

Scientific Figure making: From MATLAB to Adobe Illustrator

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Introduction

This mini-guide will show you how to use MATLAB images in Adobe Illustrator. One of the key features of Illustrator is that an image is linked to the original file before you permanently embed it into the Illustrator file.

Note: if the images are linked and not embedded you cannot share the Illustrator files of the person you have shared it with does not have access to the original files. This function requires that you keep all the linked files in the same location.

Once you have linked a file to Illustrator it is possible to go back to MATLAB and change your graphs. If you save the linked image as the same name (override the save), then Illustrator will show the new file. This will allow you to update your graphs while you are still working on the drafts of your paper.

Best practice is to use the Arial font in MATLAB, most journals allow and/or prefer an Arial font.

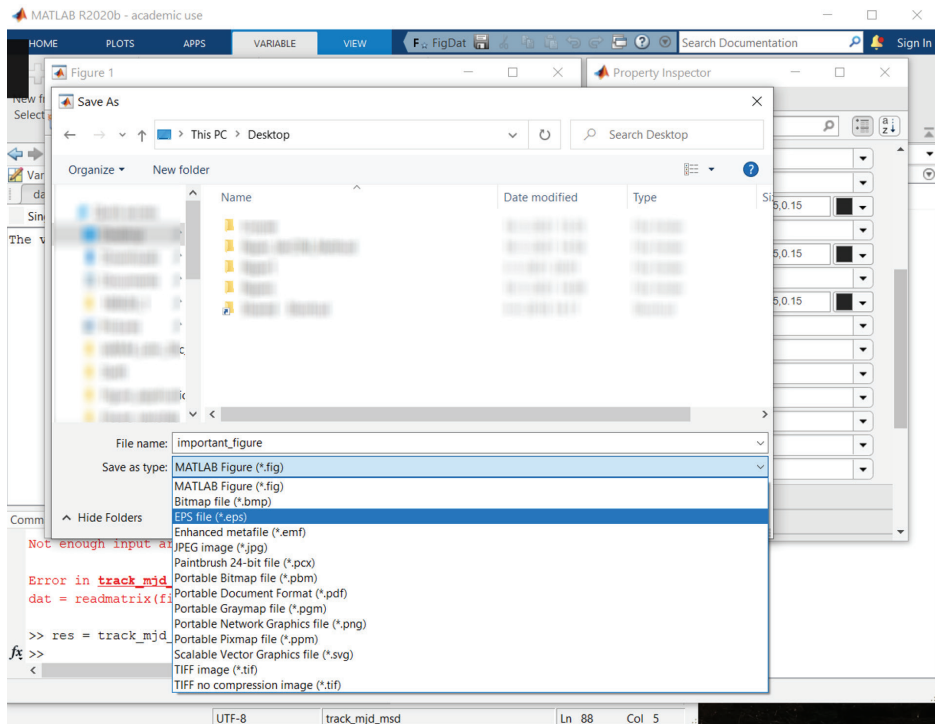
MATLAB allows you to export many different file types, but .eps files retain the vector format best.

Have fun making awesome figures,

Lizah

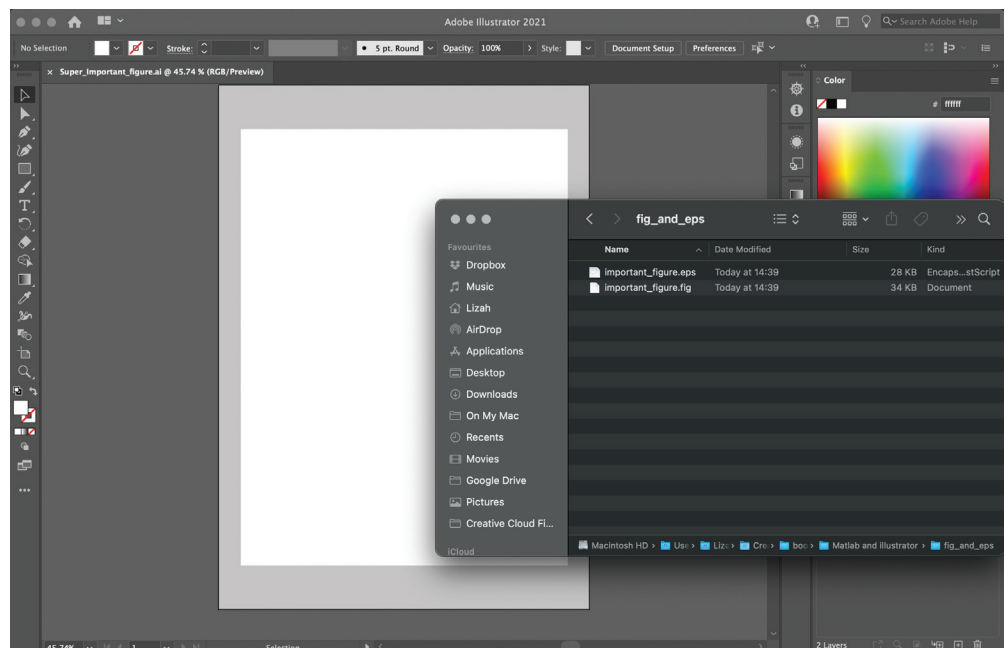
1: Export from MATLAB

From MATLAB, export your file as both an .eps and a .fig file. The .fig file is your MATLAB file that you can modify whenever you want, the .eps is a vector type file that can be read by Adobe Illustrator. The 'Save As' function allows you to save the file in different formats.



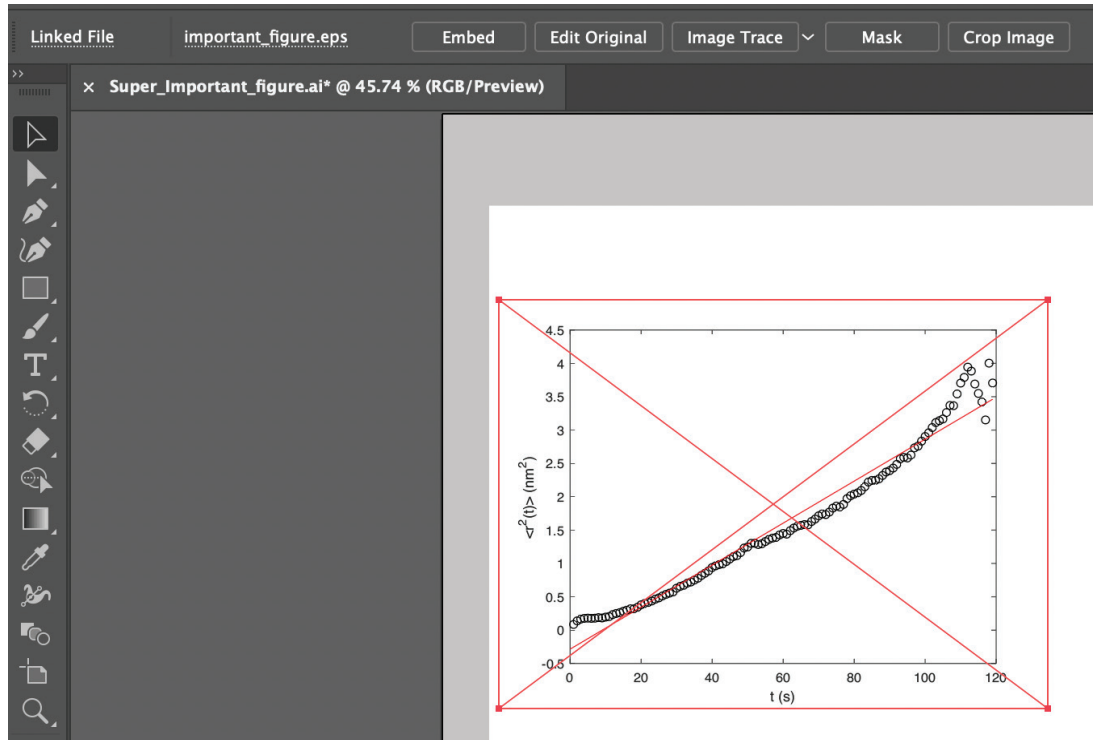
2: Add Figure to Illustrator

Drag and Drop your image into Adobe Illustrator. Good practice is to keep your files organized so you know which .fig file belongs to which .eps file.

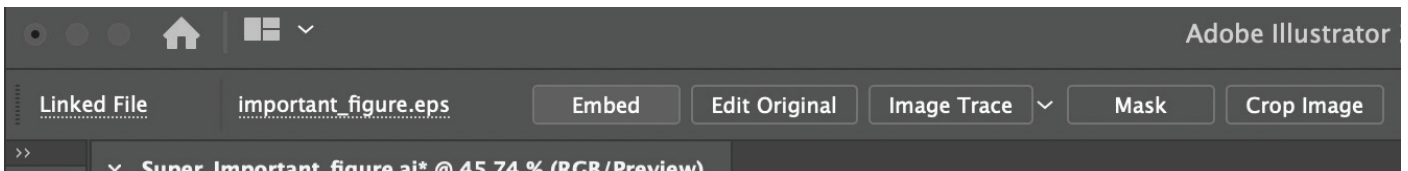


3: Linked File

This is now a LINKED FILE. If I delete the original file it will disappear from the Illustrator file. BUT if I change the original file then it will be updated in Illustrator. Best practice is to leave the files linked until you are sure of the last version. But even if you embed them and change your mind later you can just add a new image.



4: Embed file



When you embed the file it's part of the Illustrator file and it will allow you to modify the text on the axis. You may find that you want to change the font or the size of the text.

