

## **Preparing Files for Display Here at The Focus Group**

Here is a quick summary of how to prepare photos for display on the digital projector here at the Focus Group. We really want to see your work – DON'T BE BASHFUL!!! Probably the quickest way to improve is to share. Feedback (if desired) and just pushing yourself a little bit are always good things.

I want to be clear that any file format and file size is welcome. We don't want to exclude your participation here – it is your club. These guidelines are just that, guidelines. What follows below is a good, easy way of preparing files for fast display.

First, a little bit of explanation as to the recommendations I am making below. First, remember that the maximum resolution of the projector is 800 pixels wide by 600 pixels high. What this means in practical terms is that even if you provide an image from a 39 megapixel medium format camera back, the absolute vast majority of data from your image will be tossed out before it even makes it to the screen. It is better that you do this rather than the projector – at least you will know in advance what will show up.

The second issue is file size. We don't need a huge file for display. Large files take a while to load into the computer and to process for display. Since we want a lot of members displaying their work, we'd rather spend the time on showing images rather than waiting for them to download. If possible, try to keep them under 125 K. Not every image, especially something with an immense amount of data in it, will compress this much, but it does give you something to shoot for.

The last issue is file format. JPEGs work best. There are several reasons for this. Almost every computer and image processing software will recognize that format. Second, they tend to be smaller, so they take less time to download and process for display. Finally, they are a good format for image sharing, either by email or by cd/dvd.

I want to make two more comments before giving instructions. These are for display here at the club. You may have different needs outside of the Focus Group, so you may need to resize and resave for those usages. JPEGs are small – don't worry about having multiple copies. The second comment is that I am assuming that you are working with some vaguely recent version of Photoshop, either Elements or the full-blown version. I have used Elements since version 1 and these instructions will work there. For those of you with other software editing programs, the same ideas work there, but perhaps under a different name.

Also, please try to keep the number of images to no more than 10-12. In the past, this has not been much of an issue, but if we have many members showing their work, time can be an issue.

Step 1: First, process the image as you normally would. Save the image as a good copy to do whatever you normally would with it. Don't forget to back it up!

Step 2: This is where we actually get into saving the image for club presentation. Open up the file if it is not already opened.

Step 3: This step will depend on how you processed your image and may not be needed. First, go to LAYER on the toolbar and FLATTEN IMAGE. Hit that. It may be greyed out, in which case you can skip that. Second, go to IMAGE on the toolbar, and then MODE on the dropdown box. Check "8 Bits". This might already be checked. Again, if it is, just go on to the next step.

Note for more advanced users: Actually, since we are saving as a jpeg later, we don't really need to flatten the file. This is actually a workflow step I have generically adopted for other projects and use here out of dumb habit.

Step 4: On the Toolbar, go to Image. On the dropdown box, go to Image size. Click on that. A popup box should open up.

Step 5: Near the bottom of the box, in the document size area, there is an entry for resolution. Change that to 72 and the box to the right to pixels per inch. When you do that, you may notice that the numbers in the width and height boxes have changed dramatically. Don't worry about that because we'll address it in Step 5.

Note: for advanced users, you really only need to do step 6. This is a carry over from the old days of simple video cards.

Step 6: In the pixel dimensions area, change the longest dimension to 600. If the shot is a horizontal (landscape format) this means that it will be 600 pixels wide, by some smaller number high. If it is a vertical (portrait format) the shot will be 600 pixels high, by some smaller number wide. The box on the right of the number should read pixels, not something else.

For more advanced users, we can actually go to a maximum of 800 pixels horizontally and 600 vertically, but the 600 number above makes things easy to remember, especially as you get started.

Step 7: Hit "OKAY". The box will close and the image will shrink a lot. This is a good thing.

Step 8: Back to the tool bar on the top, go to "SAVE AS". **DON'T** use "SAVE"!!! You will overwrite your original version and will have to start again from the original if you need to print an 8x10 later!!!

Step 9: Go to the file name entry and give it a file name. Don't worry about the fact there may already be a name there. Overwrite it, preferably with something new so even if you accidentally used "SAVE" rather than "SAVE AS", you won't overwrite up your original version.

Step 10: Under the file name entry, there will be a box for format. Find "jpeg". If that is not there, most likely the image is not 8 bit or it has layers. You'll need to be sure you did step 3. Hit "okay".

Step 11: That box will close and a new one will come up labeled jpeg options. There are two things of interest here. First, at the bottom is a size box, which tells what the file size will be if you just hit "OKAY" now. At the top, there is a slider for images options and image quality. As you move the slider from right to left (large file to small file), you'll see the file size at the bottom go from a big number to a small number. What is happening is that as you move from a high quality number of 10 to 12 (large file) to a low quality number 1-3, the file gets more compressed and smaller. Generally, you want to use higher numbers to avoid strange artifacts showing up in the final file. For display on the club projector, generally using a number 7 or higher will get you a good combination of image quality and file size under 125 K. Use the largest one that gets the file there.

After you are done, hit "OKAY"

Your file is now ready to be brought in.

#### Some other comments.

If your image has very little detail and has a wash of a single color, you might find that it is already under 125 K at the maximum image quality number of 12. I have one picture, at 400 by 600 pixels, is 32 K. In this case, just hit okay.

If your image has a large amount of detail, you might find that it is very difficult to get near 125 K, even when your image quality number is 4 or 5. Don't worry. Just boost the number to between 8 to 12 and let the file size do what it needs to. It happens occasionally.

Keep in mind that 125 K is not some magic number. It is just a good compromise between file size, image quality and processing time when the file is opened up at the club. Quite honestly, I pulled it out of thin air (well, not quite – it used to be a file size limit on a photography website I am involved with, for the above reasons).

Dan Borzynski

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