Reducing File Sizes

By Dick Evans

Not too many years ago we were careful about the size of our files. We had to be or they would not fit on a 1.44mb diskette. Now our digital cameras create pictures over 1mb each. But with computer hard drives reaching into the terabytes, it is easy not to pay attention to the size of the files we save.

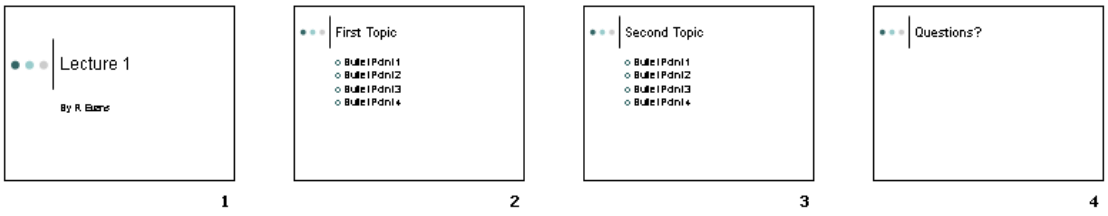
However, bloated files take longer to open and when located on a network drive they tie up bandwidth on the network as well as being slow to open. In our anxiousness, we often double-click two or more times on the same seemingly non-responsive icon only to wait and have multiple windows open, one for each of our frustrated clicks.

Why should we be concerned? The more bloat on the hard drive, the slower it runs and the more frustrated we become. We can control the size of our files and here are some examples of what we can do.

PowerPoint

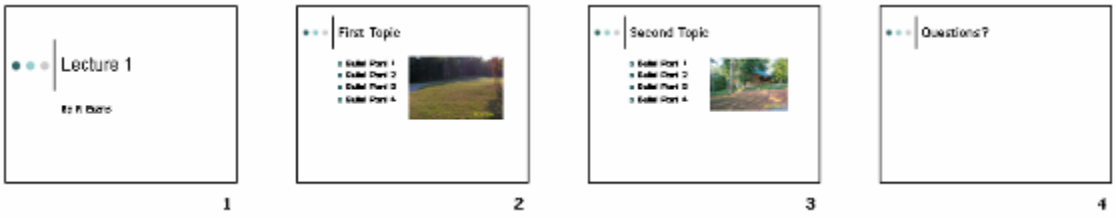
PowerPoint is a popular application used to create lectures. A simple slide deck without images does not take much space at all. The bloat occurs when adding pictures. Resizing a picture on the slide does not reduce its file size. If the picture was taken with a digital camera it may be 1mb or more in file size. Use it in one of your slides and you have added 1mb or more to the size of the slide deck. Add 20 images and your slide deck grows to more than 20mb.

For example, here is a presentation with 4 slides:



The file size is 15kb

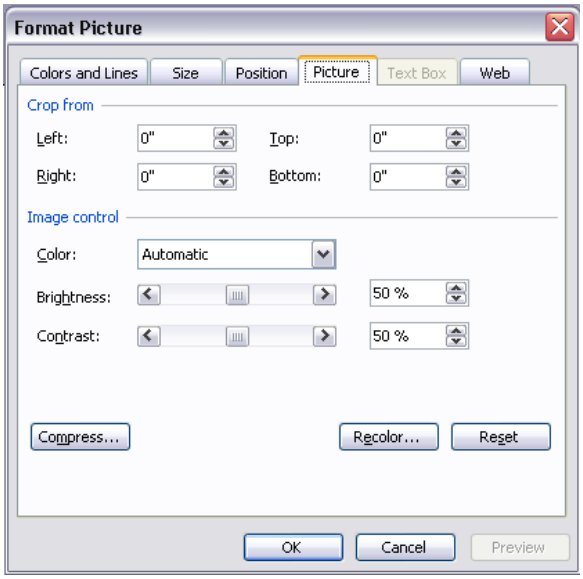
Add 2 images and resize them



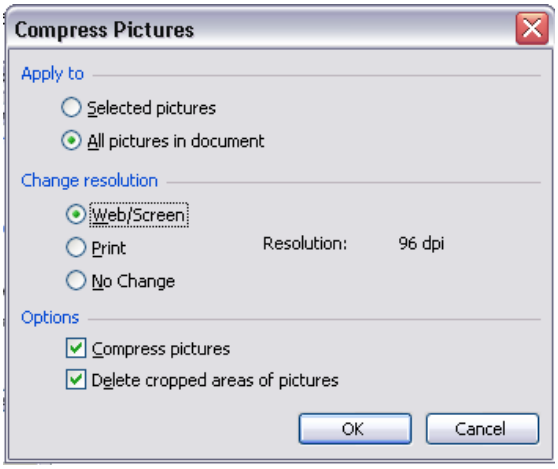
The file size is now 2,375kb

The first image is 1,021kb and the second 1,312kb. Both were resized after being copied to the slides.

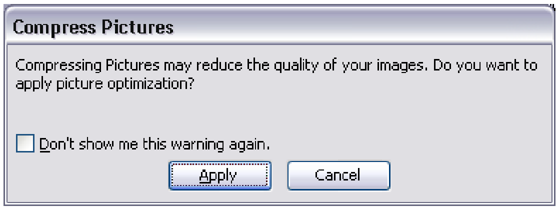
1. **Double click** the first picture



2. The Format Picture dialog box opens. **Click Compress**.



3. Select **All** pictures in document, **Web**/Screen, **Compress** pictures, and **Delete** cropped areas of pictures, and then click **OK**



4. At the Compress Pictures dialog box, click **Apply**. Then back at the Format Picture dialog box, click **OK**

5. **Resave** the file and its size becomes 65kb

The quality of the images has not been compromised, the files loads much quicker, and considerably less space is used.

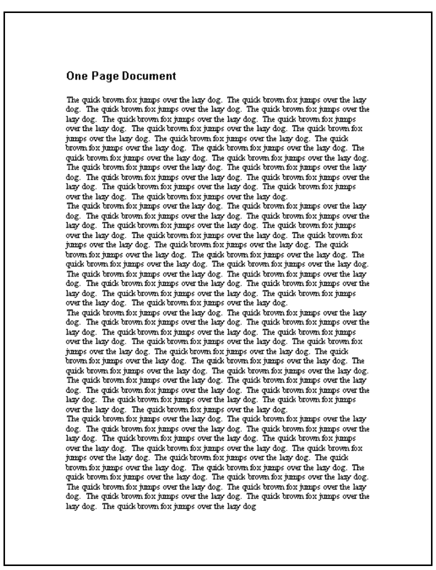
What about PDF's, you ask. The larger the file you are printing a PDF from, the larger the PDF. As an example, here are the results of printing the above files as PDFs.

Using PDF reDirect v2, the slide deck with the uncompressed pictures generated a PDF of 135kb. After image compression, the generated PDF was only 37kb

Word Documents

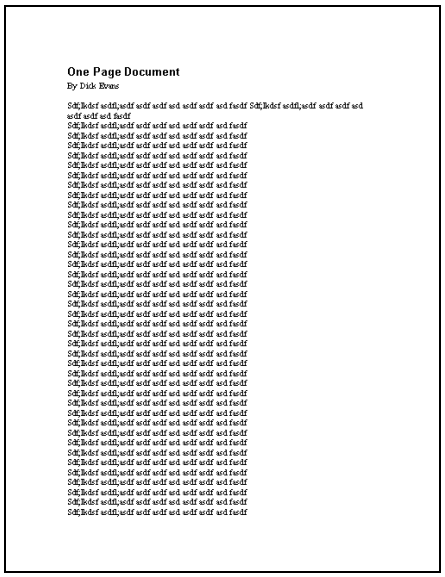
Word has the same issues and more. When a Word document is created and then modified, the new copy contains the original plus all changes. This is why a few changes to a document will cause the file to be much larger than the changes made.

Here is a simple one page document



File size is 28kb

I removed the body and replaced it with less text, and then saved the file once again



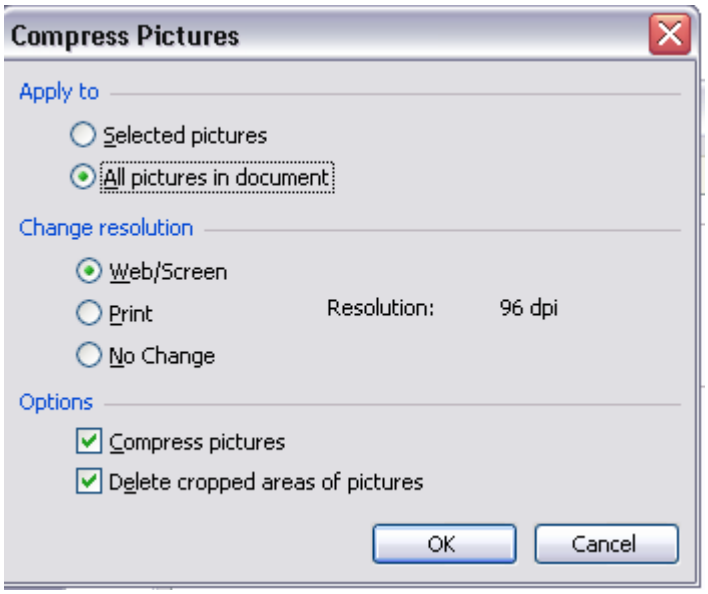
File size is 34kb -- less text in the body, 6kb larger. Each time a change is made, the file increases in size.

This is not as much of an issue as images. Just like PowerPoint, resized pictures retain their original file size.

1. Add the 1,312kb picture used in the PowerPoint example

File size 1,357kb

2. Like with PowerPoint, **double-click the picture**, and then click **Compress**



3. Select **All**…, **Web**…, **Compress**, **Delete**, and then click **OK**

4. At the Compress Pictures dialog box, click **Apply**. Then back at the Format Picture dialog box, click **OK**

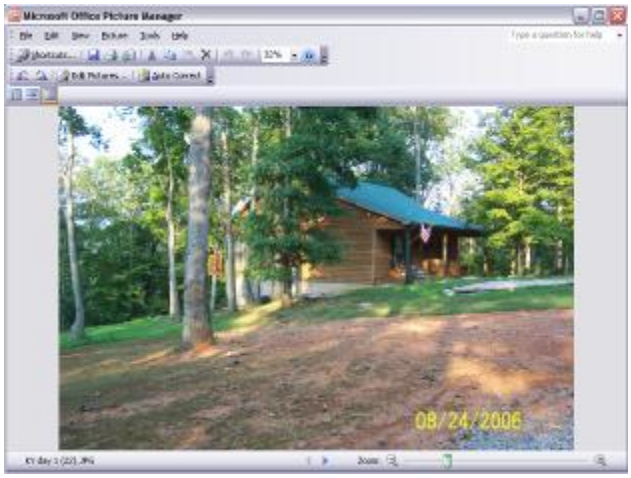
5. **Resave** the file and its size becomes 43kb

Uploading Digital Pictures

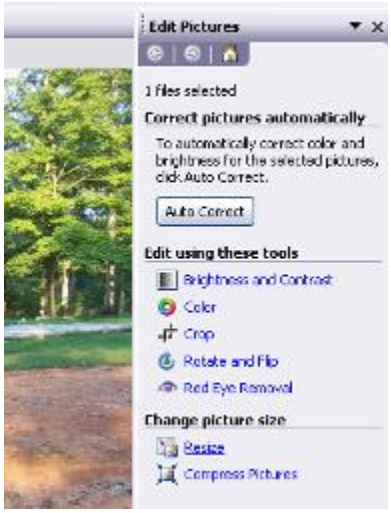
Digital Pictures can be uploaded directly and perhaps accessed from a content page. The same issues exist—the file size of most digital pictures are very large, much larger than needed to display on a web page. Reduce the size of the pictures BEFORE uploading.

Microsoft Office contains a program called Picture Manager.

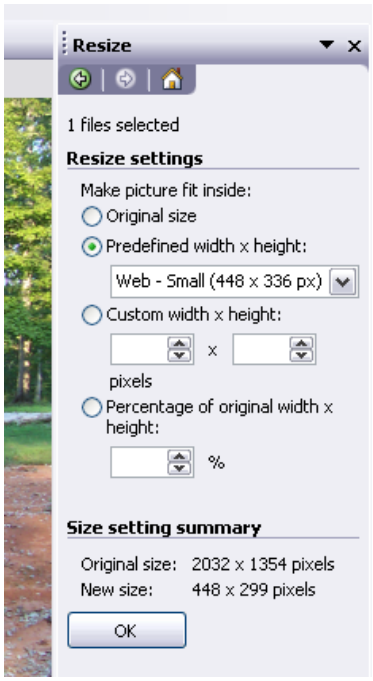
1. **Open** your digital **picture** using Picture Manager



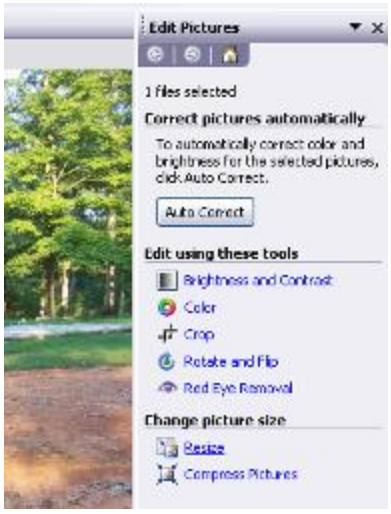
2. Click **Edit Pictures…**



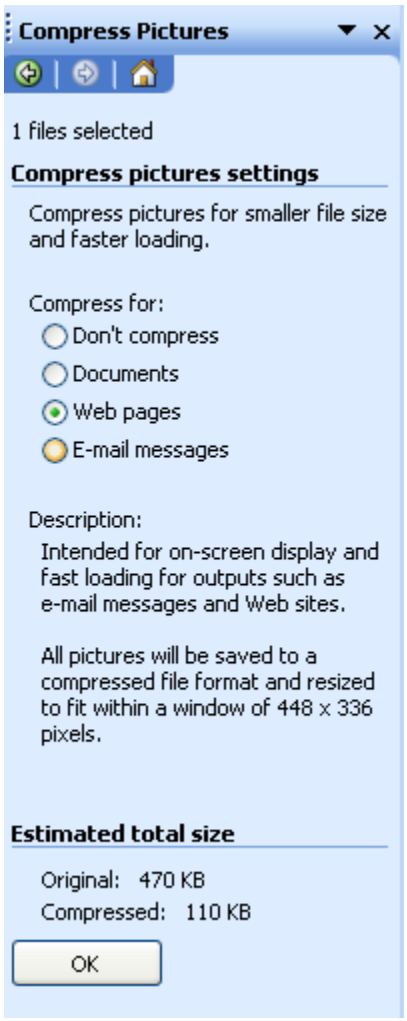
3. Click **Resize**

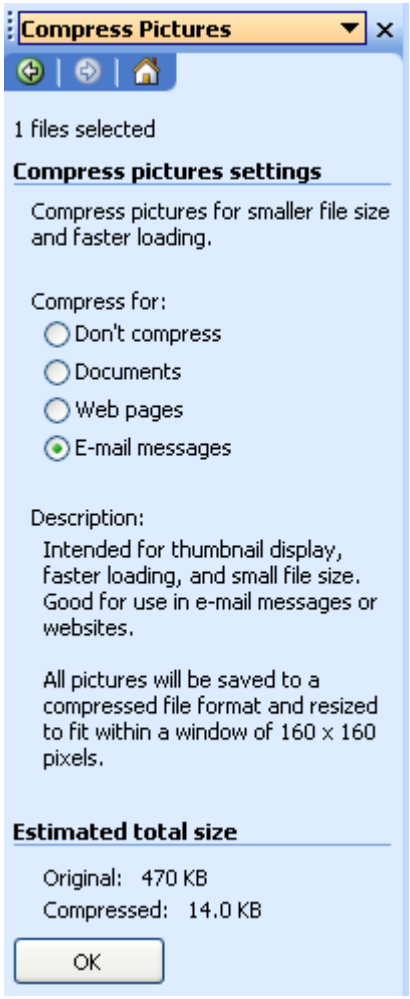


4. Select **Web – Small** (or any other size desired), and then click **OK**



5. Click **Compress Picture**





6. Choose **Web Pages** If you are using the image on a Web page, or Email messages if attaching to an email. If you choose Documents, you might find the compressed size large than the original. Then click **OK**.

7. **File** > **Save As**, change the name to preserve the original file, and then click **Save**

8. **File** > **Exit**, and then **Don't Save** to retain the original image file

9. The new file is 74kb

Another approach is to use the Microsoft Power Toy called Image Resizer. It adds a right-click selection to resize an individual picture file or a selected group of them.