

## **Adobe Photoshop Album**

Review by Don Lewis

### **Product information**

Photoshop Album is produced by Adobe. The corporate headquarters is located at the following address.

Adobe Systems Incorporated  
345 Park Avenue  
San Jose, California 95110-2704  
Tel: 408-536-6000  
Fax: 408-537-6000

The product may be purchased at most software outlets such as CompUSA, Staples or Best Buy. The retail price is \$49.99. It is often discounted. It is also available at most online outlets such as PC Connections, Gateway.com and Amazon.com. Prices range from \$44.95 to \$49.99. Visit the Adobe web site at the following address for more information or to download a free trial version. <http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopalbum/main.html>

### **Introductory Summary**

Photoshop Album is a program for managing digital photos. It provides the ability to organize photos into searchable catalogs. It also has limited, but easy to use image editing functions and the ability to import pictures from digital cameras or scanners. There are also easy to use functions to create slideshows and other creations and share your photos with friends and family over the Internet.

### **Requirements**

Pentium III or higher, 256MB of RAM, 150MB of hard disk space, Windows 98SE, Me, 2000 and XP, SVGA, Internet Explorer 5 or higher, CD-ROM

### **Installation**

Inserting the Photoshop CD launched the installation wizard. The CD also contains the Adobe Reader. The wizard loaded the reader as well as Photoshop without asking, even though I have Adobe Acrobat and do not need the reader. Uninstall is provided by the Windows Add/Remove programs function.

### **Features**

The main purpose of Photoshop is to organize your photos into a catalog. Photos can be imported from files and folders, digital camera, card reader or scanner. The photos are organized first by date. The date is picked up from the digital camera metadata or from the file date of photos without metadata. This may leave scanned photos with the date they were scanned, not the date the photo was taken. The date can be easily adjusted to the proper date. You can create keyword-based tags organized into four main categories – People, Places, Events and Other. Associate each picture with all of the appropriate tags by dragging and dropping them onto the photos. There are also a Favorite and Hidden tags. These can be used to display your best photos or hide the worst. Photos are displayed in the Photo Well, with variable size thumbnails. You can then limit the photos displayed to those with particular dates or tag(s) that you choose. The default view of the Photo Well has the Tag panel on the left and the Properties panel on the right. These can be removed when not needed to enlarge the photo display area.

There is a fix image command that provides the ability to crop the picture, fix red eye, change brightness, contrast and color saturation. There are one-click buttons for auto levels, auto

contrast, auto color and sharpen. These commands are very basic. If more powerful editing is needed, you can open an image editor with one click. Photoshop Album creates a new version of any edited photo so that you can return to the original at any time.

Photos may be viewed using the Instant Slideshow. It works well, but is much slower than the slide show built into Windows XP. There is also a calendar view. Select a month and it will show each day with pictures for that day. If there are multiple pictures, they will display in a slideshow. You can also create a slideshow to share your photos on the Internet or on CD using the Creation Wizard. Many templates are provided. You can specify the order of the photos, add music, display a title page and captions and control the transition between photos. You can also record audio captions to be played with a photo.

The Creation Wizard also provides for making photo albums, video CDs, greeting cards, calendars, eCards, photo books, and Web sites. The wizard is a step-by-step process to choose all of the options provided in each of the creations. All steps are self explaining and easy to use.

The print function offers some very easy to use options for printing your photos on a local printer. There are picture packages with a variety of picture sizes on each page as well as the ability to print individual pictures in many sizes. There is a warning when the print size will cause the picture to be rendered at less than 150 pixels per inch.

You can share your photos or creations by email or on the Internet. The email feature provides the ability to select photos from the viewing well. It will send a slideshow in Adobe PDF format that can be displayed using the free Adobe reader or attached as single photos. The size of the photos can be controlled to reduce the transmission time. Album has a built in contact book, but it is not associated with your email address book. You must build it separately, or you can put the individual addresses in the email. The ability to use the email address book would make this effort much easier.

The Online Services features allow you to send images from Photoshop Album to remote service providers. Your friends and family can then go to the sharing site to view the photos over the Internet. There is a one-click function to order prints of your photos or creations from online services such as Shutterfly Online Print Services.

### **Documentation**

A forty page “Getting Started” users manual covering the basic functions is included. It is well illustrated and easy to follow. As in most Adobe products, the help files seem complete and are actually helpful. However, it is not always easy to find a particular subject in the help files. I inadvertently dropped a tag on the wrong photo and could not find instructions on how to delete it. I fell back to the “click around until you find it” method. Selecting the photo and right clicking it brought a menu that solved the problem.

### **Product Support**

Online support includes a searchable knowledgebase, product tutorials, downloadable files, user-to-user forums and technical announcements. There is also phone support from 8 am to 6 pm seven days a week.

### **Conclusion**

I had hundreds of pictures on my hard drive obtained from scans and digital cameras. They are divided into folders with names that are meaningful to me. It was very easy to import these pictures into the Photoshop Album catalog. Album creates a link to the photo files on your hard

disk. The photos remain where they are. If your photos are scattered over your hard drive, there is a search function to locate them and let you choose which to import. Even though I was able to find the particular pictures that I was looking for with my old method, Album provides a much easier and faster way to pull together pictures based on dates or the tags that I set up. The setup process was easy to do, but time consuming. I think that I set up too many tags. I have learned not to be so detailed until there is a need for it. It is easy to go back and add more tags later.

Getting pictures from a card reader or scanner works swiftly. It recognized my Compact Flash card reader immediately and read in all the pictures on the card. It gives no options for selecting the pictures to import, where to put them or renaming them. There is a rename feature that allows a base name and appended numeric value after they are imported. It also recognized my scanner and interfaced with the scanner software to scan pictures. The Windows XP Camera and Scanner Wizard is slower, but gives more options. I did not try importing directly from the digital camera through the USB cable.

There is an archive command to copy a set of photos to a CD or DVD. The Archive command includes an Offline option. With this option, all the master files of the selected photos are written to CD or DVD, and then a low-resolution copy is written to your hard disk and the master files are deleted from your disk. You can continue to see the photos in your catalog and view them on-screen, but you've freed up most of the disk space they used. When you need the full resolution copy online, you will be prompted to put in the CD or DVD. If the photos are already on CD or DVD, you can import the low-resolution copy and leave the full resolution on the offline copy.

The Creation feature is fun, easy and useful. I found the print function to be a time saver as well.

Photoshop Album is very slow starting. It takes a long time loading various components. Other Adobe applications like Photoshop Elements and Acrobat seem to perform the same way.

I am well pleased with Photoshop Album. It satisfies my requirements for getting my photos better organized and I really like the creation features. If you are looking for a program to get your photos organized, download the free trial copy and give this a try.