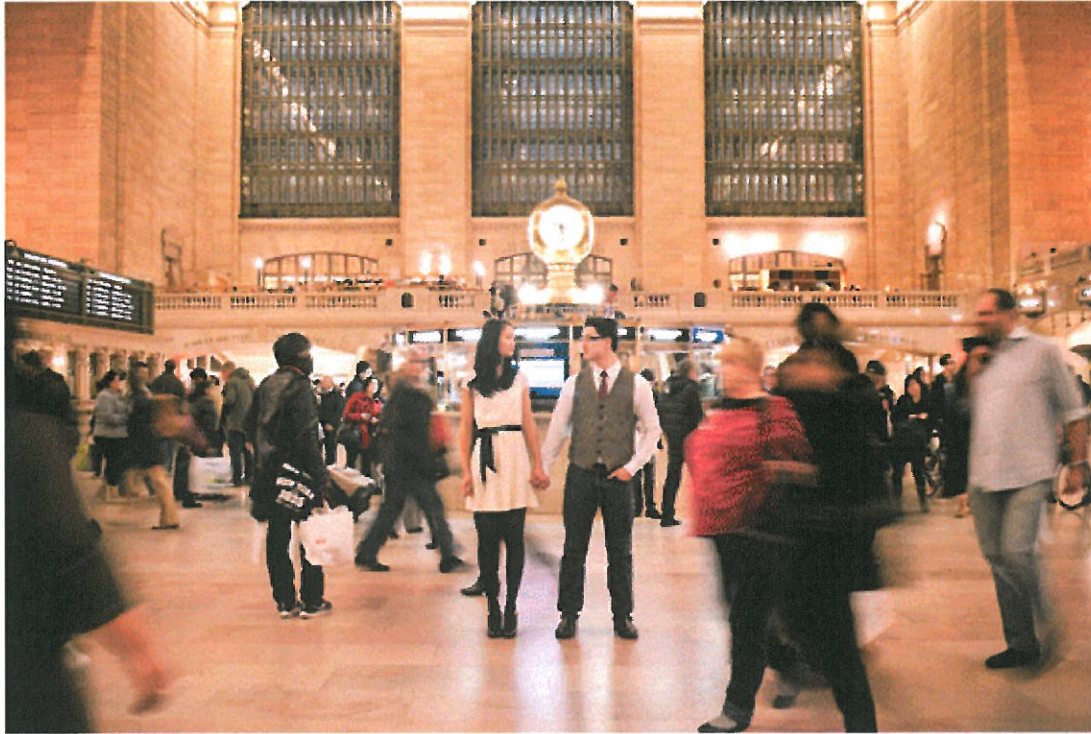# How to Make a GIF

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Want to make an animated GIF (GIF is an image file type, meaning Graphics Interchange Format)? This series of moving images plays like a short film on your computer screen. Whether you're documenting your baby's first steps or creating a slideshow, GIFs are a great way to save—and share—memories.

There are several options for the would-be GIF maker. Photoshop allows you the most control over GIF quality, but there are also free online programs you can explore if you don't use Photoshop.

Photoshop

Hit File >Import>Video Frames to Layers. One you've selected the video you want to turn into a GIF, the Import Video to Layers screen will pop up, asking you to choose the Range to Import. If the video is more than two or three seconds, use Selected Range Only, and slide the frame markers under the video to indicate at what frame you want to begin and end your GIF. Press OK.

Hit File>Save for Web to bring up the screen where you'll adjust variables to find your preferred combination of image quality and file size. You'll probably want to keep many of the defaults as they are, at least in the beginning.

Start with Colors: the default is 256, the maximum number of distinct shades available in each frame. Unless your file is very big, leave this as is.

Dither allows you to give the impression of wide array of colors using just the shades available in a particular frame. A higher dither percentage will result in a better-looking GIF, a lower one equals a smaller file.

Web Snap converts the colors in the Color Table to web-safe shades—it should be at 0 percent.

A higher **lossy** percentage means your GIF will look grainy and the animation choppy—keep it low.

Adjust the **Image Size**. Many GIFs are between 250 and 500 pixels in width, and 167 and 333 pixels in height.

At this point, you're ready to hit **Save**. Congratulations, you've created a GIF!

There are also several online programs that allow you to make a GIF:

Picasion and **Gickr**

These sites are fast and easy to use. After you've upload the images from your computer, web cam, or web address, adjust size (300px is the default on both sites) and speed. Then hit Create Animation (Picason), or Continue (Gickr), and you're done.

Make a GIF

Once you've added your pictures to Make a GIF, select the order in which you want them to appear, then adjust the animation speed and resize your images. Hit Create My GIF, and voila! You'll be provided with a web address for your GIF, so you can send the link to doting grandparents—or post it directly to Facebook.

Imgflip.com

Imgflip.com has more advanced options than most of the free GIF sites. After you've uploaded your photo or video, drag the arrows along the bar to identify at what second you'd like to start/stop the video, and to specify how wide you'd like the image to be (260px is the default). Imgflip also has "Power Options," like "Forverse," meaning the GIF will play forwards, then backwards. When you're ready, hit the Generate GIF button.

The GIF above was created by photographer Cynthia Chung.