

Five Free Graphics Tools

By Dianne Reuby

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Free Site Builder <http://www.freesitebuilder.co.uk>

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Graphics often need a bit of a tweak before you add them to your pages. Cropping, making the background transparent, resizing, or just finding that picture that you ****know**** you've got somewhere on your hard drive! Irfan View can carry out all these tasks, and includes a great browser which loads at the click of a key, and displays thumbnails for you to choose from. It will also do screen captures. Available from many freeware sites (see below), you can also download from <http://softwarecenter.net/irfanview/>

GIF files can be "optimized" - have all the unnecessary information cut out of them. This makes them quicker to load on a web site, without affecting their quality. GifClean32 from <http://members.tripod.com/~mharing/GifClean32.html> will do this, and is very easy to use. JpgCleaner from <http://rnbw.tsx.org> does the same for JPG files.

NOTE: Some clipart creators ask you not to use these tools on their graphics, as the programs can remove the copyright info from the file. So check first!

Do you want an icon for your web site? Having a "favicon" which displays in Internet Explorer address bar and favorites list can make your site stand out. GoldIcon will let you create 32x32 BMP icons. Get it from <http://www.goldshell.com> To find out more about favicons and how to use them, go to <http://www.favicon.com/>

Harm's Tile from <http://www.users.uswest.net/~sharman1/> will allow you to create seamless tiles for backgrounds, buttons, etc. It has several effects that can be used alone or combined together, such as ripple, fish-eye, buttonise and more. It's fun to use, too!

UFX (Ultimate Effects) - <http://www.ultimatepaint.com/ufx/>
can apply special effects to your pictures. It's prime
purpose is for scanning and manipulating photos, but it can
be used on other graphics too. You can also use Adobe
Photoshop plug-ins with it. Use it for screen capture,
transparent gifs, special effects and other tasks too.

Some of my favourite freeware sites:

<http://www.completelyfreesoftware.com/>

<http://www.webattack.com/>

<http://www.jumbo.com/>

<http://www.moochers.com/>

Some of my favourite free graphics sites:

<http://www.iconarchive.com>

<http://www.clipartcastle.com>

<http://www.clipart.com>

<http://www.free-backgrounds.com/>

Dianne Reuby is co-author of the e-book "First Website
Builder", <http://newbieclub.com/builder/?pramclub>

Dianne created and runs the Free Site Builder web site and
ezine, dedicated to helping newbies create web sites with
free tools, services and resources.

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