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## Computer Scrapbooks

When digital cameras were first released on the market, everyone was excited. Finally, here was an easy way to take and store photos. No more would our closets be plagued with boxes and envelopes housing a hodgepodge of unorganized photographs. What we didn't realize was that soon, our computers would be filled with a hodgepodge of unorganized photographs.

The explosion of home computers and the Internet has led to an increased need for people to organize computer scrapbooks. It's easy to accumulate literally thousands of digital pictures, and it's just as easy to get them all mixed up. Try finding a favorite photo as you're scanning through a list of numbers and letters. Creating computer scrapbooks makes it quick and easy to locate the photographs, as soon as you want to see them.

When preparing your computer scrapbooks, the first step should always be renaming your photos. You should use file names that are easy to understand and organize, rather than keeping the default names set by your digital photography software. Anyone who has used a digital camera or camera phone knows just how hard it can be to decipher the file names, let alone selecting the photographs. Proper titles listed in computer scrapbooks make it easy to remember which pictures you have.

One key point to remember is that all of your computer scrapbook files will be sorted in alphabetical order. This can get confusing, particularly if you're naming pictures by date. Rather than call your photos 'January10', 'April21' etc, use the numerical format year, month and then day. Those same files will now be called 20050110Baby and 20050421Baby. In doing so, your computer will display them in the correct date order for you.

After your photo files have been renamed, you need to create folders to store the different types of photo files. Try organizing your computer scrapbooks by subject, theme or occasion. This will allow you to find your photos much easier later on. For example, create a folder called 'Baby Pictures' and save all of your baby photographs in that folder. By setting up and following a naming system, you'll soon have the most well organized computer scrapbooks around.

Whether or not you print your digital photos, always create backups of all your computer scrapbook files. There are many archiving programs that can be used to compress large files, enabling them to be stored on a CD or other removable disk. It is essential that you label your CDs to keep your computer scrapbook backups as organized as the originals. You can write the title on the CD itself, but you should also remember to alter the name of the CD as read by the computer. Most CD writing software automatically prompts you to give the CD a title, but check the instructions before you start the burning process so you, and your computer, will be able to clearly identify the CDs.

Digital cameras make it easy to take and save pictures. Computer scrapbooks make it easy to find the pictures anytime you're ready to take a trip down memory lane or share the digital images with your friends.