Digital Printing Do's & Don'ts

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Choosing the right print size

- **Computers just do what we tell them to do**
- **You need enough pixels in your image for the print to be sharp at the desired size.**
- **Printing at 200 dot per inch (dpi) is OK for acceptable image quality, however 300 dpi or more is required for excellent print quality**

- ***What does that mean, and how can you figure the best print size for a particular photo?***

Choosing the right print size

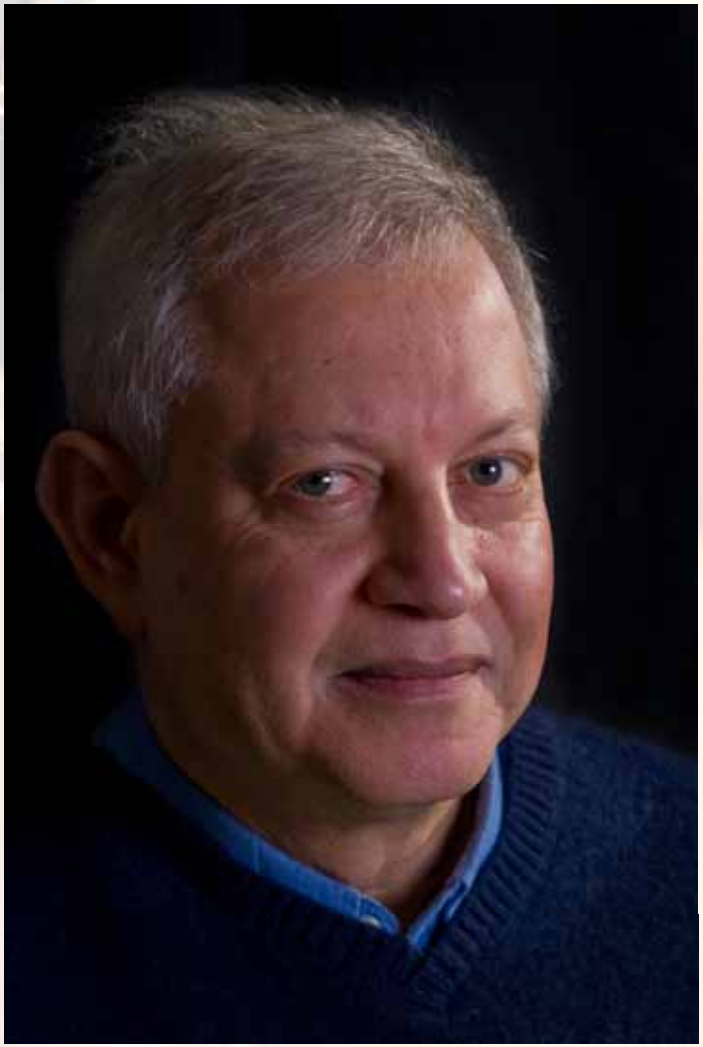
- First determine how many pixels are in your photo
- Right click the image files icon, choose Properties, and click the detail tab. You will see the width and height listed in pixels. In some programs just click a photo's icon and you will see an information box with a list of the details.
- Next if you are printing at 300 dpi divide each measurement by 300

Choosing the right print size

- Suppose your photo measures 2000 X 3400 pixels
- This would mean that the best size for this image would be about 6X11 inches
- Other factors may effect the photo quality but this is a good guide for deciding how large your image will print well

Choosing the right print size

- Image size in pixels
- Width 2929
- Height 4380
- Print size
- Width 9.7
- Height 14.6



Choose the right paper

- Do not choose just any paper
- Plain paper absorbs the ink and washes out the color and destroys fine detail
- Choose photographic ink jet papers
- For most home printers sticking to the printer manufactures papers will usually give the best results
- If choosing other photographic papers they will work well if you have the paper profile to load into your print driver

Choosing the right paper

- Glossy paper is shiny and gives your photos a resounding visual punch
- Semi gloss has most of the same qualities as glossy with out the shine
- Matt paper has more tonality range and lower contrast (this is favored by many art photographers and for portrait photographers)
- Canvas can give a painterly effect

Stick with the manufacturer's ink

- This may be more costly but keep in mind that printers are not stand alone gadgets that work well with any fluids you put into them
- Remanufactured inks or refilled ink cartridges will result in lower-quality prints
- This is most obvious when printing photos

Dye Ink Printers vs. Pigment Ink Printers

- Most home printers are Dye Ink
- Dye inks have a normal display life of approx. 25 years in color and 50 years in B&W
- High end home printers and professional printers are often pigment ink printers
- Pigment prints have normal display life of up to 100 years in color and 200 years in B&W

Verify the print settings

- When you are ready to print a photo, double check all your print driver settings
- Make sure the paper is loaded correctly. Photo paper is designed to print on a particular side. If it is loaded with the wrong side out the ink will not absorb properly
- Did you set the right paper type?
- If you have a profile for the paper make sure you use that to get the proper color
- For good color management make sure your monitor is also profiled regularly

Use current print drivers

- Drivers are software interpreters that let your computer and printer communicate
- Manufactures are constantly revising these drivers to improve output quality
- Always use the most up to date drivers for peak performance and picture quality
- Check the manufactures web sites for updates often

Printer maintenance

- It's a good idea to run printer alignment, color calibration, and print cartridge cleaning functions at least every 90 days
- These functions (usually accessible from the printing preferences menu) prevent blurring, streaking, and off-center photo prints

Some basic hints

- When capturing images always use the highest quality setting in the camera
  - You can always lower the setting for specific applications later, but if you shoot at a low resolution to start you will not produce as high a quality print and will not be able to enlarge them as much

Some basic hints

- Always let your prints dry for 8 to 12 hours before mounting or framing them
- Always make sure you check your scanned images for dust or scratches before printing
- Keep in mind that if you are mounting and framing images, printing borderless may not be the best choice as you will loose a small portion of the image on the borders when you do so

Some basic hints

- When selecting a printer to purchase choose a printer that has individual ink tanks for each color
- This will save you money on ink as prints do not use the same amount of ink from each color to produce your images. A multi color tank will have to be replaced before all colors are used resulting in waste of both ink and money

Some basic hints

- Always save your images at the largest size you wish to print them at
- Always save your images in an uncompressed file format (TIff, PSG, DNG)
  - You can always convert them to JPEGS for e-mails, web use and other applications where you may need to use them at lower resolution
  - Keep in mind that memory is much less expensive than it used to be. External hard drives that hold 500 GB to 1TB can be purchased for $100 to $150 range