



PREPRESS TWO CENTS: IMPROVING PHOTO RESOLUTION

Not Like Keeping a New Year's Resolution

OR: Can high resolution be counterfeited?

You sent your job to the printer, and the preflight report you received says you have some low-res images. What could be the harm in opening those photos and punching in a higher resolution in the Image Size window? That should fix the problem, right? Wrong.

Let's take a look at this common misconception. Images with a high resolution contain more, and therefore smaller, pixels than an image with a low resolution. High-resolution photos have more detail and subtler color transitions than low-res images because of the density of pixels.

You can't improve a low-quality image by typing in a higher resolution. Changing the resolution value simply makes each pixel larger, resulting in an undesirable effect sometimes referred

to as "pixelation" or "bitmapping;" output with large, coarse-looking pixels. Increasing the print resolution doesn't add any pixel information to the image. If the camera didn't capture the information or the scanner didn't scan it, the information is simply not there.

At this point you have to make a choice; accept the printed quality the way it is or attempt to improve it by some other method. You can reduce the size of the photo to make the most of the available pixels, or you can add a border or clone in extra image around the edges. Otherwise, you might choose to use a completely different photo with a higher resolution.

If you have any questions about resolution or need help with a specific project, please contact us.



The image on the left is 300 dpi; the image in the center is 72 dpi; the image on the right was a 72 dpi image resampled to 300 dpi. Resampling didn't improve the quality at all.