



## Tips for Website Images

By Pam Sargent

### More or Less

That is the question, how much is TOO much? One of my pet peeves is a site that is so image heavy it takes forever to load. It is my opinion that when a customer has to choose between a site that takes too long to load, and one that loads almost instantly, they will usually choose the latter. So, what is the solution? Well there are two really, one is to put few (if any) images on your site, and the other is to decrease the “weight” of your images and choose specific formats so they take up as little space as possible on your server.

### Size and Weight

Image size and what I call “weight” are not the same thing. Size is the physical size of the image in pixels, inches, or centimetres, which is what you see. The “weight” is the size of the image in bytes, kilobytes or megabytes. That is what you cannot see but makes all the difference in how fast your page loads.

### Resizing

Other terms for resizing include:

- Re-sampling – general term,
- Up-sampling – to create larger images
- Down-sampling – to create smaller images

Your image-editing program will automatically resize your image for you using a formula. You can do this in html as well simply by assigning values of height and width to your `<img>` tag. In effect re-sampling either increases or decreases the amount of pixels in the image and can affect its quality.

Note: resizing images in html does NOT affect the “weight” of the image. I personally recommend resizing your image in your editor and then uploading to your site. Remember to keep a copy of the image in its original size. When you reduce the amount of pixels, they are gone for good.

### Formats

So let us take this step-by-step, what format is best for website design?

There are two standard formats available for all browsers as well as one other format that is limited to two browsers that I know of.

**JPEG** - stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group. This format supports 16 million colors and uses a “lossy” form of compression. This means that it throws away unnecessary information and/or colors. This format can reduce image “weight” up to 5% of it’s original size and is ideal for photos and larger, more complicated images that have a lot of shading. I do not recommend it for images with small text, as the text can get blurry.

**GIF** - stands for Graphics Interchange Format. This format supports only 256 colors and uses a “lossless” form of compression. This means no data will be lost forever. The bonus with gif format is that it supports transparent images. That is images where the webpage background color shows through the parts of the image that you want to show as clear. This is best for smaller, less complicated images with fewer colors such as buttons and banners. However, it does not handle shadings and semi-transparencies well. Another bonus with gif is the availability of creating animated images.

**PNG** - I do not know much about the format called PNG, but I can tell you what I have found out about it with a bit of research. PNG stands for Portable Network Graphics. It is a license-free alternative to gif. The latest version of Netscape and Internet Explorer supports this format, though I am not sure which, if any, of the other browsers do, so be careful how you use it. This format is an improvement on the gif transparencies and can better handle semi-transparencies, though it does not support animations. Png can compress an image up to 20% more than the gif format and uses lossless compression.

## **Optimize**

You have heard (or seen) me talk about optimizing or compressing an image. They are basically the same thing, lowering the amount of colors and/or resolution (the amount of pixels or dots per inch) of your image to reduce the amount of data saved on the server.

## **Resolution**

You can use a scanner or an Image creation/editing program to change the resolution of your image. What resolution is best? Most computer monitors use a resolution of between 72 and 95 dpi (dots per inch) so setting it any higher than that would not only waste space but also not look any better and setting it lower only reduces the image quality.

Your editing program can also compress the image automatically using a special formula. The best advice I can give you on this is to tread carefully and experiment to create the perfect balance between image “weight” and image quality. Remember jpg format uses “lossy” compression so save the original image first before experimenting with it, otherwise that data will be lost forever. Likewise with changing the resolution or resizing your image. I cannot stress enough the importance of retaining a copy of your original image.

**More compression = smaller size = less resolution = less image quality.**

When you decide to create a website, you must first consider what your target market is and what sort of technology they are likely to have available to them. If they are most likely to use top of the line equipment and the most current and widely used browsers, then you can use more images and/or less compression as well as png graphics. If you expect them to be a bit behind the times, then simplicity is the best policy.

## Questions & Answers:

[mlzambos] I have one to get us started.

[delaney] k

[mlzambos] Which programs do you recommend for resizing and re-sampling our Pics in?

[delaney] Photo shop is the industry standard, and if you start off with that program, it's fairly easy to learn.

Personally I use paint shop pro and would recommend that.

[mlzambos] Thanks

[mlzambos] Any other questions out there?

[delaney] your welcome

[PattyD] ?

[mlzambos]>[PattyD] go ahead with your ?

[PattyD] How do you "animate" a gif?

[delaney] to animate a gif, you would have to create several different views of the same image

[delaney] then use another program such as animation shop to put it together

[delaney] hold on a minute sorry

[delaney] k animating a gif is like creating an animated cartoon, you have to create it frame by frame, moving 1 or 2 seconds in each frame, then you load all the separate images into a specific program, animation shop for paint shop pro, I'm not sure the name for photo shop

[ally] Fireworks MX can do that too, animate

[delaney] and that program will put it together for you using a formula to create a kind of slideshow of the images at the rate of speed you dictate

[delaney] yes fireworks is another good program ty ally

[mlzambos] Captivate can do it too I think

[delaney] ty Chelle,

[PattyD] Thank you

[mayihelp] How can I create a banner?

[delaney] dang phone ringing off the hook NOW of all times lol I got my son to play receptionist for me

[mayihelp] little VA in the training

[delaney]

[mlzambos] Great question Julie.

[delaney] I didn't see the question sorry

[mlzambos] How can she create a banner

[delaney] k gif format is the best format to use for banners unless you are using just images or larger print, you would start off by estimating the screen size your target market would likely use

[delaney] rule of thumb is generally 800 pixels wide, then gather together the images you want in the program of your choice. I would keep each element on separate layers so you can play around with your placement

[delaney] you want something simple, not too busy, but with all your pertinent info easy to find at a glance

[Jeannine] ?

[mlzambos]>[Jeannine] go ahead

[delaney] what is the banner for? some sites specifically state a size that is acceptable for them, if you are using it on another site, 800 is the norm for your own main page topper

[Jeannine] what programs are out there for banners?

[delaney] yes Jeannine?

[delaney] sorry I seem to be stopped did you ask your question yet Jeannine?

[Jeannine] yes, what programs do they have out there for designing banners to add to different sites?

[mlzambos]>[delaney] You okay over there.

[mlzambos] Okay we are seeing what happen to Pam hold on.

[delaney] hmmm I'm not sure what you are asking? Both photoshop and paint shop pro can design banners, there is another open source one, sorry can't think of the name at the moment, but I have never used it

[delaney] sorry lol was thinking and I'm not sure I'm getting all messages

[mlzambos] Illustrator is another one

[Jeannine] ok, that's what I'm asking. I was wondering

[Jeannine] That's something I'm interested in doing

[delaney] illustrator is a component of photoshop

[mlzambos] Wow I learned something new today.

[ally] i design my banners in Fireworks at the moment, as a PNG file then export them

[delaney] lol well you CAN get it separately

[ally] either to a GIF or JPG

[mlzambos] Very cool. Any other questions?

[delaney] fireworks is another program I'm hoping to check out one day, after I finish learning photoshop

[mlzambos] Pam you do really well in Photoshop.

[delaney] any program that allows you to create layers is good for banners or any other imaging you need

[mayihelp] So you recommend photoshop for banners

[delaney] ty Chelle not as easy for me as Paint Shop Pro tho

[Jeannine] Photoshop is out of my price range right now.

[mayihelp] I'll have to look to see if I have any of these programs

[Jeannine] I just went price it. WOW

[delaney] I personally recommend Paint Shop Pro, but if you are starting out and want to go with the industry standard Photoshop is the way to go, learning PSP first will inhibit you

[mayihelp] I would love to create my own banner just for the fun of it

[ally] yup u need layers so you can control each image/text you add to your banner

[Jeannine] Right now I have PhotoSuite II that I use for my photos

[coxadmin] ?

[delaney] I'm not familiar with that program, who makes it?

[delaney] yes Lynn?

[mlzambos]>[coxadmin] Go ahead with your ?

[coxadmin] I've been hearing a lot about The Gimp

[coxadmin] is it a good programme to use for images and banners?

[delaney] oh yes THAT's the open source program ty for the reminder

[Wendy] if you have a Mac.. they have Gimp Shop which is very much like Photoshop

[delaney] from what I've seen of the program, it allows you to use layers and is very similar to photoshop and paint shop pro, so yes I would say it's a good one

[coxadmin] thank you

[delaney] I'm not that familiar with it but I've heard a lot of good reviews about it

[mlzambos] Okay time for I more ?

[mayihelp] In web designing which program do you find the easiest to work with. Right now I just use html codes in notebook.

[delaney] photoshop IS quite expensive, paint shop is less so which is why I started with it, and each new edition gets closer to photoshop in quality

[delaney] htmlkit is good for simply coding, frontpage is easy for what-you-see-is-what-you-get designing

[Jeannine] ic I'm very familiar with corel products

[delaney] htmlkit allows you to preview your work, gives you the freedom to do your own coding and also can do javascript and vbasicscript

[delaney] oh and also can do php

[mayihelp] I am designing a page using Yahoo Site Builder and it is so easy and fun

[mlzambos] Jeannine if you use Corel then I would think Corel Draw would work also for Graphic Design in Lawyers

[delaney] is where you can find it

[mlzambos] Yahoo Site Builder is good but it won't work if you want to host your site on another server outside of Yahoo.

[delaney] I didn't know corel draw uses layers now

[ally] remember, sometime what you see is what you get, turns into if you might what u see

[Jeannine] That's actually what I first learned on. I was indisplay ads at a newspaper and that's the program we used to design ads.

[ally] ops, that didnt make any sense  
 [mlzambos] Good thing is that you can export it to FP I know for sure. Some site builders don't give you that option.  
 [delaney] made PERFECT sense ally lol and very true  
 [ally] a site sometime doenst loke they way it was suspose to be when you built it  
 [Therese] Hi Folks - Just wanted to jump in here found a site called  
 [delaney] FP frustrates me sometimes cause I'll have it coded perfectly, it will look find on the preview but screws up when I upload  
 [mlzambos] very true.  
 [Therese] you can look at your graphics in the different browsers  
 [delaney] oh kewl Therese ty  
 [Therese] Anyways just thought I'd share that - BFN  
 [mlzambos] Thanks Therese.  
 [delaney] byby  
 [ally] when i am building my site i use all the views  
 [ally] and the code view  
 [mlzambos] Okay I want to take this time to Thank Pam for her time. She may be able to stick around and answer your questions some more but if not you can email here at:  
 [delaney] I used to, but didn't really want to download all the new browsers  
 [ally] if you want to alter say some text, sometimes it is better to delete it from the code view  
 [Jeannine] Right now on my site I have my portfolio in pdf files and I would rather do it differently  
 [mlzambos]>[delaney] insert your email address here please  
 [ally] how many pages in the portfolio  
 [Laurie] Thanks Pam - that was great!  
 [Jeannine] about 4 or 5 but they are different links but pdf taks so long to load  
 [Jeannine] yes, thank you Pam  
 [PattyD] Thank you Pam.  
 [delaney] a pleasure  
 [Jeannine] another typo. takes so long to load. Sorry ya'll for my typos.  
 [coxadmin] Thank you, Pam  
 [mayihelp] \*clap\* Thank You Pam \*clap\*  
 [Sally] thanks!

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*Pam Sargent is our creative mind and expert in graphic design. She has been taking clients personal photos and turning them into works of art as well as creating original artwork that is a combination of sketch art and digital art.*

*Her business, [Delaney Imaging](http://www.delaneyonline.com), ([www.delaneyonline.com](http://www.delaneyonline.com)) has been in business since late 2002. She was recently approached by Innocence International, requesting one of her images for a charity auction to take place this November. Along with creating works of art on the computer, she recently created a new font that uses common music symbols. She is currently working on an E-Book that will be for parents of children and that has coloring pages for kids along with cartoons that the parents will enjoy of common childhood behaviors.*