

Hummingbird Design

Image Basics

When you create new pages or posts you will want to use images because they make the page more appealing to visitors, increase the likelihood that visitors will stay on the page longer and because Google rewards us from a SERP (search engine ranking) point of view.

A picture's worth a thousand words so it's worth the extra time and effort to ensure that all your images beautifully represent your brand. These are the basic steps we need to follow to ensure optimise your images for Web use.

Tips

- Start with the largest, best quality version of an image available so that you can crop and resize to your requirements
- Don't waste time with images that don't represent your brand well in the first place, no amount of editing will fix that issue
- Select photos with colours that reflect your brand colour palette
- Photos with depth, where the eye can look past the text and through the photo, create a more interesting effect on the web than more flat one dimensional photos
- Working in bulk to resize and optimise images, then compress then in batches, and upload them to your media library in batches, is a more efficient use of time then working on a single image as you need it.

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Creating Images for Web Use

It's unlikely that you will find an image that can simply be uploaded to your Media library and used straight away. Most likely you will need to do one or more of the following;

- Crop and resize photos
- Add semi-transparent overlays
- Add text and Logos to backgrounds or images
- Add photographic effects to sharpen or blur image

For Photo Editing there are a number of great tools available, Photoshop is a clear winner in terms of functionality but comes with a high price tag and steep learning curve. Fortunately the tasks you need to perform most often can be completed quickly using the free version of either

PicMonkey <https://www.picmonkey.com/>

Canva <https://www.canva.com/>

If you take the time to get to know one of these apps really well you'll be able to produce very professional graphics for social media and you'll be able to ensure the photos on your site always look their best.

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Once you have images you're happy with they will need to be compressed for Web

To ensure your web pages continue to load quickly, which is an important part of the both the user experience and SEO, you'll need to compress the images before loading to your Media Library.

You want to get the greatest image compression with the best image quality, this can be achieved by:

1. Ensuring you're using the right size image – using an 800 KB square image set to display at 300KB square is to needlessly bulk up the page
2. Using Tiny JPG to compress .JPG and .PNG files before uploading to the Media library <https://tinypng.com/>
3. Using the WP Smush plugin on your WordPress site will further compress your images automatically as they are uploaded

Ensure Images have ALT tags

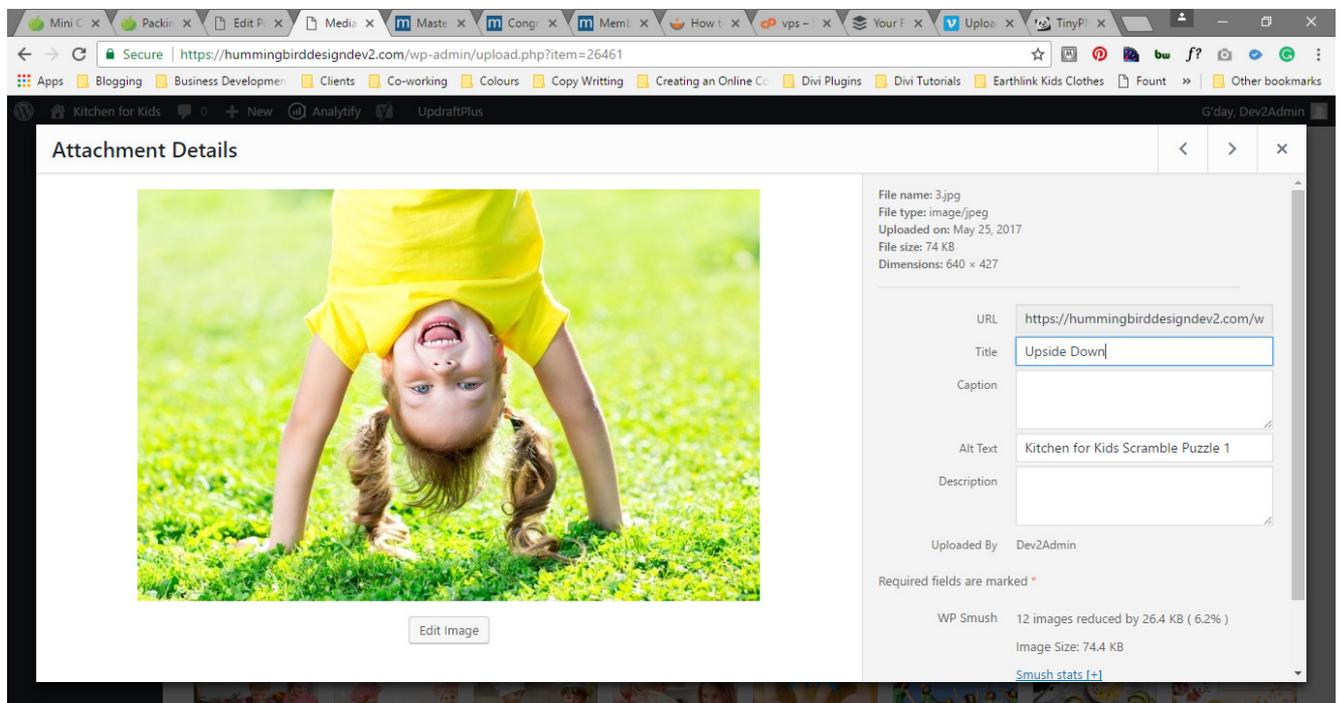
The Alt Tag is the 'alternative text' Meta data which is recorded for each image. If you had an ancient browser which was unable to load the image it would display the alt text instead, or the alt text may be read aloud to a vision impaired visitor to your site. Importantly search engines index the Alt Text and it contributes to our overall SEO score.

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All images should have Alt Text set when they are added to the media library. The Title, caption and description should also ideally be filled in but it's the Alt Text which is most critical.

Alt Text should describe the picture and ideally include one or more of your keywords for SEO. Unfortunately it's not ideal to simply give all your images the same basic Alt text as Google is looking for unique image Alt Tags which are relevant to the content on each page.



The screenshot shows the 'Attachment Details' page in a WordPress media library. On the left, there is a preview of a young girl in a yellow shirt performing a handstand on a grassy field. Below the image is an 'Edit Image' button. On the right, the 'Attachment Details' panel is open, displaying the following information:

- File name: 3.jpg
- File type: image/jpeg
- Uploaded on: May 25, 2017
- File size: 74 KB
- Dimensions: 640 x 427

The 'Attachment Details' panel includes several input fields:

- URL: <https://hummingbirddesigndev2.com/w>
- Title:
- Caption:
- Alt Text:
- Description:

At the bottom of the panel, it shows 'Uploaded By: Dev2Admin' and a 'Required fields are marked *' notice. There is also a 'WP Smush' section indicating '12 images reduced by 26.4 KB (6.2%)' and 'Image Size: 74.4 KB', with a link to 'Smush stats [+]'.

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Image Sizes

Cropping and resizing images is something you'll need to do often. In general the best sizes for sharing images on social media are as follows and both Canva and PicMonkey have many excellent templates based on these sizes:

- Facebook – 1,200 x 628 – *this is the image size you need for the 'feature image' in a blog post*
- Pinterest – 735 x 1,102 – *include an image with text this size on the page or post so that if your page is 'pinned' a user can select this image*
- Instagram – 1,080 x 1,080 – *not required on the page/post as it's not yet possible to share directly to Instagram.*
- Twitter – 1,024 x 512

In terms of your Website Images if we follow the 16:9 aspect ratio this is helpful to keep your images at a width and height that scales appropriately for mobile.

The following image dimensions follow the 16:9 aspect ratio standard for your website where our widest column is constrained to be no greater than 1080 wide.

- 1 column: 1080 x 608
- $\frac{3}{4}$ column: 795 x 447
- $\frac{2}{3}$ column: 700 x 394
- $\frac{1}{2}$ column: 510 x 287
- $\frac{1}{3}$ column: 320 x 181
- $\frac{1}{4}$ column: 225 x 128