

**Photographic Alliance of GB
Technical Standards Committee**

**Projected Digital Images
Outline Proposal for Standards Documents**

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Circulation

This Proposal is for the Technical Standards Committee members, and copied to the President. After comments, any revised Proposal may be given a wider consultation.

Introduction

The Committee's work from Apr-05 resulted in a technical document (3rd Interim Report) presented to the Executive in Apr-06. The Executive requested that this be developed into suitable standards documents.

This Proposal arises from a consideration of how the Executive's request could be achieved. It has taken some time to reach this Proposal as a number of apparently conflicting requirements have to be met.

- Documents/standards/recommendations should be short and simple.
- A short document has to rely on considerable knowledge already shared by the author/reader. But, we cannot rely on existing knowledge.
- A simple document could be easily misunderstood.
- A long document is not automatically informative to a novice in the subject.
- All documents in the subject of projected digital images are likely to need ongoing revision.

Any document has a structure and editorial style. It would be undesirable to draft any document fully in one style before being reasonably certain that the style is suitable. That suggests a two-stage process, where the style is first exemplified and approved before a full document is prepared. Hence this Proposal.

Scope of the Standards Library

There are two sets of participants in projected digital images:

- Authors.
- Event organisers.

Both will need material tailored to their requirements, although with some knowledge of the other.

There are several levels for authors and event organisers: Club, Federation, Alliance, and Open eg, International. It is agreed that Alliance standards can only be binding on Alliance events, but we should aim to make our standards helpful and useful for others. In practice, we can reduce the number of levels to just two.

- Events where the author and organiser are closely connected, and the author is expected to be present at the showing. Club events are at this level.
- Events where the author and organiser are substantially disconnected, and the author may not be present, or may never be present at the showing. All supra-Club events are at this level.

While we will certainly need two documents (authors and organisers), it is not clear that we shall need four (each by level).

- With respect to authors at both levels, we are unlikely to be writing a long and detailed book. More likely we will be drawing attention to the standards and information likely to be set by organisers and what those mean.
- With respect to organisers, the close relationship between authors and organisers at Club level means that the choices for a Club organiser are merely more relaxed than those for a supra-Club organiser. We may be able to use the same standards statements for both, while indicating more flexible options for Clubs.

Editorial Style

Suggestions have been received that a checklist approach would be desirable. This would certainly make the standards documents short. A checklist is also likely to make the standards more durable. That would be particularly so if the checklist was a set of output specification statements.

Example: “The organiser must state the pixel dimensions (width and height) used to project the image.”

Such a statement says nothing about how the standard is achieved in practice. In turn, that suggests we should support the standards checklist with a more extensive set of guidance notes which contain current practice. And, we can prepare that guidance with different degrees of emphasis for each scenario/option.

Degrees of emphasis need a standard format. Thus, ‘must’ implies no real alternative, whereas ‘should’ suggests some choice is available. The example above includes ‘must’ for this reason. In turn, ‘should’ might be qualified with a star rating: a strong recommendation ‘should (***)’; through to a weak suggestion ‘should (*)’.

The standards for both Club and supra-Club might turn out to be the same. The variation would then come in the guidance notes, where the levels of emphasis might be different for the two levels.

In any event, both the standards checklist and the guidance notes should be as modular as possible, so that individual items can be easily updated as required.

Proposal - Standards/Guidance for Organisers

As a first reaction to the Executive’s request for short simple guidance, it seemed that guidance for Club organisers would be the best place to start, because use of PDI in Clubs can be less stringent than at an international exhibition. But, that first reaction seemed to be wrong, as it might be easier to draft standards for supra-Club organisers, because there must be fewer choices. Then, a view based on more thorough analysis (here) suggests that standards expressed properly might be the same for both Club and supra-Club organisers, with any differences covered within guidance notes.

Annex 1 and 2 show examples of how standards and guidance might look. The examples cover information which must be published to authors, and for these items there will have to be matching guidance for authors to understand what to do.

Not shown, but there will also be standards and guidance for organisers which are not information to authors. These items will not match within the authors’ guidance.

Proposal - Guidance for Authors

As explained, there must be items in the the guidance for authors which cross refer to items in the standards and guidance for organisers. We will need a cross-reference table for item numbers in the two sets. There may also be items unique to the guidance for authors.

Annex 1: Sample. Standards Checklist for Organisers

The following is a draft in a possible style for part of a checklist of standards.

Information to be published to Authors

The organiser must state:

1. Projection:
 - 1.1 The pixel dimensions (width and height) used to projected the image.
 - 1.2 The action to be taken when a submitted image has either fewer or more pixels, in either width or height, than the number used to project the image.
2. Data Files and Metadata:
 - 2.1 The permitted formats of image data files to be submitted.
 - 2.2 Where compressed data formats (eg, JPEG) are permitted, the degree of compression either recommended or required.
 - 2.3 Any required format of file name.
 - 2.4 Any requirement for a colour profile to be embedded in the data file.
 - 2.5 Any requirement for metadata fields to be included within the data file.
 - 2.6 Any requirement for metadata fields to be submitted with the data file (but not within it), either electronically or on a physical entry form.
 - 2.7 Any requirement for the media used to submit image data files and metadata, including any arrangements for e-mail submission.
 - 2.8 What action will be taken with data files, metadata files, documents or their submission not conforming with the specifications in this section.
- ...

Annex 2: Sample. Guidance Notes for Organisers

The following is a draft in a possible style for one item of the checklist in Annex 1. It is assumed that the meanings of the terms [Clubs] and [supra-Club], and the star rating of recommendations have been explained in an Introduction.

Item 1.2:

When the submitted image has fewer pixels in either width or height than the number used to project the image, then the image must be projected with the unused pixels in black.

When the submitted image has more pixels in either width or height than the number used to project the image, then

- [Clubs] The image should (*) be scaled to fit the projected space while retaining the same aspect ratio. The organiser may choose to do scaling at the stage of preparing all files for the event, or leave scaling to the display

software at the time of projection. The organiser must not perform any other modification to the image data file eg, sharpening after scaling. Authors should be informed that scaling may alter the appearance of the image, and is at their risk.

- [supra-Club] The image should (***) be rejected.

It will be apparent that the guidance notes are bound to be much longer than the standards list.

Annex 3: Sample. Guidance for Authors

The following is a draft in a possible style for one item which matches to an item in the checklist in Annex 1. In this case, Author item 17 refers to Organiser item 2.3.

17. Image Data File Name. The organiser will say what filename must be used for your file. You must be familiar with how files are named, what characters are and are not permitted in filenames, and how to rename a file. The full data filename includes both the filename part which you usually see, and the filetype tag which is often not shown directly on your folder display. Examples of filetype tags include .jpg .tif. You must ensure that the filetype tag always matches the data format of your file.

Example: You are asked to name your file <title> BY <author> and this means you replace <title> with the title of your image, and <author> with your name. The part ' BY ' in this example is a keyword meaning that this is a part of the filename which you must retain, including the blanks, because the organiser needs to know where the break is between your title and your name so that all the images from all the authors can be correctly managed. Because 'BY' has a special meaning here, you should not use it anywhere in your title: 'Dunes by the Sea' is not a suitable title.