



# INSIDER'S GUIDE PHOTO ORGANIZING



## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The numbers are impressive - there are an estimated 1.7 TRILLION paper photos stored in albums, attics and shoe-boxes. Other estimates show that Americans have taken over 550 BILLION non-digital photos. These photos represent the heart and soul of a family's history - new babies, first steps, weddings, vacations, new business openings, vintage photos of great grandpa - and all at risk. Less than 1% of these memories have been transferred to digital, a much more durable and reliable format. The remaining 99% are still very much at risk of being lost or forgotten.

The numbers of digital photos taken every day is also staggering. A survey of 1,169 regular photo-takers revealed that Americans now take more than 10 billion photos every month. This figure is bolstered by the ever-present smartphone which nearly 60 percent of respondents say is their primary photo-taking device.

The ability to find that picture of Susie at her first dance recital or that precious photo of Grandpa holding his first grandchild has become a frustrating challenge for the average family. In addition, many families do not have a sufficient backup system in place to safeguard their family photo collection and the memories it holds.



## THE EMOTIONAL REWARD

Give yourself a pat on the back! You have already taken the first step in recognizing that your photos are important enough to get some help. When we ask people why they take photos their responses are consistent. They take photos to document and remember experiences, people, events, places and milestones that are important to them. They capture what they VALUE in life! We are a people of stories and photos help tell the stories of our lives.

Studies show that photos have a positive impact on families by connecting generations and reinforcing positive values. In fact, many experts agree that photos have a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing of children. Parenting and youth development expert, Doctor G (Deborah Gilboa, MD) says that *“organizing and displaying photographs connects children to our families, our values and our life goals for them.”* Through her work with APPO, she demonstrates how helping families to use their pictures also helps them to raise the next generation to be respectful, responsible and resilient!

When you take the time to organize, backup and share your family photos the rewards are infinite!

*(You can learn more about Doctor G by visiting her website at [www.AskDoctorG.com/free-resources/](http://www.AskDoctorG.com/free-resources/))*



# GETTING STARTED



## Step 1: Hunt and Gather

Designate a temporary workspace in your home that allows you to spread out. A large table in the corner of a room or a separate room. Assemble your supplies. Gather your memory collection into your workspace. Locate all photo albums, loose printed photos, memorabilia, negatives, slides, undeveloped film, loose memory cards, family artifacts, home movies (ex. VCR tapes, miniDV's, film, etc.). Determine the devices where you have photos stored, such as your smartphone, computers and tablets.

Assess the mess. It's time to take an inventory and lay out your plans. You need to know how many photos you have to deal with so that you can plan the scope of your project. Taking a count of your digital photos can be done in a few clicks. Printed photos are a little less exact.

Having an end-goal and a deadline will help motivate you towards completion. Think ahead to when you have your entire photo and video collection organized and accessible. How would you like to share and enjoy those photos? Do you want a family yearbook with highlights? Do you want a photo gallery on your wall with milestone events? Do you want online photo albums that other members of your family can access? What about a video slideshow to enjoy with some popcorn? Choose a few fun ways you plan to celebrate and share your photos - this is the fun part!

# INSIDER TIPS

- 1 A Photo Organizer's supply kit includes cotton gloves, face mask (*for moldy photos*), garbage bags, empty bins, photo sort box (*see our Top Product Picks on page 13*), sticky notes, index cards, photo labeling pencil, dental floss, a tablet or smartphone and an external backup drive.
- 2 If you have digital photos in various locations on your computer or on other computers in your household, use a device like Picture Keeper to compile all your images. This handy thumb drive has built-in software that seeks out images on your computer and backs them up to the device. It even let's you know if you have duplicates!
- 3 Photo Organizers don't count photos - they measure or weigh them! A one-inch stack of photos is approximately 100 photos; six to seven pounds of photos are about 1000-1200 photos.



## Step 2: Sort and Organize

Before you start organizing your printed or digital photos, take a moment to consider how you want your photos to be organized. Do you already have a structure in place that you can build on or fine tune? If you already have some or many of your printed photos in chronological order, then continue with that structure.

Create a family timeline that plots birth dates, wedding dates, special or milestone events, vacations, etc. This timeline will make it easier to identify photos and events, as you work your way through your collection.

As you sort your printed photos, plot your organizational structure with sticky notes on your table or inside a sort box. Use an index card to note key points that you will use later to tell the story. Identify and set aside any photos that you plan to have digitized. Wear cotton gloves for this process!

Before you begin working with your digital photos, perform a backup! You'll want to be sure you have an extra copy of these important photos in case you get carried away with the delete button! Digital photos can be overwhelming, especially if you have a lot of them. Choose photo-organizing software that does most of the work for you. Look for features like calendar or time sorting, star-rating, and the ability to use keywords. These simple tools will make it easy for you to find the photos you want in a few clicks.

As you work through your digital photos, use the ABC's (see our *INSIDER TIPS* on page 7) to identify key photos and use a rating system to flag your favorites. Renaming your images is also a good practice to put in place now. Your photos will have a numbered file name assigned by the camera when you took them. **The Photo Organizers™** recommend the following naming convention:

**Year-month-day-event**

**2014-01-20 Grandma's 80th Birthday**

Using this format, your photo organizing software or computer will automatically sort your photos in date order. What's more, photos exported or shared with family will have your new filename to help identify the photo!



# INSIDER TIPS

- 4 Organizing loose printed photos by theme can help you move faster without getting bogged down with date matching and chronological obstacles. Themes like *Vacations*, *Birthdays*, *Celebrations* and *Christmas* are easy to identify. Broader themes like *'We Love To Compete'* work well for sports, activities, game nights, etc.
- 5 Photo Organizers use a simple acronym called “The ABC’s” to help their clients sort their printed or digital photos. Your ‘A’ photos are the most important photos that belong in an album. ‘B’ photos are photos that support the story that you want to keep, but don’t necessarily belong in an album. ‘C’ stands for can! (*Yes, you CAN throw out photos!*) Toss or delete doubles, blurry and excessive landscape photos. *How many photos of that sunset do you really need?* And ‘S’ is for story. Identify and keep any photos that support a story. For example, a picture of a towering tree in the backyard that little Jimmy planted with Grandpa back in 1970.
- 6 Children’s artwork, trophies and other bulky artifacts can be included in your collection, too. Take a photo of important items and include the printed or digital version of these photos with any corresponding photos in your family timeline.



### Step 3: Archive and Backup

Once your collection is sorted and organized, you need to consider how you will protect this important family asset.

Digitize your important printed photos and store your entire collection in a photo-safe storage box. The box you choose should protect your prints from light and be free of acid and unstable plastics, such as PVC, as these things can accelerate the deterioration of your photos. (Check out our *Resource Guide* on page 13 for our recommendations.)

Plan to have several backups in place to protect your digital images and scanned printed photos. We recommend having at least three copies of your digital photos collection, including one copy that is stored off-site. An off-site backup could be an external hard drive located in a safety deposit box or at a family members home. Off-site could also include a cloud-based option. Backups can be performed manually or automatically depending on the system you choose.



# INSIDER FACT:

**Most households invest in insurance to protect their household belongings and vehicles from loss. Ironically, the average family invests very little time or money to insure the safety of their family photo collection, even though most agree that their photos are priceless and irreplaceable.**



## Step 4: Celebrate and Share!

Photos are meant to be shared and enjoyed. A printed photo book of your latest vacation displayed on a coffee table will be enjoyed more often than photos tucked away on your computer. A wall display will bring years of enjoyment and surround your family with positive memories on a daily basis.

Looking through your first photo book will inspire you to want more and provide the motivation you need to make this a regular habit. In the years to come, imagine a family bookshelf filled with your favorite memories ready to share and enjoy anytime. Most importantly, your family story will be documented for generations to enjoy!



## Step 5: Maintenance

Set aside time in your schedule to manage your photos on a regular basis. This may be weekly or monthly depending on how many photos you take. This is an important task that should be added to your calendar alongside life's other responsibilities. Maintaining your collection in short, manageable time slots, means you'll avoid a repeat of the chaos that happens through neglect!

Finally, if you get stuck, get help! **The Photo Organizers™** are here to help you with instruction and guidance. They can work alongside you or complete the entire project for you. You're not alone!

To find help in your area, locate a photo organizer at [www.appo.org](http://www.appo.org)



# INSIDER TIPS

7

External hard drives have a 4-6 year shelf life and should be checked regularly for performance. Consider adding this task to your bi-annual routine of replacing the batteries in your smoke detectors and flipping your mattresses.

8

Stuck for ideas? Select 10-15 photos from each of the different themes in your family life spanning several years. This should be easy with your new star-rating feature that allows you to identify key photos. Upload all your images to a photo book publisher of your choice (*or hire a photo organizer to do this for you*) and then add a few words to complete the story. Title your album 'Life is GOOD'.

9

Empty your memory card weekly or after each event. A full memory card can hold thousands of images and may become a roadblock for getting those photos organized. Delete, tag, rename and organize as soon as you upload them to your computer.

# Resource Guide: Our Top Product Picks

**Picture Keeper** - A handy device for seeking out and backing up any image on your computer. Finds duplicates too!

<http://picturekeeper.com/>

**Mylio** - A photo organizing and editing app that syncs your photos to all your devices. Edit and organize on your mobile devices and your changes are updated in real time on all your devices! <http://mylio.com/>

**Forever** - A permanent digital archive for your most important family photos. Forever's permanent guarantee means your photos will be archived and converted as technology changes and your future generations will have access for 100+ years!

<https://www.forever.com/>

**The Legacy Box** - A photo safe solution for your printed photos that looks great on your bookshelf too!

<http://thephotoorganizers.myshopify.com/>

**Archival Methods** - Archive quality storage accessories for all your photo storage needs. <http://www.archivalmethods.com/>

**Kodak PS50** - Rent or purchase this high speed scanner from EZ Photo Scan for top quality scanning at home. You can trust the Kodak brand for high end scanning. <https://ezphotoscan.com/>

**Fotobridge** - Scanning and conversion service for your prints, slides, and home movies. This company has been APPO approved for quality and dependability and used by many Photo Organizers. <http://www.fotobridge.com/>

**Photodex** - ProShow is an easy to use program that helps you tell your family story through video slideshows and montages.

<http://www.photodex.com/proshow>

**Flip Pal** - a handy mobile scanner for scanning pictures that are already in albums and for taking with you on the go. Don't attend another family reunion without this in hand! <http://flip-pal.com/>

**BackBlaze** - Cloud-based backup for your entire computer system. Backblaze works in the background 24/7 to ensure that your photos and documents are always protected.

<https://www.backblaze.com/>

**Nick Kelsh - How to Photograph Your Life.** Need a few extra photography tips? Nick is the best with his easy-to-follow instructions for taking better photos. His photography courses will have you taking professional quality photos in no time.

<http://basicphotography.howtophotographyourlife.com/nick-kelsh-online-photography-course/>





# Memory Lane Designs

Your personal photo organizer at Memory Lane Designs can help you with instruction and guidance.

Contact us by phone (615) 274-8826 or email [info@memorylanedesigns.com](mailto:info@memorylanedesigns.com). We can work alongside you or we can complete the entire project for you!

*We look forward to working with you to create something special.*

Editor: Lisa Kurtz, Director of Operations, APPO

Designer: Janet Blunt, Chief Creative Officer, Photopeace

Copyright: All contents copyright ©2015 by the Association of Personal Photo Organizers. All rights reserved.

Liability: The author(s) and publisher have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information herein. However, the information contained in this tutorial is distributed as-is, without warranty, either express or implied. The author(s) and/or publisher of this tutorial cannot be held responsible for errors and omissions, or any losses or damages achieved by following the information contained in this book. Always use your head and consider your unique situation.

Trademarks: This tutorial identifies product names and services known to be trademarks, registered trademarks, or service marks of their respective holders. They are assumed to be the property of their respective owners and are used only for reference.