

On Becoming an e-Agent— Digital Images – PART I Part 35

By Jo Becker, BA

In the computer world, each file has a certain file format, dependent on the type of software used to create it, or dependent on the intended use of the file. When discussing picture files, there are several possible file formats but two are the most widely used and most important to understand.

The first, .jpeg, has emerged as the standard format for pictures used on the internet. JPEGs (an acronym meaning joint photographics expert group) was designed to carry a great deal of image information in the smallest possible package which makes it ideal for transferring via e-mail and for upload to/download from websites. Most .jpeg files needn't be larger than 72 to 96 pixels per inch; this is also referred to as resolution.

The second file format, .tiff stands for tag image file format. Tiffs file are larger files and take up more space on your computer, but are the preferred format for printed use. Using a high-resolution .tiff (200-300 pixels per inch) will give you the best quality graphics on your printed flyers and brochures.

If you're planning to print the image, use a .tiff. If you want to send a picture to a friend, or are sending a graphic to your web designer for use on your website, you will need to be sure the file is in .jpeg format.

Another important consideration is the dimensions of your images. A very general rule of thumb is to make your pictures 640 x 480 pixels unless you know you want them to be different. This translates into approximately 8.8 x 6.6"—pretty good size, eh!

When you import your pictures from your camera into your computer's image manipulation software, you might (depending on preset settings) have an image that's 1000 x 750 pixels—that's over 13 x 10". Or maybe each image is 1700 x 1275 pixels—that equates to over 23 x 17" big. When people email you an image that fills your entire screen and you have to scroll down and over to see the whole thing, they haven't bothered (or likely didn't know how) to resize the image first saving you from this hassle. Make your friends and clients love you, not hate you by being sure you resize your images before sending them out. Each software program is different but look for something like "resize" in your menu options. The place to designate resolution should be close by. Some programs tie these two measurements (dimension and resolution) together so changing one automatically changes the other. There are times when you might want this and times when you won't but in either case that's beyond the scope of this article for now.

Note that a lot of digital cameras allow you to predetermine the output size of your images automatically making your pictures 640 x 480, which saves you some steps at the computer and allows your camera to store more pictures than it would otherwise. Sounds good, eh? Well, not exactly. I would strongly recommend *not* doing this. What you give up in return is a reduction in the overall number of pixels each picture you take has. This affects your picture quality, especially if the picture will be printed and/or enlarged. So, if you bump into this setting on your camera, just forget you ever saw it.

If all of this seems too overwhelming, ask for help, but keep trying! Before long you will get the hang of it. In the meantime, *hang it there!*

Jo Becker has eight years of licensed real estate experience. As a former broker, she knows how important, and sometimes scary, technology and self-promotion can be. Jo has provided personalized one-on-one marketing consultation and computer software training to the industry since 2002.

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