

Photoshop 5.5 & 6.0 Tips & Tricks

About Actions

Actions are simple scripts you can set up in Photoshop that will allow you to record a repetitive task. After the steps are recorded, they are saved and can be applied over and over again with the click of a button. These actions are a time saver when you are working with many images that need to be processed in the same way. In this exercise, you are going to make an action for reducing the size and color depth of an image, then saving it to a gif format. Before creating an action, it's a good idea to know beforehand what steps you will take and settings you will apply. The Actions recording process will record every change you make to an image, including the wrong ones and any undos. So experiment before starting your recording.

1. Set Up The Action

1. Open an image in Photoshop.
2. Open the Actions window.
If it is not open, go to the Window Menu
Choose "Show Actions."

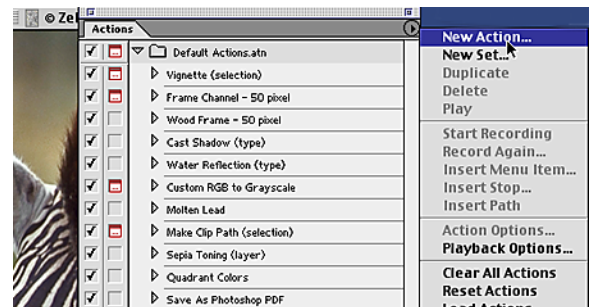
3. Create a new Action

There are two ways to create a new action:

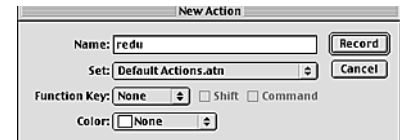
1. Click on the triangle at the top left corner of the Actions Window to reveal the options.
Choose "New Action."

or

2. Click the fifth icon at the bottom of the Action Window. It's next to the trash can.

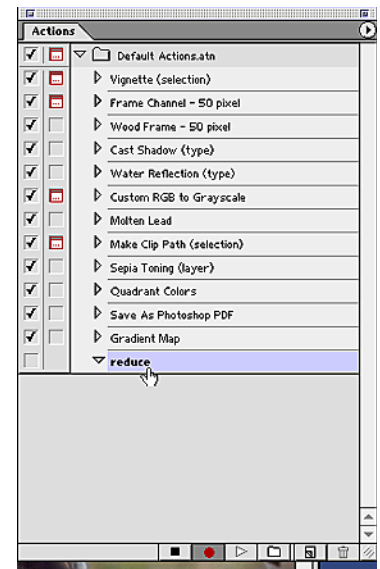


When the New Actions Dialog Box appears, name your new action; then click "Record."



Note: you will want to name your action in a meaningful way, such as; 100/72 high for an image that will be reduced to those proportions.

When the dialog box disappears, notice that the new action appears at the bottom of the Actions Window and now the Stop icon is red, indicating that you are in "Record" mode.

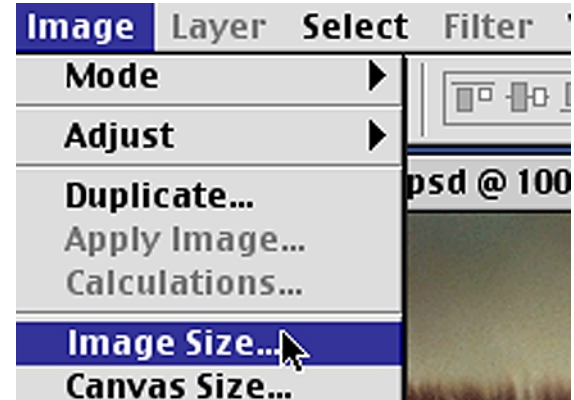


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2. Reduce The Image To The Proper Size.

This image is too large for our web page and needs to be reduced.

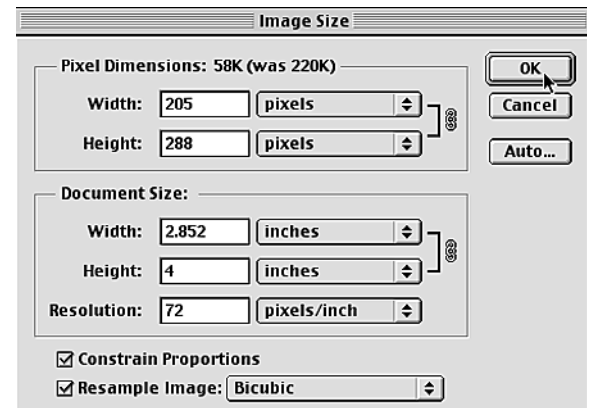
1. Go to the Image Menu.
2. Choose Image Size.
The "Image Size" Dialog Box appears.



3. Image Size Control Settings.

You can see and control all the information about this image's size from this dialog box. Since you are making these images for the web, be sure to use the pixels setting. We want these images to appear 4 inches high on our web page. The average monitor screen is 72 dpi. $72 \times 4 = 288$.

1. Type 288 in the height box of the Pixel Dimension area.
2. Click OK.



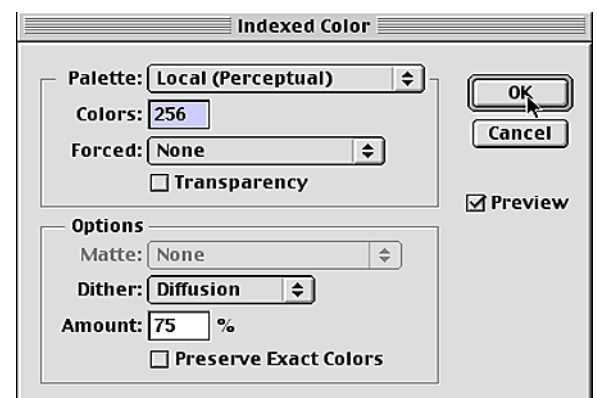
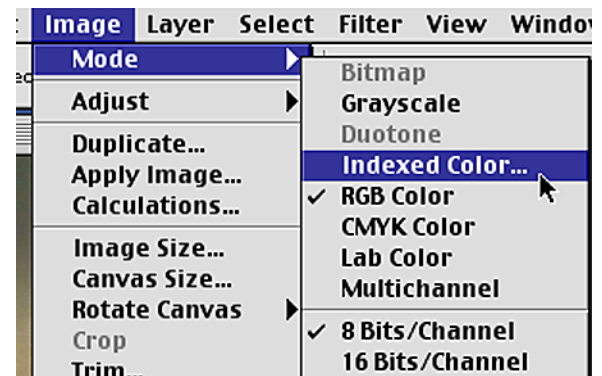
4. Reduce the color.

1. In the Image Menu, select "Mode"
Then choose "Indexed Color."

The indexed Color Dialog Box appears. There are a number of options to choose from. If you are not familiar with these options, refer to the other pages in the CookBook to learn how to make the best choices for creating gifs.

2. Since this image is a photograph, its best to choose:
Palette: Choose either "Local (Perceptual)" or "Local (Adaptive)" (see note below).
Color: 256
Dither: Diffusion
Amount: 75%
3. When all settings are selected, click OK

Note: To see the effects of the different indexing options, activate the Preview box by clicking the box next to the "Preview" in the Indexed Color Dialog Box.



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5. Save The Files

1. In the Edit Menu, choose "Save As."
Be sure to use the "Save As" option or you may accidentally overwrite your original file.
2. In the "Format" Drop Down box, select CompuServe GIF.
The name in the "Name" box automatically includes the gif extension.
3. Locate and select the folder or create a new folder for your converted image.
4. Click the Save button.

Now whenever you need to convert an image to this thumbnail size GIF, all you have to do is open the image and click the play button for this action.

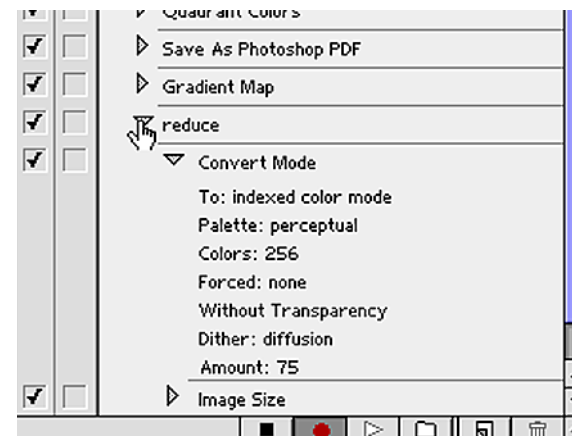
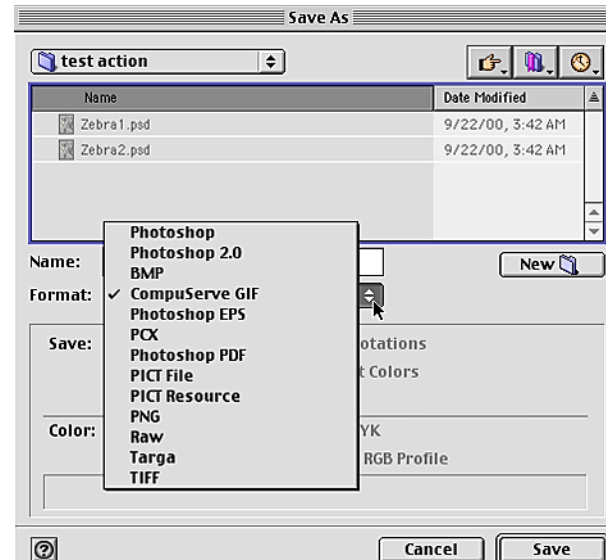
Note: the Action Script that you are creating will look for the same folder name and location that you defined in the script. All converted images are saved in that folder every time you run the script.

Notice how the steps have been added to the new action being recorded. These steps can be modified at any time.

If you have large number of files, and you would like to streamline this process further, you could create a Batch file of this action. This will allow you to select a whole folder of images to process at once, rather than opening files and running the action individually.

To do this,

1. From the File Menu,
choose "Automate" and then "Batch."
2. Choose a destination folder to save your converted files into, so you don't overwrite your original files.
3. Choose appropriate options from the pop-up menus.



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5. Create A Droplet From An Action

When a Droplet is created, an icon is produced on the desktop or in a folder. A Droplet allows you to drag and drop a folder full of images to be processed in the same manner automatically from the desktop. Unlike a Batch File, a Droplet is a little program of the selected action. Droplets can be transferred and shared between Mac and Windows operating systems.

To create a Droplet:

1. In the File Menu, choose "Automate."
Then choose "Droplet."
2. Choose a location to save your Droplet.
3. Select the Set and Action from the pop-up windows.
4. Check any options you want to include in the droplet.
5. Choose or create a folder to receive the processed images.
6. Click OK.

Note: Droplets can be moved between Macs and Windows machines.

1. A Mac-made droplet needs to have the .exe extension added to be use in Windows.
2. To use a Windows made Droplet on a Mac, drag the droplet onto the Photoshop 6.0 application Icon.

End of
Create An
Action