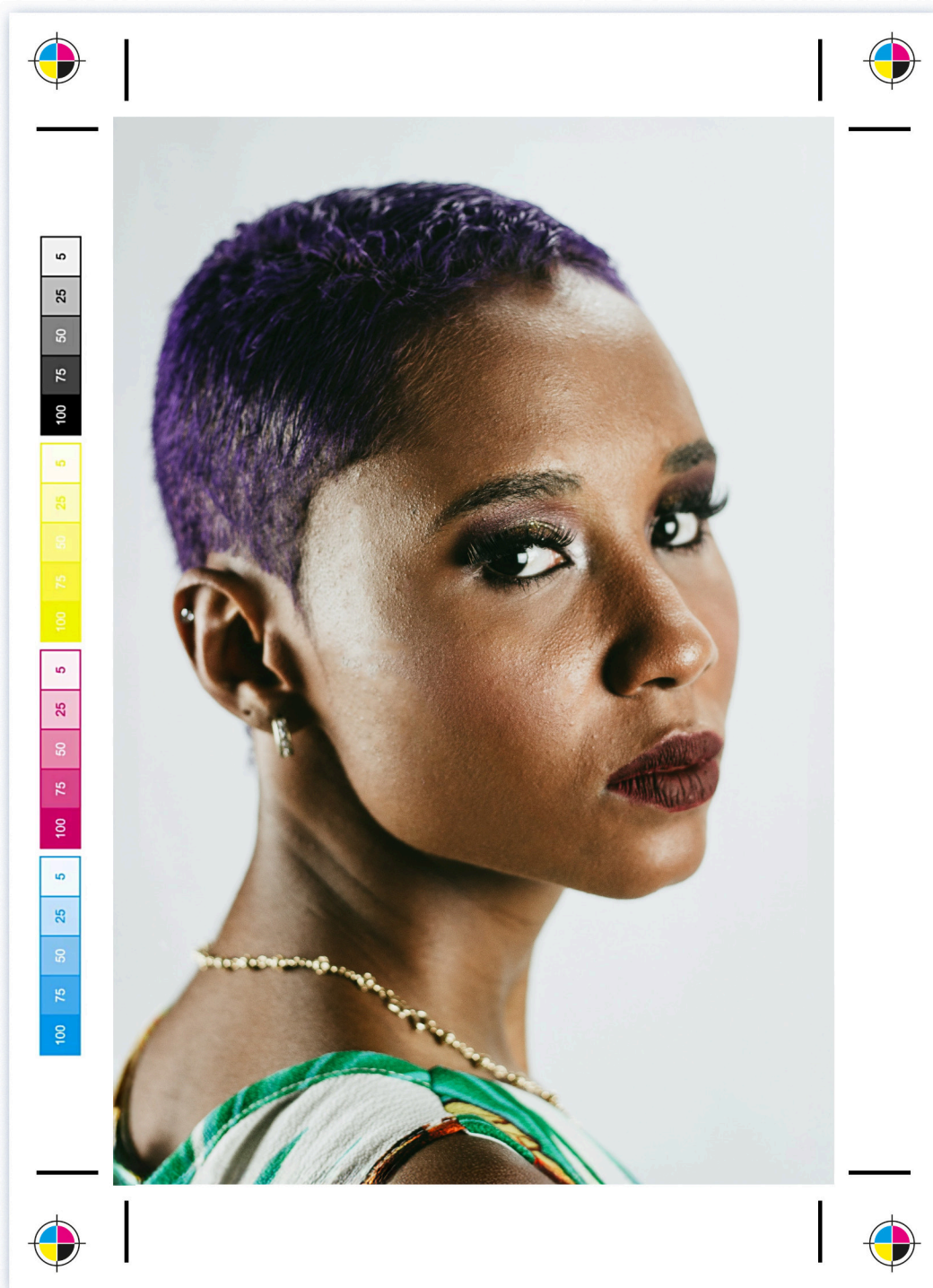


Bleeds & Margins



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NOTE: The crop marks, registration marks, and color bar on the front cover should **never** be used with KDP or Ingram Spark. Typically if a printer wants them they will add them.

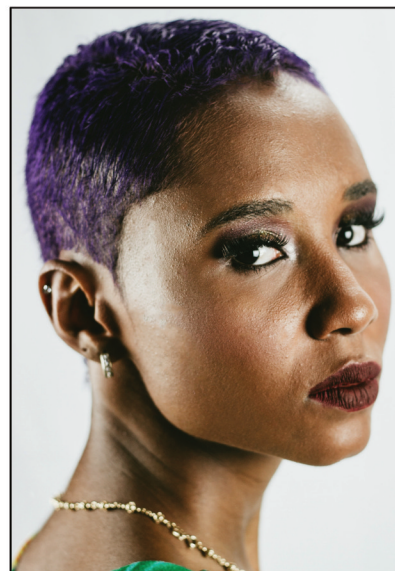
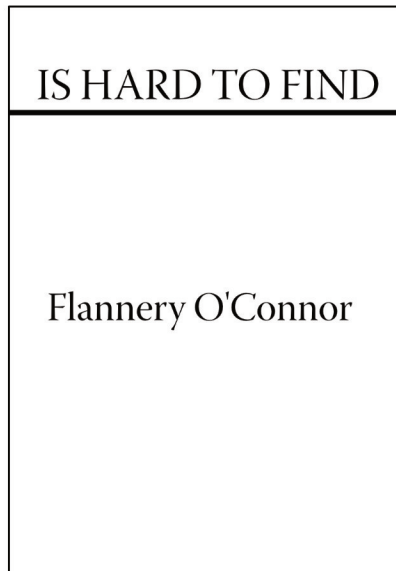
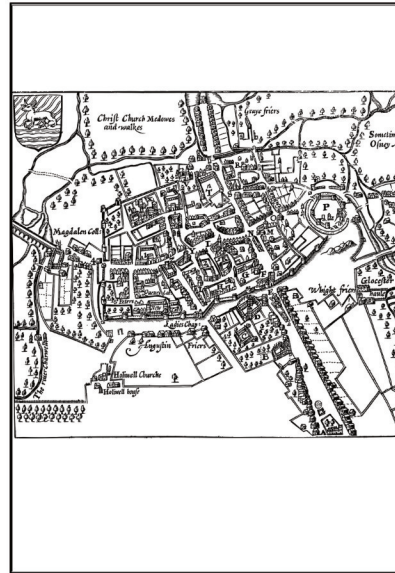
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Bleeds

It is hard to remember back to when I hadn't known about bleeds. But being active on the Create Space and now KDP forums, I realize that for many people Bleeds are a mystery. The concept is easy: any printed element—text, images, or graphics—that ends at the very edge of a page, top, bottom, outside, or inside, or any combination of edges, is said to bleed:

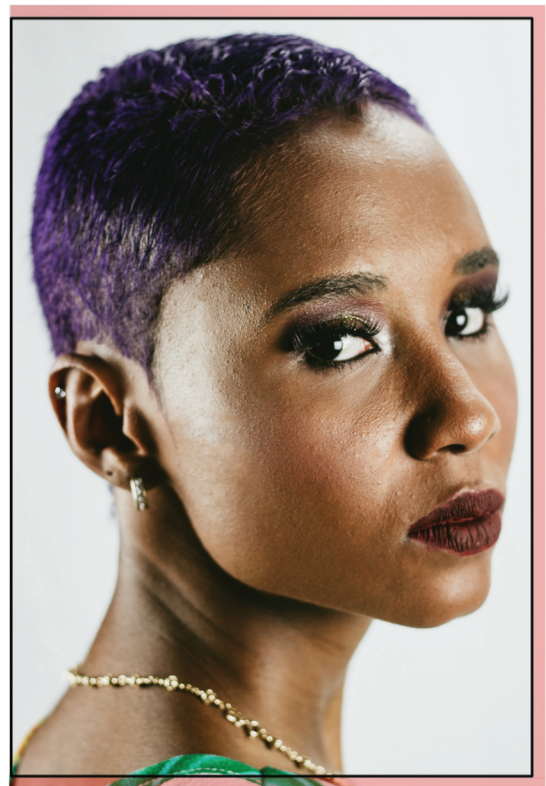
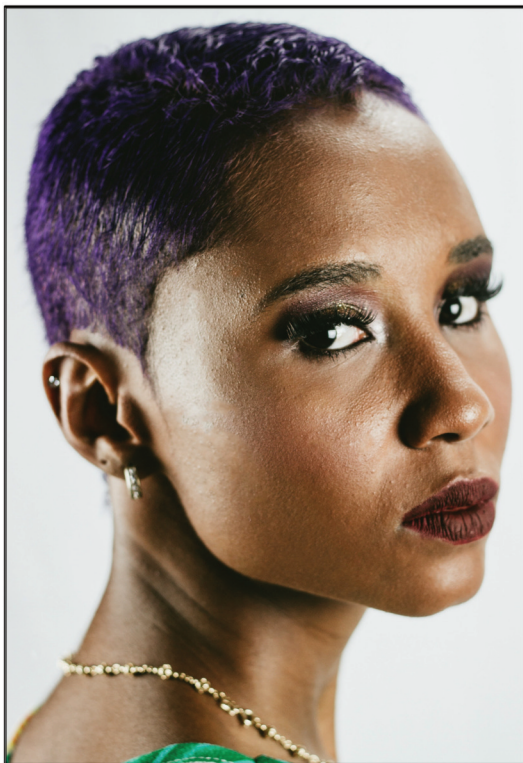
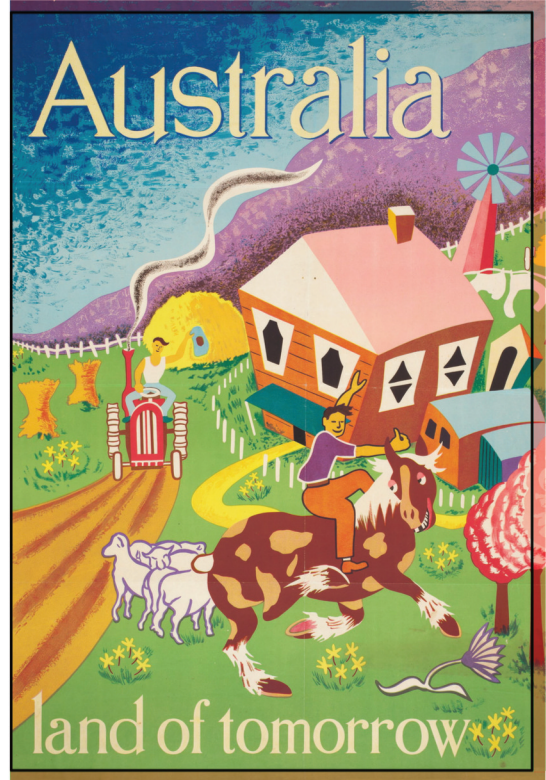


All four examples bleed. The black border is only to define the image on the page. To achieve this, the image must extend past the trim line (edge). This extra image area is called the *bleed margin*. In these examples, it is marked in red:

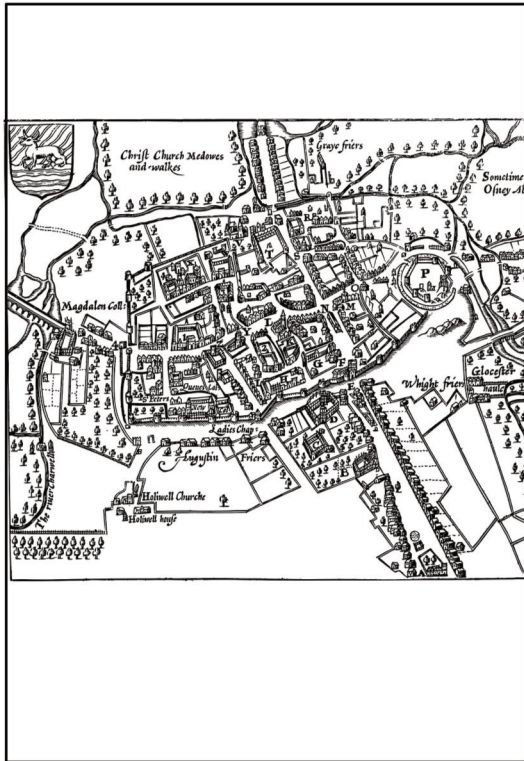
Bleed Image Trimmed



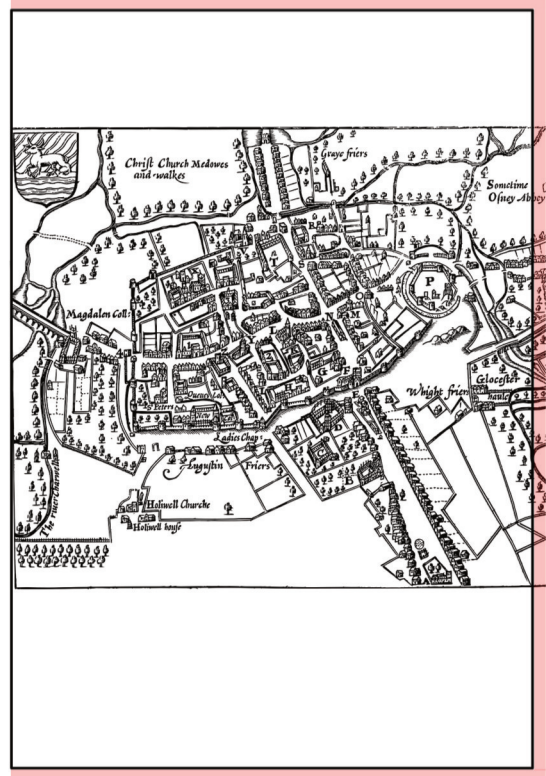
Bleed Image Untrimmed



Bleed Image Trimmed



Bleed Image Untrimmed



IS HARD TO FIND

Flannery O'Connor

IS HARD TO FIND

Flannery O'Connor

The parts of the image inside the bleed margin (covered in red in the examples) will be trimmed off during the binding and trimming stage of book production.

This margin is typically 0.125", although some printers might require as much as 0.25".

If only one graphic bleeds, for example the title page for the Flannery O'Connor book, the entire book will be set up as if it all bleeds.

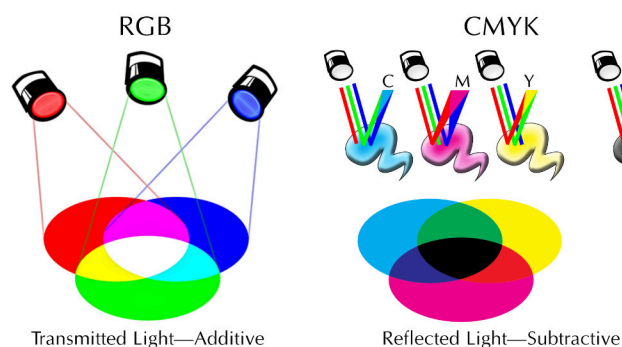
- **No bleed:** If the trim size of your book is 6" x 9", and your book has no bleeds, do not select bleed and do not add anything to your page size.
- **Bleed:** If your the trim size of your book is 6" x 9", your actual page size will be 6.125" x 9.25", for all pages. There is no bleed margin on the inside edge.
 - You select 6" x 9" as your trim size
 - You select that your book bleeds
 - All of your actual pages, i.e., your PDF trim size, will be 6.125" x 9.25"

All covers bleed. A typical cover template has the bleed built into it. Templates are a handy way to make sure that all the margins are honored. While you can put text anywhere in the white areas, do not let even a pixel extend into the out-of-live areas (red). In the example on the opposite page, the text isn't close to any of the red margins. If it were close, I would enlarge the image to at least 300%, and I would examine the text along every possible point of contact.

In the example, I placed the template above the cover art, and reduced the opacity to about 45%. This is a convenient way to check things.

As a matter of good workflow,

- Save your multi-layered cover art file (working file). Do not flatten it.
- Make export/convert/save as a JPG.
- Open the JPG and export/convert/save as a PDF.



At this point, because it's an issue in printing, I need to briefly talk about color space. *RGB*, red, green, and blue, is what our eyes are sensitive to—it's what and how we see everything. Your monitor is *RGB*. *CMYK*, cyan, magenta, yellow, and black, is used for printing. Your color deskjet printer is *CMYK*. Almost all commercial color printing is *CMYK* (these are called process colors; and sometimes this is

referred to as four-color printing).

All graphics programs default to *RGB*. The universal color space is *sRGB*(monitors, TVs, cameras, scanners, etc.). So most of us will work in *sRGB*. There are other kinds of *RGB* color space (e.g., Adobe *RGB*), but *sRGB* is the most common.

I work in *sRGB*, and for KDP I upload in *RGB*. If I'm using professional software, I select *PDF/X-3*. Most conversion programs (e.g., doPDF, nitroPDF, cutePDF, etc.) and conversions made in Word or LibreOffice/OpenOffice will be *sRGB*, will convert *CMYK* art to *sRGB*.

However, for IngramSpark, or any printer who wants *CMYK*, I will use *PDF/X-1a*. This will

convert RGB to CMYK, or preserve CMYK if that is what your art is. However, I will compare the PDF to the JPG or the working file. Usually, the colors will match or will be very close. If they are off, I will adjust them. If there are only a one or two images, I will convert them manually.

Always ask your printer, or check the printer's specifications, what color space, PDF preset, profiles, etc. they want. However, KDP and Ingram will strip off our profiles, and replace it with theirs.

The differences between sRGB and CMYK are most evident in large, solid areas of color that exist in sRGB but not in CMYK (these are called out-of-gamut colors). For continuous tone images, like photographs, this is generally not a big problem, again, almost all printed images that we see are CMYK. But you should be aware of the possibility of a problem.



While the solid colors look disastrous, here is a montage of images with quite a bit of out-of-gamut color:



sRGB Original Art

Out-of-Gamut Color in Red

Scan of CMYK Printed Piece

I used a feature that highlights all out-of-gamut color. The printed images are fine.

Margins

In addition to the bleed margin, every book has inside, outside, top, and bottom margins. There is also a special margin called out-of-live or live element margin:

KDP uses this model. The *minimum* inside margins are based on the page count:

24–150 pages: 0.375"

151–300 pages: 0.5"

301–500 pages: 0.625"

501–700 pages: 0.75"

701–828 pages: 0.875"

Ingram Spark recommends a 0.5" margin, the inside edge of which is shown with a dotted blue line.

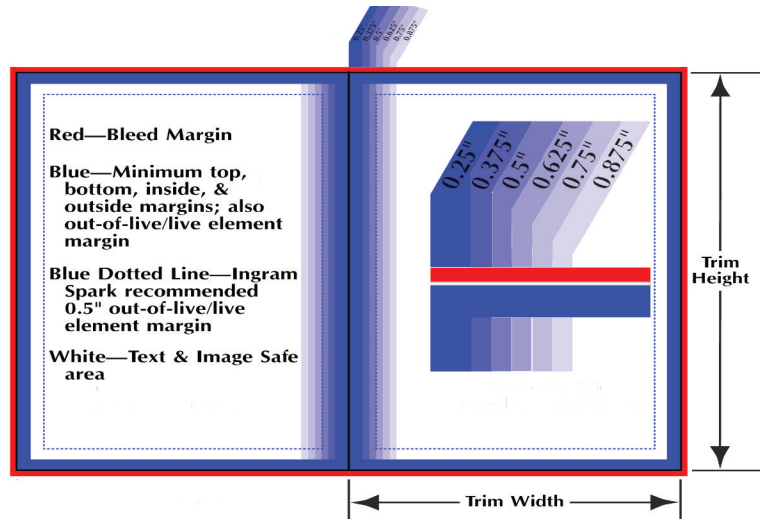
All of the margins are minimums. If you look at most books, except mass market books, you will see significantly bigger margins. This is particularly important for the inside margin, because the books have a tight binding, and do not want to open flat—a bigger inside margin the easier it is to read the book. I prefer inside margins of around 0.875"–1.25".

While Ingram *recommends* its margins, KDP is less permissive, it will block a book if these minimum margins are not honored. For the most part, a book that meets KDP's guidelines, will meet IS's. Many people will have KDP print their paperbacks and IS print their hard-bounds. Generally, the interior files can stay the same and only the cover has to be remade.

If your book is all text, as long as you keep the text in the text safe area, you won't have problems.

I recommend using the books around you to develop the design of your book. When you think you have something, print it out. I like to print out a spread and a chapter opening page, at a minimum. I will trim the pages to size, and live with them. If I have several designs, I'll write on the back what I've done.

For KDP there are other concerns. These seem to find support in the concept of "customer experience." Amazon assumes that certain things related to the Live Element Margins (LEM) will lead to a disappointing customer experience. At the time of this writing, this is the prevailing explanation; in years gone by, it was that some things could look like bad printing. There are several content issues that are important to be aware of, and these involve images or graphics.



A



Good: This image bleeds correctly.

B



Good: This image does not bleed and it is in the text safe area.

C



Bad: This image enters the bleed margin but does extend all the way. It should be adjusted to look like A or B.

D



Bad: This image enters the out-of-live/LEM margin. It should be adjusted to look like A or B.

E



Bad: the boy's foot and the snail's eye are inside the LEM. To fix, move the elements out of the LEM. See F, below.

F



Good: the boy's foot and the snail's eye have been moved into the text safe area. This is based on a real problem with someone's cover and the boy in the upper left would have been okay.

G



Bad: if the some of the clouds were white, this could be blocked because they are “white gaps along the edge.”

H



Good: the white clouds were filled in with color.

According to KDP Print Publishing Guidelines (2016, page 11):

Live Elements

Live elements include text or other important information that is intended for reading and should not be cut off when the book is trimmed. All live elements must be located inside the safe zone (recommended margin areas).

Background text or text that's not intended for reading can be located outside the safe zone, but that information could be trimmed from view during publication.

Text within images that span across two pages of the book (such as maps or design text) can be located inside the gutter margin area, but that information could be lost from view inside the binding when printed.

If text or elements are important to the reader, they should not be located outside of the safe zone.

It is good advice to keep live elements away from the trim line, regardless of how your book is printed.

“Live elements,” “out-of-live,” “live element margin,” do not appear in the KDP help pages. I have been unable to find them or anything close. It is possible the search engine isn't good, but if it is not easy to get information about this—when ignoring the requirements will get your book blocked—it is something to be aware of.

White gaps is a blocking issue that I believe is a misreading of policy that is related to creating book covers with a template.

Coloring Books

Coloring books shouldn't be a separate issue but they are. First, KDP and IS may not produce the best coloring books. To be even remotely competitive in price, most people use B&W on standard white paper: this is equivalent to 22 lb white, copy/bond paper. Even without doing a test book, you can test if you can use the paper or not; and the binding is perfect bound like almost all paperbacks.

The bigger issue is with KDP, which blocks lots of coloring books and books with line art is white gaps. There is speculation on the forums that coloring books are rejected because of the title, using a non-human name, keyword stuffing, etc. However, I know that books are rejected because of white gaps, see Example H, above, and the examples below. I know this from reading the KDP rejection review emails.

I believe this blocking issue is a misreading of an admonition against using cover templates incorrectly—leaving white gaps around the cover art and the outside edges. Regardless of why this is a blocking issue, a number of us have advised against coloring books that bleed: that is, where the lines bleed off the page.

Recently I worked with clients on two coloring books, where the lines bled. We were prepared to change the work so they did not bleed, but to my surprise, KDP accepted the books. I asked

KDP if this represented a change in policy, but I was told there was not policy, but whether a book is blocked or accepted is based on a book by book review. That said I can show what appears to work. This bleeds:



This does not bleed:



There is no other option along the edge of the page. Do not let the lines enter the LEM margin (blue) unless they pass through to the outside edge of the bleed margin.

