



COLOUR GRAPHICS AND PRINT QUALITY

Can I use colour? Yes. But...

- Yes, colour tables, graphics and photographs are acceptable in a thesis or project for submission to the library.
 - But... these colour features must meet library standards for publishing quality.
- The test for any colour feature is whether they still do the work you wish them to do, if seen in photocopy.
 - This is not a requirement that you submit in black and white/grey tones only. It is merely the best test for sharpness, clarity and contrast in the colours and backgrounds you are using.
 - These standards are based on the need to serve the reader, who is probably using a photocopy of your work. How can you tell if any data or information is lost to the reader when they are working from a black-and-white (grey scale) copy?
 - You can test your own figures by photocopying them and then photocopying the photocopies.
- Looking at this second generation photocopy, ask yourself if any data or information has been lost.
 - If so, they colour feature must be amended to meet the library publishability requirements.

Check all figures, and borrowed or imported figures, photos and tables for print quality early.

- You may need to choose a different illustration or create a new one.

Fixing problems with colour figures and tables.

Examples

- Maps and other line drawings are white in original, but background turns grey in MSWord.
 - Sharpen the contrast. This can be done in a photographic or other art program or with MSWord's Format/Object or Format/Picture tools. Click on figure. Click Right mouse. Choose Format Picture, object or drawing box.
- Colour lines against a grey background in a graph
 - Lines appear grey on grey. Contrast insufficient
 - Eliminate grey backgrounds in Excel chart configurations
 - Add symbols to lines as well as colour.
- Colour bars in bar graph disappear on white background
 - Yellow is worst offender
 - Change to colours with more grey tone or a darker or deeper colour
 - Add boundaries to bars

- Contrasting colour bars in a bar chart lose contrast.
 - Bars virtually indistinguishable
 - Use texture as well as colour in bars
- Black text against a colour or grey background
 - Text becomes blurred
 - Change font to Arial
 - Change text to white, and perhaps deepen the colour of the background to sharpen contrast.
 - Or, if black text is preferred, lighten the grey background to smallest percentage, or change to white.
- Pixelation in a photo or other imported figure
 - Increase resolution of the picture in the originating program (Photoshop, Excel, etc.)
 - If a borrowed image, try the same in Photoshop or other such program.
 - Consider replacing the borrowed image with one of your own making
- Pixelation in an imported Excel table causes blurring in MSWord
 - Don't import it as a figure.
 - Copy/paste the table into MSWord, and configure it as a Word table.
- Poor picture reproduction in MSWord makes picture fade or blur in photocopies
 - Brighten the picture, i.e. improve contrast in the originating program.
 - Consider creating separate pages for important figures, with caption on one page, and figure on a following page, then printing the figure, on an appropriately numbered page, from the originating program.

Any more ideas?

Please feel free to email me at thesis_assistant@sfu.ca with other methods that have worked for you.