



Megabyte Memories
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The Mess to Success Method

Preparing for a Photo Scanning Project

Whether you are considering organizing your photos yourself or hiring a professional photo organizer, I encourage you read this **before** you begin. Knowing what to do and what not to do will save you time and make the task easier.

Megabyte Memories Services

Megabyte Memories Photo Scanning Plus Organizing service transforms your print photos and albums into a digital collection that is **searchable, sortable and sharable**.

Services include:

- Scanning with professional-grade photo scanners.
- Scanning of loose photos, oversize photos and other items (see page 2).
- Colour improvement.
- Adding correct dates to the digital files—when a photo was taken (or your best guess).
- Adding searchable keywords – events, celebrations, activities, places, and more.
- Adding names of people in the photos using Facial Recognition software.
- Naming all digital files with the date and other meaningful information.
- Placing digital files into folders by date – by decade, by year, or year and month.
- Showing you how to search, enjoy, store and share your photos.

Two Service Options

If you choose to work with Meg Macintyre of Megabyte Memories, there are two different options for photo scanning and organizing services. Your choice will depend on your budget and how much time you are willing to spend on the project.

Full-Service Option

With this option, you hand over all your photos and I do *almost* everything! I say ‘almost’, because I would still need to have meetings with you, and you would need to complete forms for dates, names and other information.

Full-Service Pricing

After the complimentary photo consultation, an hourly rate is charged.

The Mess to Success Method

The Mess to Success Method is the most economical option. It requires that you spend time following very specific instructions for sorting your photos to get them ready for scanning.

Topics covered in the instructions include:

- Culling your Photo Collection (deciding what to scan)
- Dating and Sorting Your Photos.
- Naming People in your Photos
- Creating and Using a Keywords list.

The more time and effort you devote to the project, the more searchable your photo collection will be.

Mess to Success Method Pricing

After the complimentary photo consultation, pricing is based on quantity and size of photos.

There are extra charges for scanning of album pages, framed items, delicate items etc.

Items That Can Be Scanned

Megabyte Memories can scan the following items:

- Loose photos and photos removed from albums.
- Backs of photos (double-sided scanning) of photos measuring up to 8" x 10" – to capture information written on the backs of photos.
- Oversized photos and other items measuring up to 12 3/4" x 17 3/4".
- Documents, certificates, maps, and charts measuring up to 12 3/4" x 17 3/4".
- Framed items with very clean glass measuring up to 12 3/4" x 17 3/4".
- Full pages of photo albums and scrapbooks measuring up to 12 3/4" x 17 3/4".
The full pages can be scanned when the photos cannot be removed from the page, or when there are notes written on the page.
- 35mm slides.
- VHS and camcorder tapes can also be digitized. This is a separate service.

Megabyte Memories works with a trusted partner to digitize film and other media not listed above.

Storing and Protecting Your Photos

Do you know where and how your photos are stored?

Photos fade, discolour and become more fragile over time. Storing your photos properly will help keep them in good condition. If you're not ready to start a photo scanning and organizing project yet, at least make sure your photos are safe.

Store your photos:

- In a part of your home that has a moderate temperature year-round. Not in an attic or unheated garage.
- In a location where there is little risk of water damage from burst pipes or leaks.

Archival Storage

Ideally, your important photos should be stored in archival-quality, acid-free boxes or albums.

Handling Your Photos

Any fingerprints and dirt on your photos may show in the scanned image. When handling your photos, albums or slides follow these guidelines:

- Have very clean hands – no lotions or hand sanitizer on hands. Wash hands well with soap and water.
- Wear cotton or nitrile gloves or finger cots to help protect your photos as you handle them.
- Work on a clean surface and keep your work area clean.

Keep photo handling to a minimum. Handle photos by the edges as much as possible.

Gathering Your Photos

It's important to locate and gather all your photos before you start sorting them. Many cherished photos are in frames and should not be forgotten. Ask family members if they have photos that should be included in the collection so that the photos are preserved for everyone to enjoy.

Protecting Date Information

Important!

Be very careful when gathering your photos. Do not immediately remove photos from envelopes, albums, boxes or whatever else they are stored in.

It is important to preserve any date clues that may exist:

- The photo envelope may have a date on it.
- The album page may contain some photos with dates written on the back.
- The storage box or container may contain notes.
- A photo you do not want to keep may have a date written on the back that may help to date other photos.

If clues you find are small, hidden, or otherwise not obvious, label the item more clearly with a sticky note, or place the item in a well-labelled container.

Shipping Photos and Albums

If you need people to send you photos or albums to add to the project, they may be hesitant to do so. Reassure them that the best way to protect the photos is to have them scanned—the sooner, the better—before they fade and discolor even more.

Package the photos in a sturdy box and protect the items inside from moisture. Consider placing photos and albums in zip-top bags before they are put in the box.

Choose a shipping option that includes package tracking, and ship on a Monday so that there is very little chance the package will sit in a very hot or very cold warehouse over the weekend.

Recording Photo Information

It's never too early to start recording any information you know or discover about your photos. While gathering your photos, start listing known dates, names, locations, activities, celebrations and more. Use a computer spreadsheet, a Word document, or a piece of paper for your lists.

Recording Dates

The date a photo was taken (or a best guess) can be added to the digital file of a scanned photo. When digital files are dated, it becomes much easier to find specific photos.

If you don't know a photo's exact date, it's still a good idea to determine (or guess) the year or even just the decade.

Record the dates you know and ask family members to provide a list of dates they know. Any known dates can help you to date photos more accurately. The more dates you record, the more photos you will be able to accurately date.

Record personal dates about family members such as:

- Date of Birth
- Date of Death
- Year started school
- Year for different school grades
- Year started college/post-secondary
- Date of marriage.

Record any other dates that may help with photo dating such as:

- Dates of specific trips or vacations.
- Dates of celebrations or events.

Recording Other Information

Information about a photo can be added to its digital file. The information is added as keywords. A keyword can be a single word (vacation) or combination of words (New York) that identify people, locations, activities, celebrations and more.

A collection of photos with keywords is searchable. Most software used for viewing or managing photos has a search feature.

Photo Albums

Removing Photos from Albums

If you have albums from which photos can be removed, you should remove them to have them scanned. If your photos are in a high-quality, acid free album, they will probably be easy to remove. Be careful to preserve chronological order when you remove photos from albums.

Detaching Photos from Album Pages

Over the years, your photos may have become stuck to the album pages. Consult with a photo organizer before try to separate photos from pages. There are a few different methods for loosening and removing photos stuck to album pages.

Sticky residue or anything else stuck to the back of a photo must be cleaned or covered so that scanning equipment is not damaged.

Please ask for recommendation for how to cover the backs of photos or for what products to use to clean your photos.

Returning Photos to Albums after Scanning

If you plan to put the photos back in the albums in the same order as before, it is up to you to record which photos were in which album and on what pages. Make notes or photograph the pages for future reference.

Consider purchasing a high-quality, acid-free album for your best and favorite photos. Consult with your photo organizer about how your photos should be stored long-term.

Scanning Full Pages of Albums and Scrapbooks

Many older albums have photos glued to the pages and often have notes written on the pages. Full pages can be scanned, even if the pages cannot be removed from the album. Each full page is saved as a digital image. Individual photos on the page can be isolated and saved as separate images.

There are several options for enjoying a scanned album or scrapbook. It can be viewed as individual page images, combined into a PDF file, or re-created as a digital flipbook.