

Using Inkscape to Prepare Files for the Epilog Laser

Chapter 1: Change Document Size

The Launch Pad presents using Inkscape to prepare files for the Epilog Laser.

...Video that briefly goes over using Inkscape to prepare a file to use with our laser. First things first we want to change the document size. Go up to file, document properties, switch from millimeters to inches, and then we change it to whatever size our material is. For example, if we have a piece of wood that is seven by ten that's what we would do. Seven by ten. Hit seven by ten. Obviously it won't be exact because maybe your material that you want to engrave on doesn't have exact measurements but get it close as possible. I'm going to change this to an 8 by 8 square. And I've changed the document size to 8 by 8.

Chapter 2: Import an Image

Now we're going to import an image that we might have had on our desktop or what not. Importing an image onto Inkscape is quite easy. Once again go to File, choose Import, select the file you want to import, choose the best quality, hit ok, and your image is imported for laser.

Now it's not absolutely required but it's a good idea to convert this bitmap image that you imported into a vector image. Doing that is pretty easy. Again, you go up here, choose Path, choose the trace bitmap function, trace bitmap comes out, you see a preview. If you don't see anything you can just increase the brightness threshold. If there's too much or it turns all black then you lower the brightness threshold. Usually 450 to 500 is good enough and you see the preview shows that. Hit okay. You could close out of that, and then you have your vector image that's been converted. You can go ahead and delete the original image. The vector image is the one we'll use and then once you have your vector image made you can adjust it how ever you like.

Chapter 3: Make a Cut Line

Next, I'll show you how to make a cut line. This is a way for the laser to determine to cut the material rather than simply engrave. Not all material can be cut but for thinner pieces of wood, this is what we would do. We can make cut lines using squares or ovals or lines. I'm just going to use the square as an example. You could barely see it but this is what you do. You pick the square and you choose Object, fill and stroke and there we go. If I actually turn on the fill you would see that it turns black so I'll turn off the fill stroke.

We have the stroke color as red. The color doesn't matter but it's just important for our sakes to denote for our reference that oh yeah, I made this into a cut line. What is important is the size width of the line. It's .001 inches thick and so the laser knows to cut that. If it was thicker, like .01 inch as you can see here now this it's a thicker this will just be etched. It'll be etched rather than cut, so let's change that back into .001. So now we know that this will be cut. So for our example here, I'll make this bigger. The black android logo will be etched, but this square will be cut. It's a cut line. Now if we wanted the square to be etched we would make that line thicker.

Chapter 4: Adding Text

Finally to adding text adding text is pretty easy. Select the text button here click on it, write what you want, and if you want to change the font and text style, go up here, choose text, text and font. You can have a list of different fonts. Yours will be different. Choose apply, that changes how the font looks. Apply changes where the font looks, so that's what you do there. You can close out of this and then once you have the font the way you like, that's where you can change the size and positioning of the text that you made. So don't worry about the size and positioning when you first make the text because you can always change it afterwards. That's true for the image you downloaded or imported and the cut lines that you made you can always change the positioning after you do it to where you like it.

Chapter 5: Saving a PDF through Inkscape

Once you have it done to where you like it you want to save it. I always like to save two copies, I save one as an Inkscape svg so I'll do it and I also save one copy as a PDF. Save As, let's choose PDF, click Save, this dialog box comes up. It's very important that you choose convert text to pass, otherwise the font won't be saved, and you hit ok. Now saving a PDF through Inkscape is different than making a PDF using microsoft word or PDF creator. It has more data and it actually has the cut lines and stuff saved as the PDF so it is a little different and there you have it.