Program does impressive file size reductions

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We intuitively understand the value of being able to make things smaller without sacrificing performance. The endeavor produces smaller speakers with bigger sound and a host of portable electronic devices such as digital cameras, cell phones and computers all of which continue to get smaller yet sport lots more functionality that their predecessors. And when it comes to our computer data, being able to store more in less space without sacrificing quality is also understandably desirable. Plus reducing a file's size also lets you send it faster online.

The science of data compression continues to flourish as newer, faster and better mathematical algorithms are created and fine-tuned. Two of the more popular compression methods are JPEG for images and mp3 for audio files. With formats like these, the file reduction is directly proportional to how much compression is applied during the conversion. For example, JPEG with all of its variations typically reduces a picture file's size by a factor of 10 without sacrificing too much of the original image's quality. Any more and you begin to see artifacts and pixilation in the images. As mp3 compression goes up, the audio quality begins to deteriorate.

It's really a balancing act between how much compression you want to apply and how much of the quality you are willing to give up. There are also utilities such as ZIP that will compress files even smaller but in order to view or use them, they first have to be decompressed. But I recently discovered a utility that reduces files sizes by up to 98 percent without sacrificing any quality. And what's even more amazing is that these compressed files can be seen and used without decompression.

You use them just as they are with any application.

Granted when I first read about Balesio's FILEminimizer, I was somewhat skeptical. I mean I have a fairly good grasp on how data compression works or so I thought. But after interviewing the company's spokesperson and trying FILEminimizer for myself, I have to admit that I'm beginning to believe in the compression fairy because I have absolutely no idea how they do it. And just like the secret Coke formula, Balesio isn't giving me any clues on how it's done. They just say they're using an "Intelligent compression technique which preserves the original quality." All I know is that it just works.

Granted the 98 percent compression is an "up to" amount but in my trials, typically I have seen lossless file size reductions in mid 80 percent to lower 90 percent ranges, which is still really impressive. As an added note, FILEminimizer Pictures works with JPEG images, which are already compressed. Typically you don't want to compress files that are already compressed since in some cases, they can actually get larger. But evidently that doesn't happen with the FILEminimizer Pictures product.

Running FILEminimizer is fairly easy to do. You are first presented with a Windows Explorer-like window that lets you browse any directory from which you can select one or a group of files you want reduced. You then see each file in your selection being compressed with columns that display each file's before and after size reduction, plus a total of how much reduction has taken place. It's all quite intuitive and easy to use.

FILEminimizer Pictures ($34.95) is for reducing the file size of JPEG, GIFF, TIFF and several other popular image formats. FILEminimizer Office ($44.95) lets you compress Microsoft Office PowerPoint, Excel and Word documents.

The only way to really appreciate how effective the Balesio compression

products are is to try them for yourself using your own files. FILEminimizer Pictures even has a free trial download that will let you minimize 20 files before you buy it. The FILEminimizer programs require Windows.

More information: fileminimizer.com

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