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CREATING IMAGES FOR THE WEB

The purpose of this paper is to explain and clarify how to create images for the web. By creating images is meant having the correct format, size and dimensions etc. that are suitable for the web. If you have already got your images saved on your computer then this paper will explain how to efficiently modify them for the web using an image editor (Adobe Photoshop 6.0 was used at the time this article was published; Later versions of Adobe Photoshop might vary slightly in appearance and wording). A practical example will be used to demonstrate how to create the images.

The Original Image

It is a very common observation that originals are more valuable than copies. This is also the case with Digital Images. When you scan, download or save an image to your computer make sure that you do not alter the original. The reason behind this is that if any error or mistake occurs in altering the original you will lose any means of recovering it.

The best thing to do is create a folder called 'originals'. Save all original image files in that folder. When you want to change or alter the images for a specific use, like publishing them on the web, you would make copies of the original preferably in another folder. How to make copies will be shown later in this document.

Creating an Image for the Web

Creating an image for the Web is a very straightforward process using Adobe Photoshop. Let's assume that you have an image file called 'robot.bmp' in the 'originals' folder and that Adobe Photoshop is installed on your computer. The steps to create an image for the Web are as follows.

1. Open the file in Adobe Photoshop by clicking on the 'File' Menu. The 'File' menu can be found at the top left in Adobe Photoshop. Click 'Open...' and select the image file from the correct folder.

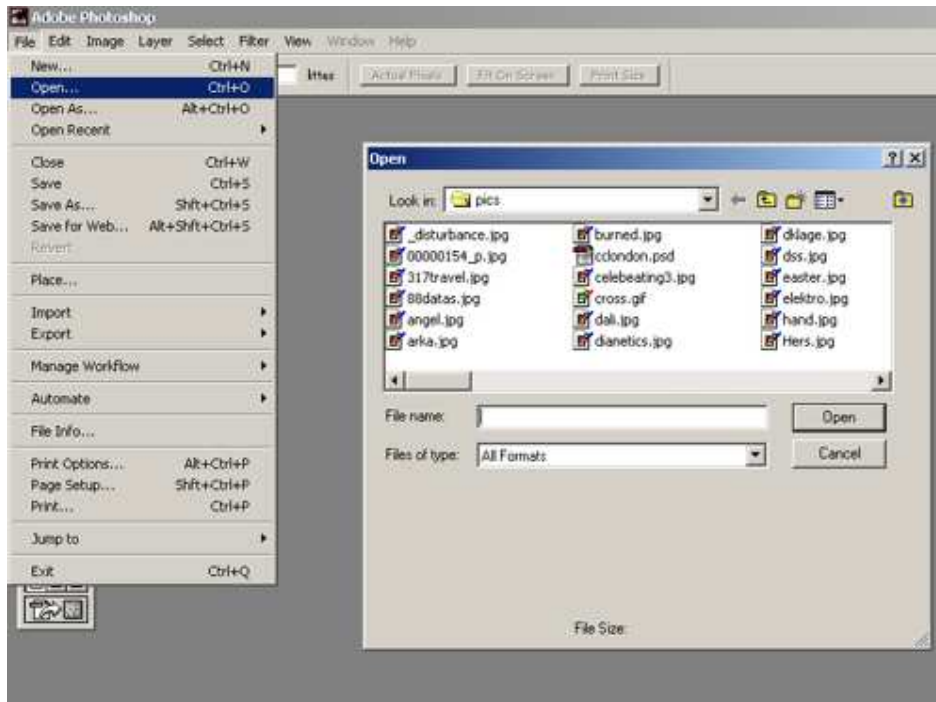


Fig 1. Open the image file using the 'File' Menu.

- Now that the image is open we can resize it. We do this by clicking on the 'Image' Menu and choosing the 'Image Size...' option.

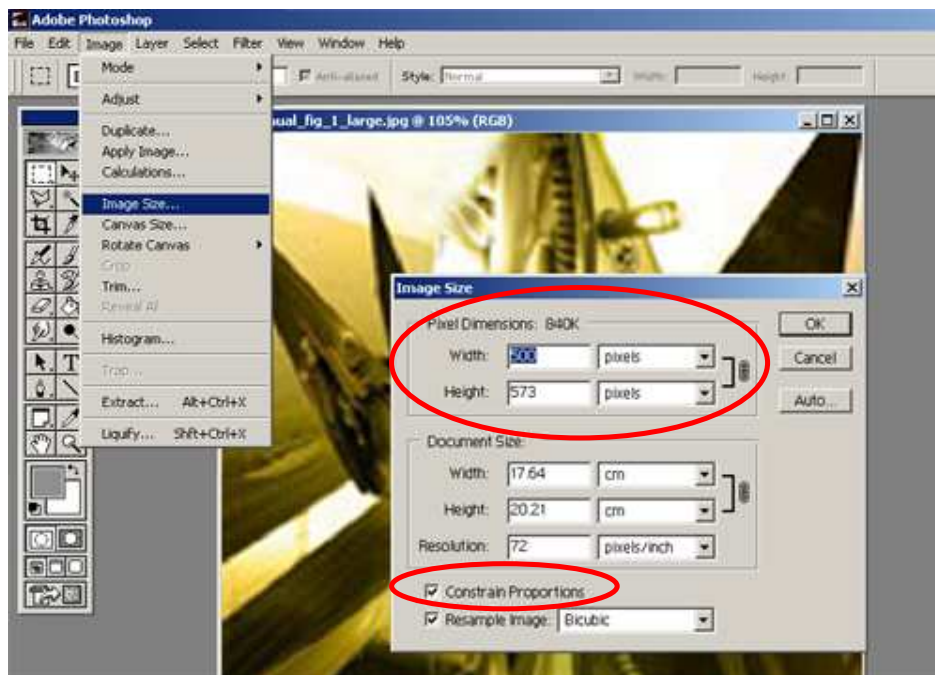


Fig 2. Image Size Properties

This displays the Image Size Window which has a few options in it. We are only interested in the width and height of the image at the moment which you can find in the 'Pixel Dimensions' area. First make sure that 'pixels' is selected in the dropdown box in the 'Pixel Dimensions' section. Also make sure the 'Constrain Proportions' option is checked as indicated in figure 2. Once that is done change the height or width depending on which

one is longer. In this case we will change the height to 250 pixels (Note for Portfolio and Photostore Clients: You will find the maximum dimensions allowed in your gallery when you attempt to upload an image from your Portfolio or Photostore Admin section). The width will automatically adjust to the height so that the image stays in proportion. Click on 'OK' and the image will resize to the dimensions specified.

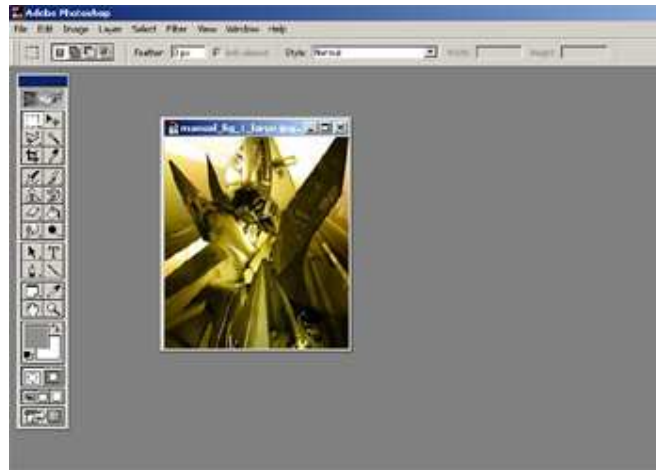


Fig 3. Resized Image

3. The last step is to save the image for the web. We do this by clicking on the 'File' menu and selecting the 'Save for Web...' option. The 'Save for Web' window shown in figure 4 will appear.

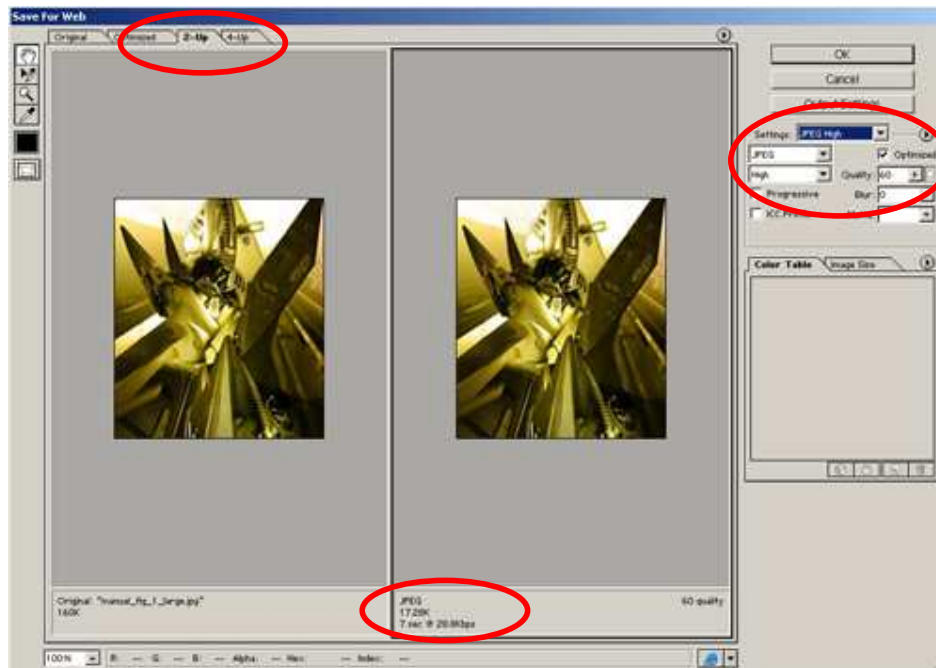


Fig 4. Save for Web

Select the '2-Up' tab at the top of the window. This gives a split view of the original and the new image. On the right you will see a 'Settings' section. Choose 'JPEG High' from the 'Settings' drop down box. The quality will change to 60. The file size is shown at the bottom of the split window for each image. In this example it is 17.28Kb so we are within the prescribed limits.

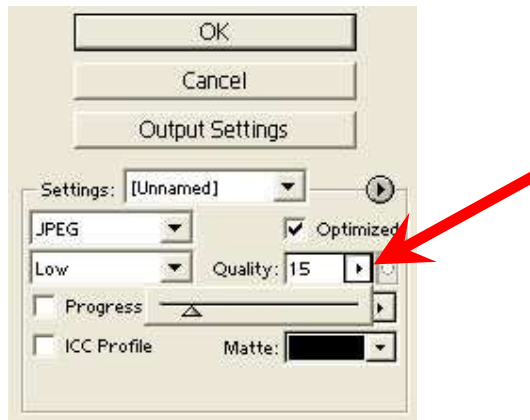


Fig 5. Quality Slider

Now comparing the two images if you feel the quality is not good enough then you can raise the quality through the 'Quality' setting. Keep in mind that high quality means larger file size. In this case we don't want our file size to exceed 20Kb. When you are satisfied with the quality and the file size meets your requirements, click 'OK'. A window will appear where you will select the folder you want to save it in. Name the file so that the name itself can identify what image it is. For example, 'robot_thumbnail.jpg', 'robot_small.jpg', 'robot_original' etc. Click Save.

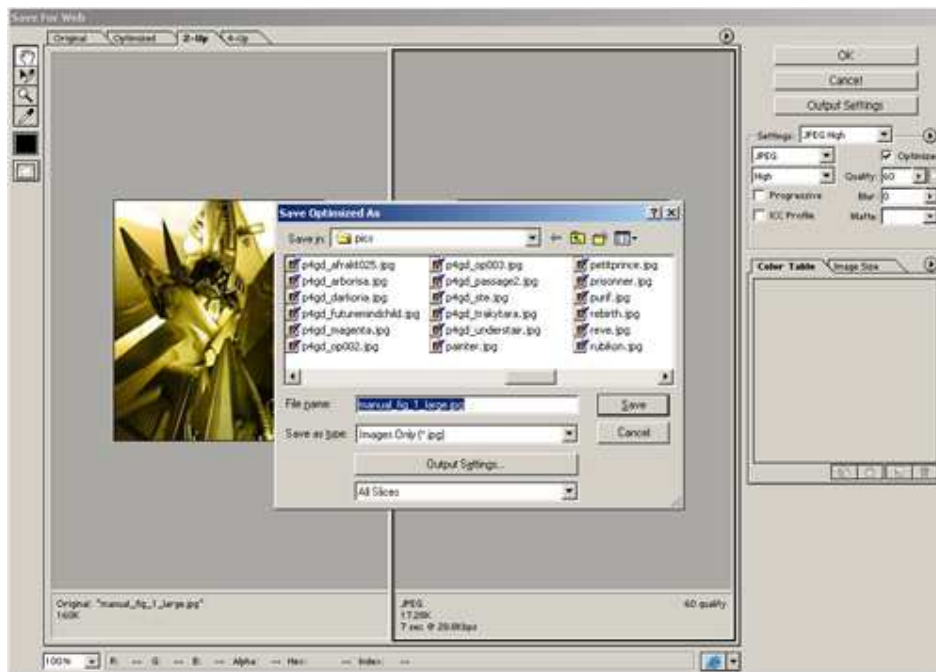


Fig 6. Saving File to Folder

Your image is now fully optimized for the web.

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