

Digital Image Compression

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TECHNOLOGY

Image compression technologies work to minimize the file size of digital images. The three common compression formats used for images on the web are JPEG, GIF and PNG.

PURPOSE

Finding the best compression format for an image yields the highest image quality with the smallest file size.

PROCEDURE

1. Open the image in the image editing tool.
2. Save a copy of your file using the best compression format for your image and needs:
 - » JPEG: best option if transparency or animation aren't needed.
 - » GIF: used for small images or illustrative images with blocks of the same color. Supports animation and transparency.
 - » PNG: good for images with uniformly colored areas. Uses lossless compression which results in a higher quality image, but files sizes are larger. Supports transparency.

3. Tune compression settings to lowest acceptable quality level with optimal file size reduction.

TOOLS

- » Desktop apps: Photoshop, Gimp, or iPhoto.
- » Web-based/mobile processing: Pixlr.
- » Compressors: gifsicle, jpegtran, optipng, pngquant.

CONSIDERATIONS

- » Keep copies of your original uncompressed images.
- » Only compress your images once.
- » For online projects, "Save for the Web" or "Optimize for the Web" option found in most image editing tools.



BEGINNER

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