

Preserve Your Family Photos

Use your own computer and save a \$bundle.

Here are some things to consider:

What you will need to complete the project:

- Desktop or Laptop Computer with Windows XP or later
- Extra Hard Drive space for temporary storage of images
- Optical Drive & blank media or USB Flash Drive/s to store the images
- Flatbed scanner
- Image editing software
- Your collection of photos
- Consider how you will display the results to your audience.

Get Organized!

- *Organize your storage space*

Use a hierarchical folder structure, using family surnames to organize the folders. (Think of a family genealogical tree.) Group siblings in folders under the family surname. Store children's photos in folders under the parents' photos. The tree can grow for as many generations as needed. Give each main family branch its own tree. The trees will reside side-by-side under a general heading such Family Photos or Family Album.

- *Plan file naming conventions*

Put enough information in file names so that you will have a very good idea of the contents. Use lower case file names. Use capital letters to separate words. Name your pictures something like this: lastFirst-yy-mmdd.tif; Groups pictures: if possible, use all the names left to right e.g. Occasion-MarySmith-JaneDoe-EdwardLuca-yy-mmdd.tif.

If you plan to buy a new computer

- You can scan and save your family pictures on just about any computer, but here are some thoughts to consider if you are considering a new computer for this project:
- The main thing you want to consider is the graphics capabilities and storage space. It's good to store your pictures on a different hard drive than your operating system, i.e. Drive D or higher. That way, if something happens that you have to repair or replace C:\, you haven't lost your precious pictures. An indicator of good graphics is that the PC has a separate graphics card rather than just some chips on the motherboard, and the graphics memory is not shared with the system memory. You will want it to be equipped with an optical drive that can read and write DVDs.
- Computers designed for gamers are a good bet for people who do image processing.

Some Suggestions:

- *Add some hard drive space:*

External USB hard drives are available on the WWW beginning at about \$70. Just have your favorite search engine search for external hard drives.

- *Optical Drives & Flash Drives*

If your computer is not equipped with an optical drive that writes DVDs and CDs, all may not be lost if you have a USB port. External versions of these drives are available at electronics stores or Amazon for nominal prices (under \$50). CDs hold about 700 MB; DVDs 4.7 GB

USB Flash drives (a.k.a. Thumb or Jump drives) are popular and hold much more data—all the way up to 512 GB! They cost \$0.50 to \$1 per GB.

Some More Suggestions

Flatbed Scanner

- Flatbed scanners will work with documents of any size, where those with document feeders are intended for those of uniform size. If your picture is too big for the scanning bed, you can take multiple scans and stitch them together later in your editing software.
- When choosing a scanner use the optical resolution as your guide and ignore interpolated resolution. See PCWorld's [Scanner buying guide of 2013](#). PCMagazin's [How to Buy a Scanner](#).

Image Editing Software

- Adobe Photoshop - \$700 or by subscription
- Adobe Photoshop Elements - \$100
- Corel Paint Shop Pro - \$80
- Corel Photo Paint (part of CorelDRAW suite) - \$500
- IrfanView - \$0 (Be sure to install this one.)

Display your pictures

- Printed pictures has been the traditional way to display them, and this will probably be the preferred display mode for a long time to come. This requires that you have no extra equipment to see the pictures. Also, print-quality pictures are the highest quality images, and you will want to store at least one copy of each image as a print quality picture. That is, the image resolution will be at least 300 dpi.
- Most ink-jet printers do a good job with photographs. Epson has some that use ink that does not fade. You may want to investigate these before investing in a new printer for your pictures. You can get decorated papers at your local office supply store that will allow you to create some very attractive backgrounds for your photo prints.
- You may also want to use a computer screen for display as a slideshow or web pages. Computer screens are about 96 dpi, so you will want a second set of pictures sized for this display medium.