Kate's Ultimate Guide to Submitting Professional Formatted Images for the Artistically Gifted but Technologically Disinclined

Kate Shinn; Last updated: January 12, 2023

What are the image requirements for submission?

Applications must include the submission of four (4) digital images of your work. These images will be used to jury your work and for use in all marketing materials. **Improperly formatted or poor-quality images will be rejected.**

- Images must be in JPG format.
- Images should be a minimum of 5 inches (1500 pixels) on the longest side at 300 dpi.
- Images selected for the cover of the brochure may have to be larger, so be prepared to have an even higher quality image available.
- Title images the following way: LastName_FirstName_titleofwork.JPG

Note that if selected to participate, you are granting EAST the ability to use any and all images submitted for our website or social media promotions of the Tour.

What does any of that even mean? (Image Specs 101)
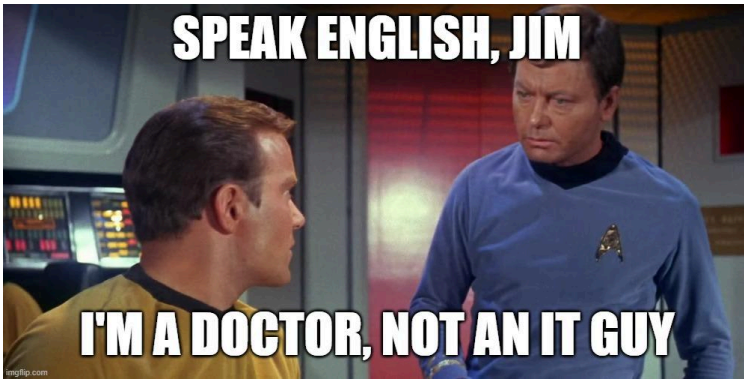
Calm yourself, Bones. It may seem intimidating, but it's actually pretty simple.

DPI stands for dots per inch. Occasionally you may see it referenced as **PPI** (pixels per inch), but for our purposes these are essentially interchangeable. The DPI of an image measures the quality of the image in the same way that thread count is a metric for the quality of your sheets. More pixels and threads? Crisp images and comfy sheets. Very few pixels and threads? Blurry, garbage images and a mysterious rash.

Most images taken with a phone on standard settings are 72 dpi. That means that there are 72 pixels per inch (linear). For Facebook and other general use, 72 dpi is plenty. Generally it is recommended that images be at least 150 dpi for web use and 300 dpi for printing, but the sky's the limit. A digital artist friend of mine draws in 600 dpi so that she has more control over itty bitty details. Where possible, you should always save your work in as high a resolution as you can. Because resizing your image to make it larger won't improve the print quality.

Fun fact: it's all connected! It's important to remember that the size of the image and the dpi are both adjustable, but only to a certain extent– and changing one measurement can sometimes affect the other. So, if you print an 1800 pixel wide image at 300 dots-per-inch, the printed image will be six inches wide. Print the same image at 180 dpi and it will be 10 inches wide. It's basic math—just divide the number of pixels by the DPI.
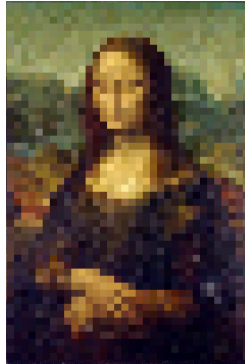
Lower DPI
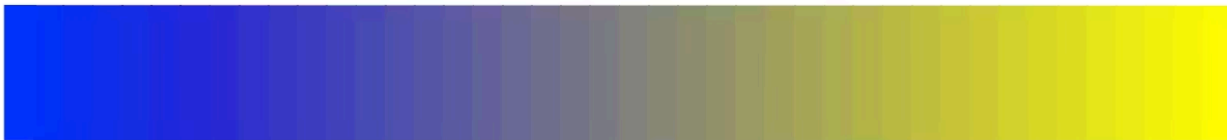
Higher DPI
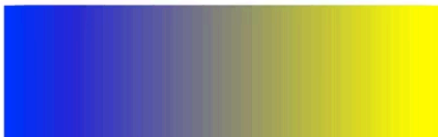
Why should I care? (The Reasoning)

Well, for one thing this is an incredibly useful skill for emerging and professional artists (and has been for 20+ years). Thankfully, it's a fairly entry level tech skill that should be doable by even the staunchest of luddites.

Even Da Vinci knew that image quality is paramount.

For one thing, the quality of your images can affect how digital reproductions of your work turn out. As a general rule, poor quality prints are far less likely to sell, and can negatively affect how the quality of the original art is perceived.

Just about all art shows and galleries will request a certain image size and dpi so they can more accurately judge your works and promote you in their marketing. The biggest reason we at EAST are sticklers for image requirements? Thumbnails are nice and all, but the photos sent to us will be used in online and print marketing, printed in the brochure, blown up for the giant Preview of the Tour Poster, and will be considered for the brochure cover. We need a large, high quality file for marketing purposes, to ensure YOU look like a professional artist, and WE look like a professional artist organization.

You're young, can't you do it for me? (Support)

HA. No. I am a **volunteer** webmaster. My role does not include IT support. I have a full time normal job, I'm trying to run my art business, I have friends, family, and hobbies I'm already neglecting, and I've heard rumors

that the human body requires occasional food and sleep (I'm not convinced). Managing this website takes a lot of time that I am happy to give, but I don't have the bandwidth to give 1-on-1's with 40+ professional artists.

You have resources! If you follow this entire guide to the letter, you've tried Googling a solution and you're still stuck, go harangue your son-in-law, neighbor kid, or whoever else is your go to IT specialist and see if they can help. Ask another artist. Go check with your local librarian (they know more than you think). Edmonds Community College may have resources as well. They certainly have college students who may be eager to help in exchange for some cash.

Have you exhausted all of the above options? Did you REALLY? In that case, please see the "Why isn't this working? (Troubleshooting)" section.

How to: Windows

## Find what an image's dimensions are:

The first step is going to be figuring out what your current image dimensions even are. Open up whatever folder you keep your images in.
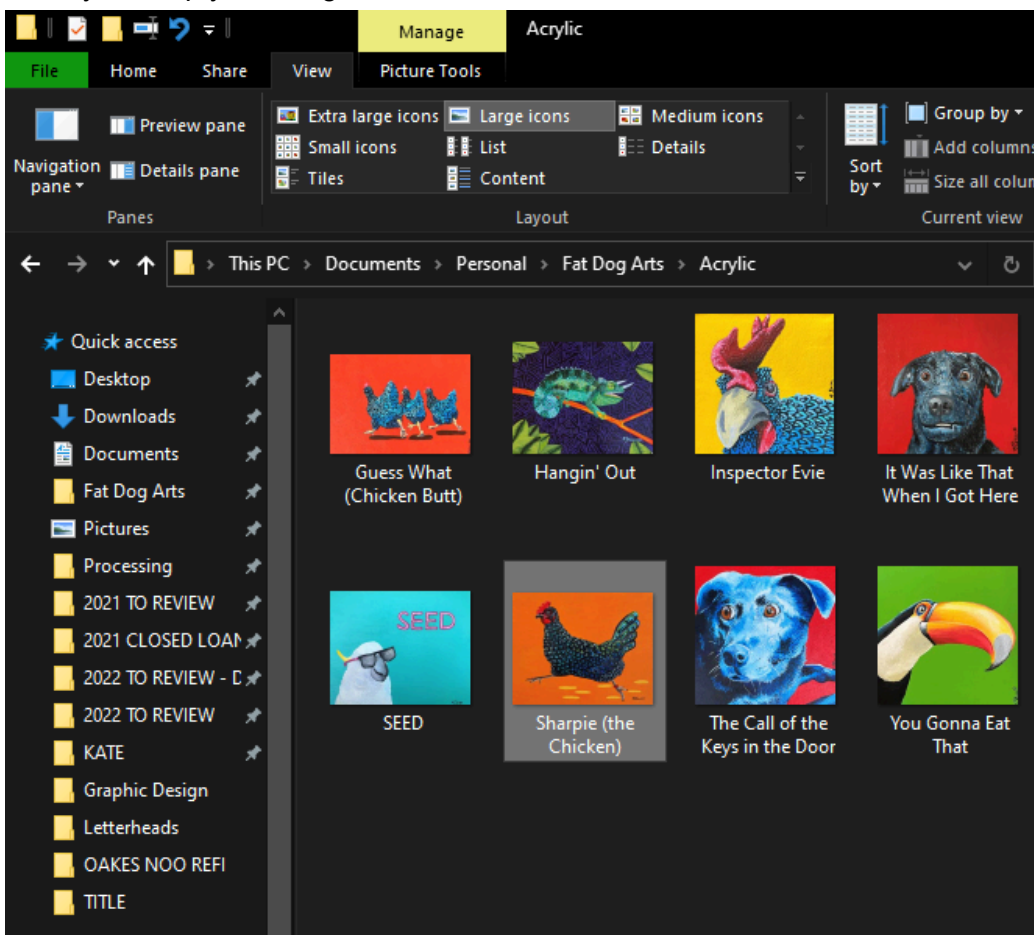

In this instance, we're going to be checking the dimensions of the painting: Sharpie (the Chicken).

Right click the image you want to check, and at the bottom of the menu you'll select "Properties."

A new little window will open with a bunch of information about your file. At the top of the window, you're going to select the "Details" tab.
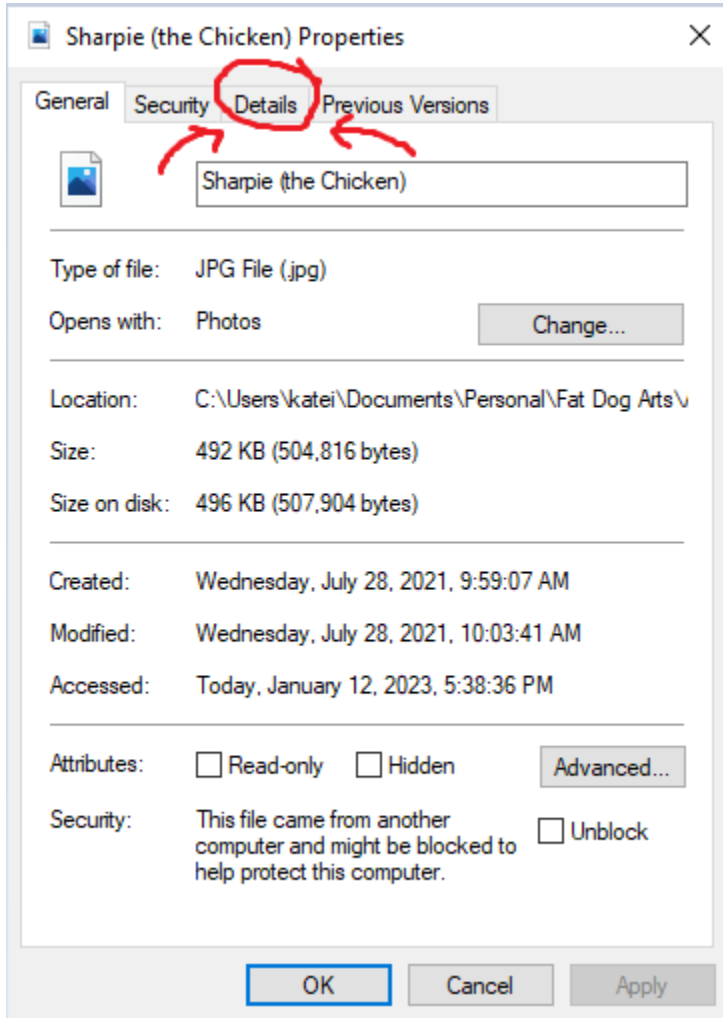
Scroll down just a little to the Image section. Here's the info we need.
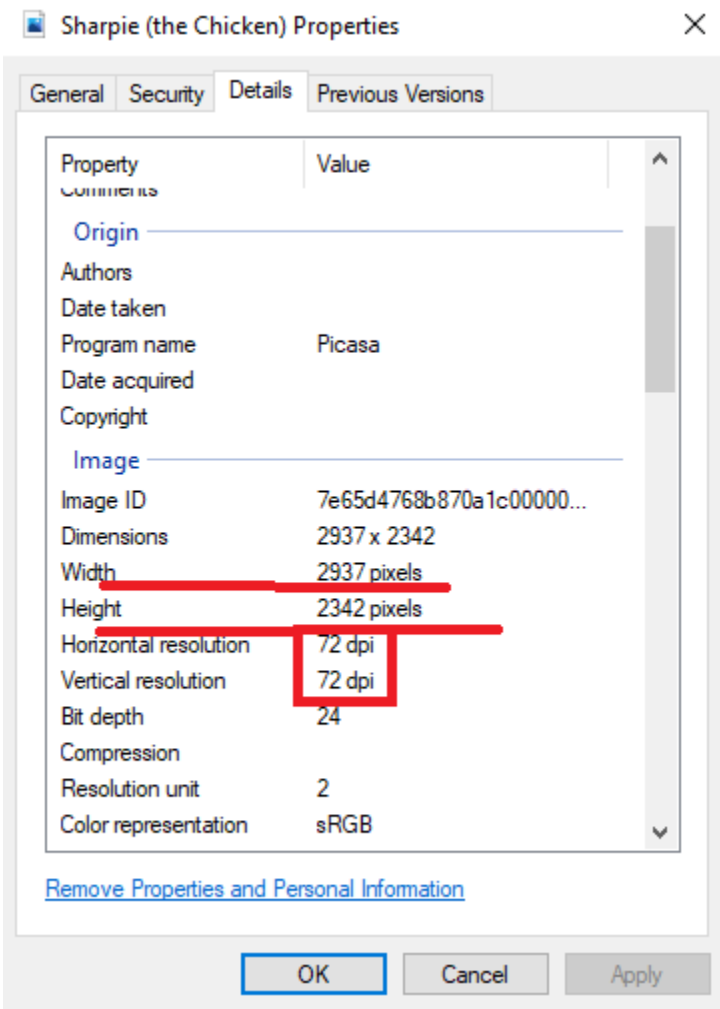
Don't worry about horizontal vs. vertical resolution— they should be the same number. That's your dpi. Sharpie (the Chicken) is 2937 pixels on the long side with a dpi of 72.

No, Dora! It doesn't! The image length is more than enough, but the density of the pixels is not high enough to be a print quality image. Let's fix that!

Resize the image

I've heard some of you wizards can do this in photoshop really easily. I have never tried this as I refuse to pay Adobe more money than I deem strictly necessary. Lucky for us ~~poor~~ principled folk, there's free alternatives all over the place. To resize your image dimensions, here are two options using free tools that should already be on your computer.

How to resize an image on Windows using the Photos app
The Photos app should be the default photo viewer for nearly every image type in Windows.

1. Double-click the image file you want to resize to open it in Photos.

2. Once it's opened, click the three dots in the top-right corner, then click "Resize."
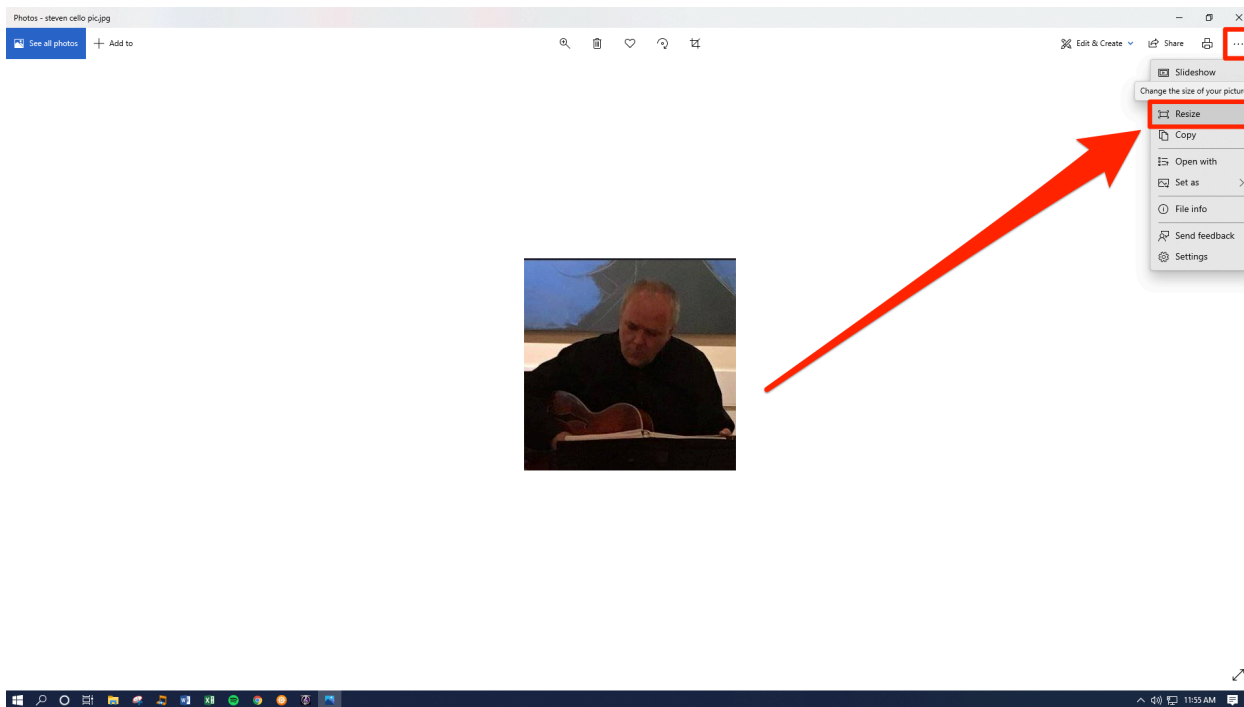
3. A small pop-up will appear, offering you three preset sizes for the picture. Pick one of them, or click "Define custom dimensions" at the bottom. The preset sizes are measured in megapixels.
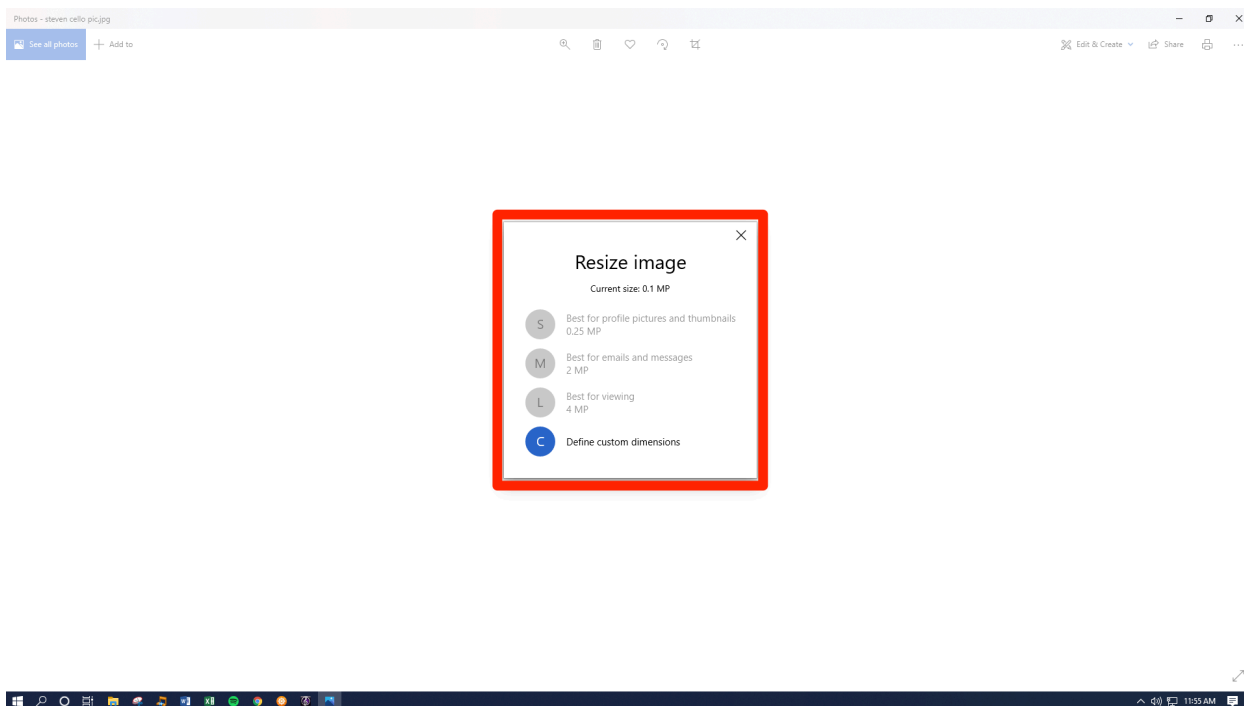
4. If you picked custom dimensions, a menu will appear that lets you set exactly how big you want the image to be. You can also choose how high quality the resized image will be — higher quality pictures look better, but have a bigger file size.

If "Maintain aspect ratio" is checked, then you only need to change either the height or width, and the other dimension will change automatically to match it.

Set your new dimensions, and then click "Save resized copy." You'll be shown the picture's current size at the top of this menu.
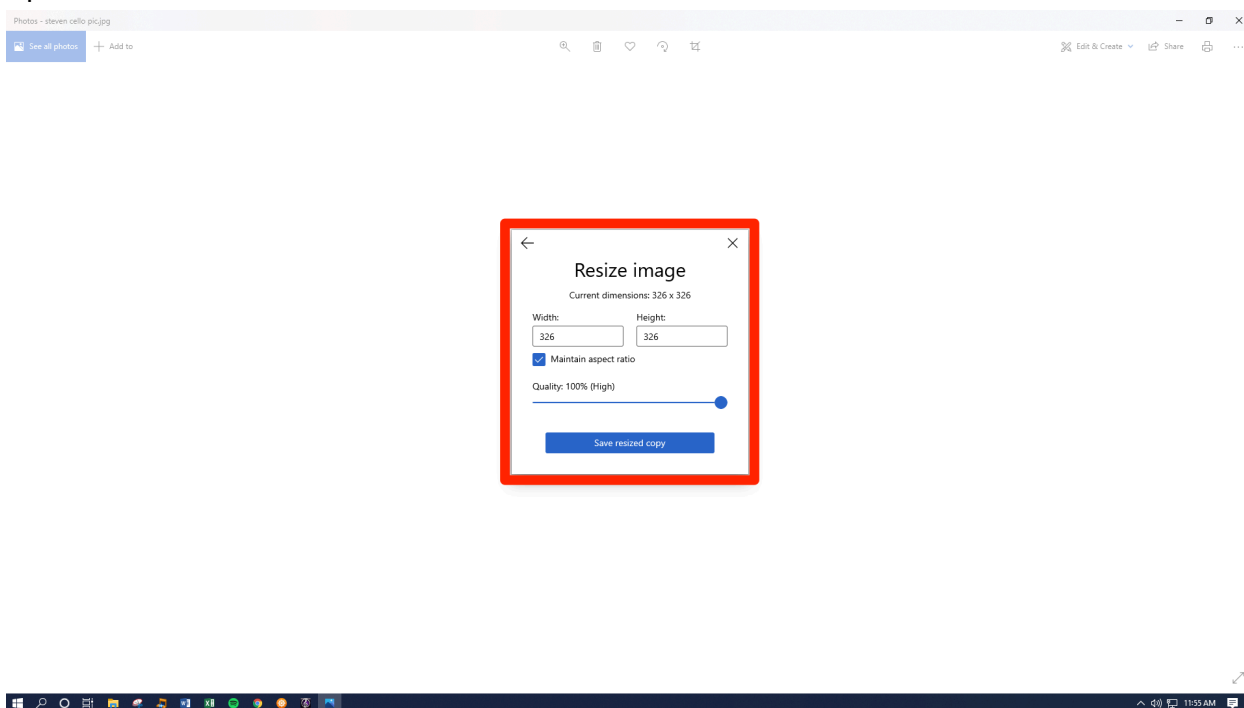
How to resize an image on Windows using Microsoft Paint

1. Start Paint, which you can usually find in the Start menu. If it's not there, you can type "Paint" in the Start button search box and click it when it appears in the search results.

2. Open the photo you want to resize by clicking "File," then "Open," and selecting the image from your computer's files.

3. In the top menu bar's "Home" tab, click "Resize." The "Resize and Skew" window should appear.

4. Enter the size you want to resize the image to. You can set the size by percentage (i.e. "30 percent larger"), or click "Pixels" and enter the exact dimensions you want. As long as you keep "Maintain aspect ratio" checked, you only need to specify the horizontal or vertical dimension, and the other dimension will be set automatically.
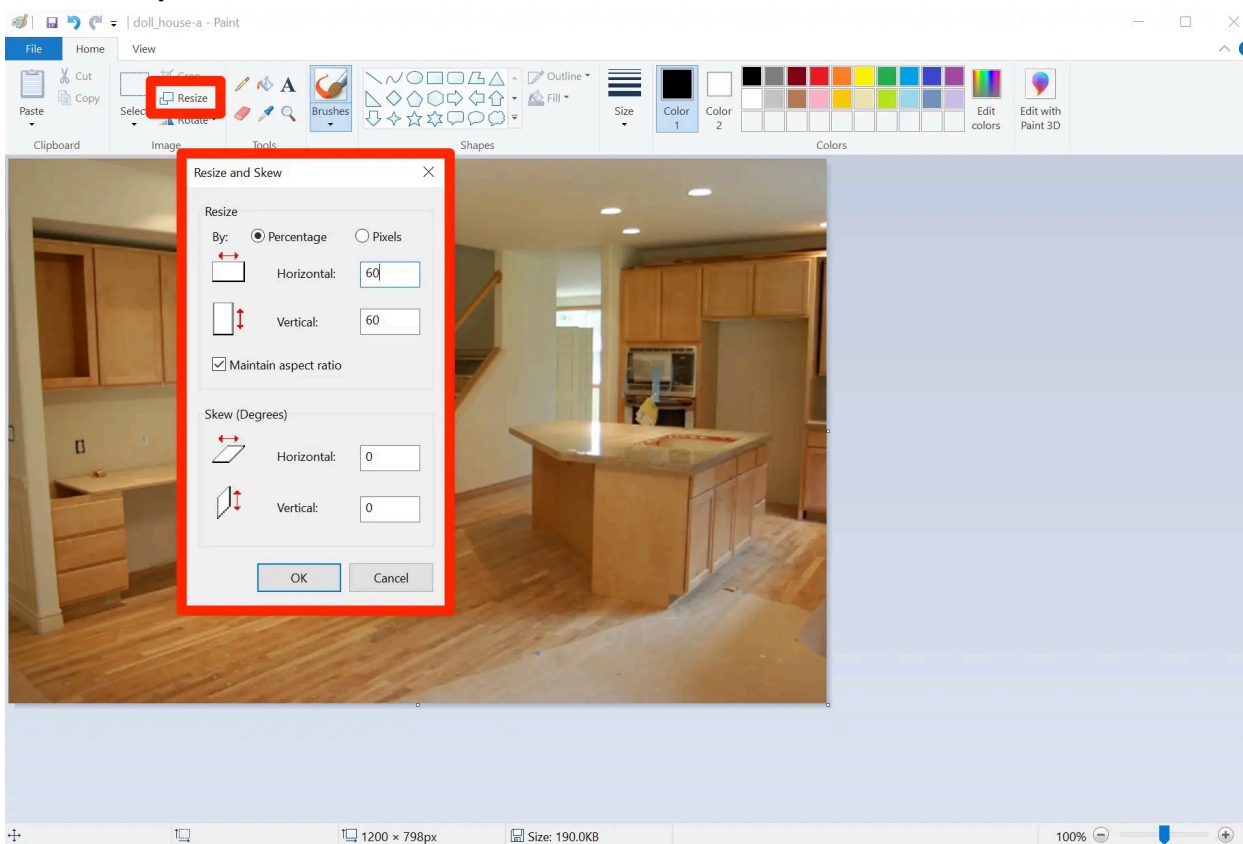
5. Click "OK" to make the change.

6. Save the new version of your image by clicking "File" and then "Save As."

Change the DPI

There's a couple different methods to change your DPI. I adapted these instructions from MakeUseOf.com as I don't ever use Photoshop or GIMP. You'll need an app or online service if you're using Windows, as you can't change the DPI natively otherwise.

Remember that DPI is only a measurement of print resolution. Changing the DPI does not change the size of your digital image or the size of the file. Whenever possible, get in the habit of setting your target DPI either in camera or as you're doing your initial photo editing. It helps.

How to Change the DPI in Photoshop

To change an image's DPI in Photoshop, go to Image > Image Size. Uncheck Resample Image, because this setting will upscale your image, which will make it lower quality.
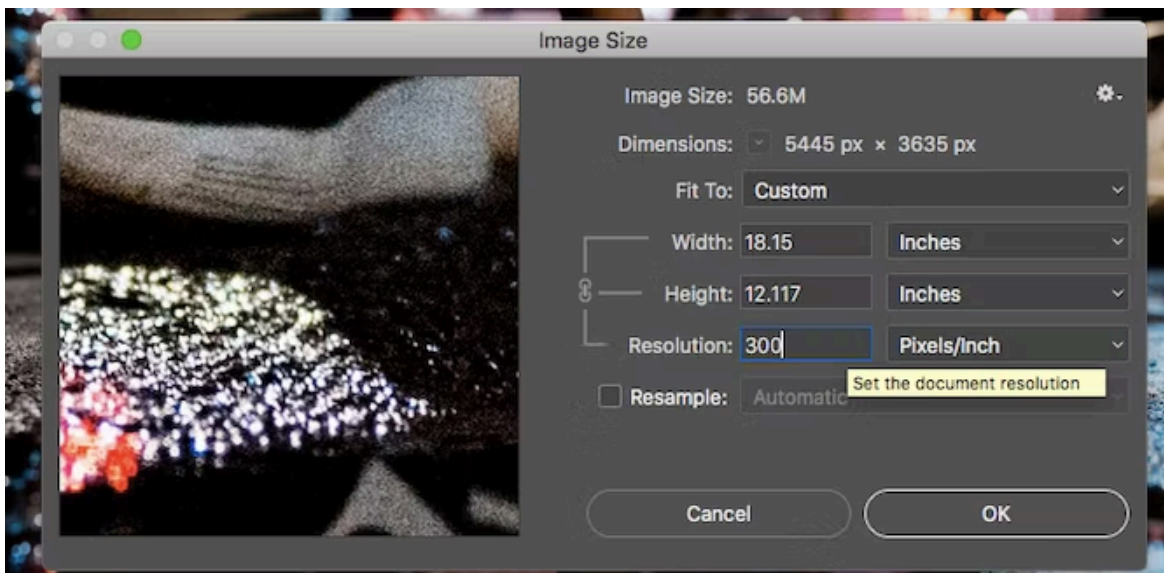

Now, next to Resolution, type in your preferred resolution, set as Pixels/Inch. Notice how the Width and Height figures change, too. This shows you the size your image will print.

You can, of course, specify the width and height instead, in inches or centimeters. If you do this, just make sure your DPI doesn't drop too low to degrade the quality. That can happen if your image is small.

How to Change the DPI In GIMP

To change the DPI of an image in GIMP, go to Image > Print Size. Enter your preferred DPI next to X Resolution, set in pixels/in. The Y Resolution should update automatically, too.
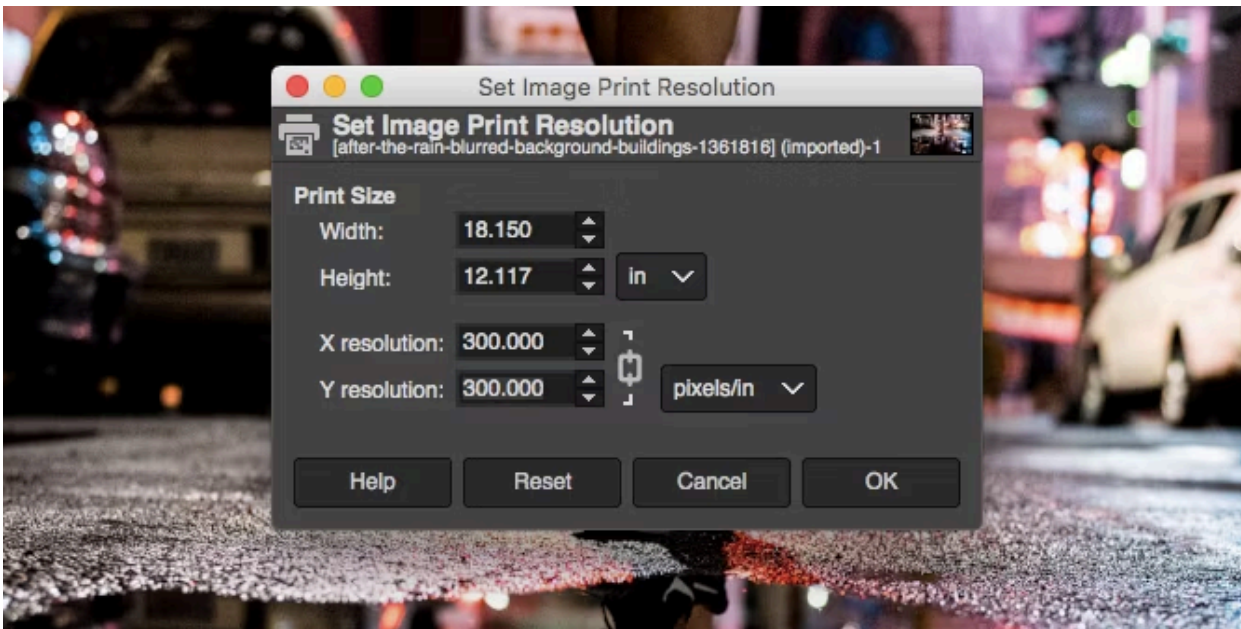
Like in Photoshop, you can set the physical width and height instead. Again, make sure the DPI doesn't drop too low when you do this.
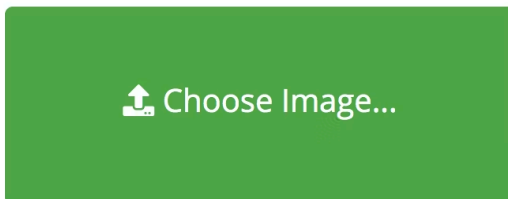
How to Change the DPI Online for Free

Why pay for it, when you can do the same thing for free? You can always change the DPI of an image with Convert Town, a DPI-changing web app, for free online.

All you have to do is input the DPI you need the image changed to (common resolutions like 300 dpi are available as handy presets), drag and drop the file to upload it, and wait. When it's done converting, it should automatically download your updated image to your default download folder.

How to: Mac iOS

Lucky for you, Mac has a super handy dandy tool built right into your computer for all of the above. The Preview tool lets you check your image dimensions, and change them, all in one window.

Preview is the default image viewer for Mac, so open your image and it should just pop up in Preview. Go to Tools > Adjust Size. Uncheck the box labeled Resample image to ensure you don't increase or decrease the number of pixels in the image. Now, with Resolution set to pixels/inch, type in your target resolution (such as 300). You'll notice that the width and height also change, showing you the new size the image will print at.
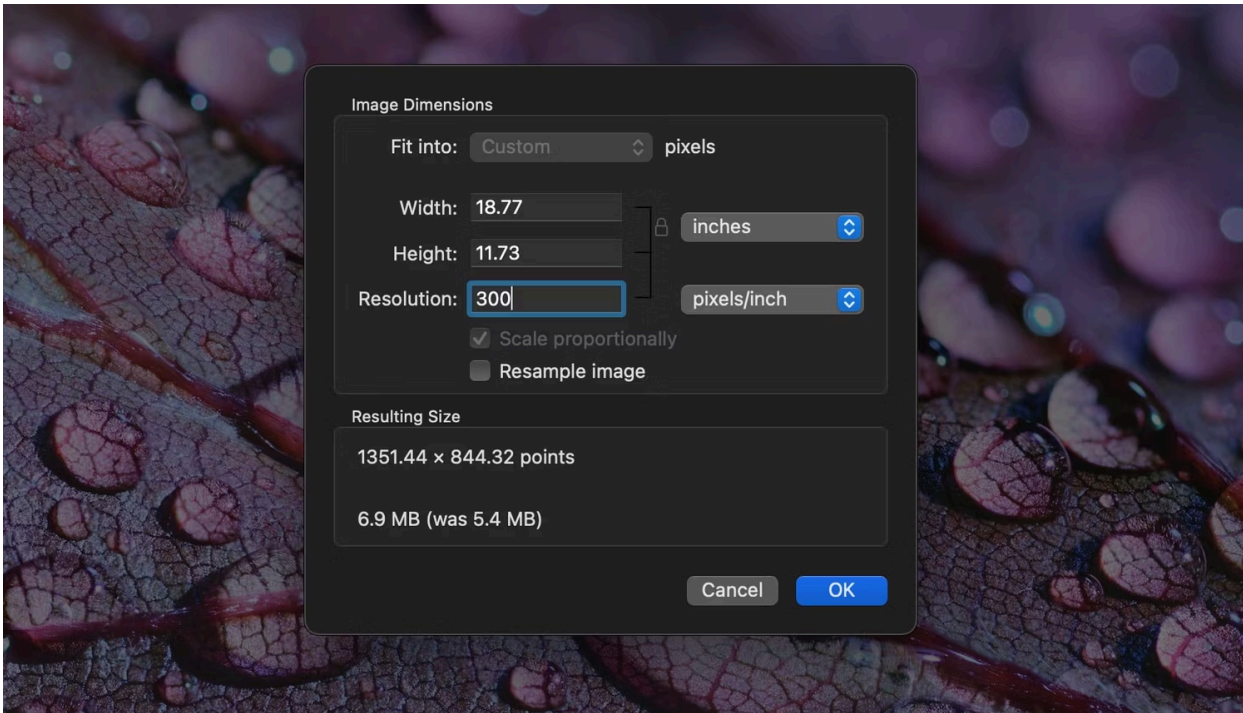
Why isn't this working? (Troubleshooting)

The good news: changing your image dimensions and DPI is pretty easy.

The bad news: if the original file isn't large enough, no amount of resizing is going to fix it.

For example, take this image of the same chicken painting, however this time it's a cropped screenshot of a Facebook thumbnail (for extra crappiness).

Width	226 pixels
Height	224 pixels
Horizontal resolution	96 dpi
Vertical resolution	96 dpi

I'm going to follow the directions above to resize the image and change the DPI to match the Studio Tour image requirements.

Oh god. What have I done.

Width	1500 pixels
Height	1487 pixels
Horizontal resolution	300 dpi
Vertical resolution	300 dpi

The size is right, the dpi is right. Why does it look so awful?!

If you can't see what I'm talking about, here's a comparison of the above stretched image and the original image.

The moral of the story? There are limits to your resizing abilities. The computer can only do so much, and it just can't stretch pixels that aren't there. Resizing from 1200 to 1500 pixels shouldn't be a problem at all, but trying to stretch my pixels to go over 5x as far isn't going to happen without a serious compromise to picture quality.

So how do we fix this? Honestly, you can't. If I didn't have the larger original image already available to use, I would need to go back and rescan or re-photograph my work with the correct parameters. This is why it's so important to make sure your settings are correct when you create the image rather than constantly having to go back and fix your work. Check the settings on your scanner or camera before you take photos. There are too many brands of scanners and cameras to get into the nitty gritties. Just Google "[brand] [model type] dpi settings" and the first couple of results should give you what you need.

If you follow this entire guide to the letter, you've tried Googling a solution and you're still stuck, go harangue your son-in-law, neighbor kid, or whoever else is your go-to IT specialist and see if they can help. Ask another artist. Go check with your local librarian (they know more than you think). Edmonds Community College may have resources as well. They certainly have college students who may be eager to help in exchange for some cash.

Still stuck? Have you exhausted all of the above options? Did you **REALLY**? In that case, I'd be happy to take off my volunteer hat and help. My hourly rate is $150/hr (1 hour minimum) to resize images or adjust the DPI. If the original file isn't big enough, I can also assist with creating new, compliant images at a rate of $250/hr (2 hr minimum). I may be busier than is probably healthy, but money talks and momma needs a new studio space.

Good luck!

Kate Shinn
EAST Volunteer Webmaster