

# Optimizing Photos for your Website

## A Step-by-Step Image Optimization Guide

The following recommendations are followed by web contributors. If you have any questions or additional tips to share, [let us know](#).



We all know the saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” If the photo is too big, too small, or formatted incorrectly, it may say everything that you intend. In the realm of web design and content creation, striking the right balance between aesthetics, performance, and accessibility is paramount.

This article delves into the importance of image file size optimization, introduces the 1MB rule, and provides step-by-step guidance on how website contributors and editors resize and compress images to elevate website performance and accessibility.

### The Significance of Image File Size Optimization

In an era where user experience reigns supreme, website loading speed plays a pivotal role. Large image files can substantially hinder a website's loading time, resulting in frustrated users and potential SEO setbacks. Moreover, accessibility for users with varying internet speeds and devices can be compromised. This is where image file size optimization comes into play as a key practice.

### Introducing the 1MB Rule

One of the cornerstones of image optimization is the 1MB rule – a guideline that emphasizes keeping image files below 1 megabyte in size. This rule encourages content creators to maintain a delicate equilibrium between image quality and website performance.

### Balancing Quality and Performance: Best Practices

Here are the best practices to consider when optimizing image file sizes:

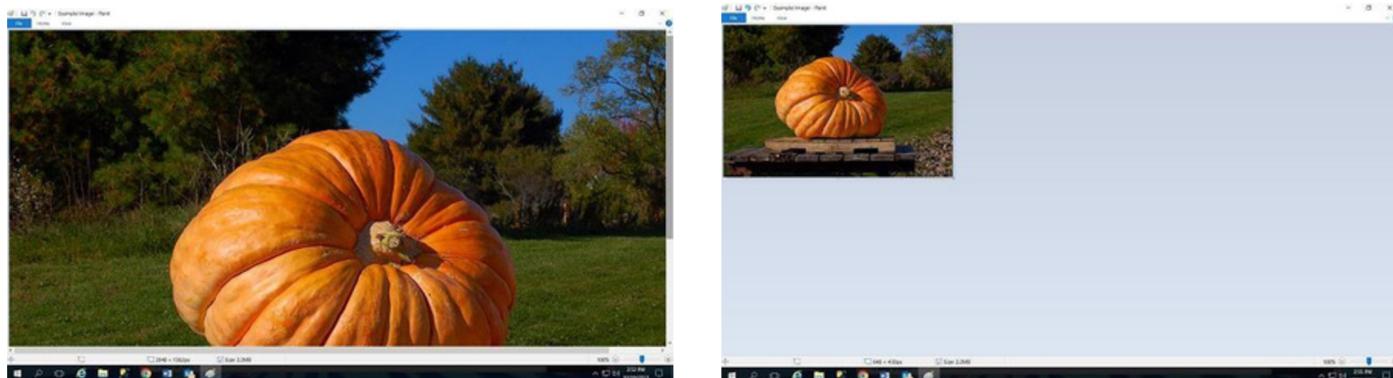
**1. Appropriate Image Format:** Choose the right format for your images. JPEG is ideal for photographs, while PNG is suitable for images with transparency.



PNG images (left) are known for its transparency and is great when you have logos that you want to blend into your page's background. JPG or JPEG (right) is the most preferred and ideal format for images.

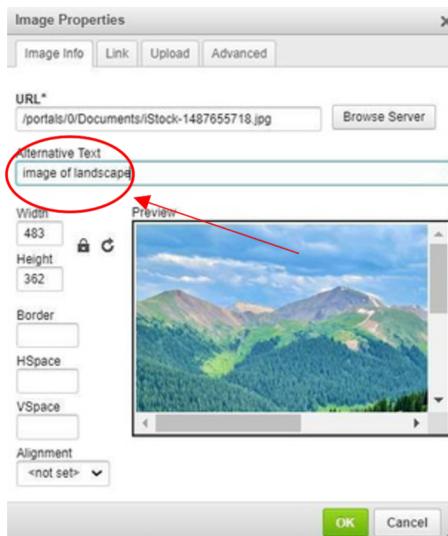
**2. Resolution and Dimensions:** Resize images to match their intended display dimensions on the website. Avoid uploading unnecessarily large images.

**3. Compression Techniques:** Utilize compression tools or online platforms to reduce file size without sacrificing image quality. Strive to find the sweet spot where quality remains high while the file size is minimized.



A comparison of an oversized and high-resolution image (left) and a properly resized and compressed image (right). A properly resized image can enhance a user's web experience while an oversized and high-resolution image will disrupt and slow down loading times. Always resize a large image BEFORE uploading, if resized in the web editor the image will still read as its original size.

**4. Consistent Alt Text:** While optimizing, don't overlook the importance of adding descriptive alt text to images. This is crucial for both accessibility and search engine optimization (SEO).



SEMCOG > Test > Edit Content

Custom Editor Options

Workflow State: Draft ( Version 2 ) ( Content Staging )

On Save?  Publish Changes?

Source

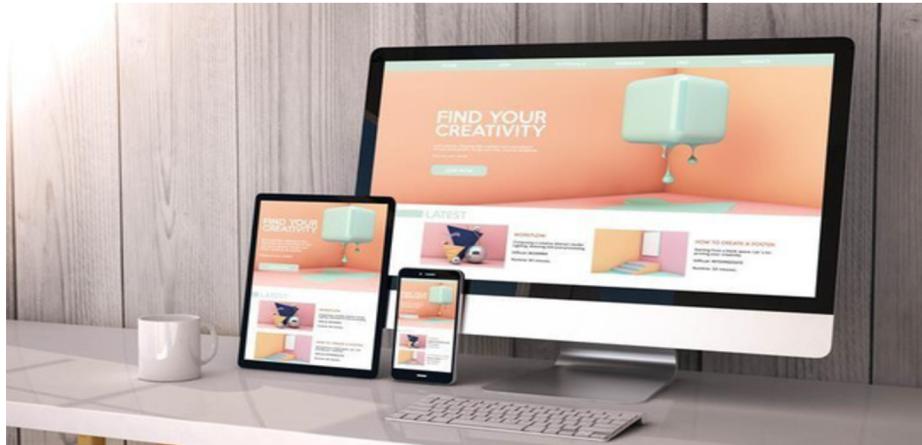
```
<p>Add Content...</p>
```

Save Cancel Edit Preview Version History Rich Text Editor

*Consistent use of alt text improves accessibility and boosts search engine optimization efforts. Both images show the different options on how to add alt text.*

**5. Save and Preserve:** Since you do not want to lose your original photo file, save the compressed image with a new filename while retaining the original high-resolution version.

**6. Responsiveness and Cross-Device Testing:** Preview the optimized image on various devices and screen sizes to confirm its responsiveness. Always consider aspect ratio. Always ensure that the aspect ratio remains consistent for visual integrity across all platforms that users may view it on.



*Image test across all devices and even browsers to ensure the responsiveness of your site, for a seamless user experience.*

For deeper insights, resources like Google's Page Speed Insights

(<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>), The Ultimate Guide to Website Images [2023] (<https://www.cronyxdigital.com/blog/the-ultimate-website-image-guide#size>) and Image Optimization Guide (<https://developers.google.com/web/fundamentals/design-and-ux/image-optimization>) provide valuable information and tools to further enhance image optimization skills.

By following these simple steps for image optimization, you can help ensure your website stands as a beacon of best in-class design and accessibility. High-quality photos are essential to telling the story of Southeast Michigan, and we hope these tips are useful in telling the story of your community. Stay tuned for more tips on more web content best practices and a follow-up article on optimizing photos for social media!