

IrfanView 3.99 Tutorial – Using Batch Conversion

Norman C. Borg – February 2007

Objectives

This tutorial will show you how to use IrfanView to:

- Apply batch conversions to a number of graphics files at once;
- Resize images;
- Rename image filenames;
- Change colour depth on images;
- Convert images from one graphic format to another;
- Create framed thumbnails

Download and Installation

IrfanView is freeware. It can be downloaded from <http://www.irfanview.com>.

After downloading, locate the file **iview399.exe** in the Installer folder and run.

This tutorial is based on **version 3.99** of the software, however the features covered should work with earlier and later versions.

IrfanView Settings

Broadly speaking you can leave all default settings as is. You may however wish to have a white background screen rather than the default black one. Change this as follows:

- Go to Menu > Options > Properties.
- Click on the **Viewing** tab.
- For the **Main window color** select white (or any other colour you fancy).

Tutorial 1: Creating web-friendly photos

Scenario

- We are going to use 10 files of varying size available in the Source Folder you have downloaded from the website. If you have not downloaded the tutorial file yet see *Download the tutorial files* below.
- What we want is to turn these existing files into web-friendly graphics, so that they can download faster from the Internet and take less space on the server.
- We will also give the photos a standard size.

What do we need to do?

- **Rename** the photos to have a more standard filename and numerical sequence.
- **Resize** the photos to take less web space and appear on the screen without requiring any scrolling.
- **Reduce colour-depth** and **change the image format** to save even more web space.

What is batch conversion?

All the above operations will need to be done on each and every image you want to have online. Batch conversion enables you to execute the operation on all the required files at once, without having to repeat the routine for every separate file.

Download the tutorial files

The files on which we will do the batch conversion are available on <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/normancborg/casws/irfanview.html>.

1. Click on **Download tutorial files**.
2. Enter the address on your browser and select **Run** when prompted.
3. Before unzipping the files, click the **Browse** button and select the **Desktop** as a target file.
4. Click on **Unzip**.

Shortly, you will have a folder on the desktop called **Source Folder**.

Backing up

Before actually working on the folder, you should make a backup copy to ensure that no harm is done to the original images. Remember that if you are working with photos, original files can be easily replaced if damaged or over-written.

Do this now:

5. Right-click on the Source Folder and select copy.
6. Open **My Computer > Local Disk (C:)**.
7. Right-click and select **Paste**.

You now have a copy of Source Folder in the root directory of your C: drive.

Create a Target Folder

It is not our intention to change the original files, but rather create converted versions of these files. The best practice is to create a separate location where to save these new files. Create a new folder on the Desktop as follows:

8. Right-click anywhere on the **Desktop** and select **New > Folder**.
9. Enter the name **Target Folder** and press **Enter**.

The new, converted images will be saved in this folder.

Open IrfanView

IrfanView will open with a blank screen. Actually we do not need to load any images into IrfanView for our tutorial. We will go straight to the batch conversion functions.

10. From the menu, select **File > Batch Conversion/Rename...**

The Batch Conversion window will appear (Fig. 3).

Selecting the source files

11. From the **Look in** drop-down menu, select the **Source Folder** of the Desktop. In order to see the BMP files make sure that in the **Files of type** drop-down menu, **BMP/DIB/RLE - Windows Bitmap** or **Common Graphic Files** is selected.

The list of files should appear in the files window.

12. Click on the **Add all** button. The list of files (including the file path) will appear in the **Input files** window.

Deciding where to put the target files

13. In the **Output directory:** area, click on the **Browse** button, and navigate to the **Target Folder** directory you created on the Desktop.

Decide on the actions to take

14. Go to the **Work as:** area.
15. Select **Batch conversion – Rename Result files**.
16. In the **Output Format** drop-down menu, select **GIF – Compuserve GIF**.
17. Click the **Options** button. The **JPEG/GIF save options** window should appear (Fig. 1).
18. Ignore the JPEG settings. For the GIF options, select **Save Interlaced**. This will make the images appear gradually while downloading on the website.
19. Click **Okay** to get back to the Batch Conversion window.

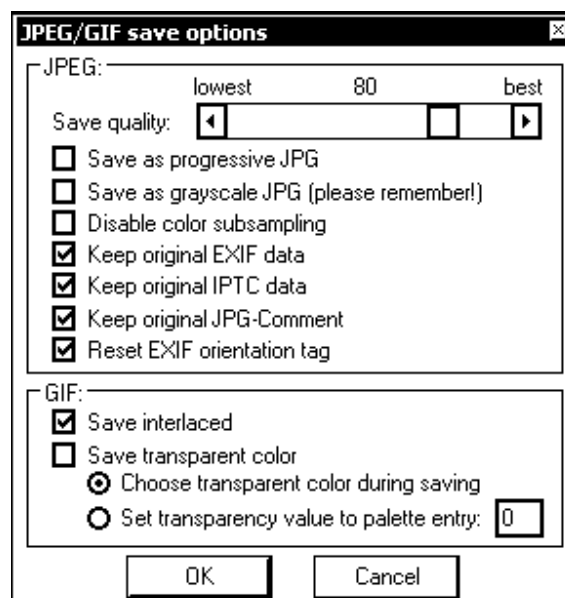


Fig. 1

Advanced options

20. Back in the Batch Conversion window, tick the **Use advanced options** checkbox.
21. Click the **Set Advanced Options** button. The **Settings for all images:** window should appear (Fig. 2).

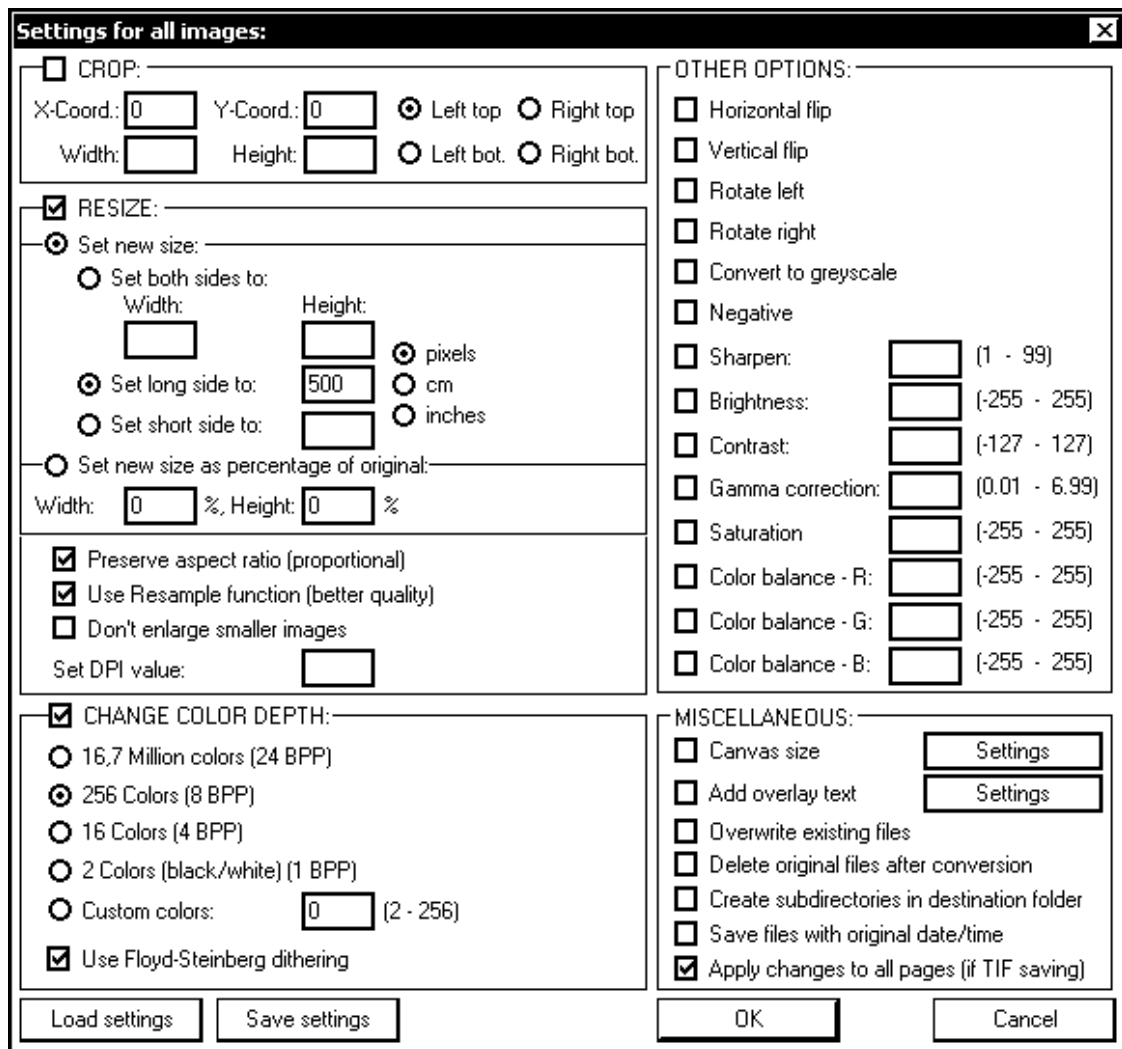


Fig. 2

We will set the resizing. A photo 500 pixels across (landscape orientation) should be sufficient for a web page, so we will set the resizing to be 500 pixels on the long side of the photo, whether it is in portrait or landscape orientation.

22. To do this, select the **Set long side to** radio button, and type in **500** in the corresponding text box.
23. Tick the **Preserve aspect ratio (proportional)** checkbox. This will ensure that the photo is resized proportionally and will not be distorted. At this point the length of the shorter side of the photo will be calculated automatically.

The appearance of the photos

24. Tick the **Use resample function (better quality)** checkbox. This will ensure the photo is properly resampled when moved down from 16 million to 256 colours.
25. Tick the **CHANGE COLOR DEPTH:** checkbox.
26. Tick the **Use Floyd-Steinberg dithering** checkbox. This will ensure that the re-colouring preserves the correct tones of the photos.
27. Select **256 colors (8BPP)**.
28. Optionally, you can save these settings if you intend to process other photos in a similar way later.
29. Click **Okay** to go back to the Batch Conversion window.

Renaming the files

We need to do two things, here: provide the images with a standard name and give them a proper numerical sequence.

30. In the **Name pattern** textbox, enter **Tutorial-##**.

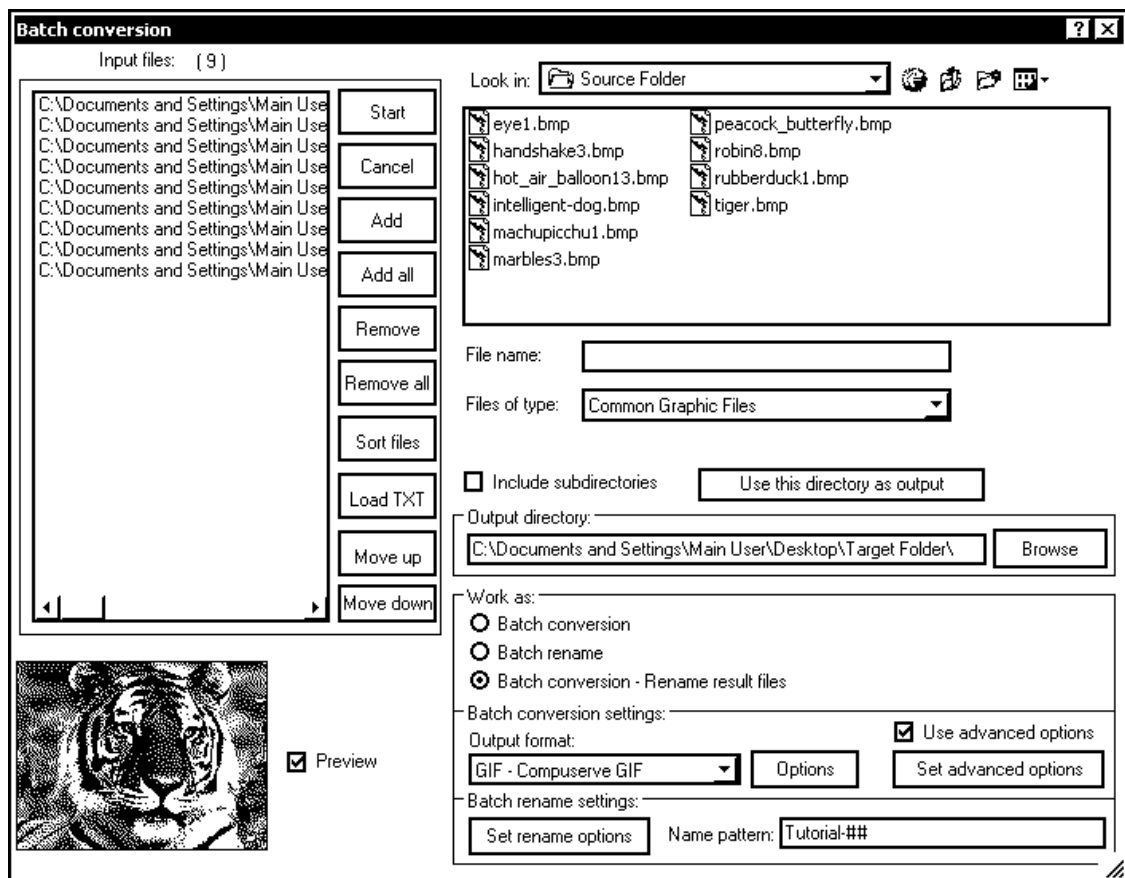


Fig. 3

All files will be named tutorial-, followed by a two-digit number which will be automatically incremented.

Your final settings in the Batch Conversion window should look something similar to Fig. 3.

Run the conversion/renaming process

31. Click on the **Start** button. IrfanView will start the conversion/renaming process. At the end it will display a window like the one shown in Fig. 4. If everything went well, you should have zero errors reported at the end of the process.

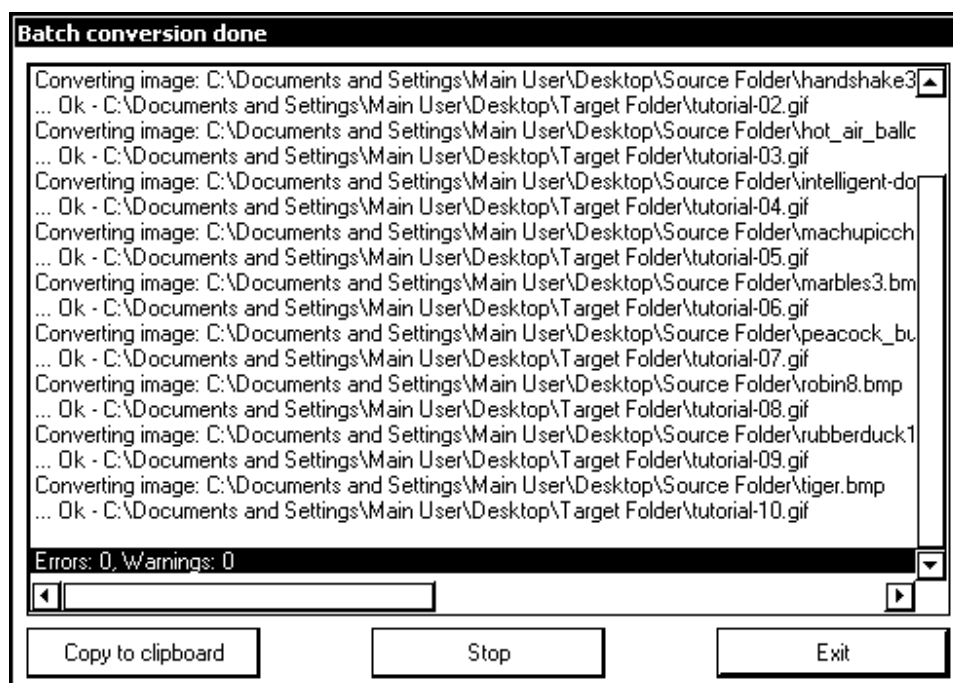


Fig. 4

32. Go to the Target Folder on your Desktop, and check the files created.
33. Compare their file sizes with those of the original files still in the Source Folder.
34. Preview (Windows Picture and Fax Viewer) the newly created photos to check their quality. Note the skin tone and other colours.

Tutorial 2: Creating Thumbnails

It is true that FrontPage has a function for creating thumbnails on the fly. However, this is done one image at a time, and may result to be impractical when dealing with a large quantity of images.

The same batch conversion process used above can be used for creating a large number of thumbnails at one go.

Selecting the source files

1. Run IrfanView.
2. Select **Menu > Batch Conversion / Rename...**
3. Select the **Target Folder**. We intend to work with the images we have created for the first tutorial.
4. Select **Add All**. All images in the Target Folder starting with “Tutorial” will be transferred to the Input Files list.
5. The **Output folder** should be the same as the last sessions (IrfanView remembers this. If it is not, set it to the **Target Folder**).

Setting the file conversion process

6. The **Work as** option should be **Batch conversion – rename results**.
7. **Output format** should be **GIF – Compuserve GIF**.

Naming the thumbnails

8. Set the **Name pattern** to **tn\$N**. “tn” will stand for thumbnail. This will help put all thumbnails together when listed in Windows Explorer. \$N stands for the original name of the file. Therefore, the file named “Tutorial-01” will generate a new file called “tnTutorial-01”.

Advanced options

9. Tick the **Use advanced options** checkbox.
10. Click on the **Set advanced options** button.
11. In the **RESIZE** area, set the **Set long side** to **100 pixels**.
12. Make sure that the **Preserve aspect ratio** and **Use resample function** are selected.
13. Set **CHANGE COLOR DEPTH** to **16 (4 BPP)**.
14. Select **Use Floyd-Steinberg dithering**.

Adding a frame to the thumbnails

15. Go to the **Miscellaneous** area.
16. Tick the **Canvas size** checkbox.
17. Click on the **Settings** button which is now enabled. This will take you to the **Add image border (canvas size)** window (Fig. 5).
18. Set all borders to **2** and select a **border colour** of your choice.
19. Click **Okay** to return to the Settings for All Images window.

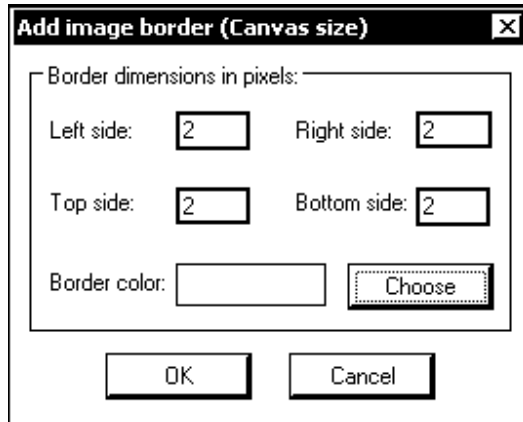


Fig. 5

Saving your settings

You will probably need these setting for other sets of images later on, so it would be wise to save the settings for later.

20. Click the **Save settings** button. The information will be saved as an INI file.
Select a location where to save it.
21. Give it a clear name for reference (ex. *thumbnailsettings* or something similar).
22. Save the file.

Starting the operation

23. Click **Okay** to return to the Batch conversion window.
24. Click the **Start** button.

At the end of the operation, exit IrfanView and check the results in the Windows Picture Viewer.

If you think 16-colour thumbnails are not clear enough, you can repeat the operation with a resolution of 256 colours. In this case keep this in mind:

- The thumbnail images will be larger in filesize;
- You will have to set the **overwrite existing files** option in the **Miscellaneous** area (**Settings for all images** window). However, be careful how to use this function!