

Creating PNG Icons for FirstClass

Creating Icons for FirstClass 8.3 and higher is easy. All you need is a graphics program that can create a PNG image with a transparency or alpha channel.

My program of choice is Adobe (formerly Macromedia) Fireworks. It is extremely easy to create the new icons with an Alpha channel. You can use other programs, but this article is based on Fireworks.

The following is the process that I use. If anyone else has any other ideas, I would like to hear them.

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STEP 1: Choose an image

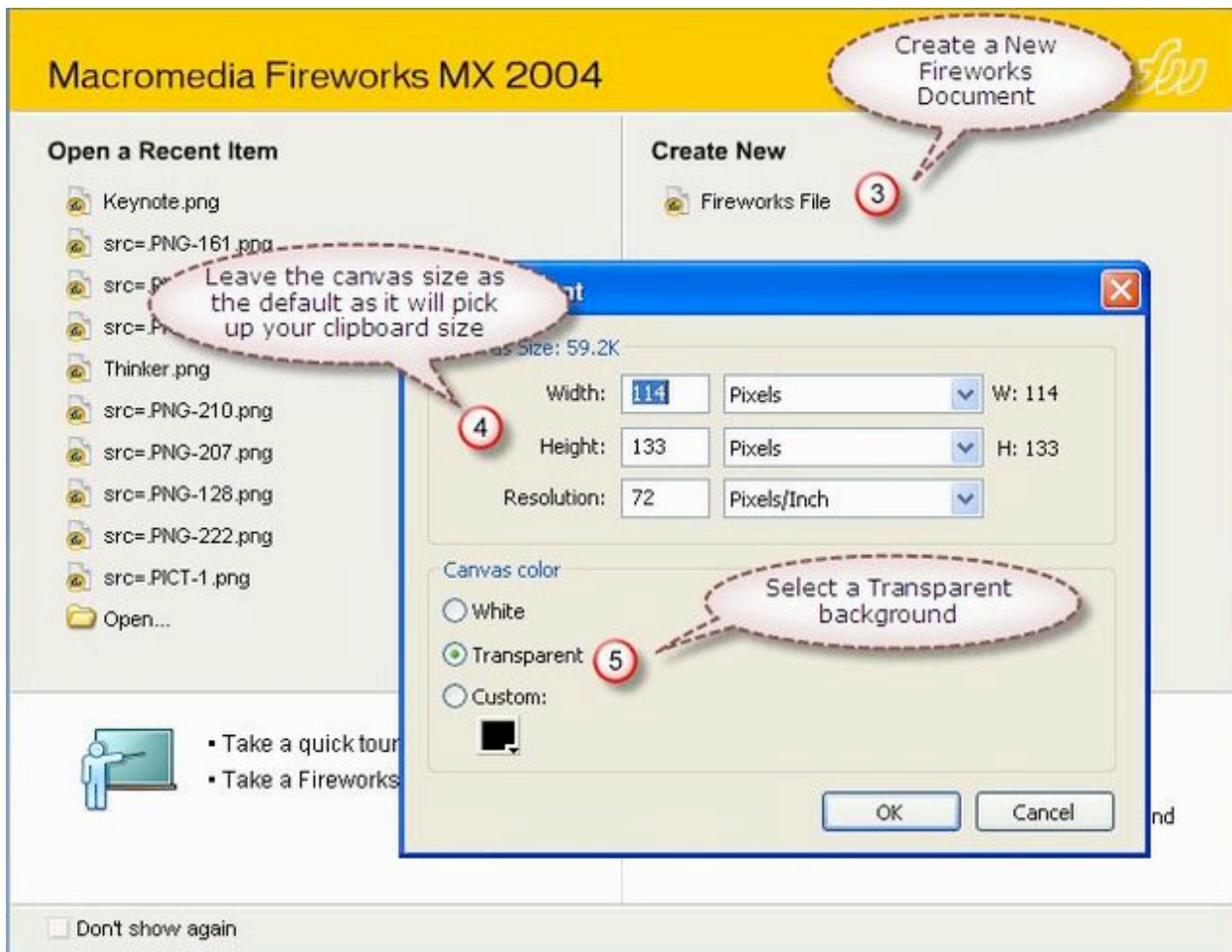
First, you need a nice image. I am partial to the OS X icons, but you can use any image you like. You can also google images. For example, here is a Keynote image I captured on my Mac using Snapz Pro.



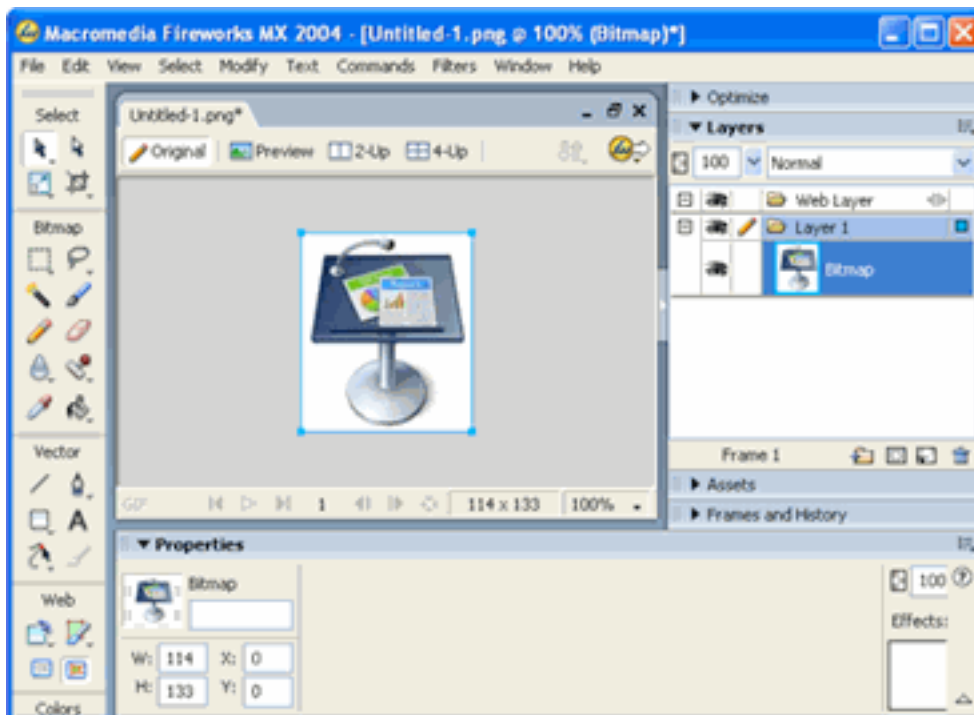
I want to scale this icon back to a 64 X 64 pixel icon, which is the new standard icon size for 8.3 and the size I am creating all of my custom icons.

STEP 2: Open the image in Macromedia Fireworks

- 1** Copy the desired image so it is on the clipboard.
- 2** Open Macromedia Fireworks.
- 3** Create a new Fireworks document.
- 4** Leave the canvas size at default so it picks up the clipboard size.
- 5** Select Transparent in the Canvas color section.



6 Paste the clipboard into the canvas.



STEP 3: Customize the image

Making a white background transparent

1 Select the magic wand tool.



2 Click on the white space surrounding the icon to capture all the white space.



3 Press Delete to remove the white and show the transparent background.



4 Choose Select > Deselect to remove the selection box.

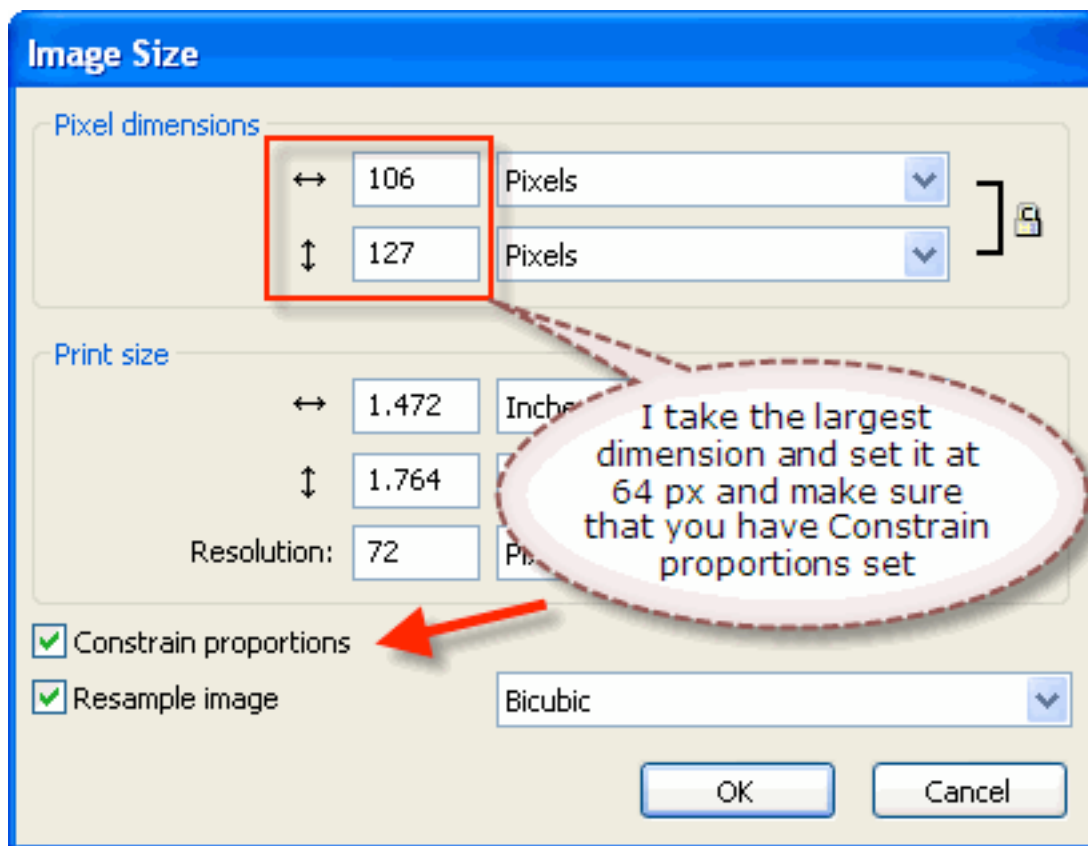
Trimming the canvas

Choose Modify > Canvas > Trim Canvas to remove any extra space around the image.

Scaling the image

Choose Modify > Canvas > Image Size and set the size of your image.

Make sure you have "Constrain proportions" selected, and then set the largest dimension to 64 pixels. The smaller dimension will automatically adjust itself.



STEP 4: Export the image

You need to export the image as a PNG image with an Alpha channel.

To do this:

1 Choose File > Export Preview.

2 Adjust the settings as follows:

Format: PNG 8

Palette: WebSnap Adaptive

Transparency type: Alpha Transparency

3 Click Export.



Shortcut

Once you get the settings you want, save the settings so that you can just select from the list each time. In this example, I have saved my settings as FCIcon Export.

Export Preview

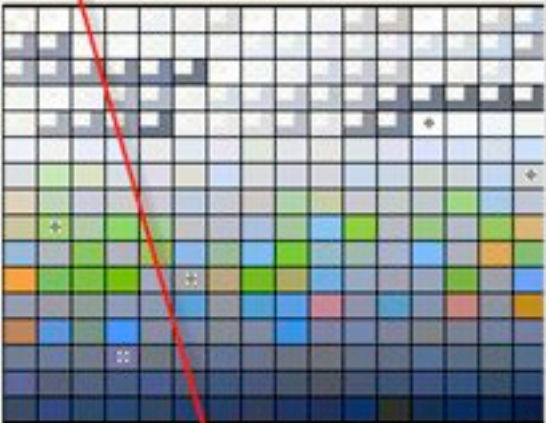
2

Options File Animation

Format: PNG 8

Palette: WebSnap Adaptive

Dither: 256 256



Alpha Transparency

Matte:

Remove unused colors

Interlaced browser display

PNG Adaptive 3.19K 0 sec @56kbps

Preview 256 colors

Saved settings: FCIcon Export



100%

3

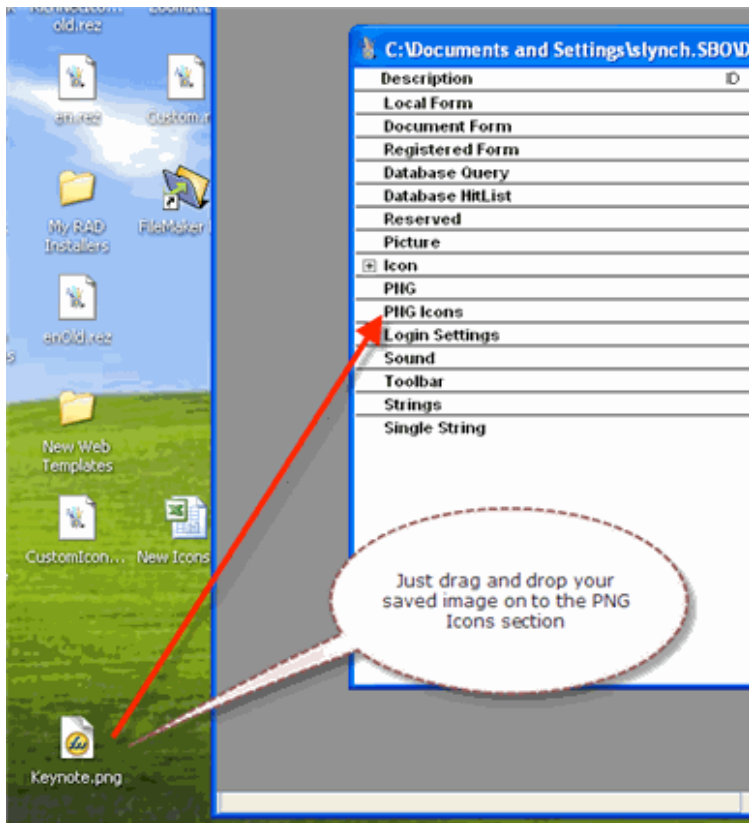
Export... OK Cancel

STEP 5: Add the image to Designer

Your new PNG image is now ready to drag and drop into a new settings file in the latest FirstClass Designer.

1 Open FirstClass Designer.

2 Drag and drop your new image from your Desktop onto the PNG icons section.

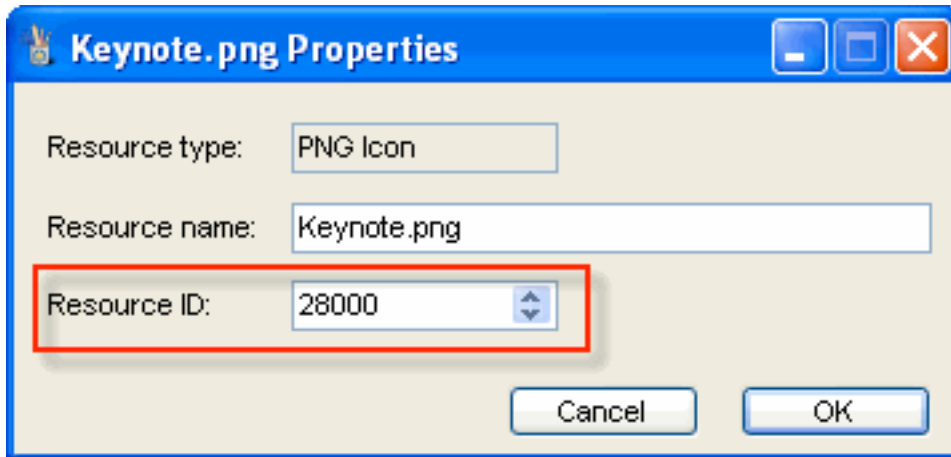


This will create a NEW icon using the name of the file.

The screenshot shows the settings file window with the 'PNG Icons' section expanded. A new entry has been added to the list, highlighted with a red border. The entry is 'Keynote.png' with an ID of 1000, a size of 3188, a type of 'PNG Icons', and a CRC of 603a1c5a.

Description	ID	Size	Type	CRC
Local Form				
Document Form				
Registered Form				
Database Query				
Database HitList				
Reserved				
Picture				
Icon				
PNG				
PNG Icons				
Keynote.png	1000	3188	PNG Icons	603a1c5a
Login Settings				
Sound				
Toolbar				
Strings				
Single String				

3 Open the properties of this new resource and give it a Resource ID within the allowable range (28000 - 28999).

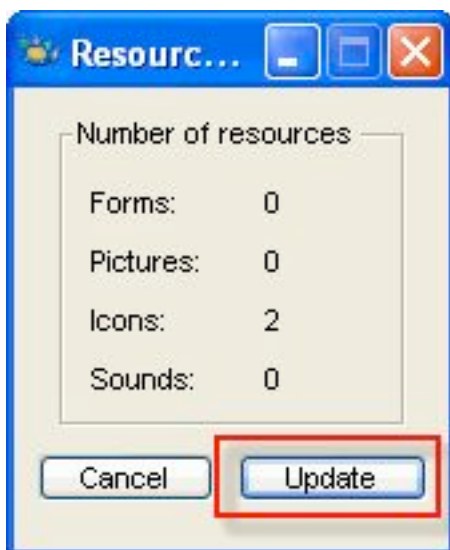


Repeat steps 1 through 5 for each image you wish to customize.

STEP 6: Add the resource file to FirstClass

In order to assign these icons to objects on your FirstClass system, you have to log in with a settings file that contains these new icons.

- 1 Log in as yourself (assuming you are a sub administrator).
- 2 Upload the custom settings to your File Storage Area.
- 3 Double-click the settings file.
- 4 Click Update on the resource updater window.



This will make your new icons available to you from the Properties (Get Info) window when you select an object.



STEP 7: Share the resources with users

The final step is to make these resources available to your users. The preferred way to do this is by using the Rules and Resources folder.

Upload the new settings file to the Rules and Resources folder of a conference that all of your users are likely to open. When users open the folder, they will be prompted to update their settings using the Resource updater.

Another option is to upload this file to the Rules and Resources folder for one of your user groups, such as All Users.