

## Do You Know How To Effectively Make Graphics For Your Website?

A splash of graphics can make a website look very nice, however, there seem to be some myths surrounding the use and making of graphics for a website. I aim to deflate as many of those as possible in this article. If any of the following statements make your wary of using or making graphics for your website please read on.

1. It is hard to make graphics.
2. There's a steep learning curve to a lot of the software involved in making graphics.
3. Graphics are not very flexible.
4. Graphics are not search engine optimized.
5. The software involved in making graphics is expensive.
6. The training needed to use graphic software is expensive.
7. You need to use JavaScript to make dynamic images.
8. You need to use CSS to make dynamic images.
9. Making and using graphics is time consuming.
10. You need graphic design skills to make graphics.

Let's attack these statements one at a time.

1. It is hard to make graphics. I can't deny that it sure can be hard. However, the web is full of tutorials showing you step by step how to make very neat graphical elements for your website. In fact it is possible to find tutorials that show you how to make the entire design for your website in a graphic program. When you want to step out of the boundaries set by these tutorials, that's when it gets hard, and that's when you need to learn some new skills. However, more often than not a bit of experimentation with the methods you have already learned can take you a long way.
2. There's a steep learning curve to a lot of the software involved in making graphics. This is very much related to the first statement. Yes. Some of the software can be complicated and I do recommend that you either make use of online tutorials, read a book or take an online class to improve your skills. If you just need to make some nice looking buttons an online tutorial will do just fine. However, if you're looking to make advanced effects an online course or a book may be in the books for you.
3. Graphics are not very flexible. It's true that once an image is created and uploaded to your website there isn't that much you can do to it. In fact I recommend that you do not try to alter it from your code. However, with multiple slightly altered variations of the first image and a bit of css and javascript you can create some very neat effects.
4. Graphics are not search engine optimized. It's true that you get a lot more seo for your money with text, but there are still some things you can do to improve the seo of your image. Using the alt tag is a very good idea when using images. In fact it is something you should always do.
5. The software involved in making graphics is expensive. If you want the best you have to pay for the best. The very best graphic software on the market will cost you around \$350. However, you can get by with free open source tools. In fact, in my opinion the second best graphic software on the market is the Gimp which is totally free. It's not quite as good as the very best which is Photoshop, but it definitely takes second place. Many of the tutorials you would use with photoshop can also be applied with Gimp. It requires a bit of work, but it's possible.
6. The training needed to use graphic software is expensive. Learning something new can be done in two ways.
  1. you try to figure it out yourself.
  2. you get some professional training.Option 1 is cheaper, but takes a lot more time than option 2. Which you choose is up to you, but think about the time and money you save when you've learned to make your own graphics.
7. You need to use JavaScript to make dynamic images. Well, .gif images can be used to make animations, but that might not be what you think about when you're talking about dynamic images. Using javascript is by far the easiest way to make dynamic effects like rollover when a mouse pointer is over your image. In fact it doesn't take that much of an effort. I've done it with as little as 8 lines of javascript code.
8. You need to use CSS to make dynamic images. Well, I haven't used CSS to make dynamic images, but I've definitely used it to position images correctly. Learning CSS is not only going to be a huge benefit when using images. I'd say it's pretty much mandatory to have at least a basic knowledge of CSS if you're going to be a webmaster.
9. Making and using graphics is time consuming. The first few times you do anything new it's going to be time consuming. I'd bet you that anybody with a few years of experience in web design can create a button and have it on a website with a nice rollover effect in under an hour. After that first button is online it gets even easier as you can simply cut and paste the code needed to use it.
10. You need graphic design skills to make graphics. It's true. However, that's not the same as having to be an absolute expert. I'm by no means a neat-graphic-making-machine, but I get by. I use online tutorials, look at what other people have made and try to replicate the process. However, if you do want to become an expert at making graphics taking a course on the subject is ideal. That's it for now, I sincerely hope this will help you make the decision to make your own graphics.

### About the Author

Mike Nielsen is a web developer from Denmark dedicated to providing tools for other aspiring web developers and others looking to make a living online. At [Web Construction](http://www.webconstruction.com) he provides numerous resources to that end.

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