

Microsoft Picture It! Publishing Platinum, Edition 2002

Software review by Phil Thomforde

Approximate cost \$39 with a \$15 rebate requiring proof of purchase. Offer expires December 31, 2002. Program can be purchased almost anywhere including Staples or Wal-Mart.

**Picture It! Publishing** is a complete desktop publishing program as well as a complete photo-editing program. Project templates by the thousands are at one's fingertips for the creation of greeting cards, invitations, calendars, newsletters, announcements, posters, banners, flyers, stickers, stationery sets, certificates, awards, masks, coloring books, gift tags, recipe cards, party hats and many more. Users with a creative bent can design their own project drawing on 15,000 project templates, 250,000 images, 200 font styles, 3,500 sentiments, 5,000 quotes, more than 1,5000 animated greetings, and 2,800 sounds and music clips.

**System Requirements:**

One must take care not to install too many extras because full installation can be in excess of 3GB

Multimedia PC with Pentium 166 MHz or higher processor

Microsoft Windows 98, Windows ME and Windows 2000 professional operation system or later.

32 MB of RAM minimum (64 MB recommended) for Windows 98

64 MB of RAM recommended for Windows MWE and Windows 2000

450 MB of available hard disk space minimum (580 MB needed for installation)

805 MB of available hard-disk space recommended (935 MB needed for installation)

Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 software included. Up to an 80 MB of hard-disk space may be required for Internet Explorer upgrade. This installation will not replace our primary browser.

Quad-speed or faster DC-Rom drive

Super VGA monitor; 1 MB of VRAM

Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device

**Optional:**

Modem (28.8.baud or faster recommended)

Access to the Internet

Audio card with headphones and/or speakers

Microsoft for voice recording

Compatible with:

Most digital cameras, scanners, printers, storage devices

Hewlett-Packard Photo Smart products

Iomega Zip storage devices  
Kodak Photo New online and fujifilm.net  
MIX, JPG, PCD, TIF, WMF, BMP, CDR, GIF, PCX, PNG, TGA and more file formats

### **Installation:**

My installation went smoothly. I understand there is no uninstall feature; however, it can be removed through the control panel.

### **Features:**

Adding to the many thousands of pictures readily available, one can also get pictures from one's computer, a CD, a digital camera, the Web or a scanner.

Online help is available at- <http://pictureit.msn.com>. At every step the program features on screen help which is available where needed. I found this feature very helpful.

My initial project was to edit some family pictures received by e-mail. I first tried to improve the intensity of the colors in one picture; it was much too drab. I found two methods of improving it. The first was an automatic fix that went over the whole picture to balance everything. It improved the picture but was still not perfect. The other way was something called "touchup painting" in which one can correct only the exact portion of the picture that I wanted. This method, however, was very time consuming and, if one did not have the time for much individual attention, the automatic fix would probably be the most efficient way to fix a large volume of pictures.

The next test I had was an attempt at removing someone from a picture so that it looked like they had never been there. In my attempt, my main tool was the "clone painting", in which one picks a source point and a target and then when they paint it replaces whatever is at the target with the appropriate portion of the picture from the source point. The person I wanted to remove covered up a portion of another man's shirt. I cloned from the other side of his shirt to remove his face. After removing him there was an empty space that I filled with a clone of part of the wall. I ended up with a very realistic picture that fooled people unfamiliar with the original.

Some of us have boxes of family photos too precious to discard but perhaps with some dressing up selected ones would be more worth saving. With Picture It! Publishing I could eliminate scratches, lighten faces caught in a shadow, remove dust, remove a facial blemish or mend a torn shirt. You don't like the electric wire overhead or a man hole cover on your street photo of your house? Follow the instructions on your screen and they disappear. For fun, perhaps you want to show your son scoring a goal upside-down. You have only to click "Position" and it can be done for you.

As with other projects on the computer, these can be saved, sent by e-mail or printed, and don't overlook the infinite possibilities of sound effects. Nothing conveys excitement like sound. With Pictures It! Publishing you can add your own sound effects to the project that can be sent by e-mail.

Picture It! Publishing is a great bargain. It is a good photo-editor for someone who either does not have the money for the expensive, high end, editor like Photoshop or does not

think that the large increase in price for Photoshop is worth the small increase in quality. It is very easy to get started and to use. The instructions guide you step by step. Like a good novel it is hard to put down once you have used it.