

HOW TO ASSEMBLE A DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

There are various ways of doing this – the one I used on Monday is described briefly below.

Whatever technique is used, it will rely on the use of Layers. If you don't know how to use these (or would benefit from a refresher), one source of information is Clive Haynes' website:

<http://www.crhfoto.co.uk/> Click on **Photo & Digital 'Know-How'** and scroll down to **Getting to Grips with 'Layers'**. There are various other pages dealing with other aspects of Layers.

The Help section of Photoshop also contains info on using Layers.

Remember that digitally projected images have a resolution of 1024 pixels wide x 768 pixels tall. You can produce bigger pictures than this, but they will all be reduced by the projector (or computer – not too sure which) to fit within this limit.

The method that I demonstrated on Monday was as follows.

- 1) With Photoshop open, go to File > New and on the Preset drag-down box select 'Custom'. Type 1024 pixels in the Width box, and 768 pixels in the height box. Select RGB Color in the 'Color mode' box and White in Background Contents. Press OK and you will now have a white page onto which you can paste your pix. Save this with a suitable file name, e.g. Portfolio 1.psd.
- 2) Open each of your pictures in turn and resize them so that they will roughly fit into the 1024 x 768 page. For example, if you are going to put 2 landscape format pix side-by-side, I would reduce them to 500 pixels wide. To do this, once you have opened the image file, go to Image > Image Size, tick Constrain proportions and Resample Image. Below these tick boxes, there may be a pull down box with Nearest Neighbour, Bilinear etc. If you have this choice, it's probably best to select Bicubic Sharper (best for reduction) since you will be reducing the size of your images. Then, in the Pixel Dimensions box, type 500 pixels into the Width box. (The Height box will automatically adjust to maintain the same aspect ratio). Click OK. The picture size should reduce considerably. If you want to make any further changes, use Control + to increase the size so that you can see what you are doing. In the case of portrait format pictures, it will probably be difficult to fit in more than one row, so these should be resized to, say, 750 pixels high by typing in 750 pixels into the Height box.
- 3) Once you have got the required size, select the image (use either Control A or go to Select > All) and copy it onto the clipboard (use either Control C or Edit > Copy).
- 4) You then need to find your blank portfolio page – it should still be open if you go to Window and scroll down to the bottom. (If you closed it in Step 1, re-open it - >File > Open Recent). Paste the picture into place by using either Edit > Paste or Control V.
- 5) You can then use the Move tool (usually top of the list in the LH tool column) to move the image to where you want it.
- 6) If you need to resize it, go to Edit > Transform > Scale. Hold down Shift, click on one of the corner boxes and move it inwards to reduce the size. Then

either press return or click the big arrow on the row of icons above the picture. (Alternatively, you can type in a % value into the H and W boxes). [Note: it is not a good idea to start with a small picture and then increase its size since this could result in a pixellated effect].

- 7) Repeat steps 2 to 6 to add extra photos to your Portfolio page. Each one will be added as an extra layer, as you can see from the Layer Palette. If you click on a particular layer in the layer palette, it turns blue to show that it is active, so you can then move that layer around, resize it etc. If you want to hide a layer, click on the eye icon to the left of the thumbnail. If you want to remove a layer, click on it and drag it to the waste bin (bottom right).
- 8) Once you have all the image layers in place, you can move them round, resize them etc.
- 9) You can use guides to help you line things up. If you've not got a ruler on the top and LH edges of your image, go to View and click on Rulers. It may also help to go to Snap To and click on Guides. [When you move images, they will then 'stick' to the guides when they get near them.] To add a Guide, move your cursor over either Ruler, click and drag into the picture. You can repeat this as many times as you want for both horizontal and vertical guides. To move a Guide, select the Move Tool (top in the Tools palette), move it over a Guide line until the tool changes shape, left click and drag to a new position. To remove a Guide, click and drag it back to the Ruler.
- 10) Use the Text Tool 'T' (Tools Palette) to add a caption. Click on the tool, then select the font, font size, alignment and colour from the pull-down boxes above the image. Move the cursor to where you want to insert the text and start typing. If you want to modify it, highlight the text, and select an alternative font, size etc. [you can also do this using the Character Palette which you can find under Window] If you want the caption to appear on more than one line, press Return where you want the line break to occur. You can adjust the line spacing on the Character Palette. Once you are happy with this, click on the big tick above the picture.

The above steps should allow you to put together a Portfolio containing several images and a title/caption.

Some of the ways in which this can be improved are as follows:

A) Adding a border. There are two main methods:

- Adding a border once the Portfolio has been assembled. In the Layer Palette, click on the Layer containing the photo that you want to add a border to. In the Tools Palette, click on Rectangular Marquee Tool (usually 2nd from top) and drag round the edge of the picture. Go to Edit > Stroke, then type in the size of the border that you want – 2 or 3 pixels is usually OK. Click on the Color box, select the colour you want, click OK. Set Location to Inside. Set Blending to normal and opacity to 100%. Click OK and the border will be added. Then Deselect that layer (Select > Deselect or Control D). Go back to the Layer Palette, pick the next photo and repeat.
- Alternatively, you can do the same thing when you open and resize each photo (step 2 above). In this case, after you have resized the photo, go to Select > All (or use Control A), then go to Edit > Stroke and type in the size of the border that you want etc. The disadvantage of this method is that the thickness of the border will change if you re-size the photo by a substantial amount once you have pasted it onto your Portfolio Page.

- In CS3 (I don't know if it works in other versions) you can also add a border as follows: select a Layer in the layer stack, click on fx at the bottom of the stack, click on Stroke and select the size, colour etc.

B) Adding a background

Open the photo that you wish to use as a background, resize to 1024 x 768 pixels (or possibly something larger, select (Select > All or Control A), copy (Edit > Copy or Control C), go to your Portfolio image and paste (Edit > Paste or Control V). The image will appear as a new layer on top of everything else. Go to the Layer Palette, click on the Layer you have just added to make it the active layer, hold down the LH mouse button and drag the Layer downwards through the list until it is just above the Background. Your image should then be the background.

- If you make your background image larger than 1024 x 768 pixels, you can drag it around to use the most appropriate part of it.
- If you want to adjust the Levels, Brightness etc of this layer, go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer, and pick what you want to adjust, e.g. Levels. A new Dialogue Box will open. Click the box marked 'Use previous layer to Create Clipping Mask', set Mode to Normal and Opacity to 100%, and click OK. A new box will appear and you can adjust the Levels of just the one layer.
- If you want to make your background less intrusive, select it on the layer stack, go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and adjust the Radius until you get the desired effect. Alternatively, choose Motion Blur, or Noise, or whatever effect you want. Try different effects in different Portfolios.

C) Adding a shadow

Select the layer in the Layer Palette, click on fx (= effects!) at the bottom of the layer palette. Choose Drop Shadow, then there are plenty of sliders to play with. Make a note of the settings so that you can apply them to the other layers. Press OK.

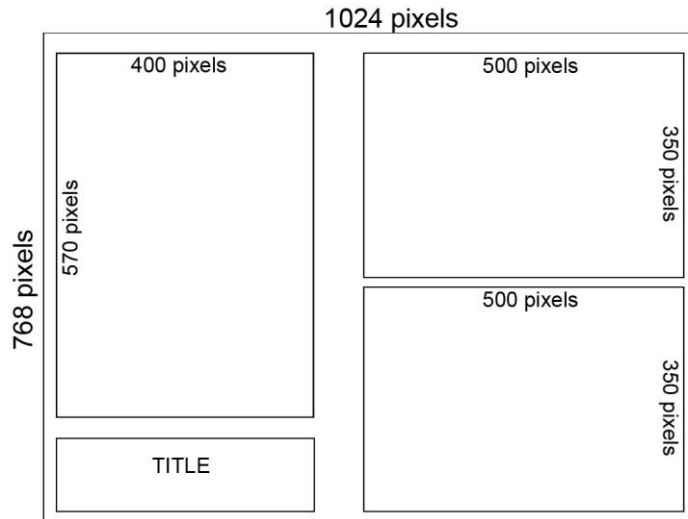
I suggest that (i) you don't add shadows to all your portfolios (ii) you experiment with all the various fx available.

D) Finishing

Once you've finished your Portfolio, I suggest that you first save it as .psd file so you can go back to it at a later date and modify any of the layers. To produce the final version, go to Layer > Flatten Image. (If it asks you whether you wish to discard hidden layers, click OK). All layers then become one final image which you can then save as a .jpg file and e-mail to me as your entry.

Another Approach

A slightly more advanced approach is to plan your layout by sketching it out on paper. One example would be as follows, but you are free to use any layout you wish:



A bit of simple maths should allow you to estimate a size for each photo. Don't forget to leave some space between and around the photos. In the above, I've left 20 pixels around the outside and let the other spaces look after themselves. It's up to you whether you use the same or different sizes for the individual images.

The next stage should be to open each image in turn and resize it to the dimensions that you have chosen. The easiest way to do this in Photoshop is to use the Crop Tool which (on CS3) is the 5th box down (a black square with a line through it) on the Tools palette on the LH side of the screen. In the box above the image, click on Front Image, then type in the required image size in the Width and Height boxes, e.g. 500 px into the Width box and 350 px into the Height box (overwrite the cm unit). Then move the cursor over the image, left click and drag. The aspect ratio will be fixed, but you can move the size and location of the selected area to where you want. Once you are happy, click the big tick and the picture is cropped and resized to 500 x 350 pixels. You can check this by going to Image > Image Size.

You could add a border at this stage (Select All, Edit > Stroke etc, as above)

Thereafter, you can proceed from Step 3 above.

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