



Digital Scrapbooking: The Next Generation of Scrapbooking

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Digital Scrapbooking is one of the fastest growing hobbies out today! It combines the concept of traditional paper scrapbooking using a digital graphics program to create your digital scrapbook layouts. Simple Scrapbook magazine has recently a magazine dedicated completely to Digital Scrapbooking. Other well known Scrapbooking Magazines (Creative Keepsakes, Memory Makers, etc) also have dedicated sections for this unique but complimentary method of scrapbooking. This short intro will focus on giving you a small taste of the many ways you can digital scrapbook with your computer.

Topics include:

1. what is digital scrapbooking
2. essentials for digital scrapbooking including programs to use
3. definitions and terms used in digital scrapbooking
4. paper vs. digital
5. do I need a digital camera and how do I get non-digital photos on the computer
6. digital kits and pre-made pages
7. saving and storing files
8. File formats associated with digital scrapbooking
9. printing options and other uses for completed layouts
10. internet resources

What is Digital Scrapbooking?

Digital Scrapbooking is simply using a computer graphics program to create the look of a layered scrapbook page. In traditional paper scrapbooking you would use real backgrounds, embellishments and photos all together to create a page. In Digital Scrapbooking you take these same elements but they are all digital files (backgrounds, frames, photo mattes, tags, fiber, etc) and using your graphics program you move, resize and layer to make the completed page on your computer. To create the layered look you use the tools in your program to give shadows and depth to your page. Then you save, print and place in an album the same way you would with a traditional paper scrapbook. Most digital scrapbookers create traditional style scrapbook pages there are also some very graphic inspired styles such as collage and montage.

Essentials for Digital Scrapbooking

- computer PC or MAC
- digital graphics program
- external storage device: CD or DVD burner & or external hard drive
- *digital camera (not necessary! You can use photos on CD or scanned in)
- *photo printer (not needed if you want to take to a photo lab)
- *high resolution scanner (to scan processed photos or elements)
- *top loading scrapbook albums

* optional items (except for scanner if you do not have a digital camera)

List of commonly used Programs for Digital Scrapbooking

Adobe Photoshop - the most awesome of all programs but has a steep learning curve and is quite expensive. (Around \$800)

Adobe Photoshop Elements - a scaled down version of Photoshop, easier to learn and still does most anything you might want to do. Cost about \$150. Excellent and very user friendly!

Corel Paint Shop Pro - A great program, does have a bit of learning curve. Runs usually about \$150. Can only be used on a PC not a MAC.

Microsoft Picture It!/Digital Image Pro - Great capabilities, is also a photo editor. Does have a few kinks, uses a lot of memory. Comes with tons of great clipart. Very user friendly.

Ulead PhotoImpact - Another popular and versatile program, easy to learn.

Definitions and Terms used in Digital Scrapbooking

Express Pages, ploppers, pre-made pages, scraplets, etc: a pre-made page that has all elements in place. Simply place your photos and your text using your digital graphics program and you are done. The quickest way to get a page done! These pages can be found online usually as single downloadable files.

Digital Scrapbooking Kits: These include all the digital elements that you would need to create a digital page. Each digital element (frame, background, tag, fiber, etc) is a separate file that you drag and drop onto your digital page using your digital graphics program. Kits usually will include more than one choice of backgrounds, frames, mattes, tags, word art, etc. Kits can be found individually online as a downloadable link or as part of a collection on a CD.

Digital Elements or Elements:

An element is an individual piece that you would use in your digital scrapped page. Examples of elements are: tag, frame, photo corners, eyelets, rivets, frames, etc.

Resolution: Print quality that an image is created in. Pixels per inch (ppi) or dots per inch(dpi) is the term used for resolution. 72 ppi is standard web resolution meaning that it will be the resolution of most images that you will see on a web page on the internet. 300 ppi is standard print quality for commercial images at a print lab. For home printing or quality printing in a photo lab 200-300 ppi will produce high quality prints. Online stores that sell digital scrapbooking kits and elements will be 200-300 ppi.

Layout: a digitally created scrapbook page

Paper Scrapbooking vs. Digital Scrapbooking

In the Digital Scrapbooking community you will see many different types of digital scrappers. The three main ones are those who previously paper scrapped, those who have never paper scrapped and those who combine the two techniques and do both.

The great thing about digital scrapping is that you can individualize it to suit what works for you! Here is what you can do with Digital Scrapbooking:

- Create your digital layouts with purchased kits and elements

- Create your own digital layouts completely yourself using the tools from your digital graphics program
- Create your backgrounds and some elements yourself or use purchased ones on the computer then print out and affix your previously processed photos on top of the printed background.
- Resize your scrapbook page to share with family and friends
- Print multiple copies and albums very easily
- Reuse your purchased or personally created elements over and over again! Purchase once only and you have the ability to use them on more than one page.
- Create one scrapbook page and then easily re-do or change slightly to create another similar page.
- Email your completed digital scrapbook layout by simply resizing for email.
- Create a video slide show of your digital scrapbook layouts to share
- Burn your scrapbook layout files to CD Rom or DVD to save as a back up
- Create cards, labels, recipe cards, and other craft items using your digital graphics program

The key is that you do not have to be simply only a paper scrapbooker or only a digital scrapbooker! You can combine them and do a bit of both or whatever works best for you. Paper scrapbookers have been using the computer for years for text and journaling, so going that little step further opens up a whole new world.

Do I need a digital camera to do Digital Scrapbooking?

It will be and is much easier to digitally scrapbook if you have a digital camera! However that said one of the favorite tools in this hobby is a scanner. You can easily scan in previously processed photos into your computer and use them the same way that you would use a photo taken with your digital camera. The whole point is that if you want to do your scrapbook pages completely digital you need to get your photos into a digital file format. To do this you can use your digital camera and then upload your photos into your computer or scan in at a high resolution previously processed photos which converts them to a digital file or get your 35 mm camera film processed and put onto a CD rom to put into your computer. Remember that you can also paste previously processed photos onto completed printed out digital layouts if that is what works best for you.

Digital kits and Pre-made pages

To digitally scrapbook there are two ways that you will do it: use the simple, quickest way by using a pre-made express page, or use a digital kit and create your own digital scrapbook layout.

An express page or plopper is a one digital file that is a completed scrapbook layout. You simply add on your photo, text and journaling and you are done. The quickest way to get a layout done! You can find these pre-made pages in most online Digital Scrapbooking stores.

A digital kit is a set of backgrounds and elements that you can purchase or create yourself to make your scrapbook layout. Each background and element will be a separate file that you can manipulate yourself. You can purchase kits online from many Digital Scrapbooking sites and download them to your computer to use over and over. Once you have the kit it is yours to use in all of your own personal layouts. Using your digital graphics program you start out with a background then add in your photos and all other elements to create your layout. You have the flexibility of moving around and resizing elements to suit your layout and add in your creativity.

Saving and Storing Files

Completed digital scrapbook layouts are known for being very large size files! Working in the digital graphic programs and saving as the format that retains the layers will take up a tremendous amount of space on your computer. If you do not have a lot of hard drive disk space you will need and want to get an external storage device such as a CD/DVD burner or internal/external hard drive. There are ways that you can cut down the size of your digital files using your graphics program. However you will also always want to have back-ups made of your digital scrapbook files so that you can save and cherish your memories for future generations. Computers are not always safe! Backing up your files is always very important with anything that you do with a computer.

File Formats associated with Digital scrapbooking:

Program specific formats (retains all layers intact) - Photoshop format is PSD and Paint Shop Pro's format is pspimage or psp. You must always save your original as the native program specific format to keep your layers intact. When you save as a JPG the layers will be flattened so to speak into one layer and you will not be able to change the layers as a JPG. Native formats are always very large, especially in the 12x12 size. Some can be up to 35 MB in size!

Jpg – stands for Joint Photographic Experts Group. This is a format that is best used for backgrounds and papers that do not require transparency around it. In digital scrapbooking you will find all backgrounds and papers as jpg files. This is also the format that you would want to save your layouts in to email or upload to a printer. It is considered a flat file and you will not be able to make any changes to a layout once it is saved as a JPG file.

Png – stands for Portable Network Graphics. All elements that require transparency around are saved in PNG format. Think of a frame that you need the center to be transparent so you can drag it directly on top of your photo. If the frame was saved in a JPG format you would have white all around and inside the frame so when you dragged it on it would not be transparent.

Printing options and other uses for completed layouts

There are two ways to print your complete digital scrapbook layouts: print them yourself or take them to a photo lab to get them printed for you. Home photo printers are now relatively inexpensive enough and give great quality that you can print out your completed layouts at home yourself. What if your layout is a large size like 12x12? There are also wide format home printers available now that give excellent quality. You can take them to a photo lab and get them printed, most photo labs will print 12x12 size as well. The very nice thing about doing it digital is that you can resize your 12x12 layouts and print at a very common scrapbooking size of 8x8 inches on your home printer. There are many album sizes available that also have the nice feature of top loading pages perfect for just dropping in your printed layouts. Check out your local print/scrapbooking shop for printing options and scrapbook album options.

Here are also some other uses for your completed layouts:

- Place in an album for display
- Frame and use for display in your home
- Frame or place in an album to give as gifts for family and friends
- Create calendars with your completed digital scrapbook layouts
- Personal website galleries
- Video or DVD slideshows

- Print onto canvas for art in your home
- Get bound into a hard covered album

The list is endless depending on your creativity and imagination!

Online Resources

Here are a few online sites all about Digital Scrapbooking. You can also do a simple search on www.google.com and find literally thousands of sites related to Digital Scrapbooking. The internet has become the largest shopping mall and resource area for the hobby of Digital Scrapbooking.

Full Service Sites: galleries, forums, chats, tutorials, shopping

www.scrapbook-bytes.com

www.digitalscrapbookplace.com

www.scrapbookgraphics.com

Portal Sites that link to other designers and their online stores

www.digitalscrapbookpreviews.com

Books and Magazines available at your local Chapters, Micheal's or Scrapbook Store

Simple Scrapbooks Digital Scrapbooking version 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5

Scrapbooking the Digital Way – author Michelle Shefvland

Digital Scrapbooking – author Sally Beacham

Digital Scrapbooking for Dummies – author Jeanne Wines-Reed

Creative Digital Scrapbooking: Designing Keepsakes on Your Computer: Designing Keepsakes on Your Computer – author Katherine Murray