

Tips for Resizing Costume and Props Photos

The photos of your costumes and props add a great deal of value to the Inventory Database. If you can see a picture of a costume/prop and read all about it, you and others using the database will learn so much more about the costume/prop.

The Theatre Inventory Database costume records are designed to hold up to 2 photos or drawings of each costume/prop. The database uses a special technology called DBPix which will link to your photos in folder. This is a terrific of the database but you still have to think about the size of the photos before linking them to your records.

Why Resize?

Most cameras -- even cell phone cameras -- produce images quite a bit larger than needed for the Theatre Inventory Database, so it's a very good idea to reduce their pixel dimensions. If you take a photo of a costume with a digital camera you have the option to take a low resolution, medium or high resolution photo. A low resolution photo won't look very good when enlarged to a big size but a high resolution photo can be over 6 MB in size - much too big for the database. The ideal size for use in the Theatre Inventory Database is about 300 pixels wide by 400 pixels high - which is typically less than 300KB file size. Images used on web pages are commonly in this same size range.

The main reason to resize the photos smaller is that some reports and search results screens (the Photo Gallery) in the Theatre Inventory Database will display many photos on a page and if the photos are too large (over 1 MB each) the program will not be able to display the full page of photos. Reducing the size of the photos helps eliminate this problem.

Taking the Photos

To maximize the number of photos you can have in the database:

- 1) Take photos at a medium resolution so that the file size is about 1-2 MB .
- 2) Use a photo software - such as *Microsoft Office Picture Manager* (comes free with Microsoft Office 2010), *FastStone Resizer* (available on the web), *Photoshop* or another software (see list below) - to reduce the file size while preserving the image quality.

See the two photos below (before and after resizing) to see how a resized image is still a very good photo for the database.

For example: Original file size: 1.2 MB

Used *MS Office Picture Manager* to resize the file size to 82K (90% reduction):



There is a slight difference in the two photos but the one on the right has a lot of details and will look good on the screens and reports while saving a lot of space.

If you have a few photos you can resize them one at a time. But if you have hundreds or thousands of photos you may want to consider resizing them in a batch process. Here are some suggestions on how to resize the photos.

****** Before you begin - always make a backup of the photo files ******

The resizing process should always be done on a copy of the file. Costume & Theatre Inventory Resources is not responsible for changes to your files - always make a backup before you begin.

Resizing Instructions for Single Images:

To use the **Microsoft Office Picture Manager** to compress a file - follow these steps (these work for Office 2007 and 2010):

- 1) Go to the Start menu, select *All Programs* and look for *Microsoft Office*.
Select Microsoft Office Tools and look for *Picture Manager*.
- 2) You will have to tell the program where to find your pictures by adding a 'picture shortcut'. Look for the "*Add Picture Shortcut*" link in the upper left area of the program screen. Click on "*Add Picture Shortcut*". Use the Browse window to find the folder where the pictures are stored. Select the folder (you won't see any pictures just yet).
- 3) Back at the Picture Manager screen, select the folder from the list at the left. Once the folder is selected you will see all the photos in the folder.

- 4) Click on a picture to select it. (You will see a colored border around the picture). By right-clicking on the picture and selecting "*Properties*" you can view the properties of the picture (on the right side of the screen) and see the file size. If the file is over 250 KB I would recommend that you resize it.
- 5) Go to the tool bar at the top of the screen and select "*Picture*" and look at the last item on the list - "*Resize*".
- 6) Look at the right side of the screen and you will see options for compression. I would select the "Custom width and height" option. Enter 300 in the width box and 400 in the height box. Click on the OK button to resize the file.
- 7) Use *Save As* to save the file under a new name - i.e.- "PurpleTutu-Resized" so you know that it is a new version of the file. It is a good idea to keep the original file as it is so you will always have a higher resolution of the photo.
- 8) Repeat the process for all the photos to go into the database.

If you don't have Microsoft Office Picture Manager installed but you own Microsoft Office 2010 I would check your installation and see if you can add that feature to your installation.

If you don't have a full Microsoft Office installed I would look for another image compression software package. There are several software packages to compress photos available on the Internet (see below). Some photo compression software packages are free and others like Photoshop are more expensive. I would try one or two out to see which one you like the best.

Resizing Instructions for Many Images all at one time:

One software that I have used and like is called **FastStone Resizer** - available free from <http://www.faststone.org/FSResizerDetail.htm>. It is easy to use and will resize a folder of photos at a time.

Many services are available online that will resize uploaded photos for free (search the words "resize photos online"), but these generally allow you to do only one photo at a time, and some have file size limits. These are okay for resizing a few photos, but aren't efficient for large collections..

Adobe Photoshop is the most powerful and versatile software to use on your computer, but also the most expensive tool for accomplishing this relatively simple task. Adobe Photoshop Elements and Apple iPhoto can also batch-resize photos, and are less expensive. If you have access to one of these applications and someone who knows how to run it, great!

Many other options are available at a variety of price points. We have not tested these, but some relatively inexpensive examples include:

Batch Photo (www.batchphoto.com/index.html) ,

AVS Image Converter www.avs4you.com/avs-image-converter.aspx

Batch Image Resizer (www.jklnsoft.com/)

Using FastStone Resizer:

Preparation

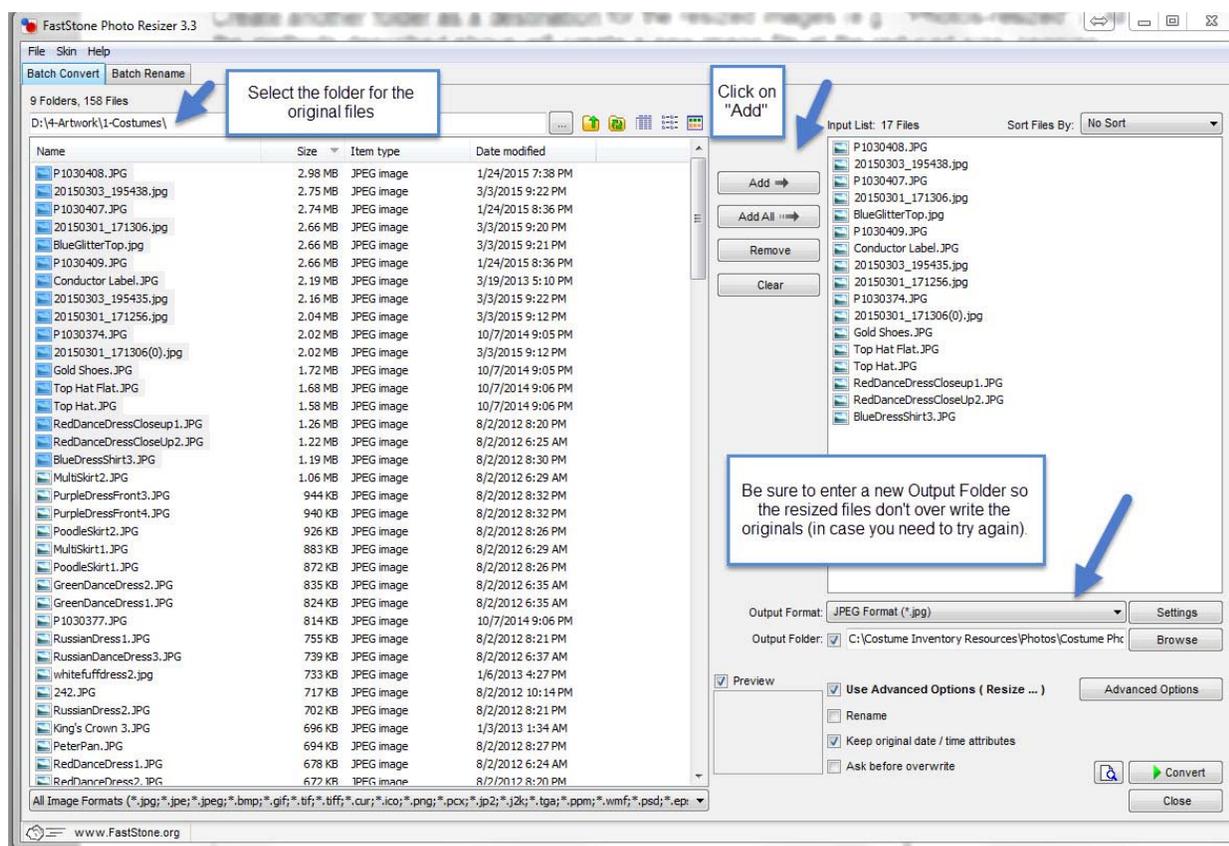
Name your images in a way that lets you associate them easily with the records for each item. This may be the file name straight out of the camera (e.g., "IMG1234"), or your own name specific to a production (e.g., "Nutcracker 0001"). Just plan ahead for how you want to associate image names with costume records. Keep it logical and flexible.

Gather all the photos you want to resize in one folder (e.g., "Photos-original"). This may be all the photos for a single show, or if you're working with photos for several shows at once, keep them in separate sub-folders.

Create another folder as a destination for the resized images (e.g., "Photos-resized"). All the methods described above will create a new image file at the reduced size, keeping the original image intact.

1. Select photos:

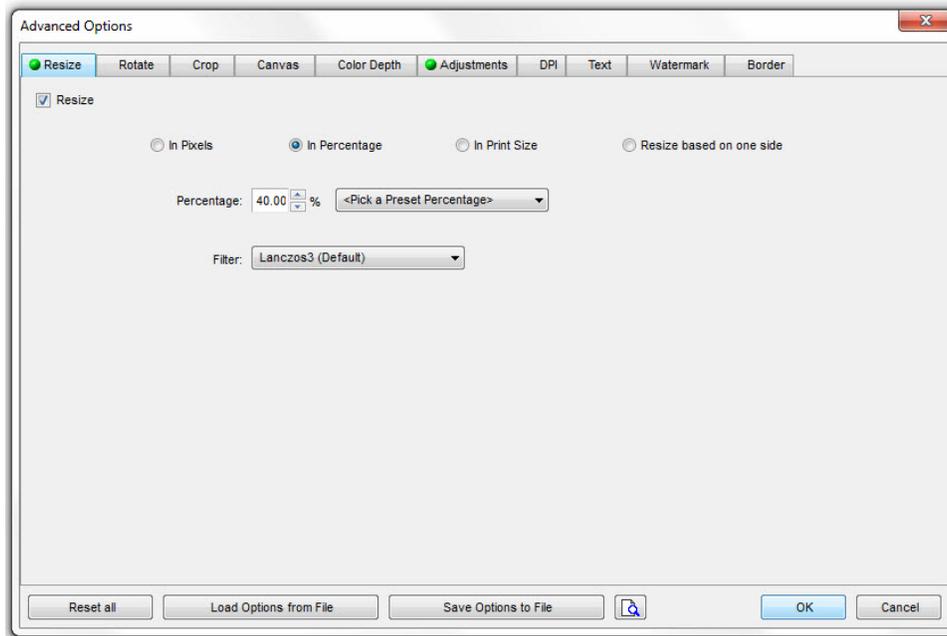
Select the folder of photos and "Add" the photo file names to the right column



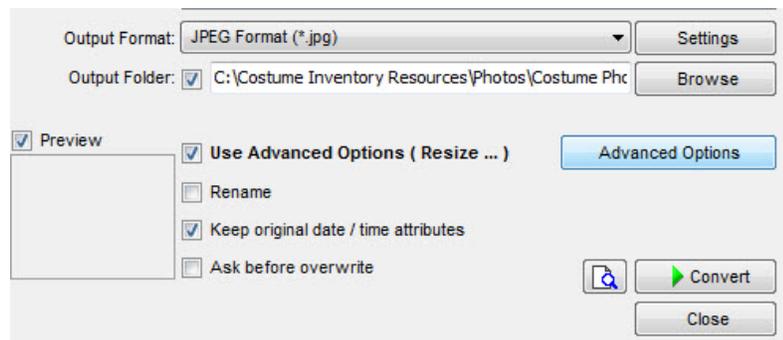
2. Advanced Options:

Click on the Advanced Options button. Look for the Resize tab. You can try several different settings but I like to start with a Resize - in Percentage. I start with 40% and see if the size of the photos is close to what I want (~ 200 - 500 KB).

Select the Resize tab and enter the Percentage of reduction.



Once you have set the options. Look at the screen and be sure the check mark is on for the “Use Advanced Options” and that the output folder is where you want the resized photos to go.



Run the Resize utility

Click on “Convert” to start the resize process.

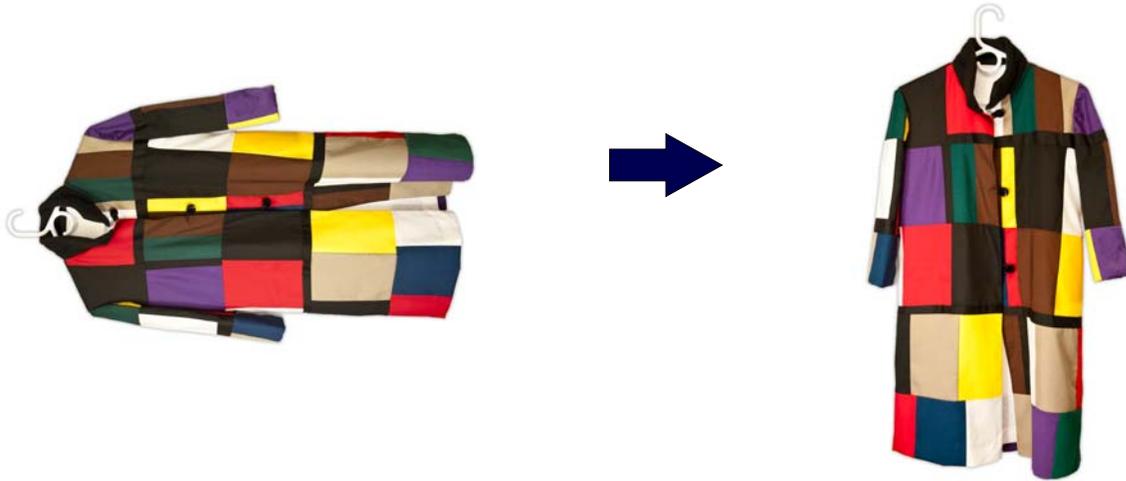
Remember you are trying to get the photos to about 100 - 150 KB each. You may have to try the software a few times on a few different settings to get the size you want.

Verify the size and quality

Once the photos are resized, link a few to a record in the the Theatre Inventory Database. Be sure that the image quality is still good. If you have resized them below 50 KB they may be too fuzzy (pixilated) to look good. You may want to go back to your originals and try again with less reduction.

One last note:

The Fast Stone Resizer application is also good for rotating photos that are not right side up (for example - a dress which is horizontal). It can also be used to brighten a group of photos if they are too dark.



Here is the website again: <http://www.faststone.org/FSResizerDetail.htm>.