



Organizing digital photos



Why we organize our photos

- Makes everything easier to find
- Forces us to review and learn
- Helps make backups more efficient



Major steps

- Create a digital photo hub (DPH)
- Develop processes that make all photos we want to keep, no matter where they come from, go into the DPH
- Create a sensible folder structure in the DPH
- Sort, cull, edit, and, organize (rename, tag, label, rate) photos
- Automate backups of the DPH

Digital photo hubs

- It's where to go to find a photo to print or share
- It's what you back up regularly

Digital photo hubs

- Is dedicated to memories only (photos, home movies, letters, but not music or work documents)
- Accessible at all times
- High capacity
- Predictable
- Ideal DPH: a folder on a computer you own that is backed up

DPH import processes

- Identify inputs: where do all your photos come from? (smart phones & tablets, social media, multiple computers, cameras, email, scans, etc.)
- Create workflows that bring photos into your DPH with as little work as possible
- Some workflows may require multiple steps
- Automate workflows as much as possible

DPH import processes

- Main methods: 1) direct, 2) wi-fi, 3) cloud storage account
- Dropbox, Google Drive and OneDrive all offer options to automatically copy photos from phone to online storage
 - 1) Get the app
 - 2) Configure app to auto-sync while on wi-fi
 - 3) Open app to sync

DPH import processes

- Other apps (e.g., Whatsapp, Snapchat) have settings that can automatically copy photos to your camera roll
- Facebook & Instagram: can download one at a time manually, or use a service (e.g., Zapier) or program (e.g., Mylio) to automate handling of multiple images

Folder structure

- Important for sorting and searching
- Level of detail depends on how many photos you have and what you use them for
- Options: by date, place, theme, sequence, or some combination
- If using numbers to begin folder names, use leading zeros to ensure proper sorting

Folder structure (place)

Canada

UK

United States

Florida

Maine

Massachusetts

Andover

2018

2019

Ipswich

Folder structure (theme/event)

Anniversaries

Birthdays

Graduations

Holidays

 2016-06-02 Colorado

 2017-02-19 Orlando

 2018-07-09 Quebec

Weddings

Folder structure (sequence)

Scrapbook

Section 01

Section 02

Section 03

01 Page

02 Page

001.jpg

002.jpg

Section 04

Folder structure (date+place+event)

2017

2018

2019

2019-01-15 Zealand Notch hike

2019-01-16 Zealand Notch hike

2019-03-04 Pine Island big night salamander count

2019-07-04 Salem Fourth of July fireworks

Folder structure: the unsorted folder

UNSORTED

2019-06-18 Vermont vacation SORTED EDITED ORGANIZE

2019-06-18 Vermont vacation SORT EDIT ORGANIZE

2019-08-02 NH Tripyramid hike SORTED EDIT ORGANIZE

2017

2018

2019

Folder structure: alternative to using an unsorted folder

2017

2018

2019

 2019-01-15 Zealand Notch hike

 2019-01-16 Zealand Notch hike

 origs

 processed

 2019-03-04 Pine Island big night salamander count

 2019-07-04 Salem Fourth of July fireworks

Culling photos

- Keep only your best shots
- Types of files to delete:
 - Out-of-place
 - Mistakes / blurry pictures
 - Redundant photos from bursts
 - Duplicates, thumbnails, and non-image / non-video files
 - Unflattering pictures
 - Too-short video clips

Culling photos

- De-duping tips
 - First make a backup
 - Run de-duping software in manageable chunks
 - Delete when you have a 100% match
 - If deleting similar images, choose the one with the larger file size
 - Be ruthless. “Do I really need both these photos?”

Culling photos

- De-duping software
 - Awesome Duplicate Photo Finder (Windows)
 - PhotoSweeper (MacOS)
 - VisiPics (Windows)

Editing photos

- Essentials: color correction, cropping, resizing
- Basic editing tools are built in to modern OSes and in free online services
- Additional editing functions can be found in photo management software
- Yet more exist in dedicated image editing software

Organizing: renaming files

Pros

- makes files more recognizable to humans and searchable by native operating systems
- universally portable; doesn't rely on special software or operating systems to read/search metadata

Con

- time-consuming, even with batch renaming

Organizing: renaming files

Format suggestion:

YYYY-MM-DD location event who sequence#
(safe with <=250 characters on modern OSes)

original

IMG_9506.JPG

modified

2019-10-21 Andover Computer Users Group Dean 01.jpg

Organizing: tagging

- Can be used instead of or in addition to file renaming
- Rule of thumb: make each tag just one or two words
- Helpful tags: location, subject, date and people
- Strive for consistency



Organizing: tagging

- Can tag using operating system, photo management software, or specialized tagging software (e.g., TagSpaces)
- Look for options to tag in batches
- Adding tags to files' metadata rather than to a database or XMP file makes the files a little more mobile and future proof



Organizing: color labeling and rating

- Color labeling can be useful for identifying processing plans
- Ratings can help with deciding which photos to share or print
- Neither needs to be a part of the file's metadata



Backups

3-2-1 approach

- Always have three copies of your data
- Have two of them be local
- Have one be off-site



Software

- Photo management software can help with one, some, or all of the organizing processes, as well as editing photos, managing data backups, sharing, and printing
- Don't get “locked in” – portability is key!



Software

- Adobe Bridge
- MacOS Photos
- ACDSee
- Adobe Lightroom
- Photo Mechanic
- Mylio
- Forever



Discussion