



## Why image quality matters more than ever for digital publishing

*Be honest, which image did your eyes go to when you opened the page? Experts and audiences agree that a bright, punchy image is going to grab the attention of the reader first - more so than even a powerful headline.*

With this in mind, we'll look at the impact drab, boring images have on the engagement with readers and what can be done to easily overcome this.

### **What is the impact of using poor quality images on a website?**

An image is a guiding light to readers, drawing them in to engage with your thoughtfully written content, to explore the website and additional stories and share these across the various platforms.

Images set the tone for the viewer and influence the perception of the page and website content. High quality, standout images increase user engagement and recall, making them an essential element of a publishers content strategy.

## What is the impact of using poor quality images on a website cont...

It's often stated that the average reader doesn't see quality. However, we can all subconsciously tell when there's something wrong with a photo. Whether it be too dark, lacking contrast, being dull and flat or simply something that jars with our natural perception of the image. Readers pay attention to images.

Using these poor quality photos to support any content hinders the overall user experience and perception of the content and brand. After spending hours crafting a story, a bad quality image won't effectively engage the readership that the content rightly deserves.

What makes an image 'poor quality'? Visually of course it's easy to see; grainy, noisy, blocky areas stand out while darker imagery appears as nondescript blocks of colour. There are also technical attributes to consider. Both file format and file size can have unintended consequences to the visual and operational quality of the content and site as a whole.

A punchy, good quality image propels the story, garnering interest in the content before the viewer even starts to read. It portrays a sense of pride from the publisher in their content and across the titles and can quickly differentiate the content from other providers.



*Guide the reader further with captivating imagery*

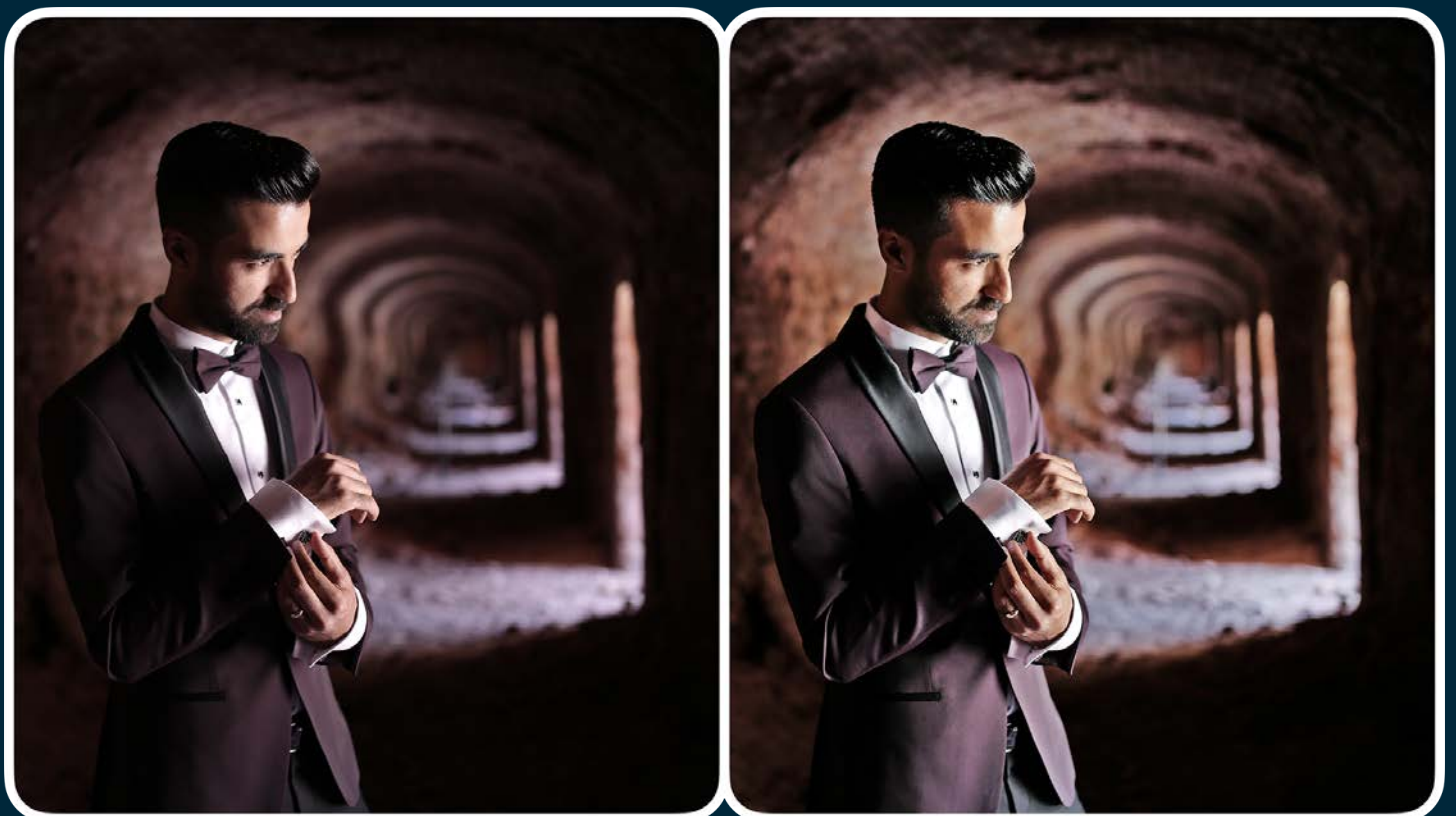
## How can the digital production teams change the way they handle pictures?

Essentially the digital teams can quickly, and seamlessly, improve image quality with little impact to their current workflow processes.

With the latest automated software it takes seconds to transform a dull image to something that jumps off the screen, grabbing readers' attention and drawing them to the story. Most importantly this can all be done without the need for any specialist imaging skills or training.

It is worth noting that many publishers have established automatic image optimisation solutions for their print publications. However, it is not always the case that these solutions are easily accessible, or even known to be available, to their digital teams. Raising awareness of the technology, its ease of use and its positive impact is a key factor to improving image quality. The digital teams are more focused on content creation and timely posting so the demand for improved image quality is a relatively new requirement.

Ultimately, the teams can embrace the power of image optimisation and continue to do what they do best, creating great content.



*Details emerge from the shadows*

## What are some common problems with images on websites?

Clearly, a lot of images used in conjunction with the stories are sourced and uploaded without the time, or perhaps awareness, to make the photos look better.

As mentioned above, there are two categories that image quality can be divided into; visual and technical. Both variants have their own impact to the reader's experience and, addressed correctly, can vastly improve attraction, readership and conversion.



*jpg artefacting in the sky caused by incorrect compression settings*

Visual problems are typically obvious and stand out – for the wrong reasons. Images that are dark, fuzzy, pixelated and without much detail do nothing to promote readership. Additionally, there's an argument for how advertisers see the product if the images are not powerful, clean and vibrant.

Technical problems can be more impactful than visual issues. A poor choice of file format can deliver unintended results in terms of reduced image quality even if the original is perfect. Inappropriate file sizes can drastically impact the loading times and scoring algorithms in the major search engines ranking factors.

These challenges can be successfully, and easily, overcome with good image optimisation practices and software.

## What is the best way of integrating image optimisation processes into a workflow?

There are a number of simple ways to integrate image optimisation into the current publishing workflow.

The most effective approach is to implement an image optimisation solution directly with the existing Editorial/CMS production system. This is transparent to the overall production process and, most importantly, typically requires little end user training so the benefits are almost immediate. Additionally, implementing the software into the photoshop department to assist with the workload enables the team to focus on the more creative side of their craft, resulting in higher quality images overall.

Another successful approach is to deploy the image optimisation as a stand-alone system, albeit still part of the content publishing workflow, enabling more skilled operators greater flexibility with the controls and results.

Either option provides for an elegant solution to work on digital and print images, each with their different requirements, in a fast and managed process.



*The eyes have it. Optimising this image brings the lioness to life*

## What are the hallmarks of a good picture?

A good picture is a Call To Action (CTA) for its accompanying content, encouraging the viewer to explore more.

What makes a truly great image is its composition and content. The best images capture a moment frozen in time, taking the viewer on a journey and enabling a connection on an emotional and visceral level.

However, from a technical perspective, a good image is sharp, with excellent clarity and resolution. It contains a broad tonal range with bright vivid colours, contrast and definition. These variables make the image stand out wherever it's seen, capturing attention and drawing the viewer in to its associated content.

Adding a third dimension to this is metadata and image SEO. An unspoken function in what makes a 'good picture' for publishers is its potential to appear higher in search results. Attaching appropriate keywords to the filename significantly improves SEO for the major search engines and adding metadata to the images should be an established procedure.

+Person

+Woman

+Dress

+Fashion

+Design

+Model

+Red

+Haute Couture

+Textile

+Accessory

+Photography



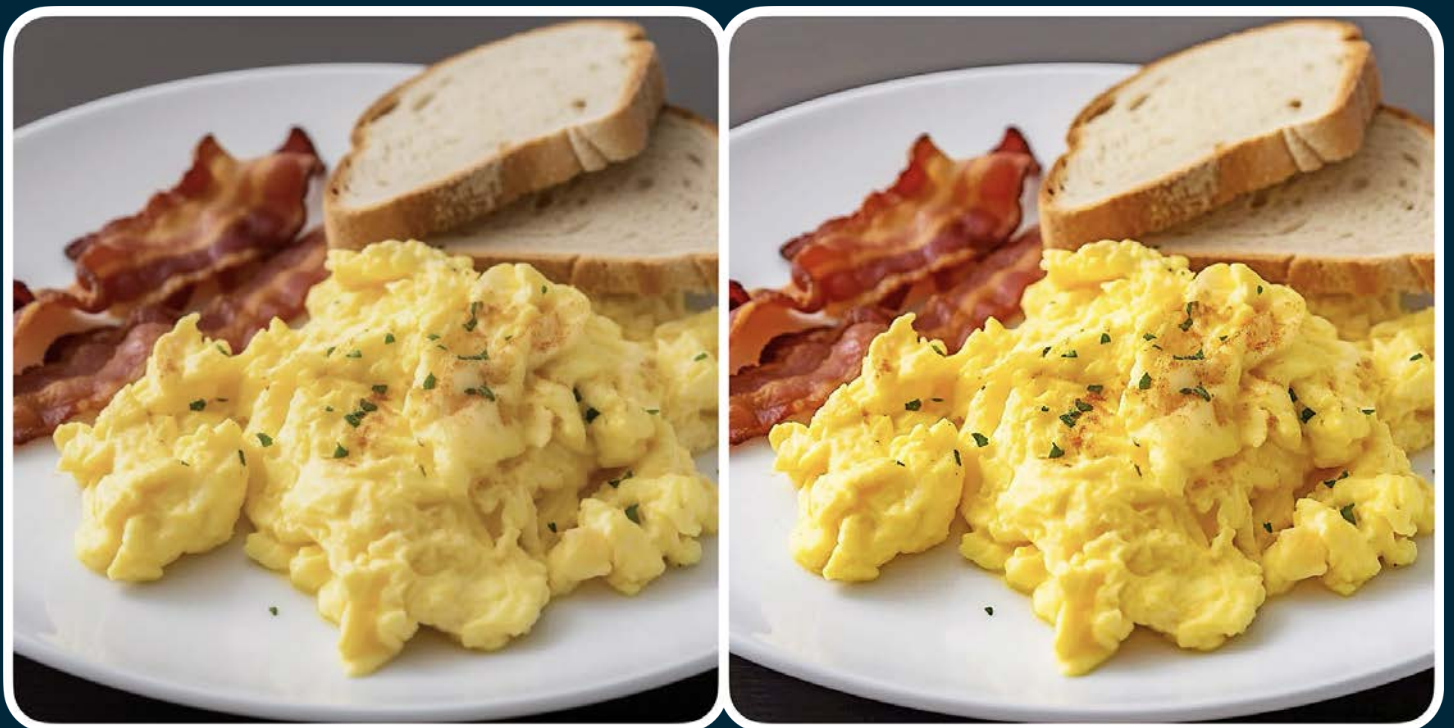
*Powerful, sharp imagery with bright vivid colours makes the photo unforgettable  
Keywords make it discoverable*

## Can publishers assume that AI-generated images are good to go?

While the results of AI generated images are certainly stunning, the images are not 'ready to go' for any publishing medium. AI images are created with only content in mind and in a controlled environment. There's no appreciation for how, or where, the image will be displayed and the inherent limitations.

Take for example the Midjourney created image at the top of the article. As we've come to expect, the original is quite remarkable in its realism. However, without the additional optimisation the image doesn't fulfill its potential - as can be seen by the image on the right. Enhancing the image specifically for the digital environment introduces much more depth, reveals more details and colours are made more vivid and eye catching.

Which version caught your eye as you scrolled down? Image optimisation for any image whether AI generated or traditionally shot, is easy to implement and the result speaks for itself.



*AI generated eggs and bacon jumps off the plate with optimisation*

*Photos are from pexels.com. AI generated images created by Midjourney*

## Next steps in powerful, attention grabbing imagery

In summary, not using image optimisation is selling your visual content out. Maximise the potential of your photos to attract and draw readers into your content and engage them subconsciously with punchy, powerful imagery. Automatically.

With powerful, intuitive software readily available to transparently supercharge your image enhancement what's stopping you?

To discuss how this can work for you, contact Pixometry via [info@pixometry.com](mailto:info@pixometry.com). To see more examples of image toning, cut-outs and auto keywording view the [galleries here](#)



### About Pixometry

Pixometry streamlines image enhancement workflows at publishers in almost 60 countries. From the largest publishing groups, working with thousands of images a day to smaller, regional titles, Pixometry optimises the image workflow while maintaining high standards for image quality. All while the editorial and advertising teams continue doing what they do best, [creating great content](#).

Pixometry has been focused on developing image enhancement software for publishers since 1997. Formerly known as Elpical Claro, Pixometry has offices in Europe and works with over 20 partners around the world.