

Utilizing the GREEN SCREEN

BACKGROUND

Green screening (or the more scientific Chroma Keying) is simply the process of isolating a portion of an image (either video or photo) so you can place it on a different background. At Alvernia we use the **Green Screen** to isolate headshots for display on other backgrounds--usually on the web, but once you isolate a headshot you are only limited by your own creativity. We do not always have action photos of every student-athlete (especially the first-year players early in the season) and we needed a solution for the primary photo on a web story. Our primary story photo on the web is 450x250. Instead of creating enhanced headshot images on an as-needed basis we make it part of our pre-season checklist to make a primary photo using every headshot on a background (the background changes year to year) and a properly cropped roster bio image (our roster bio image is 150x210).

We purchased a **Green** sheet from Target for \$19.99 and it works well. Try to hang it with as few creases as possible. Even the sheet pictured here--while not ideal--is still effective.

OUR SETUP

There are a few different places in the building I can setup for headshots. My priority is a white ceiling so I can bounce the flash for a softer exposure. I either hang the **Green Screen** from the ceiling or on a media backdrop stand like the one we purchased with the NCAA money back in 2010. I have the student-athletes sit on a stool and from there the instructions are simple, "Sit up straight and smile."



OUR PROCESS

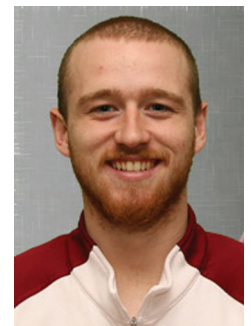
We use Adobe Lightroom to manage all of our digital images (14,560 in the 2011-12 school year), so I will explain the process using Lightroom and some of its side benefits, but it can also be done using Photoshop on its own. This is the progression for junior men's basketball player David Sloan. Don't be intimidated by the process. My Graduate Assistant could do a 30-man roster in less than 30 minutes from import to final export.



Original



Web Story Primary



Roster Bio

1. Exercise your creative muscles by creating a background in the same size ratio as you need for the primary photo for a web story (our file is 900x500 and our final size is 450x250...don't ask me why, I just like to work twice as large as my final need). Consider being somewhat bland directly behind the head of the student-athletes because we will crop that down for the Roster Bio image later.
2. Take the headshots and import them into Lightroom. For our men's basketball team I imported into Pictures/2011-12/Men's Basketball/Headshots. Once they are imported, go to the metadata portion of the file and change the Title of the file to the student-athlete's FirstName_LastName (this will allow us to easily name each of the different files using FirstName_LastName). Lightroom makes this process so simple. It can be done in Photoshop, but it's a bit more time-consuming. Metadata is found under File > File Info.
3. Crop the image down to a box that nearly touches the top of the head and the edge of the arms. Export all the im-

ages into a folder called Web (or whatever you want to indicate this is the folder of primary story images). Change export settings to custom name the file as the Title so you have a folder of **Green Screen** images like the "Original" above that are named FirstName_LastName (in this case David_Sloan). I would also change export size so the height is slightly larger than your intended final size (this just means less fine-tuning of the headshot later).

4. Save a copy of your background template as a .psd file into the same folder as the **Green Screen** originals (this makes the Save As process easier since Photoshop will default to saving in the same folder as the file originated). Open the first few headshot files (I usually open 8-10 at a time going A thru G or whatever makes sense). Using the Magic Wand Tool click on the **Green**. Hold down the Shift Key and continue to click on any unselected **Green** areas until you have selected all of the **Green**. You can mess with Magic Wand Tolerance to select pixels within a color-sensitivity range of the one you click on. I typically have that around 20 and will uncheck Contiguous so it selects **Green** pixels all over the image, not just those that are neighbors. Go to Select > Inverse (Shift+Cmd+I on the Mac) to select everything that is not **Green** then using the Move Tool drag the headshot onto the background then close the original **Green Screen** file (I do this because I save the new Primary Photo image with the same FirstName_LastName format and I can't save over something that is already open). Use Edit > Free Transform (Cmd+T on Mac) and drag one of the corners to fine tune the final size of the headshot (PLEASE hold down the Shift Key while resizing so you don't make the face skinnier or fatter than the original).
5. Once you have created a folder full of Primary Photo images, import them back into Lightroom (Lightroom has an Add feature on import that will allow you to just import the images in their current location and not make a second copy of them).
6. Now we crop the 900x500 image down to 5x7 (150x210) for Roster Bio Images. Go to the Web folder in the Lightroom Library and select the first Primary Photo image. Click on the Develop tab and use the crop tool to crop the image down to your Roster Bio image ratio (we use a 5x7 ratio and crop top to bottom starting from the left and go as far right as 5x7 will let us). Hit Enter to accept the crop then right arrow to move to the next image. Once you are done cropping every image go back to Library, select all the images, and export them into Pictures/2011-12/Men's Basketball/Headshots/Bio. We actually do two exports here, one of original size 5x7 files (357x500) and one called Bio of the exact size needed for our online bios (150x210).
7. You now have three (or four if you do two 5x7 exports) different folders with different versions of files with the same names (one **Green Screen** original [the Headshots folder], one Primary Story Photo [called Web], and one Roster Bio [called Bio]).

Ideas for Using Headshot Files

1. Primary Story Image - Easily locate and upload the properly sized image when that first-year soccer player scores a hat trick on the road in his first career game and you don't have an action shot yet.
2. Update your Roster Bio images - You can zip the folders and depending on your Content Manager provider you can probably batch associate the headshots with the bios. This comes in handy for Flash-based Live Stats that pull player images from your online roster. You can also drag your 5x7s into a Dropbox to share with schools who use a different live stats provider that doesn't access your roster bio images.
3. Sharing with the Media - You can burn them onto a CD and send them to the local paper if they use a headshot with a story/weekly update.
4. NCAA Championship Competition - Some baseball regionals held in minor league parks will make use of the video board for headshots. Last year in the Mid-Atlantic region they placed the headshot in front of a campus photo. We sent them the original **Green Screen** shots and a campus shot and they had an intern at the park do the rest. We just saved the intern a ton of time by not having to cut out each one by hand. The Golf Championships use headshots in live scoring. It sure was nice to just drag the headshots into the NCAA's ftp folder.
5. Game Promotions - It's almost too easy to make your own heads on sticks.
6. Weekly Award Winners - Treat an action photo with your favorite Photoshop filter, drop a headshot in front of it, throw in the conference logo and some Player of the Week text and viola, you've jazzed up your weekly release.



Produced by Alvernia University Sports Information
Proud supporter of ECAC-SIDA
Jon King // SID



Shameless Plug for Adobe Lightroom
Version 4.0 can be purchased for a street price of
\$149.99