Importing a Graph Into Illustrator From PowerPoint

Introduction

Scientists use PowerPoint, a standard office program, to design graphs for presentations, posters, abstracts, and journal articles. But when the graphs are required for offset printing, PowerPoint cannot complete the job. The program is limited by function and publishing options whereas Illustrator was designed for these tasks.
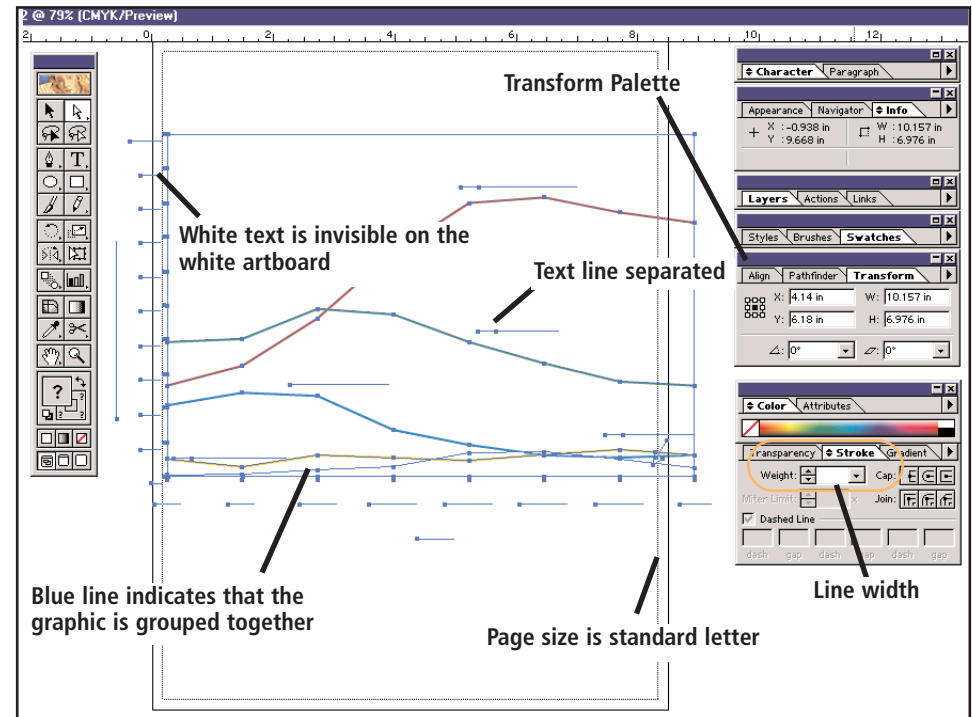
These instructions are for scientists who design complex graphs in PowerPoint and are familiar with Illustrator. Designers and technical writers who assist with graphs may find these steps useful as well. For beginning users of Illustrator, you will want to learn the basic tools and functions of the program first in order to avoid confusion.

Steps

1 Copy and paste graph into Illustrator

2 Scale to finished-size

3 Tips to touch up graphic—text, lines

4 Save for PowerPoint or print

How to Use Instructions

Use these instructions as a guide for how to import a graph into Illustrator from PowerPoint. Tips on how to improve the graph and how to save the graph are provided. Because Illustrator is a professional art program, you will find that these instructions only begin to tell you how to create graphs. Consult your Quick Reference Card provided with the software for shortcuts, tool tips, and palette descriptions and Illustrator Help files for additional instructions. These instructions were written for Illustrator 9.0 but may be applicable to earlier versions.

Figure 1. **PowerPoint graph pasted into Illustrator.** Palettes on the right are for formatting the graph including character attributes, transform options, color, and line tools stroke width. The palette on the left is the list of tools to use for editing the graph. Refer to the Quick Reference Card for information on both the palettes and tools. In this example, the text and lines are white and are invisible except by the blue line showing the graph is selected and grouped.

1 Copy and paste graph into Illustrator

Open both programs. In PowerPoint, select and copy (**CTRL + C**) the graph.

Switch to Illustrator and press **CTRL + V** (or choose **Edit > Paste** from the menu) to paste the graph. Keep the graph selected.

Note: The graph may appear oversized (see Figure 1 above) and you will use step 2 to correctly scale the object to your finished-size.

PowerPoint graphs tend to have white text on dark backgrounds; the text in Figure 1 has white text and is invisible when first pasted into Illustrator. See step 3 for making quick corrections.

WARNING: Save your file after pasting the graphic into Illustrator (**File > Save**). Also, save your document between changes in order to avoid losing your work entirely or having to repeat changes.
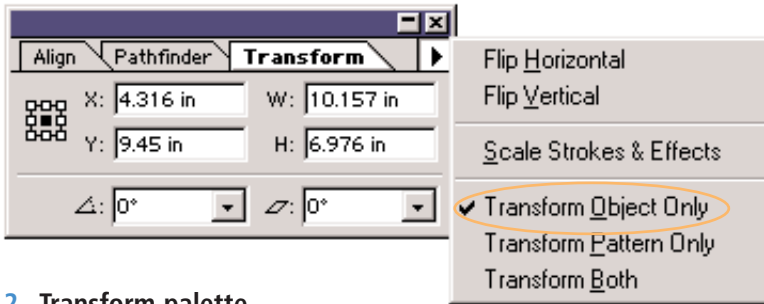
Figure 2. Transform palette

2 Scale to finished-size

Option 1: From the main menu, select **Object > Transform > Scale**.

Enter the desired size in the Uniform Scale field with the preview box selected and press **OK**. The graph should scale uniformly keeping the x- and y-axis proportional.

Option 2: Click on the Transform palette tab (Figure 2). If the Transform palette is not open, press **Shift + F8**.

Click on the arrow (top right) to expand the option. Select the Transform Object Only option.

Now, click in the width field and enter the width. Press **CTRL + Enter** to apply the value for the height and scale the graph proportionally.

3 Tips to touch up graphic—text, lines

Text
Using the Direct-Select tool click on one line of text.

Go to **Menu > Edit > Select >Same Stroke Color**. All the text in white should be selected.

Change the text color to black using the Color palette.

Note: Text may separate when pasted into Illustrator (see Figure 1). You can correct this by retyping the text into one line. Or, select the text (not text box) directly in Powerpoint. In Illustrator, use the Text tool to draw a text box first, and then paste the copy.

Lines
Using the direct-Select tool, click on one line.

Go to **Menu > Edit > Select > Same Stroke Color**. All the lines with the same color should be selected.

Change the line color to your choice using the Color palette.

Tip: Change the line width by using selecting the Stroke tab in the Color palette. Enter the width or select one from the drop-down menu in the Weight field. See Figure 1.

4 Save for output to presentation or print

Click **File > Save As** from the menu or **CTRL+Shift+S**.

Select Illustrator (*.AI) from the drop-down menu labeled Save As Type and press **Save**.

Tip: Always save the graph as an Illustrator file first by choosing . If you need to make changes at a later time, you need to use this file (called a native file.) Then you can resave or export the graph for output.

Save for PowerPoint
Click **File > Export** and select **TIFF** from the drop-down menu. Then press **Save**.

Select Medium (150 dpi) Resolution from the dialogue box (Figure 4). For PowerPoint, always use a lower resolution to limit file size load. TIFF files can be imported into PowerPoint as any other graphics and will view the best.

Figure 4. TIFF dialogue box (FIle > Export)

Select LZW compression and choose the correct platform (PC or Macintosh).

Tip: If your PowerPoint graph has a background color, you will need to place a background in the Illustrator graph because TIFF files do not have a transparent background (background is always white unless you apply a color to it.)

Save for Print
Export the graph as a TIFF (see above instructions and Figure 4).

Now, choose High Resolution (300 dpi) instead of medium.

Select LZW Compression and choose the correct platform (PC or Macintosh).

Tip: Most journals prefer the TIFF file format for graphics. For other printed materials, TIFF files will work and may be preferred by some printers and designers.

CAUTION: The TIFF file format cannot be changed. If problems arise during printing, the TIFF file creates a problem for printers and designers who need to be able to work with the graphic file. Avoid wasting time and jeopardizing deadlines by finding out what the requirement is for graphic format by your publishing group.
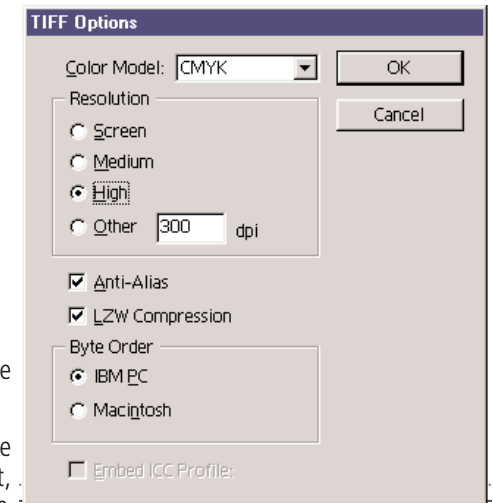
Tip

Use a file name that describes what the output is, for example, Graph1_med.tif for a TIFF saved at medium resolution.