

Marketing your business on the Internet – Part 6

Preparing Images for Website Publishing using Adobe Photoshop



Have you ever come across a website with a very nice design but with dreadful images? I'm sure you have. Nowadays, many site owners use professionals to design their website template and then take over uploading samples of their work to showcase their products.

In this article I will show you some basic tips and tricks how to prepare images for your website.

Source Image

Half of the job is getting a good source of images. Many are using digital cameras to capture images. I recommend taking a few extra shots from different angles so you will have a few options when selecting the right one for your website. Before taking pictures it is important to set up your digital camera in the high quality mode utilising the camera's full mega pixel potential.

Pay extra attention to the layout and also check that there are no foreign objects between your camera and the sign or product you are shooting with the camera. Also, when taking photos, take into account the layout (portrait or landscape) for design for the site.

Downloading images from the camera

When downloading images make sure the software you are using is not converting images into the low res jpeg versions. These conversions make the files smaller but also change the colours and details level. Downloading images in tiff file format without any resizing should be your preferred option.

Cropping and Resizing

Open your image in Photoshop. Choose

the crop tool to crop the image to the desired layout as demonstrated on picture 1. After cropping you can resize the image to the desired size. Note that the screen resolution is using 72 DPI so image with resolution 72 DPI will be shown in the actual pixel size.

Now you need to decide how big you need the images for your site. These days most computers use a monitor resolution at least 800 X 600pixels but more likely 1024 X 768pixels.

Therefore your resized picture size should fit the screen as well as your website layout. Normally I would suggest as a simple guide using size approx. 350 – 450pixels for longer side of your image. Keep the shorter side proportionally smaller. See picture 2.

Adjusting Image

Now is the time to adjust the image for contrast, colours, brightness, saturation etc. All those tools can be found in the menu under Image > Adjustments. Make your picture sharp in contrast but also make it slightly lighter as saving it to the web format tends to make pictures a touch darker than the originals. Picture 3 shows the available tools to manipulate images.

Saving for WEB

Once you're happy with the image look, feel and layout you can proceed to save it to the web format (hotkey is Alt+Shift+Ctrl+S). Adobe uses its ImageReady module to preview defined output before saving. This is a great way of choosing the best file format and settings with the preview. In the window you have the original image and you can have up

to three different options to preview and also change the original image at the same time. You can use several pre-defined GIF and JPEG file formats (Picture 4). The rule of thumb is to use the jpeg format for more complicated images where many colours and high detail has been captured. Use medium to high quality settings meaning the lower compression. If you need to use transparent backgrounds in your images one of the GIF formats should be selected.

One other great feature is the preview calculation of the size of the final image. Again you should have the images optimised for the website to be no larger than 50-80k. It's possible to use larger images on your site but download may take much longer for users still using a dial-up connection. It's always a compromise between the size and the quality of the image. If you are getting large file sizes try to go back and resize the image proportionally smaller say 250 – 300px and try again.

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