

Quick Image Editing using Online Tools

Web Maintainers User Group

Why use an online editing application?

No software to buy, install, update, load, etc.

No registration required for most.

All the functionality needed to prepare images for the web, and nothing extra.

Pretty easy to learn, a lot of editors out there are very user-friendly.

When not to use an online editor

For advanced editing with layers, filters, etc.

Desktop applications are better at compression, especially with GIF files.

More comfortable with a desktop application.

Other options: Photoshop or Photoshop Elements,
Fireworks, GIMP

Finding the right image

Campus beauty photos from College Relations: <http://www.macalester.edu/collegerelations/services/photos2009/>

Faculty and Staff Photos: M:\Mac Photos 2003-2008

Historical photos: Macalester Archives E-Resource <http://content.clic.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=%2Farchives> - contact the library for permission.

College Relations has many other images and can help in selecting a good image; contact Julie for more information.

Choosing the right editor

A matter of personal preference.

I like picnik (<http://www.picnik.com/>) because it is fast and easy to use.

If you want to explore other options, here is a handy chart that compares the features of similar applications: <http://www.smileycat.com/miaow/archives/online-image-editors.php>.

Resizing

If replacing an existing image, you can find out the size needed by right-clicking to view properties.

Scale the image to the correct size before inserting it into the webpage. (Make sure width and height attributes set in Dreamweaver or in the HTML match the actual size.)

If the picture has many people in it, make sure everyone is clearly visible when the image is shrunk down. Otherwise, it might be better to crop it so that fewer people are in the shot.

Cropping

In an ideal situation, the photographer or graphic artist should take care of image composition, including cropping.

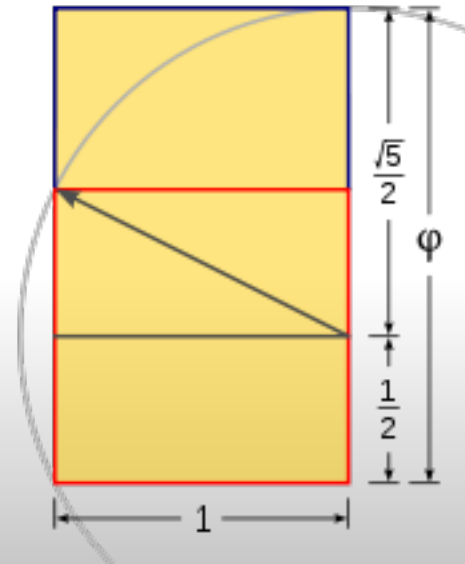
In the real world, there are some rules of thumb to help out:

The Rule of Thirds



This photograph demonstrates the principles of the rule of thirds (Wikipedia)

The Golden Rectangle



A diagram of the construction of a golden rectangle from a square. (Wikipedia)

Choosing the best file format

Images take up a lot of bandwidth, compression is important.

- **JPEG** is a good format for photographs.
- The smaller the file size, the less clear the image becomes. Find the best compression ratio for the image.
- **GIF** is better for smaller images with few colors and clean lines.
- Ideal for text or textures.



A photo compressed with successively more lossy compression ratios

Macalester

Image sample saved as .jpg (1.3kb)

Macalester

Same image saved as .gif (>1kb)

Saving the Image:

When choosing a file name, use the same rules as HTML files:

- No Spaces or special characters
- Keep it short, but descriptive (10-20 characters)

It's good practice to keep images for a web site in their own folder.

Add the image to your website

Always use an "alt" tag with a short description.

If the image is not "content", leave the description blank (`alt=""`).

Always be mindful of copyright.

Use a caption with a source indicated where appropriate.

Dreamweaver and Contribute both make inserting an image and description easier.

Resources

- Picnik Online Image Editor: <http://www.picnik.com/>
- Chart of features for many online editors: <http://www.smileycat.com/miaow/archives/online-image-editors.php>
- Web Services page on images: <http://www.macalester.edu/web/docs/images.html>
- Training from Information Services: <http://www.macalester.edu/infoservices/training/index.html>
- Documentation from Web Services: <http://www.macalester.edu/web/>

Contact information

Web Services www.macalester.edu/web

Sara Collins Suelflow, Director of Web Services
ext. 6307 or suelflow@macalester.edu

Zach Bajaber, Web Developer

ext. 6537 or zbajaber@macalester.edu

College Relations www.macalester.edu/collegerelations

Julie Hogan-Underdahl, Web Designer and Editor

ext. 6195 or hogan@macalester.edu