HOWTO : Insert pictures into WORD documents and keep the file sizes reasonable

For the sake of this article I will assume that you wish to include photos/pictures into a Microsoft Word article (i.e. for a report or newsletter article).

Step 1: PREPARE YOUR PHOTO

You should prepare your photo by using your favourite photo editing program (most likely running as a background program – i.e. at the same time you have your Microsoft Word document open.

There are many freeware photo editor applications available and a simple one is IRFANVIEW available from www.irfanview.com

- Use your photo editor to correct any red-eye issues, trimming and cropping, colour enhancement etc. You **DO NOT** have to worry about the physical size of the picture at this stage.

- Photos/Pictures are BEST saved as JPG or JPEG format – It's always a good idea to work on a copy of the original picture and save it as a copy picture so you would have to manually re-edit it if you make a mistake.

- Use either (CTRL C) or *EDIT / COPY* to place a snapshot copy of the picture into Window's CUT/PASTE buffer.

Step 2: PREPARE YOUR WORD DOCUMENT TO INSERT A NEW PICTURE

You now need to insert the picture into your word document. Select the cursor to the location of where the picture is to be placed by moving the cursor with your mouse and using the left click button (on he mouse).

- Position the cursor to the location on the page where you want to insert the picture.

- **DO NOT USE** the CTRL-V (or *EDIT / PASTE*) options at this stage. Using CTRL-V will make Microsoft products try to embed the complete external OBJECT into the document which is like inserting the entire photo editor application itself into the document! This can be huge and OBJECTS don't compress despite it looking like a picture within the document!.

- Use the *EDIT / PASTE SPECIAL* option instead. A dialog similar to this one shown here will appear on the screen.

- You should select either *BITMAP* or *DEVICE INDPENDENT BITMAP*. Other options may appear but these should not be used. Click OK to insert the picture.

- **DO NOT WORRY** if the text or picture does not look correctly (i.e. too big, wrong place, text wraps incorrectly. We will fix that as we go.
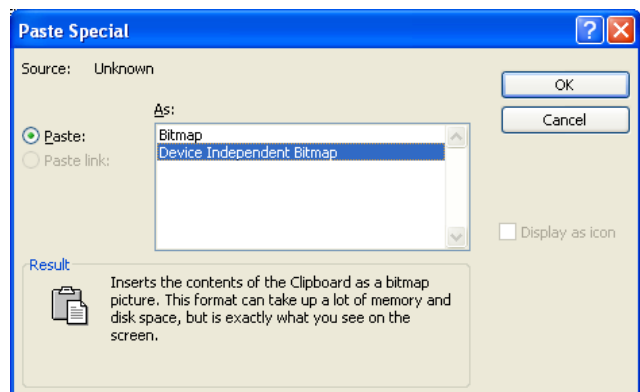
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Despite that the inserted picture has most likely caused your document to look weird, we can now fix that. At times the picture may disappear but in most cases it has just jumped onto the next or previous page or is hidden behind another picture or text.

- *RIGHT* click (mouse button) the picture and select the *FORMAT PICTURE* option.

- Select the *LAYOUT* tab on the top of the menu. If you want the words to wrap around the picture then use the *TIGHT* option otherwise click the *IN LINE WITH TEXT* option. You can play with the other options depending on what you what the picture to do. In this example I selected the *TIGHT* option so I can have text to the left of the picture.
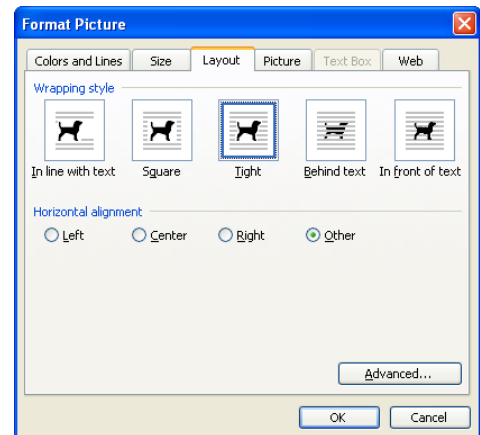
- SIZING**:** *LEFT* click anywhere on the picture to "select" it. You can now alter the size of the picture by moving the cursor over to the bottom right hand side of the picture and when the "double ended arrow appears", hold down the *LEFT* mouse button and then move the mouse diagonally towards or away from the centre of the picture to adjust its size.

- MOVING**:** You can reposition the picture by *LEFT* clicking anywhere on the picture to "select" it. Place the cursor anywhere over the picture and it will become a "crosshair" pattern. Hold down the *LEFT* mouse button and now drag the picture to where you want it to be located in the document. The text will automatically move around the picture as you move it.

- Repeat the SIZING and MOVING steps until you are happy with the overall look of the article and the position of the pictures.
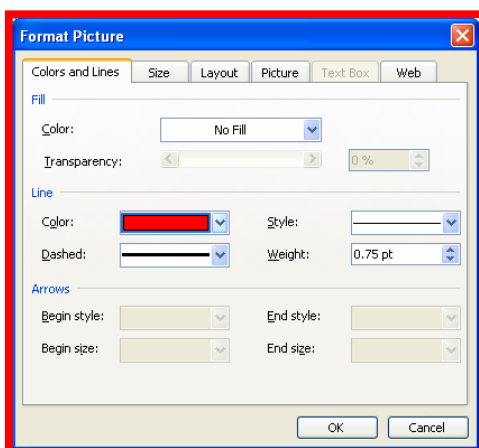
- You can add borders and change transparency etc by using the *FORMAT PICTURE* / *COLORS and LINES* tab as shown here.

If you make a mistake then pressing the UNDO button or using CTRL-Z will undo the last step you had performed.
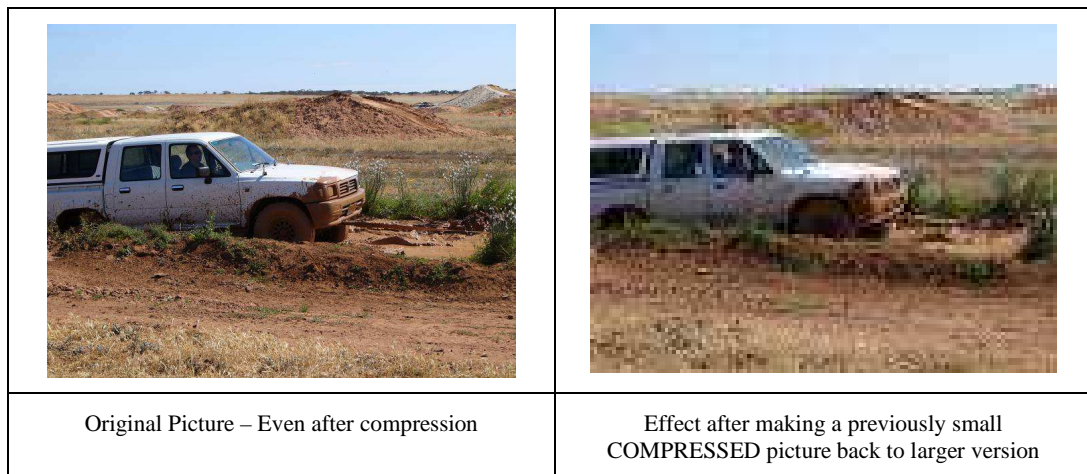
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Step 4: COMPRESSING PICTURES

Whenever you save a picture into Microsoft Word, the entire picture is saved in the document file despite the physical size of the picture shown on the page. If you take a picture directly from your camera, it can be typically up to 5 MB is size. That 5,000,000 bytes (or characters where one character is one byte) compared with this whole article which is only about 5000 characters long!

By using the Microsoft Word compression tools, the final size becomes quite reasonable. A typically JPG picture file of 1.5MB, when inserted into a Microsoft Word document, grew the Word file from 0.27MB to 6.6MB. That was a single picture! Each picture added would increase the Word file size by about 5-6MB. You would notice that your computer would really slow down if you keep adding pictures! Using the compression tools, the Word file size reduced to 0.35MB, not bad given the picture is still high resolution and prints perfectly!

WARNING – Using any form of compression may affect you ability to later "grow" a picture within the document. Microsoft Word compression understands the physical size of the picture and the printer print density (DotsPerInch) and adjusts the picture data (resolution) accordingly when it's compressed. If you decide later to expand a "compressed" picture by making its physical size grow (e.g. double its size) you will notice that the picture may become blocky and/or blurred.

| Original Picture – Even after compression | Effect after making a previously small COMPRESSED picture back to larger version |

This is one reason for always working on a copy of the original file.

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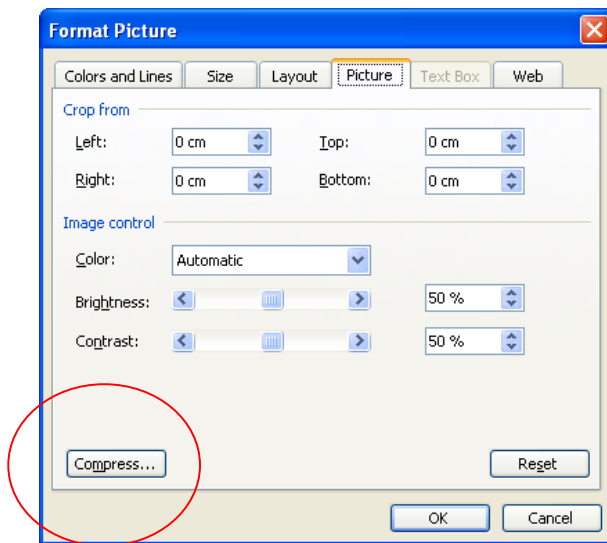
- **COMPRESS**: *RIGHT* click (mouse button) the picture and select the *FORMAT PICTURE* option.

- Select the *PICTURE* tab and then select the *COMPRESS* button.

- (You can also use the PICTURE Toolbar options and select the *COMPRESS* icon)

- The COMPRESS PICTURES dialog will appear as shown below.

- Select the ALL PICTURES IN DOCUMENT option. Ensure the other options are as per shown.

- Click the OK button to compress all pictures in the document. This may take a bit of time depending on the number and size of each picture.