PhotoMontage Help Index

Overview

Welcome to ArcSoft PhotoMontage 1.0 SE, the unique imaging entertainment program that lets you turn your favorite digital photos into an eye-catching masterpiece of digital art. Begin by choosing a main photo, such as a person's face. Then choose the micro-image collections with which to build your creation. In just minutes, you will see thousands of miniature images miraculously combine to form a mosaic-like "montage" of your main photo! Using your color inkjet or laser printer, you can create high-quality mini-posters of your montage for friends and family. Or access ArcSoft's online web services to make full-size posters and other unique digital imaging gifts.

Special features allow you to:

- **Organize** all your digital photos into easy-to-use "photo albums"
- **Enhance and crop** your photo before you turn it into a montage
- **Combine** micro-images from various ArcSoft CD collections
- **Zoom in** on your finished montage for a detailed view
- **Instantly link** to ArcSoft's cool PhotoMontage web page
- **Acquire images** from digital cameras, scanners and other TWAIN-compliant devices
- **Save your montage** in most popular file formats including BMP, TIF, JPG, GIF, PCX, TGA and FlashPix

 ArcSoft also offers a full retail version of PhotoMontage with the following additional features.

- **Build and customize** your own collections of micro-images
- **Turn** your montage into a "game" by including a "Hidden Treasure"
- **Personalize** your montages with a "Signature"
- **Add** a text title to your montage

Main Screen

The Main Screen is your starting point in PhotoMontage. It contains buttons that let you access the Get Photo, Edit and Build screens, save your photomontages and make printouts. It also contains the Main Display Area so you can see before, after, and detailed views of your finished product.

Click on any portion of the image below to learn more about that control.

Get Photo Button

This button takes you to the Get Photo Screen to create an album or select a photo.

Edit Photo Button

This button takes you to the Edit Screen, where you can crop and adjust the brightness and contrast of your main photo.

Build Montage Button

This button takes you to the Build Screen, where you can set up your micro-images for the building process.

Save As Button

This button opens the standard Windows Save As dialog box so you can save your finished photomontage.

Print Button

This button opens the standard Windows Print Setup dialog box so you can select printer settings and begin printing your main photo or montage. To print, click the Photo or Montage Button to view what you want to print, then click the Print Button. Once you've chosen your settings, click Print.

Cool Stuff Button

This button opens the "Special PhotoMontage Services" page which introduces you to additional program add-ons. These include a poster-size printing service, a library of pre-made micro-image collections and other cool digital imaging gifts. To take advantage of these services, select Show Me to instantly launch your web browser. Or manually visit our digital imaging web site at http:\\ www.photoisland.com. Cancel returns to the PhotoMontage Main Screen.

Photo Button

This button displays the selected photo in the [Main Display Area](#).

Montage Button

This button displays a preview of your photomontage in the Main Display Area, as it is being built and when it is finished.

Detail Button

This button displays a full screen detailed view of your photomontage so you can get a closer look at the micro-images.   Zoom In/Out controls let you look closer or further away.   The hand cursor lets you grab and move the picture in different directions. Click on the X button to exit.

Control Buttons

These buttons are available from all PhotoMontage screens in the upper right corner.

Help opens the Help file.   It's likely you figured this out on your own since you're reading the help file. Nice job!

Minimize leaves PhotoMontage running in the background and places it on the screen as an icon or in the taskbar depending on your operating system.

Exit closes PhotoMontage completely.   Note that PhotoMontage does not save the contents of the Main Display Area so if you still want to come back to PhotoMontage and use the current image, Minimize the program instead.

Main Display Area

This window displays your main photo or photomontage depending on which button is selected.

Get Photo Screen

Click on the Get Photo button from the Main Screen to get to the Get Photo Screen.

The Get Photo Screen makes it easy to find specific images to include in photomontages . The "Album" is a series of image thumbnails stored in groups of up to 200. You can organize your image files into albums in any way you desire. If you only have a few images you can keep them all in one album or create many albums based around categories of images. It's important to note that the albums and thumbnails are completely independent of the source image files.   When you add an image to your album it creates a reference to the location of the actual file. If you move, modify, or delete the original file using other software the album will not be able to find it anymore. Similarly, if you delete thumbnails from an album it will not affect your original images.

Click on any portion of the image below to learn more about that control.

New Album Button

This command creates a new empty album. The album can be named by clicking in the Album Menu and typing the new name.

Album Title Menu

Use the down arrow to the right of the menu to change among albums. The currently selected album can be renamed by typing over the name in the dialog.

Add Photo Button

This command adds image thumbnails to the current album.

Image files can reside on disk, floppy, CD-ROM or other removable media.   The following image file formats are supported: BMP, TIF, PCX, GIF, TGA, JPG, PCD and FlashPix. To add thumbnails to your album, click on the Add Photo Button.   A standard Windows Open dialog box will appear.   Locate and select your images, then click Open. New thumbnails of your images will be created and placed in the active album.

Multiple files can be added at once.   Hold down the CTRL key then click on each file to be added. A range of files can be added by holding down the SHIFT key then clicking on the first and last file, which will select all files in between.

An album can have up to 200 thumbnails.

Acquire Button

This command imports an image from TWAIN compliant hardware like digital cameras and scanners. It accesses your existing TWAIN software. Consult the documentation included with the hardware for information on using the TWAIN acquire.

Delete Button

Delete removes the selected thumbnail from the Album.

Note that is does NOT delete the actual file from your drive. It only affects the thumbnail in the visible PhotoMontage Album.

Okay Button

Click this button to return to the Main Screen and use the selected image to create a photomontage.

Cancel Button

This command returns to the Main Screen without selecting an image. Changes to albums are still saved.

Album Thumbnails

Thumbnails are small representations of image files on your system. Click on a thumbnail to select it for inclusion on a page.

Multiple images can be added at once.   Hold down the CTRL key then click on each image to be added. A range of images can be added by holding down the SHIFT key then clicking on the first and last image, which will select all images in between. You cannot specify which image is added to which particular cell after adding them all, use the drag/drop and copy commands to arrange them how you prefer directly on the Preview.
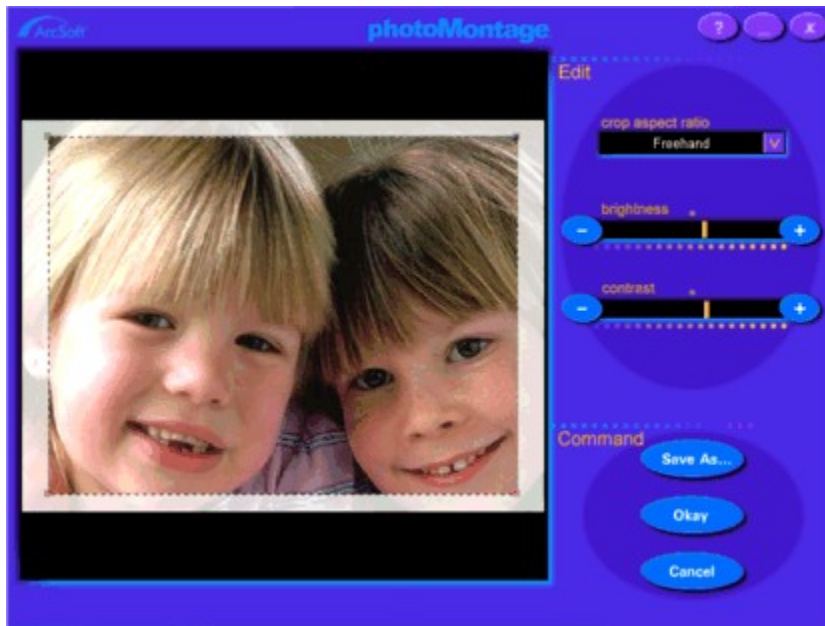
Thumbnails have no affect on your original image files.   They may be added and deleted without affecting the originals. If the original files are moved, renamed or deleted, the album will report the file is not found if you try to add it to a print. The thumbnail will need to be deleted and re-added to the album with its new name and/or location.

An album can contain up to 200 thumbnails.

Edit Screen

Clicking on the <u>Edit Photo Button</u> in the <u>Main Screen</u> takes you to the Edit Screen. This screen gives you convenient, easy-to-use tools for editing and enhancing your selected photo. It contains a preview window, cropping tools, brightness/contrast controls and commands to save and/or return you to the Main Screen.

Click on any portion of the image below to learn more about that control.

Edit Window

This window displays a preview of changes that you make to the main photo. This window also provides you with a crop selection box and corner pull-handles to crop your photo.

Crop Aspect Ratio Menu

To "crop" means to trim the edges of a photo. Use this tool to emphasize a specific area of your photo or make the photo a certain ratio. Menu options let you manually crop your photo (Freehand) or choose a crop aspect ratio such as: square (1:1), portrait (2:3, 3:4, 3:5, 5:7) or landscape (3:2, 4:3, 5:3, 7:5).

The Edit Window displays a crop selection box surrounding your photo. This box corresponds to your chosen ratio. Use the handles at the edges of the crop selection rectangle to resize it. Move it around without changing the size by placing the mouse cursor inside the box (it will change to a hand cursor), holding down the left mouse button, and dragging the box to the desired location.

Brightness Slider

This slider lets you adjust the brightness of your entire photo and preview the change in the Edit Window. To adjust, use the plus and minus buttons or drag the slider.

Contrast Slider

This slider lets you adjust the contrast of your entire photo and preview the change in the Edit Window. To adjust, use the plus and minus buttons or drag the slider.

Save As Button

This command opens the standard Windows Save As dialog so the edited image can be saved as an image file for later use.

Okay Button

This button returns to the Main Screen and updates it with the newly edited image.

Cancel Button

This button returns to the Main Screen without editing the image.

Build Screen

Clicking on the Build Montage button in the Main Screen takes you to the Build Screen. This screen gives you several options for setting up the micro-images that create the photomontage. Options include selecting micro-image count, micro-image size, output file size, micro-image pattern, micro-image repetition, and grid & border.

Click on any portion of the image below to learn more about that control.

CD Collection Menu

This menu displays your existing CD micro-image collections. The sample collection included on your PhotoMontage CD will be listed in this menu. To browse through these CD collections, click the menu up/down arrows. Choose as many CD collections as you want by clicking up to three times on each desired title. (Three checks indicate highest priority, meaning that particular collection will be used more often than a collection with one check.)

PhotoMontage will prompt you to insert CDs as required during the creation of a photomontage that includes collections stored on CD.

Micro-image Count Menu

This menu lets you specify the total number of micro-images in your photomontage. Choices range from approximately 600 to 1600 micro-images. In general, the higher the number, the larger the output file size.

Micro-image Size Menu

This menu lets you choose between small, medium and large size micro-images. In general, the larger the micro-image, the larger the output file size.

NOTE: The SE version of PhotoMontage only supports Small tiles so no other menu options are available.

Output Size Information Box

This box displays the file size of your photomontage, depending on the selected micro-image count and micro-image size.

Micro-image Pattern Menu

This menu lets you specify how micro-images are aligned with one another.

Aligned: crops all micro-images to the same size and lines them up evenly.

Offset: layers micro-images in a brick-like fashion and does not line them up evenly.

Micro-image Repetition Menu

This menu lets you choose how often your micro-images are used.

Unlimited Repeat: Micro-images will be reused as often as needed.
Limited Repeat: Micro-images will be reused occasionally.
Never Repeat: Micro-images will never be reused.

Unlimited Repeat will result in the micro-images that match a particular color being reused whenever they are the closest match. Although the result is a most realistic output, some micro-images may be left unused because there are better matches. If you choose Never Repeat, your program will not reuse any micro-images, but the output may not look quite as realistic.

Grid & Border Menu

This menu lets you add gridlines and/or border to your creation. Gridlines are the black lines separating each of the micro-images. A border is the black line surrounding the entire photomontage. Borders can be thin or wide.

Okay Button

This button returns to the Main Screen and begins the building a photomontage according to the settings selected in the Build screen.

Cancel Button

This button returns you to the Main Screen without building a photomontage or changing any of the settings in the Build Screen.

Quick Start Tutorial

Selecting a Photo

Click on the Get Photo button from the Main Screen. This takes you to the Get Photo Screen. Click on one of the sample images to select it as your main photo for your photomontage.

If you prefer, you can use one of your own images instead. Click on the New Album button to create a blank new album, then click on the Add Photo. A standard Windows File Open dialog will appear. Select the drive and folder where your images are and highlight one or more to add thumbnails for them to your new album. (Hold down the CTRL key and click on multiple files to select them all. Hold down the Shift key and click any two files and all the files between will also be selected.) Once you've added your files to an album you can select one to use as your photomontage image.   Simpler images work best. A nice portrait, or simple design will be easily recognizable after the photomontage process. Very complicated images may be more difficult to recognize.

Editing a Photo

This is an optional step. Click on Edit Photo from the Main Screen. You can crop the image by dragging the corners of the flashing crop selection rectangle to resize it. You may also move it by moving the cursor inside it so it turns into a hand cursor then holding down the left mouse button and dragging. Brightness and contrast can also be adjusted by moving the sliders. Click Okay to use your changes in the photomontage image, Cancel to not make and changes, or Save As to permanently save an image with the changes.

Building a PhotoMontage

Once the main image is ready, you can set up the photomontage. Click on the Build Montage button from the Main Screen. The micro-image collections to be used will be checked in the two menus on the left. At least one should be checked. Set the Micro-image Count to 1200 Or Less, and the Micro-image Size to Small. Type in a caption if you like. Once all the settings are correct click the Okay button.

PhotoMontage will return to the main screen and begin building the photomontage. It will make two passes, the first to collect information about the photo, and the second to place the micro-images. When complete, you can use the Save As button to store it as a file, or the Print button to print it immediate. You can also compare it to the original using the Photo and Montage buttons or look at the micro-images close up by clicking the Detail button.

Special PhotoMontage Services

The following services offer you add-ons to extend your capabilities with PhotoMontage. For online information about these services, click the special "Cool Stuff" button on the Main Screen to automatically launch your web browser and link you to the PhotoMontage page. To visit the site manually, go to www.photoisland.com/photomontage.html.

Make Poster: With ArcSoft's unique poster printing services, you are not limited to the printed output size of standard home printers. Impress and amuse friends, family and co-workers with poster-size montages! Your current image (in the Main Display Area) is stored as MyPhoto.JPG in the Arcsoft/PhotoMontage folder to make it easy to find and send to ArcSoft.

Supplementary CD Collections: The ArcSoft library of CD Collections is designed to enhance your experience with PhotoMontage. With an extensive set up collections available, you can have thousands of micro-images ready to include in your montages, allowing you to render sharper and more "accurate" results.

photomontage

A photomontage is a photo made up of a large number of very small photos in a grid-like pattern.

thumbnail

A thumbnail is a small version of an image file.   Using a thumbnail rather than a filename makes finding specific images much easier. Do not confuse a thumbnail with the original image.   If you modify your original image, changes will not be reflected in a thumbnail unless you make a new one after modifying the original image. Similarly, you can delete a thumbnail without affecting the original image.

micro-image collection

A micro-image collection is a group of small images used to create a photomontage.   More than one collection may be used in a single photomontage.

Contacting ArcSoft

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www.zipshot.com

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You'll find it's easy to stay in touch with ArcSoft! PhotoMontage can link you directly to ArcSoft's PhotoMontage page, where you can instantly learn about "Special PhotoMontage Services" and other program features. Simply click on the "Cool Stuff" button on the Main Screen. For more information on ArcSoft's other digital imaging products, customer support, helpful tips, click on Start/Programs/ArcSoft PhotoMontage/Web Services to be linked directly to our home page. Or write us at feedback@arcsoft.com. We'd love to hear your comments and ideas!

How to Register:

Be sure to mail or fax the built-in registration form to receive technical support and information on new products and releases. This form is available in your Start Menu under ArcSoft PhotoMontage/Register & Upgrade.