

Scan + Organize Your Photo Collection

What we'll cover in this class

- **Why** you should scan and organize your photos
- What to consider **before you begin** scanning and organizing a photo collection
- **Tools and resources** available at the Palm Beach County Library and elsewhere

Why scan + organize? *Preservation + convenience*

With a bit of planning, organizing, and managing, you can make sure your prints and digital photos are **safely preserved** and **easily accessible**.

Choosing how to scan your photos

Scanning can be a do-it-yourself project, or you can send your photos to a commercial scanning service. How you prioritize **time**, **cost**, and **quality** will determine what method is best for you.

- **Fast + cheap** (but not the best quality): Use the [ScanSnap](#) autofeed scanner at the library
- **Cheap + good** (but more time-intensive): [Flatbed scanner](#)
- **Good + fast** (but not cheap): Commercial scanning service ([tips](#) for choosing one)

Image quality

Quality is defined by image **resolution**, which is measured in **pixels**. Digital photos are made up of millions of colored and shaded dots or squares called **pixels**. More pixels per inch (PPI) means higher resolution, which results in a sharper, more detailed image.

Recommended settings from Family Tree Magazine

<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/photos/resolution-rules-of-thumb-for-scanning-old-family-photos-and-documents/>

- To print images at their original size, scan them at least 300 dpi.
- To enlarge photos up to double in size, or to zoom in to view on-screen, scan at least 600 dpi.
- If the original photo is small, scan at 600 dpi or higher.
- If you don't know how the digitized photo will be used and you have the storage capacity, scan at least 600 dpi and up to 1200 dpi.



Workflow

- **Organize prints:** Gather, edit, and sort your print photo collection
- **Scan prints**
- **Organize digital images:** Gather, edit, and sort your digital photos
- **Back up + manage:** Back up, add to, share, and ENJOY your collection

Organization

- **Discard** photos that you do not love, need, or care about — including duplicates and hopelessly blurry images.
- **Sort your photos into categories**, using a consistent system in a way that makes sense to you — by person, family, event, holiday, date, theme, or place.
- Use a **consistent naming convention** for folders and files, something like this:
1972-xx-xx-winter-wisconsin-sledding-jones-jon-chris-ellie.jpg

Resources

- DC Public Library Memory Lab: libguides.dclibrary.org/memorylab
- Scan Your Entire Life: scanyourentirelife.com
- A Few Scanning Tips: scantips.com
- New York Times: How to Rescue, Repair and Revive Old Family Photos
nytimes.com/2018/12/19/technology/personaltech/how-to-rescue-repair-and-revive-old-family-photos.html
- Wall Street Journal: Bring Memories of the Past Into Digital Age
wsj.com/articles/the-best-ways-to-digitize-old-photos-tapes-and-discs-so-your-memories-live-on-11609943584

Apps for your phone for low-volume scanning

- [Google PhotoScan](#)
- [FilmLab](#)
- [PhotoMyne](#): Multiple apps you can try for free, but subscriptions are required for full access

Tools for organizing + editing digital photos

- The [Photos app](#) for macOS comes installed on Apple devices.
- [Google Photos](#) works on any operating system.
- [ACDSee](#) is a relatively inexpensive photo editor and organizer for Windows and Mac.
- Adobe offers the free [Bridge](#) for organizing photos and other [subscription](#) products

Commercial scanning services

- YesVideo (Costco, CVS, Walmart): yesvideo.com
- DigMyPics: digmypics.com
- Legacybox: legacybox.com
- Memorable: memorable.app
- Memories Renewed: memoriesrenewed.com
- ScanCafe: scancafe.com

At the Palm Beach County Library

The **Creation Station** at the Main Library and **Pop Up Media Labs** at branches are not currently available, but check our website at pbclibrary.org for news about reopening.