



Problems e-mailing large PowerPoint and Word documents? Here's how to easily reduce picture size.

The problem with pictures

It's true to say that a picture can be worth a thousand words, and for most people they're an invaluable part of any PowerPoint presentation or report. Unfortunately, they're also memory-heavy and tend to make documents grow in size.

If you have a slow internet connection, you'll have trouble sending your colleagues your PowerPoint or Word documents with all your pictures in, because your e-mail won't be able to handle them.

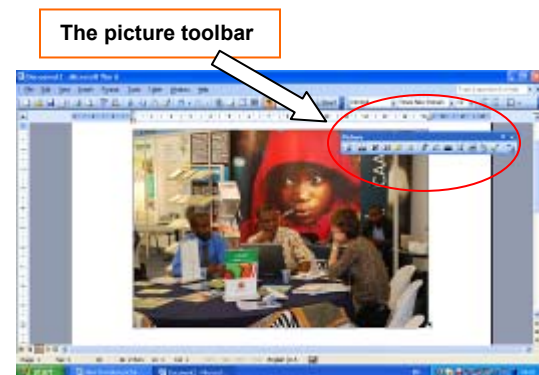
If you work in development, and especially if you are an in-country partner trying to explain your messages to the world in a professional way, this can be very frustrating.

The solution

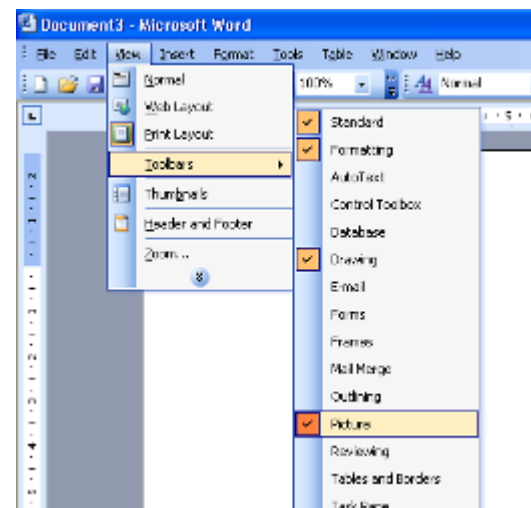
What many people don't realise is that PowerPoint and Word already contain tools that can be used to vastly reduce the file size of pictures without affecting their quality on screen. So, if you want to be able to send your colleagues a stunning project report or a key PowerPoint presentation with all those important figures, these notes will tell you exactly how to do that.

The picture toolbar – the presenter's best friend

In Word or PowerPoint, when you click on a picture a line appears around its outside edge with four editing squares in the middle of each of the sides. At the same time, somewhere on your page the picture toolbar will appear.



If you click on a picture and the picture toolbar doesn't appear, it's because it hasn't been selected in your toolbars list. So, to enable it, go to View>Toolbars and click Picture (you only have to do this once usually).



Through the toolbar you can do all sorts of useful things such as change the picture's size, lighten or darken it, crop it, and vary the way it sits relative to the text. All the pictures in these notes were produced using the Word picture bar, for example.

Just running your cursor over each of the buttons will bring up a tag telling you what it does.



The compress picture button

One of the most important tools in the picture toolbar is the 'compress picture' button. When you select a picture and then press the compress picture button, it automatically removes all the extra information (pixels) that you don't need in the picture at that size.



What do we mean by the 'information' that makes up a picture?

The information that makes up any picture consists of dots (pixels) used to construct the picture. The more dots there are, then the finer the resolution and the bigger you can print the picture.

What people don't realise is that when you resize a picture in Word or PowerPoint it doesn't reduce the amount of information (kilobytes, or Kb) held in the picture – it just makes the picture look smaller.

What this means is that people usually have unnecessarily large pictures in their documents – when a much smaller picture (in terms of kilobytes) will do.

Picture reduction in detail

Just to drive this point home, a 5 Mb picture taken with a digital SLR camera will probably be of a high enough quality to print clearly on a very large poster (3 m x 3 m, for example) if you want. So, it's important that you always keep a high-resolution, high-quality copy of all your pictures, so that you can print large sizes in the future if you want.

TIP! Keep these safe in a folder called 'High res originals'.

Reducing file sizes involves taking out some of the dots (pixels) used to construct the picture. The more dots

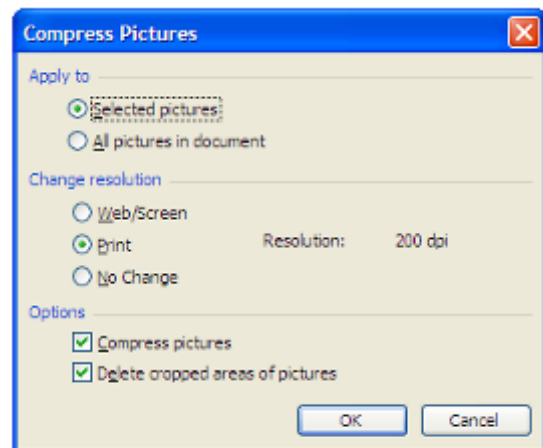
(pixels) you remove then the smaller the size at which the picture will print clearly.

So, if you want your picture to print clearly in your A4 document at full page, half page, or quarter page, most of the dots (pixels) in your 5 Mb picture aren't needed. This means that you can reduce your picture to only a few kilobytes and still have it print beautifully. This will vastly reduce the size of your document file.

The options you'll have

When you select a picture in Word or PowerPoint and then press the 'compress picture' button, you'll be given a couple of options, and it's important you choose the right one.

Basically you'll be asked whether you want to reduce the picture to 'print quality' or 'web quality' and whether you want to apply these new settings to just the picture you've highlighted or to all the pictures in the document (see the image below).



Print or web?

If you want to produce a report that will print clearly on your office computer, then choose the 'print' option and apply it to all pictures in the document.

If you want to produce a document that's purely for viewing on screen, then choose the 'web/screen' option.

The web/screen option is best for anyone working with a slow internet connection (as they are always much smaller than print quality documents). Using this technique and applying it to all pictures in the document, you can turn a massive document into a very small file which someone

with a very poor internet connection in Africa could download.

Alternative method

An alternative way of doing this (and one which some people find easier) is to right click on the picture and then choose Format Picture (this works in both PowerPoint and Word). On the bottom left of the dialogue box that appears select the "Compress Picture" button. This brings up the options for Web or Print compression and "Apply to All", as described on the previous page.

Reduce picture size only once you've finished your document

Once you've made the above changes and closed your document, you won't be able to undo them. So, it's best to save your Word or PowerPoint file under a new name before optimising your pictures.

Ideally, picture optimisation should be the last thing you do. The pictures you optimise should already be placed in the document at the position and size you want before you reduce them in size, for example.

Again, this is because once you optimise the pictures, resizing them can cause difficulties as you won't be able to make them bigger. A photo compressed to print clearly at 10 cm square will begin to blur if you decide to make it bigger as it no longer contains the information needed to print at a larger size.

That's it

And that's really all there is to it. Using these techniques you should be able to send PowerPoint and Word documents to your colleagues wherever they are in the world.

Best of luck,

The SCRIPTORIA Team

A quick summary of steps

Working through the picture toolbar

1. Save your Word or PowerPoint document with a new name
2. Click a picture within the document to select it
3. Click the Compress Picture button on the picture toolbar
4. Choose either Web or Print resolution
5. Select Apply to All
6. Click Apply
7. Save your document again

Working through a right click

1. Save your Word or PowerPoint document with a new name
2. Right click the picture and choose Format Picture from the drop down menu
3. Press the Compress button (bottom left of the dialogue box that appears)
4. Choose either Web or Print resolution
5. Select Apply to All
6. Click Apply
7. Save your document again

© SCRIPTORIA Communications
www.scriptoria.co.uk

This is a SCRIPTORIA training output. If you're interested in learning more about our training courses, please [Click Here >>>](#)