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IMAGE
OPTIMIZATION
GUIDE

IMAGES + SEO

The importance of optimizing the images on your website

When you optimize the images on your website, you are strategically controlling all aspects of images that can increase visibility within a search engine. When you have the right image format, placement, size, frequency and naming conventions you can increase the likelihood your site will easily be found in organic search results.

Page load speed is used as a key factor for evaluating the quality of user experience on a website. Page load speed also has a direct impact on a website's bounce rate, which is also used to measure the overall quality of a website.

By optimizing or controlling the size of files you are using for images, you can improve your website's performance and increase the chances that you will connect with your audience.

Google is now using mobile speed as a ranking factor for mobile searches in addition to the already established desktop speed ranking factor. As a page load time increases from one second to seven seconds, the probability of a mobile site visitor bouncing increases 113% [source: Think with Google].

1
FILE FORMAT

- .jpgs are ideal for photos.
- .pngs are good for line art, logos and photos (but tend to save at a larger size; .pngs are also ideal for logos on a transparent background.
- .gifs are good for line art and photos.

2
FILE SIZE

You can use different WP plugins or apps (imagify or Adobe Photoshop) to easily compress your images so they are in the optimal range of 30KB - 100KB.

Larger files sizes can slow down your page loading time and increase bounce rate.

3
FILE PLACEMENT

Wordpress looks best when an image is landscape and centred or left justified within text.

4
IMAGE FREQUENCY

Images should be relevant to—and add depth to your subject matter. A good rule of thumb is to use an image for every 150 words. However, images increase load time, so if it doesn't bring something valuable to the piece, omit it.

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IMAGE SIZE

For Wordpress, your images shouldn't exceed the width of your text, this usually falls between 600-800 pixels wide. Try to use landscape images, as portrait images hide the text and make the layout less attractive. You can edit images (crop and resize) in Adobe Photoshop, Preview (Mac Only) and GIMP.

600-800 px

IMAGE RESOLUTION

The optimal resolution for digital images is 72 dpi / ppi which stands for 'dots per inch' or 'pixels per inch'.
1 inch = 72 across on a 72 dpi resolution image.
The image above is 11'x72 dpi = 792 pixels across.

5

IMAGE CREATION

Be mindful of simply taking an image for use off the internet. Some images are subject to copyright, some are okay to use freely, and some can be used but must be attributed. Creative Commons, Pixabay and Unsplash are good free image resoures. Another idea is to use screenshots to help illustrate your point where appropriate. You can use a web-based editing tool to resize and perform simple photo editing in Canva, Pablo and Pixlr.

6

IMAGE SELECTION

- *Avoid obvious stock images—they usually don't add very much to the topic and can look unprofessional.*
- *Let your images 'explain' or 'clarify' your topic such as charts, infographics, etc.*
- *Choose images with faces as they are usually positively received.*

7

FILE NAMING

Use keywords in image titles, image descriptions and in alt text to be sure that someone who is visually impaired can understand your image, and that the image is properly recognized by Google.
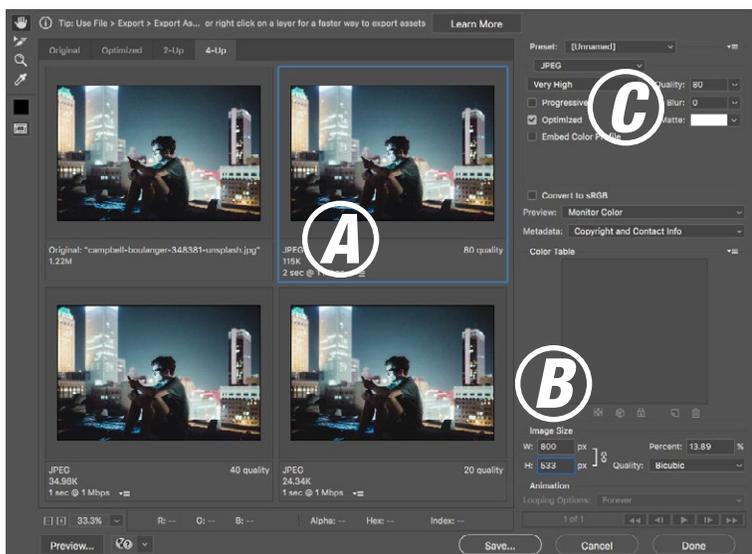
USE FILE>EXPORT>SAVE FOR WEB to optimize your images in Photoshop

Ⓐ *Review the estimated download speed. Make sure it is less than 3 seconds load time or 30-100KB.*

Ⓑ *Set the size of the image in pixes to make sure the images are not larger than they need to be.*

Ⓒ *Reduce / increase the quality of the image. There is a sliding scale from 0 - 100 that allows you to control the resolution, or data points. Use this scale to make sure you have a small file size without losing image integrity. Make sure that 'optimized' is checked off.*