



Resizing Photos - Balancing size and quality

(George Skarbek (Age Newspaper article) *Published here with permission)

There are several ways to reduce the size of photos to email to friends and relatives without a noticeable loss in quality. However using compression tools such as WinZip will not work.

This is because picture formats such as JPEG or TIFF are efficiently compressed and the best WinZip or WinRar can do is to reduce them by about 3 per cent.

Your choice of size depends on what your relatives will ultimately want to do with the images.

- If they just want to view them on the screen, then, by resizing the image you should be able to reduce the 2 MB file to less than 10 per cent with no visible difference on the screen.
- If they want to print postcard-size prints, about an 80 per cent reduction is possible.
- However, if they want to print A4 or larger, only a small reduction will be possible.

Assuming you are using JPEG, you could use the compression options of the JPEG format, but probably best of all is to resize the image and then alter the JPEG compression settings.

Obtaining the balance between image quality and image size takes some practice. By increasing the JPEG compression, the file size decreases rapidly without noticeable loss until a point where some loss is visible.

Many image manipulation programs allow you to view the resultant image as you test to find where that point occurs.

My five-megapixel camera produced a 14 MB TIFF file that was indistinguishable from the 3.5 MB JPEG best-quality file. However, by altering the JPEG settings I reduced the file size to about a third of that.

I then asked friends to view a greatly magnified section of each of the images on the screen. They could not agree which one was best. By resizing and setting the JPEG compression ratio and then viewing these images in full on a 19-inch monitor, there was no visible difference between the original and a resized and compressed JPEG image that was 58 KB, or less than 2 per cent of the 3.5 MB JPEG file!

For viewing on a screen I suggest that you:

1. Resize your large image to 800 x 600 or 1024 x 768 pixels and
2. Change the DPI setting to 72. However, always Save As with a different filename so that you retain the original image.

If you do not have a suitable image manipulation program that can resize images, you can download a tiny free program called **Irfanview** from irfanview.com. This program can do much more, including edit the images, sharpen them, resize them, do batch conversions, view thumbnails, create slideshows that can be burned to a CD and

more. It can read and write more than image 20 formats as well as a variety of movies and sound formats.

FastStone Image viewer www.faststone.org/ (free) is also highly recommended and offers a photo catalogue as well. It has a very user friendly interface, and it can also do most that Irfanview can do

GS Aug 2019