

- **CompuServe Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) .gif**
GIF (technically pronounced "jiff"), is best suited to images with relatively few colors and large areas of solid color such as buttons, banners, illustrations and line art, type, or images with sharp, well-defined edges. It is also one of the few formats for animations and transparency effects. GIF is used for most non-photographic images. GIF files use a maximum palette of 256 or less colors.
- **Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG, JPG) .jpg**
JPG is the choice for photos and "photo-like" images (most of the time). It provides smaller file sizes (thus, faster load times) and better image quality. Unlike the GIF format, JPG retains all the color information (millions of colors opposed to reducing it down to 256 colors, like the GIF format). **However, remember that JPG, JPEG uses a "lossy" type of compression.** This means if you compress it over and over as a .jpg, the image will start to noticeably lose quality and clarity. This normally occurs after about the 3rd or 4th re-compression.
- **Tagged-Image File Format (TIFF) .tif**
TIF is used to exchange files between applications and computer platforms. TIFF is a flexible bitmap image format supported by virtually all paint, image-editing, and page-layout applications. Also, virtually all desktop scanners can produce TIFF images. TIFF is a good format for archiving important original image files, as it retains very high quality and image data. However, it produces a very large file size since it is not highly compressed, therefore it is a "loss-less" format.

Tips and Notes on Screen (Multimedia/Web) Image File Formats:

There are two big considerations. Size and color.

To make "screens" that are more user-friendly (download efficiently and display easily):

- **Use images sparingly**
Too many images or extremely large ones take too much load time. Too many can also clutter the screen.
- **Use smaller graphics when possible**
Smaller graphics help lead the eye to information and are more pleasing. They also load much faster! A good rule-of-thumb for graphics is to limit each of them to 50k or less when possible.
- **Reuse your image files**
Computers generally cache images once they are loaded, saving them on the computer's disk or memory so that after the image is loaded once, it can be displayed again, almost instantly.
- **Limit the color you are using**
Mapping "gif" graphics to a reduced palette can reduce file size without the quality. Make sure and test it both as a .jpg and a gif. Compare the quality and the file sizes and go with what meets your needs and target audience' needs.
- **Use "jpg" file format** for e-mailing digital photos or when using them on web pages.

It is also very important to check the actual size of your digital images before emailing them. Many digital cameras and scanners produce images that are very large by default. It is up to you to "re-size" or "re-sample" them properly before trying to send them electronically. It is also recommended that you don't attach more than two or three image files per email message. Work with your graphic editing tool to get the image as desired, then do a "save as", "export", or "save copy as"... (so your original "archive" or editing format is not permanently changed).

- **Use "gif" file format for line art and basic graphic files** or when the file you are working with includes "animation" or "transparent" qualities. Simple images should be reduced to the least colors acceptable and saved as a "gif" file. The fewer the colors the smaller the "gif" file size.....the faster the image will load!