

Understanding and working with images

An image file is the fundamental building block to adding any sort of static visual item to your website. In general there several specific file types for images and if you have ever done work with digital photography or digitization (scanning, etc.), you might be familiar with several of them, including JPEG (.jpg), TIFF (.tff), Scalable Vector Graphics (.svg), RAW (.raw), Bitmap (.bmp), Graphics Interchange Format (.gif), GIMP (.xcf), Adobe Illustrator (.ani), Truevision (.tga), etc.

However, for your WordPress website, JPEG (.jpg) is the format you want to use 95% of the time. *Note: PDF is a document file type, NOT an image file, even though in our work PDF documents often contain images. You will need to extract .jpg images from a PDF or convert an entire PDF to a .jpg image file.*

But wait – aren't PNG (.png) or GIF (.gif) files basically the same as JPEG? Why shouldn't I use them? Without getting too far into the weeds, PNG will work just fine. JPEG are just better at looking good while taking up less space. PNG will be great for when you need a picture with lots of details – like a map – that you can zoom into. But save it for special events and use small JPEG for your day-to-day posts. GIFs are good for when you want animation – but that's a whole different lecture.

This document is a general guideline to working with images for your website but shouldn't be considered a comprehensive guide for these reasons:

- Your website may have some places for alternative sizes or non-standard size images.
- There are other tools available for image editing and manipulation that aren't listed here. I am focusing on easily available and/or free versions, though there are many popular and/or paid options out there.
- There may be places and functions on your website (headers, logos, footers, pages for archives and digitization) that require use of image formats other than .jpg, which we won't be addressing here.

What file formats look like on your computer

The easiest way to identify what type of file you have is to look in Windows File Explorer. If you have "Type" and "Size" columns, you'll quickly see the image types and size.

This example has the same image saved as the different file types so you can see the relative size on disk.

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Blog post	5/30/2023 9:13 AM	GIMP 2.10.34 XCF	156 KB
Blog post	5/30/2023 8:40 AM	GIF File	45 KB
Blog post	5/30/2023 8:36 AM	BMP File	763 KB
Blog post	5/30/2023 8:32 AM	PNG File	98 KB
Blog post (1)	5/30/2023 8:32 AM	PDF Document	355 KB
Blog post	5/30/2023 8:32 AM	PDF Document	167 KB
Blog post	5/30/2023 8:31 AM	JPG File	45 KB

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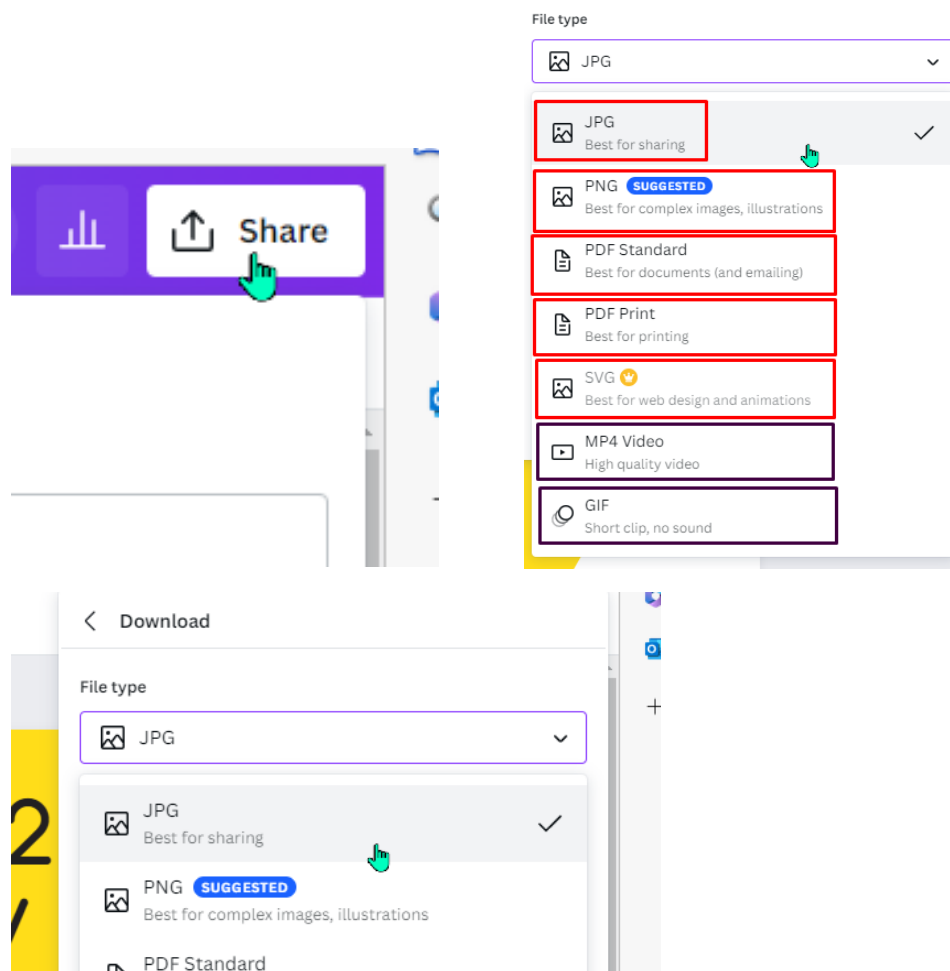
Software for working with images

This next section will cover a few software options for working with images – each has its strengths and best uses.

- Canva (web based)
- ILovePDF.com (web based)
- Photos (Windows based)
- Paint (Windows based)
- GIMP (download, computer-based)
- Microsoft Word or PowerPoint (Windows based)

- Canva (web-based)

Many of us are familiar with working with Canva. When you create an item and click the “Share” button on the far right, you will see a variety of options for downloading. It also gives some suggested use for those file types. If you are creating an image for a blog post, you will want to download it as a JPG.



Note: if you are downloading as a PDF to print posters/distribute in the library, usually PDF standard is plenty large enough. “PDF Print” might wind up being so big it won’t even go by email!

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- **ILovePDF.com** (web-based)

I mention ILovePDF.com next not for images, but for converting PDF to a .jpg file.

You can do this in Canva, but ILovePDF can be a lot faster and doesn't require logging in.

Go to www.ilovepdf.com and click on "PDF to JPG"



and follow the instructions.

For a full tutorial, view this [10 minute Digital Byte](https://www.youtube.com/@WVLSChannel) on ILovePDF at the WVLS YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@WVLSChannel>).

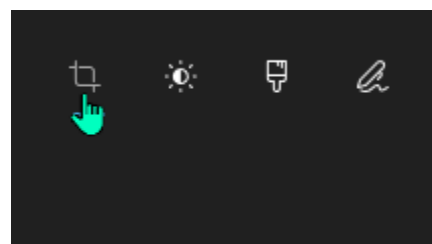
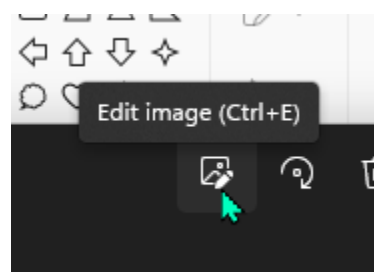
- **Photos** (Windows 10/11)

"Photos" is one of two native applications on Windows PCs. The advantage is that if you have a Windows PC, you almost certainly have the app right there, and it can be a quick and easy way to do simple cropping or quick enhancements – especially good for photos (as the name implies).

Disadvantages? Somewhat clunky if your photo/image isn't saved in the exact folder Windows is scanning to find images, it is VERY limited in what it can do, and it is not the best tool for resizing images to exactly the right size for a particular place on a website.

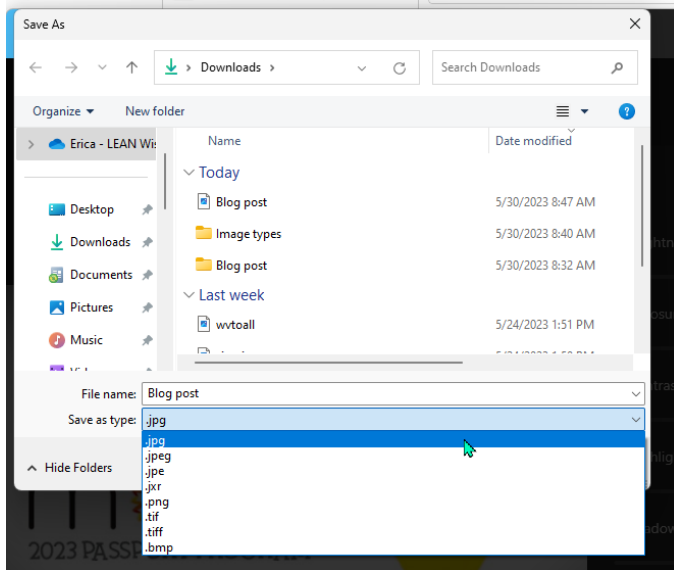
But if you have a photo from an event, etc., and just need to crop it or make adjustments/enhancements it is a quicky and easy way to work with pictures.

1. Open the file, click on "Edit Image."



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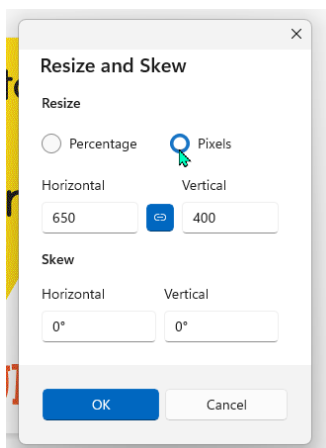
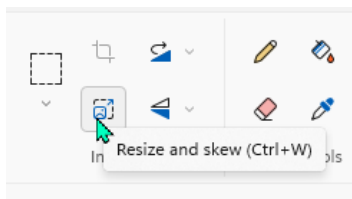
If you need to change the file type after making changes, click “Save As” and click on the “Save as type:” dropdown and select the file type you want.



- Paint (Windows 10/11)

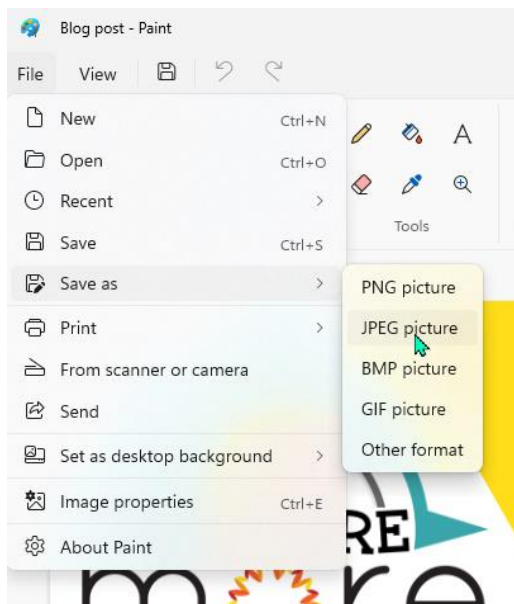
Paint (or Paint 3D) is the other pre-installed application on Windows computers. It is better for general image manipulation, but still not as versatile as Canva can be. But it is more powerful than Photos for resizing images to specific sizes.

If you need an image to be a specific size, you can click on the “Resize and Skew” icon in the top menu bar, select “Pixels” and input the required pixel size.



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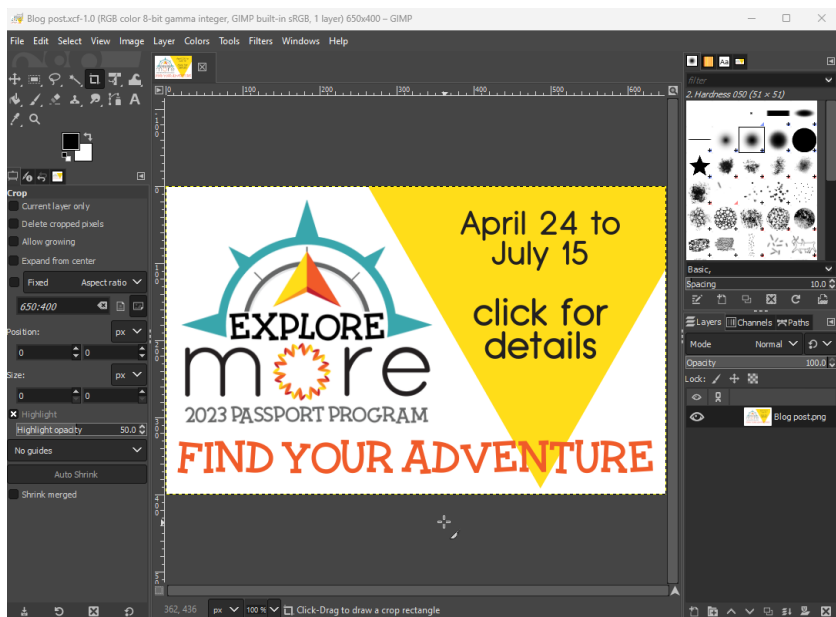
Saving an image to a different file type is also easy in Paint. Click on “File” → “Save As” and select the file type you want from the dropdown.



- **GIMP** (GNU Image Manipulation Program – software download, computer based)

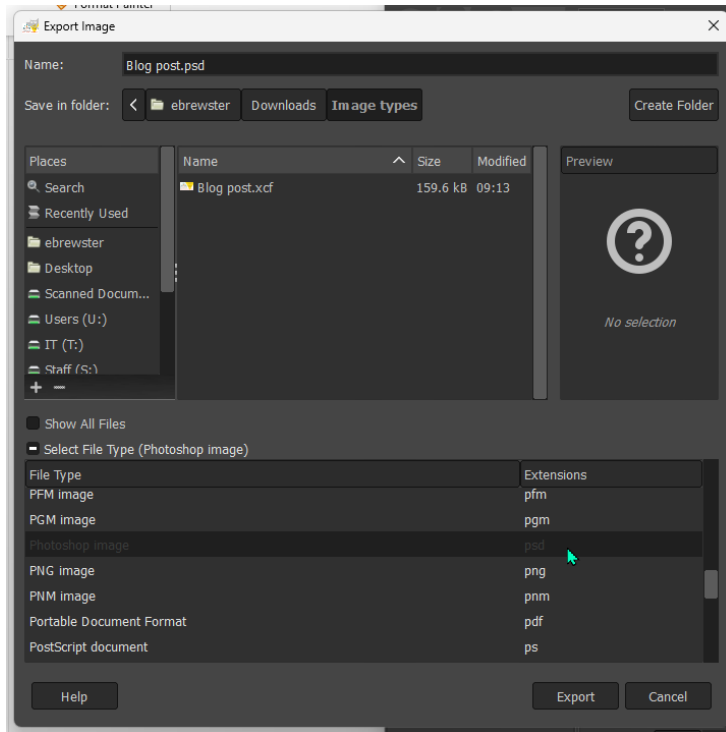
I'll confess I'm not as familiar with GIMP as the other tools, but I know many people use it and love it.

Advantage is it is a free download and it is pretty darn powerful.



Disadvantage is it is complex without lots of practice, and it does like to save things in its own proprietary file type (.xcf), so images will need to be converted to .jpg either in GIMP (via the Export As function) or using another program. But GIMP also offers a TON of export options to a whole list of image types, many of which you will probably never, ever use unless you go into graphic design.

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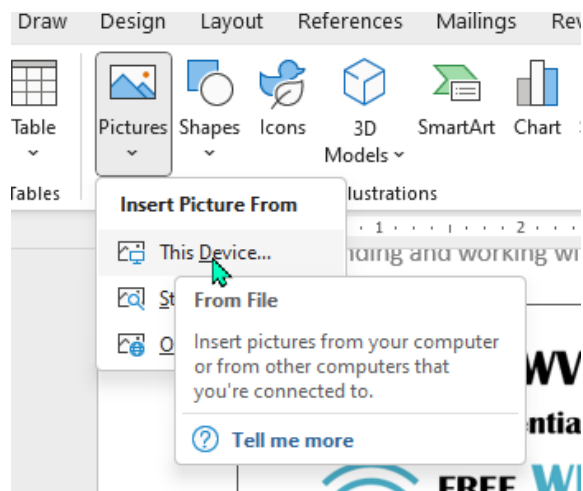
- Microsoft Word, PowerPoint (Windows)

Who knew? Microsoft Word/PPT can be a helpful image management tool of last (or first) resort.

Sometimes when all the other image editors fail and I just need to resize/crop and save an image, I just open my handy MS Word and get things done. (Note, you can do many of these same things in PowerPoint, but I am using Word as the example).

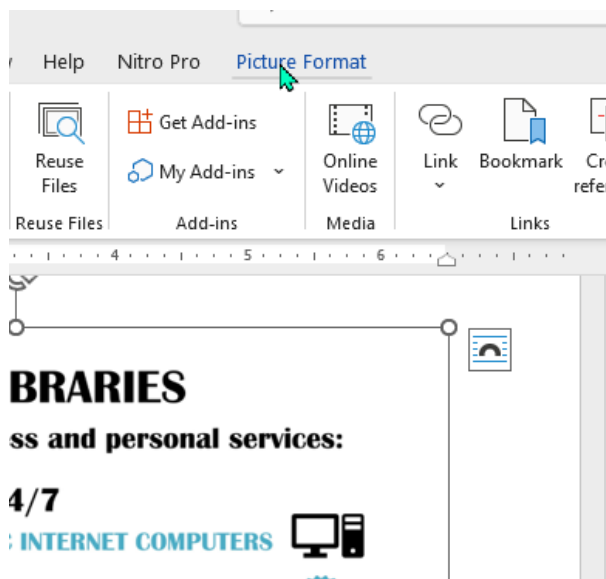
Example: I have .png file, but I only want a portion of it and I need it saved as a .jpg.

I open Word and drop/insert the image into my document:

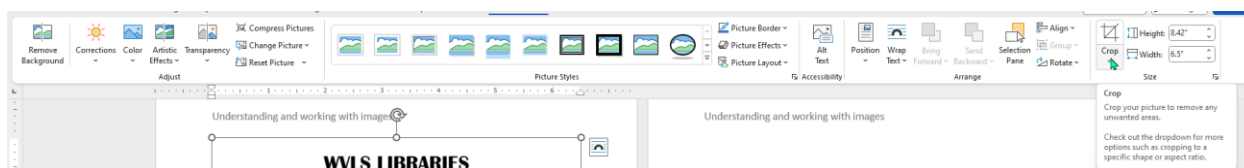


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Now when I click on the image, “Picture Format” in the top ribbon will appear.



The Picture Format menu offers a whole slew of options – we’ll focus on “Crop” and Resize on the far right side.



If you click on “Crop,” it will display the cropping squares. Word is a little more finicky than other programs, but you need to hover over the part you want to move, click, and drag.

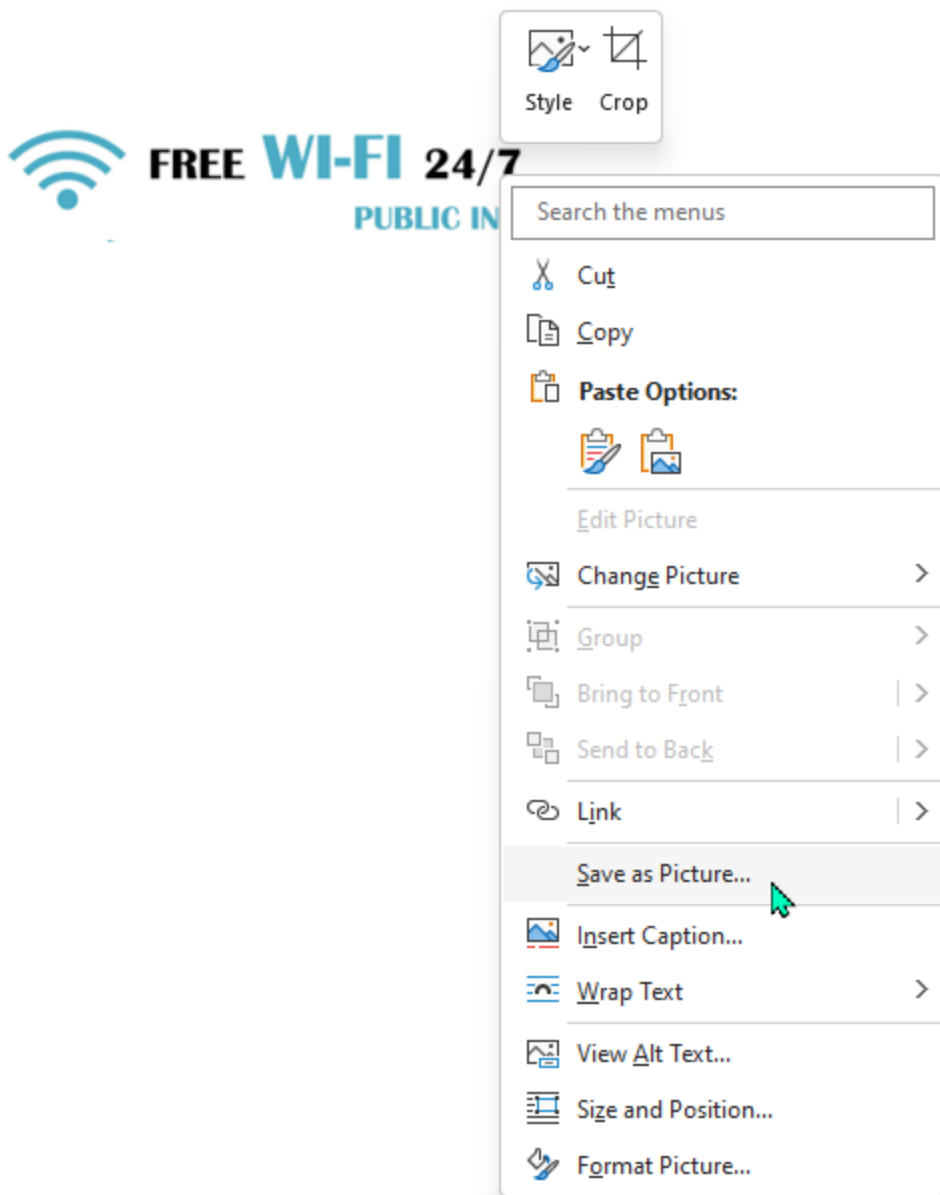


Click “enter” and your cropping will take effect.

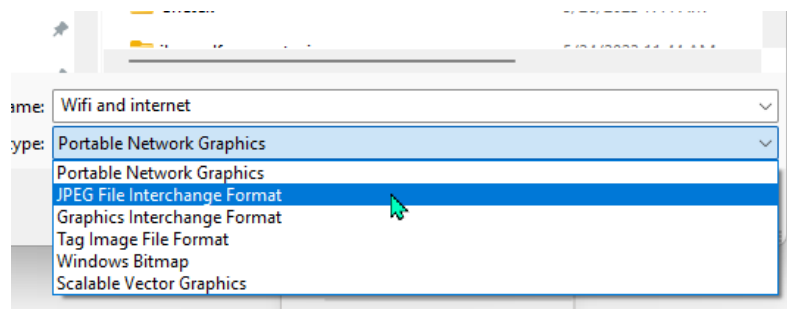


Now, if I want to save this image for use elsewhere, right click on the image and click “Save as Picture.”

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This will open the “Save As” box – name it, and “save as type:” .jpg



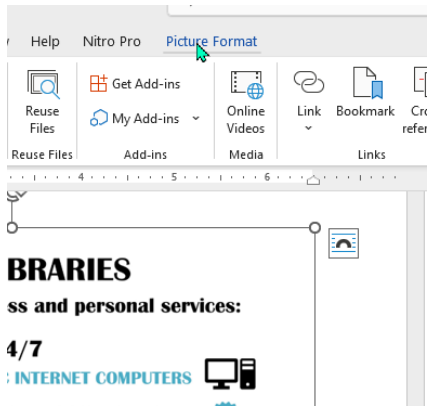
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Now you can use this image on your website!

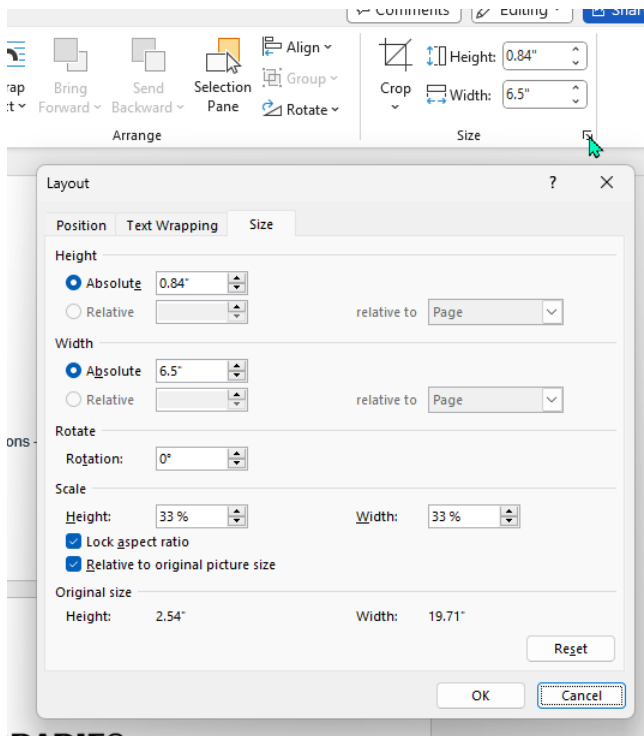
Resizing in Word:

CAVEAT – resizing often appears in inches, and doesn't translate directly to pixels as needed for the website. BUT, if you need a quick crop to ratio using inches, this is an option.

Option 1: from the Picture Format menu in the Ribbon:

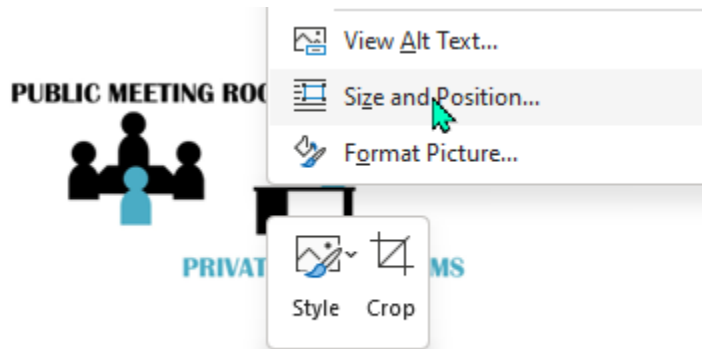


If you click on the tiny boxed arrow to the right of "Size" the full Layout menu will pop out.

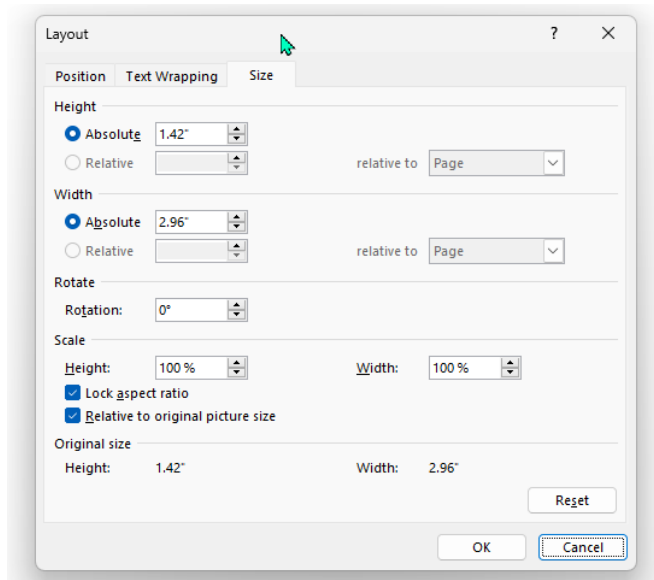


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Option 2: Right click on the image and select “Size and Position.”



This opens the Layout box and you can play with dimensions here. Again, other programs are better suited to this so I won't go into detail here.



Next up: Images, your WordPress website, and the Divi Builder