

## Digital Media Fab Lab – How To: File Set-Up for the Plotter

Proper file preparation is the most effective way to ensure success during any digital fabrication process. *Before* creating a final project, consider creating a small sample to test out the process.

High-quality sample making explores the following;

- Form. The sample design utilizes elements from the final design. Ex; line weight, level of detail, etc.
- Material. Test out the sample design on a material that supports the concept of the final design.

### File Set Up

1. Start a new document in Adobe Illustrator  
Define the following PRESET DETAILS:
  - Set the WIDTH and HEIGHT to the material size
  - Select CREATE
2. Prepare the design
  - CREATE OUTLINES from text objects
  - Use the PATHFINDER to combine shapes
  - Use IMAGE TRACE when working with imagery - ungroup, remove fills and overlapping lines
  - Apply a stroke width to objects and remove fills
  - Double-check paths are all closed shapes
3. Save files to a USB flash drive for transferring to the Digital Media Fab Lab computer