

As Seen On:



iPhoto Makes Working with Pictures Fun Again

By Khan Klatt

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Apple's new iPhoto software application clearly was engineered with simplicity and practicality in mind.

Of all the [announcements](#) Apple's Steve Jobs made at Macworld Expo in San Francisco, the one that has gotten the most attention is the attractive new iMac. Yet the real star of the show was the company's new [iPhoto application](#).

While some people will point out that iPhoto doesn't actually do anything new (some of its functions were previously available in other software utilities), none of those other utilities do all of those functions, and certainly not as conveniently and simply as in iPhoto.

I've been involved in the Web development industry since its inception. I'm equally as comfortable with doing photo editing as I am with Web publishing. Yet I'm shocked at the amount of work that is required to take a few megabytes of my digital photography and put it on my Web site to share with family and friends.

Shining Example

When it comes to taking that photography and getting any prints or photo albums out of it, the process gets very complicated. So complex, in fact, that it is likely out of the hands of most of the consumers who own digital cameras. That's where iPhoto really shines.

With MacOS X, I was overjoyed that the included "Image Capture" application would automatically launch when I connected my camera, and would allow me to rotate, download and potentially even create Web pages in one simple application.

However, I opted to use the "Web Gallery" feature of Photoshop to output my images because it gave me a little better control over titles and output options. It also kept the interface of my older photography consistent with that which I produced in OS X with Image Capture.

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Friends and Family

Once I had the Web pages automatically built, either by Image Capture, Photoshop or otherwise, I still had to upload the images to my Web site and update my index page to point to the newly uploaded photos.

But the worst part was having to upload the full-size photos once again to an online service, such as Ofoto.com, so that I could share professional-quality prints with friends and family.

The litany of products I'd use to accomplish the task included Image Capture, Photoshop, BBEdit for HTML tweaks and various UNIX Web server tools.

Enter iPhoto

iPhoto clearly was engineered with simplicity and practicality in mind. Recognizing that one's image library can have several thousand photos in it, iPhoto uses a Photo Library/Photo Album/Film Roll construct, which is not only intuitive, but also practical.

Each import session creates a Film Roll. Film Rolls can be organized to build Photo Albums, and the contents of all Photo Albums make up the Photo Library, which provides fast and easy perusal of your entire library.

Photos can be given keywords, which simplify organization and presentation. None of these functions requires you to create folders or otherwise re-order your images on the hard drive.

Intelligent Ideas

Once your photos are organized, the next step is editing them. iPhoto's built-in tools allow for cropping, scaling, rudimentary color correction functions and rotation. The uninitiated user won't notice the efficiency improvements it offers. Unlike some other packages, iPhoto places the image rotation step after the download step, which saves the user several clicks and streamlines the process.

The next unique step is the Book option. iPhoto allows you to collect photos into individual pages and gives you the option to "one-click" order a professionally made, hardbound photo album of your pictures. This service is available for a fee, of course.

Finally, there is the Share button, which allows you to select one of several templates and upload your own Web site to Apple's servers. iPhoto also includes an option to order professional prints on Kodak paper directly from iPhoto.

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The Easy Life

The same tedious task that previously took at least four different software applications to accomplish is made easy and enjoyable by iPhoto. I didn't realize that working with my pictures could be so much fun.

I now look forward to organizing and sharing my photos, and in the end, that is the ultimate goal of technology: to simplify our lives while enriching the experience in the process.

Leave it to Apple to take a tedious task and simplify it to the point that it becomes enjoyable.

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