

Microsoft Digital Suite 10

Software review

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This program requires a Pentium 700mHz or higher plus Windows 98, ME, 2000 or Windows XP. If using 2000 or XP you must have administrative privileges which I have with my Windows XP Professional operating system. I do not have Service Pack 2 so some features may not work for me but I can address that later after I learn the basics. 512 MB or higher of RAM is also recommended along with 400 MB of free disc space, Internet Explorer 6, quad speed CD-Rom drive, 800 X 600 16 bit color monitor, 1 MB of Video Ram and a mouse. Since I had Microsoft Digital Image Pro 7 installed, I was glad that this software did not remove or change this prior software and it can be used to make manual adjustments to photos that is more familiar to me as a learn Pro 10's more complex editing features. The panoramic stitching of either horizontal or vertical photos is just fascinating and nothing like the panoramic setting on my Pentax film camera. I belong to a photography club and members display their photos for 'creative suggestions'. One member brought a "stitched" photo taken on a recent hike in the mountains and I was impressed –I can see a photo taken of a wide landscape hanging on my living room wall as my first major project this year.

The installation wizard installed the program without a problem and I took the tour that went through the individual features and gave opportunities to use the help menu of each feature. Along with a 266-page user's manual that is easy to read and understand, there is an online help system for demos of some of the key features. You can quickly edit multiple pictures in a lab or edit just one. There is a touchup menu for clicking on different auto fixes. My first venture into restoring old photos came from my neighbor who wanted to email old pictures of her mother and father to her niece for including in a family album she was putting together to share with other family members. My neighbor and her niece were pleased with the results. I now have my brothers and sisters searching through their photo collections as I have few pictures of my dad or even all of us siblings when we were young.

Organizing choices are a great improvement over what I have now: you can use keywords, find similar photos, and even flag photos for future touchups and printing. The selection preview pane lets you change file name, use captions, date when taken and when modified. The preview pane also shows a summary of information about photos that I notice club members use routinely. Hope to have need of these features if I get prolific in photography.

Another feature that I would like to explore this year is the slideshow feature that can be created with pictures, narration, and music. My son is helping me with importing the music of the 60's and 70's that would go along with the picture slideshow using Photo Story that would like to create. I plan on purchasing an external hard drive (recommended by fellow club members for photo storage) and a DVD burner.

With this program you can improve pictures taken with a camera phone and save a picture in the right format for a pocket PC (which I have) and a mobile phone (which I do not have and probably won't ever purchase). I would recommend this software to anyone who has purchased a digital camera and wants to have a lot of fun with the ability to create and share some great photos via many interesting projects.