwork. We discuss cover designs and visuals with other comics professionals, including store owners, so being able to share designs from the earliest stages offers us the ability to tweak and improve throughout the creative process.

We are keen to ensure a sense of continuity and consistency exists between Deadstar Publishing's product covers and so have developed a separate visual guideline to help with this. It can be found in the resources section of our website.

Unless agreed otherwise, creators should submit the final cover image without credits, logos or barcodes. We will add these in-house.

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## Title page:

Typically we will produce this in-house to meet our style guide. Often we will select a specific image, page or panel from within an issue and use that as a backdrop over which we will place credits and legal details. If no suitable image exists within an issue we may ask the creative team to design and compose one. We will give details on this if it becomes necessary.

If a creative team is to design and produce their own title page then we will supply a visual guideline to doing so.

## Coming next issue/filler page:

This page is almost always featured on the inside back cover. We are generally happy to use any reasonable idea for it, be it a Q&A page, a coming next issue page, a how-we-made-this-comic guide, a list of special people (crowdfunders) etc. In the case that a creative team does not, or cannot, supply this page we will fill it with either additional advertising or content of our own creation.

## Logo

Similar to cover pages, we discuss and critique logos where appropriate with other comics professionals to ensure they convey the effect that they are supposed to. This means that at times we may ask you to make adjustments to your logo, if we feel it will benefit the final product.

There are a number of points to consider with logos. These are best summarised below:

- Logos should always be saved with a transparent background. Without that it is very difficult to use a logo on top of another image.
- Logos are a prime branding tool, and need to be capable of being shown at many sizes. To that end, it is preferable if your logo can be designed at 1200ppi or higher and resized for use as appropriate.
- At times it can be useful to recolour a logo for a specific purpose. Having access to unflattened images can make our jobs a lot easier in that regard.
- A logo needs to look good regardless of size. This means that simple, striking designs are often preferable over more complex visuals.

## Other generic images

It can be enormously beneficial for us to have other files available to us. Material not used in comics can sometimes be collected for use in trade paperbacks at a later date, or used in promotions etc. Concept sketches, interviews with characters etc can be useful too.

## General tips

- Although we print at 300ppi, it is advisable that you create artwork at a higher resolution than this so that it you don't hinder your ability to include detail.
- There are two common colour models, CYMK and RGB. RGB often displays in a more appealing

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manner on computer screens, but high-quality printing will be most effective if files are formatted for CYMK.

- Don't underestimate the power of transparent backgrounds. With them you can layer images on top of one another.
- Save early, save often.
- If in doubt, contact us. We want to see you succeed and will help as much as possible to ensure that happens.

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