



USING PHOTOS ON A COMPUTER

Don Bridle writes about using photos in your documents.

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Three main questions arise frequently to do with pictures:

1. How do I resize this photo?
2. How can I find that photo?
3. How do I get good prints?

Resizing a picture in a word processing document may seem easy. Just click on it, click and drag the handles (blobs on the corner and sides) and you are in charge. However, the size of your final document can be huge, even with small pictures in it. This can make sending and receiving by email very awkward, especially if one of the recipients has a slow connection. Members rightly complain when they experience unnecessary delay. If a picture is going to be reduced in size, try reducing the quality as well. This is usually expressed in dpi (dots per inch) and a change, proportional to the size reduction, will greatly reduce the file size.

Members rightly complain when they experience unnecessary delay

My advice is always to work on a copy of the original picture file. This can avoid some of the anxiety over changes that cannot be undone. After a while the creation of several versions of the picture can lead to loss or confusion, so open a new folder (directory) and keep them all together in that. The more care taken in saving pictures, the easier it is to find them again later. Try giving meaningful file names (rather than something like PHOTO26917) and arrange folders in logical order.

Work on a copy of the original picture file

Despite the advertising hype, it is not essential that every club buys a specialist photo printer for final output. Unless you need excellent photographic results, a normal colour inkjet printer can be set to produce very good prints on premium or photo quality paper. For good quality brochures and fliers, colour laser printers are now a competitive price and can save an expensive visit to the Print Shop.

All of these 3 areas can be addressed professionally by using one of the excellent software packages on the market. Whilst it is possible to spend a great deal on these, it is not necessary for most clubs to spend £300 or so just to deal with photographs.

Open-source software for dealing with photos includes:

- ✈ XnView
- ✈ The Gimp
- ✈ And for Desk-top Publishing, Scribus

Depending on what you want to do, there is usually a package to save time, frustration and money. As always, though, some proper training will help to avoid wasted time in the early stages.

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