Merging Two Graphics Into One

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Click here: Merging Two Graphics Into One

Many other topics available at the above web site.

   A reader called to ask how she could reproduce some legal size documents (8½x14) when she only has a standard size scanner (8½x11). She said she only needed a "picture" of each document, rather than an "editable" copy, and added that she had scanned some of them in sections, but didn't know how to piece the sections together.

   I explained how she could attach these sections using MSPaint (which comes with all versions of Windows). Here's how: Let's assume the lady has scanned a legal-sized page in two sections and named them **top.gif** and **bottom.gif**. (More about the "GIF" image format in a moment.)

   Now she would open MSPaint by going to **Start>Programs>Accessories>Paint**. Click on **File>New** to create a blank image. Next, click on **Image>Attributes** to choose a size for the graphic. In this example, click on **Inches** and type **8.5** for the **Width** and **11** for the **Height**. Then choose **Black & White** (in the case of a scanned typewritten document).

   Finally, go to File>Save As and name the document, say, **Legal-1** and choose **.gif** as the **File Type**.

   Next go to **File>Open** and browse her way to the file named **top.gif**. This would normally be found in her **My Pictures** folder. If you keep your graphics in another folder, such as *My Documents*, you would browse accordingly.

   Double-clicking this file would cause it to appear in the MSPaint window, floating on top of the white rectangle created earlier. Using the mouse pointer, **top.gif** can then be placed in position on the white rectangle.

   Now go to **File>Open** and repeat the above steps to place **bottom.gif** in position. When the two sections are properly aligned, go to **File>Save**. The assembled pieces would now be a reproduction of the original document with the name **Legal-1.gif** and would print properly on an **8½x14** sheet of paper.

If the two pieces don't seem to overlap and line up the way you want them to, you can use the Selection tool (the dashed rectangle in the upper right corner of the Tool Box) to crop the sections and make them line up.

Creating a Simple Photo Montage

The above steps can also be used to do things like, say, taking four small photos and grouping them into one larger image.

If you should want to reduce the size of the finished image (so that more of it could be seen at once on your monitor) go to **Image>Stretch/Skew** and type in a number for the Horizontal and Vertical Stretch percentages. Experiment to see which percentage of reduction works best for you. If you want to save a copy of the reduction, go to File>Save As and give it a different name, so that the full-size original will be preserved.

Graphic Filename Extensions

Getting back to the **GIF** image format, more information can be found here. For now it's helpful to know that GIF is often used for plain black and white images, while JPG is generally preferred for color photos. However, a scanned document may not offer either of these extensions when asking you to type in a name for the image. You may find something like PCX as your only choice.

Well, MSPaint is not sophisticated enough to recognize PCX files, much less convert them to other formats. However, a free graphics viewer named **Irfanview** (available at www.irfanview.com) can do this conversion, and many others as well. I use the program all the time.

Computer users with programs like Adobe PhotoShop or PaintShopPro would probably prefer to do all of the things described above with their own high-end programs, where terms like *Resize or Resample* would be found, rather than *Stretch & Skew*.

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