
TIFF™

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Adobe Developers Association

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Introduction

About this Specification

This document describes TIFF, a tag-based file format for storing and interchanging raster images.

History

The first version of the TIFF specification was published by Aldus Corporation in the fall of 1986, after a series of meetings with various scanner manufacturers and software developers. It did not have a revision number but should have been labeled Revision 3.0 since there were two major earlier draft releases.

Revision 4.0 contained mostly minor enhancements and was released in April 1987. Revision 5.0, released in October 1988, added support for palette color images and LZW compression.

Scope

TIFF describes image data that typically comes from scanners, frame grabbers, and paint- and photo-retouching programs.

TIFF is not a printer language or page description language. The purpose of TIFF is to describe and store raster image data.

A primary goal of TIFF is to provide a rich environment within which applications can exchange image data. This richness is required to take advantage of the varying capabilities of scanners and other imaging devices.

Though TIFF is a rich format, it can easily be used for simple scanners and applications as well because the number of required fields is small.

TIFF will be enhanced on a continuing basis as new imaging needs arise. A high priority has been given to structuring TIFF so that future enhancements can be added without causing unnecessary hardship to developers.

Features

- TIFF is capable of describing bilevel, grayscale, palette-color, and full-color image data in several color spaces.
- TIFF includes a number of compression schemes that allow developers to choose the best space or time tradeoff for their applications.
- TIFF is not tied to specific scanners, printers, or computer display hardware.
- TIFF is portable. It does not favor particular operating systems, file systems, compilers, or processors.
- TIFF is designed to be extensible—to evolve gracefully as new needs arise.
- TIFF allows the inclusion of an unlimited amount of private or special-purpose information.