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A PSNZ help sheet on ……

Preparing Images for Digital Projection

By: Ron Willems, FPSNZ, AFIAP, ARPS, AAPS

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The Honours Board of the PSNZ has asked that I write this article to guide people in preparing their images for digital projection. The following notes of course apply to any image that you might be preparing for a projected image show, exhibition or competition. While these notes are based on the use of PhotoShop the same principles apply if you use alternative programmes.

The Starting Point:
As always you must start with a very good image. Do not think that a sloppy image, that may not print well, will become acceptable just because it's only going to be projected on a relatively low-resolution (1024x768-pixel) projector. Start with a sharp, well-exposed image; that appears to be stating the obvious BUT many images in projected image competitions are often lacking on both counts.

Now open this image as a full sized file (in my case that would be 3872 x 2592 pixels) and on this do all the work to get your final result (either in RAW or JPG). This work may include, but is not limited to, adjusting your histogram for contrast and density, cropping, colour balance and any special effects, then finally sharpen as you would for a normal print file. Many books have been written on the subject of the last sentence and more detail here is beyond the scope of this article. Finally save this, with a new file name from your original (so you always retain your original JPG or RAW file), as a highest quality JPG file (compression 12 in PhotoShop).

Projection Image Enhancement:
Now open this JPG file and click on Image > Image Size and this will bring up a dimension panel and assuming the image is horizontal it will show more pixels in width than height. The maximum size for the Honours Board and most competition/exhibition work is 1024 x 768 pixels. So now go into the width box and type 1024, the height will adjust automatically but check that it is not more than 768. Do note that any vertical images on a projected screen will have the same height as a horizontal and so look like a horizontal with the sides cut off! So get over it! The maximum height is always 768 pixels.

Do not worry about the document size or resolution, as it will make absolutely no difference to the projected image but if a resolution is requested change the resolution *before* changing the pixel width. Tick the three boxes including resample image then in the method box choose either Bicubic (the best quality resizing) or Bicubic Sharper (for sharper images if downsizing). Then Save As this file, with a new file name from the file you just opened, as a highest quality (compression 12 in PhotoShop) JPG file. This is your projected image file for the Honours Board or exhibition.

For a projected images a few further enhancements may improve its image on screen. Increasing the contrast (a projected image often loses contrast) ensuring you have good blacks and detail in the whites. If you go to Image > Adjustments > Levels you can adjust the black and white sliders to get these results and the grey slider for changing the midrange density. Further you can go to the channel panel in the levels box and change from RGB to Red, Green or Blue to alter your colour balance and colour contrast if you wish. Now sharpen again, crisp images project better as most projectors give some softness, but don't sharpen so much as to give halo effects around the contrasty edges of your subject matter. Finally Save this image and woooo the judges!

This PSNZ help sheet was written by: **Ron Willems**, FPSNZ, AFIAP, ARPS, AAPS

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