

Pictures in Documents

by Dick Evans www.rwevans.com

It is a wonderful change having digital cameras that take such high resolution pictures. Years ago we used 35mm film and it is costly and time consuming. You paid for the film, took your limited number of shots, then dropped the exposed film off to be printed. A week or so later, you picked up the prints and found a few worth saving. Then to make more prints you returned to the store and ordered additional ones from the negatives. Okay, some of you are not old enough to even remember doing that!

Back to the future. We can take as many shots as our SD card will hold. Even then all we have to do is pop in another to continue shooting. We get home and pop the card into our computer and get to see them right away. We can edit them, crop them, change the lighting, and even print them out in as good a quality as we used to see with the 35mm camera from years ago. And we can print as many as we need right in our own home.

The best thing is that we can send them to others in emails, post them on Facebook, include them in a Web page, and include them in writings created in our favorite word processing app.

To get that 35mm quality, the images are saved as pretty large files. Most are over 1mb and some more than 5mb. With hard drives of 320gb and more today, that is not a big problem. Even the SD cards for our camera are up to 32gb at reasonable prices. Size only becomes an issue when we want to email them to someone, post them on Facebook, or include them in a document.

Email will only allow us to attach so many megabytes of files. It is not the number of images we try to attach, but the sum total of their sizes. And the larger the collection of files, the longer it takes to upload them to the email system and the longer it takes our recipient to download them. There are time when we can send a larger collection than our recipient can receive and they never get to see them at all.

When we upload images to social networking sites like Facebook, they trim down the picture sizes for us. However, if we upload our original large images the process takes a very long time.

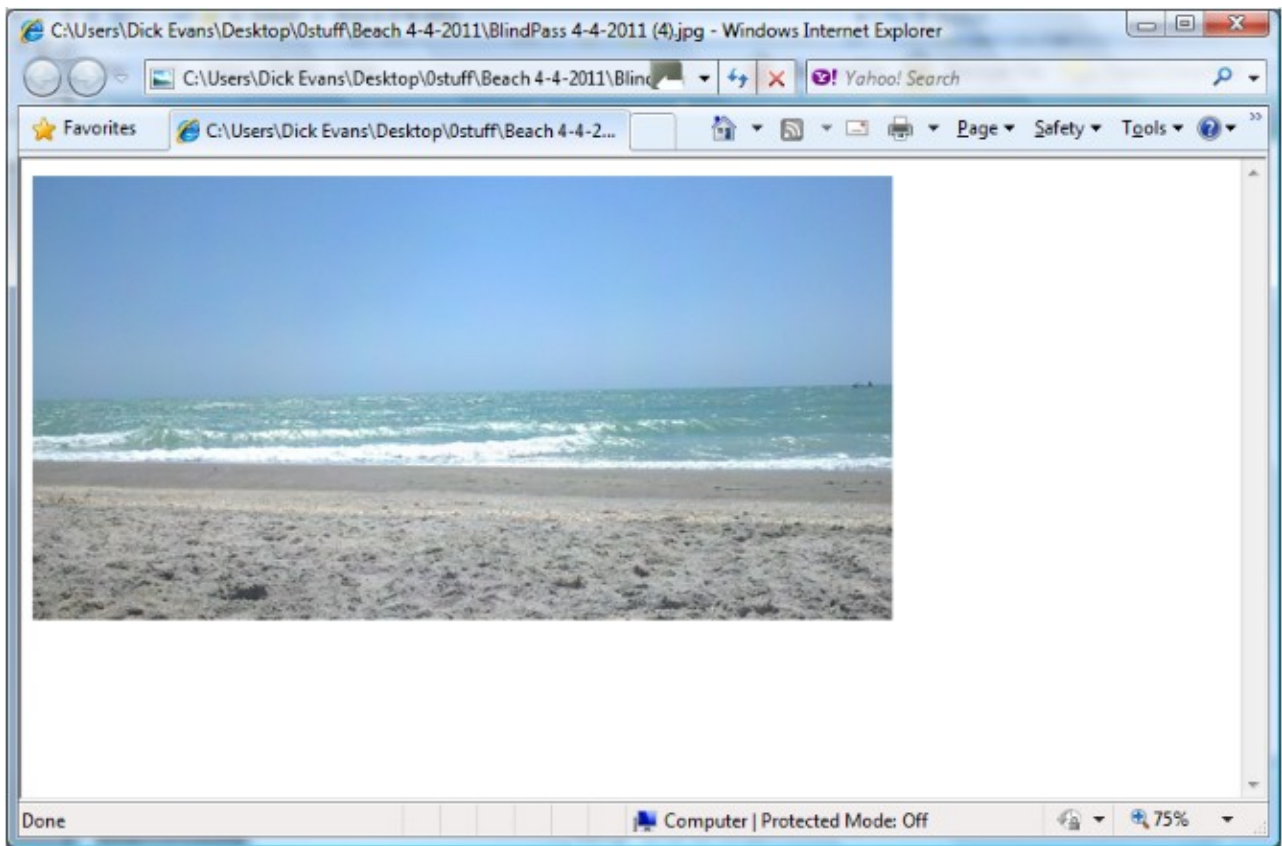
Documents are a different story and you probably wonder why I even listed them. The issue is size but it is hidden. We do not see the problem because the file is on our own computer. If we insert five 2mb images in our document, the resulting document will be at least 10mb when saved. Depending on the app we are using we may be able to compress the images so they take less space, but just resizing them on the page only affects how they appear in the document and not the actual size. Most word processing apps do not have a way to actually make the images smaller. Microsoft Word 2003 and up give you that option, but others like LibreOfficeWriter which I am using to write this White Paper do not.

I just saved this document as a .doc file and it takes up 15kb. Let's add this image:



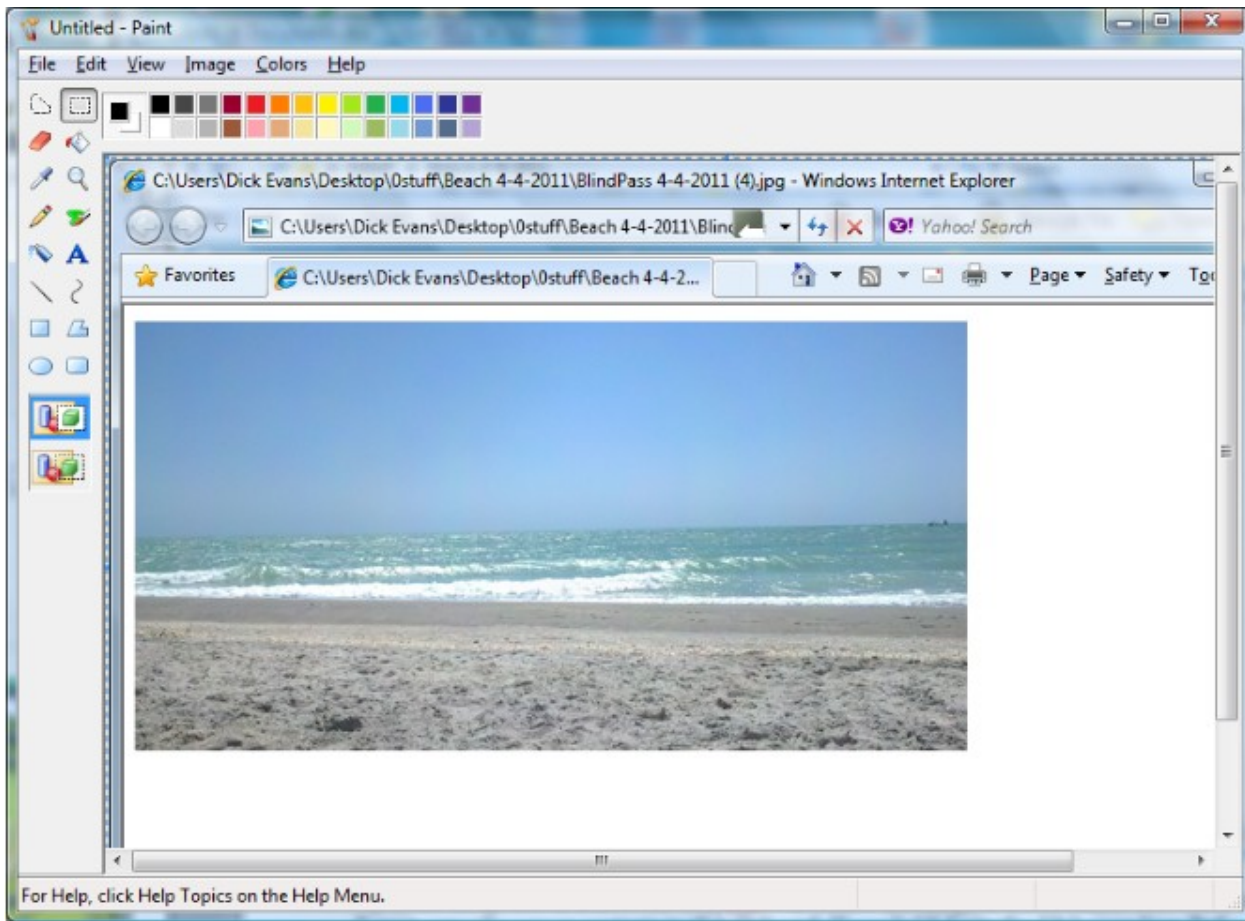
The original image size is 684kb. I inserted it and then, using the sizing marks changed it to the thumbnail size you see above. When I saved it again the document size jumped up to 705kb! Had I reduced the size of the picture before inserting it, the new file size would have been considerably less.

So let's look at a simple way to resize the image using the graphics app that came with Window called MSPaint. We will do this first and save the image with a new name and then we can use that image to send an email, upload to Facebook, or use in our document.



Open the image file in a browser. Use Ctrl+- to reduce the image to a reasonable size. Then using Print Screen copy the screen contents to the clipboard.

Note: If you hold down the Alt key and tap PrtSc, only the active window is copied. If you press PrtSc by itself, the entire screen content is copied. In this case either option works fine.

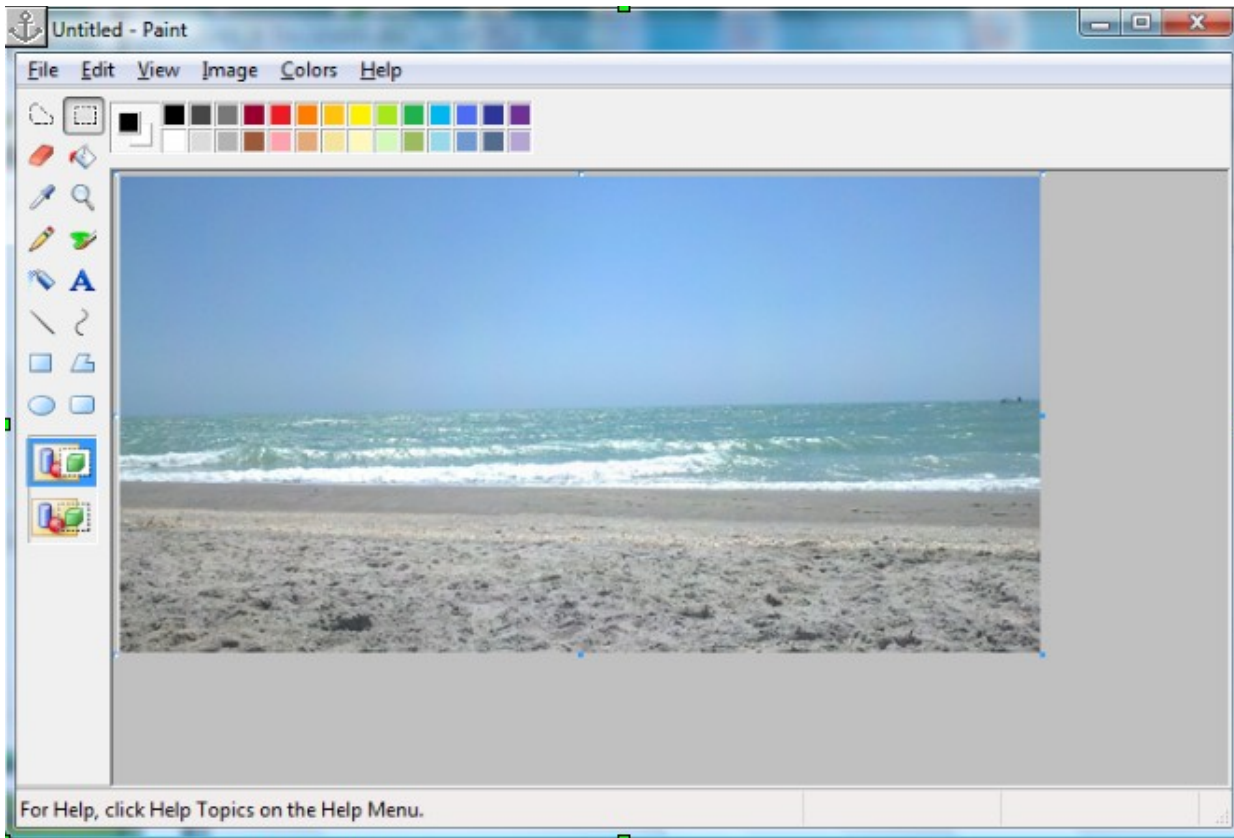


Open MSPaint and press Ctrl+V to paste the image off the screen from the clipboard to the paint canvas.



Using the select tool, drag a box around the image. Then press Ctrl+C to copy the selected area to the clipboard.

File > New > Don't Save followed by Ctrl+V to paste from the clipboard.



File > Save As the new name of the file, and click Save.

Note: I used the original name and added the word small

Name	Size
BlindPass 4-4-2011 (4) small.jpg	22 KB
BlindPass 4-4-2011 (4).jpg	684 KB

The new file of the same picture is only 22kb. The current size of this document after adding the above screen shots is 2120kb. After replacing the image of the beach with the new one, the resulting size is only 1453kb. Changing the screen shots in the same way reduced the size to 959kb.

That new picture at 22kb can easily be emailed to someone or uploaded to Facebook.

Size does make a difference.

Note: Windows Vista has a snipping tool you can use to grab an image off the screen instead of using Print Screen. I like to use a program called MWSnap that works in XP and above where it is a simple key combination to bring up a select tool and copy the selected image right to the clipboard. And there are a number of resizing apps you can download to resize one or a group of pictures. I used one called PrishResizer that does the job nicely.