

COMPUTER TIPS



Image Size, Emailing and Resizing

by
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First a couple of definitions.

Pixels is a term derived from “picture element” – the smallest element of a picture, and that is how we measure pictures.

Digital cameras are marketed by Megapixels or million pixels, and that describes the total size of the picture it will generate.

Dots per inch is how we measure computer screen resolution. Computer screens only display at 72 dots per inch (dpi). Some of us recall computer screen resolutions at 800 x 600, or newer versions such as 1,024 x 768.

For this discussion, let’s make pixels and dots interchangeable.

In the summer months, I head up north and that is mostly good news. However, the bad news is that I lose my broadband access to the internet, and I end up with “dial up” access to the internet. What does “dial up” mean? It means that those ads you see on TV about frustration with dial up are all true. With dial up, my access to the internet and to email is VERY SLOW. What used to take seconds with broadband now takes minutes, and in some cases many, many minutes, especially when someone sends very large files or pictures.

The reason I bring that up is that it is very good practice to resize images for email, so they will display better and transmit faster.

If you have a 3 MP digital camera, the size of that picture is 2,048 pixels wide by 1,536 pixels high. If you multiple those dimensions, you get just a tad over 3 million pixels or that familiar term of 3 MP.

Next, the file size of that image as stored on your computer is about 1 megabyte (MB), or 1,000 kilobytes (KB), and that is a large file to email.

Lastly and most noteworthy is that 2,048 pixel wide picture will show up on a computer screen (72 dots per inch) as 28 inches wide! Since your computer screen is only about 15 inches wide, you can only see the upper left corner, about 25% of the total image. Has that ever happened to you, when you got a very large picture via email? You can only see the upper left corner of the image. Depending on the software you are running, this may not be totally apparent to you, but the figures don’t lie.

My recommendation is to resize pictures for emailing purposes to an optimum size of 640 x 480. This results in images that 1) take only about 70 KB to store and they will transmit very quickly even with “dial up” and 2) the images will show up quite nicely on an 800 x 600 screen. When I resize to 640 x 480, I then like to actually imbed the photo right into the text of the email, instead of adding the picture as an attachment. Try it, Inset > Picture > From File.

Needless to say, there are many ways to resize images. Most image editing programs provide that capability. If you are new to image editing, I have recently been discussing the use of the free Irfanview image editing software. To see a detailed tutorial on how to resize images using Irfanview, please click on the following:
www.somewhere-in-time.net/tutorial/irfanview/

If you have any thoughts or questions on this article please contact me at jwilfore@hargray.com.