Changing Fonts, Styles, and Sizes Globally

Although Apple hired professional designers to create the card, calendar, and book templates, iPhoto makes it possible to change the font, style, and size of text for different categories of text. Be careful when modifying these defaults, though, because Apple's font choices are highly intentional, and if you change them too much, the results may not look as elegant as you'd like.

To change fonts, styles, and sizes:

1. When creating a card, calendar, or book, click the Settings button to show the settings dialog (**Figure 10.44**, **Figure 10.45**, and **Figure 10.46**). For calendars, click the Styles button, if necessary.
2. To change the look of different classes of text, choose from the various pop-up menus to change the font and style, and enter new sizes in the size fields.
3. Click OK to apply your changes.

✔ Tips

- The classes of text often change for different themes.
- If you muck up the text settings badly, click Restore Defaults to reset them.
- Using certain Type 1 PostScript fonts can cause your book order to be cancelled. For more information, see `http://support.apple.com/kb/TA22924`.

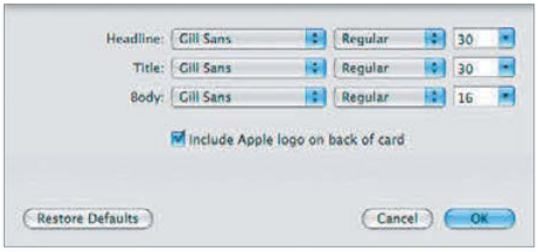

Figure 10.44 Cards have relatively little text, and thus provide only a few categories you can modify. Deselect the Include Apple Logo on Back of Card checkbox if you don't want to advertise Apple's role in making your gorgeous card.

Figure 10.45 Calendars offer quite a few more categories of text to modify. Be careful, because some caption and event text is very small, and not all fonts work well at small sizes.

Figure 10.46 Along with a number of categories of text, books offer the option to include photo titles and descriptions automatically, and to turn page numbers on and off.

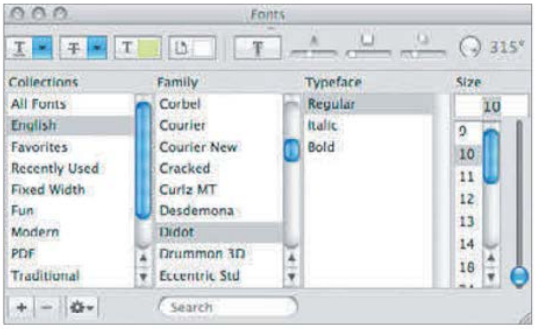

Figure 10.47 Select the font, style, and size from the Family, Typeface, and Size columns in the Fonts window.

Changing Fonts, Styles, and Sizes per Text Box

iPhoto also provides several ways to modify the font, style, and size of selected text.

To change fonts, styles, and sizes:

1. Select the text you want to change.
2. Open the Fonts window by choosing Show Fonts (Cmd T) from the Edit menu's Font submenu.
3. In the Fonts window, you can choose a font from the Family column, a style from the Typeface column, and a size from the Size column (**Figure 10.47**).
   iPhoto changes the currently selected text to match your choices.

To change just styles:

- Select some text, and from the Edit menu's Font submenu, choose Bold (Cmd B) or Italic.
- Control-click the selected text, and choose Bold, Italic, Underline, or Outline from the contextual Font submenu.

✔ Tips

- Bold and Italic are dimmed in the menus if the current font has no Bold or Italic typeface. Verify in the Fonts window.
- iPhoto does not provide keyboard shortcuts for Italic, Underline, or Outline.
- The Restore Defaults button in the settings dialog also overrides any individual font changes you've made.
- Be judicious in your changes; excessive use of fonts and styles generally looks lousy, and I strongly encourage you to print a page or two on your own printer before buying a card, calendar, or book whose fonts you've changed.

Copying Font and Style Information

If you've set the font, style, and size for one piece of text, you can copy that to any other bit of selected text easily.

1. Select the text whose settings you want to use elsewhere.
2. Choose Copy Style (Cmd Option C) from the Edit menu's Font submenu.
3. Select the text whose settings you want change.
4. Choose Paste Style (Cmd Option V) from the Edit menu's Font submenu.
   iPhoto changes the currently selected text to match the font, style, and size of your original selection.

Changing Text Color

Although it's not obvious, iPhoto provides controls to change the color of text as well.

To change colors:

1. To open the Colors window, Control-click a text box and choose Show Colors from the Font submenu (**Figure 10.48**).

   or

   In the Fonts window, click the text color button.

   iPhoto opens the Colors window (**Figure 10.49**).

2. Select the text to which you want to apply a color, and click a color in the color wheel.

   iPhoto changes the color of the text.

✔ Tips

- You can apply color only to selected text, not to classes of text in the settings dialog.
- To copy a color from elsewhere on the screen to the color box, click the magnifying glass icon, and then click a color anywhere on the screen.
- Drag the color box to one of the cells of the color swatch collection to save it for repeated use. Clicking one of the color swatches applies it to the selected text.
- Copying fonts also copies colors.
- Use color carefully and sparingly—it's too easy to make a book garish by applying too much color. You don't want your text to compete with your photos.

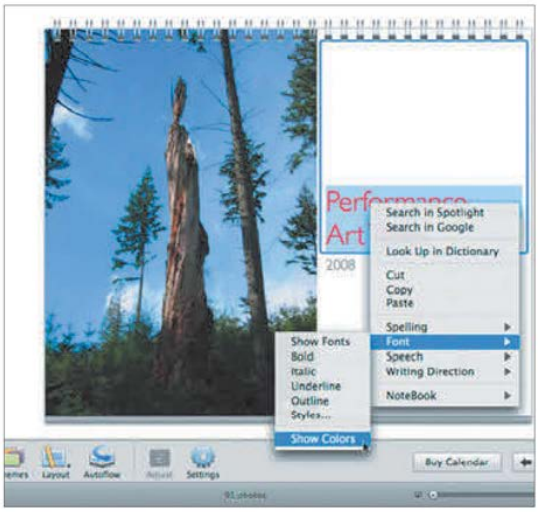

Figure 10.48 To open the Colors window, Control-click a text box, and from the Font submenu, choose Show Colors.

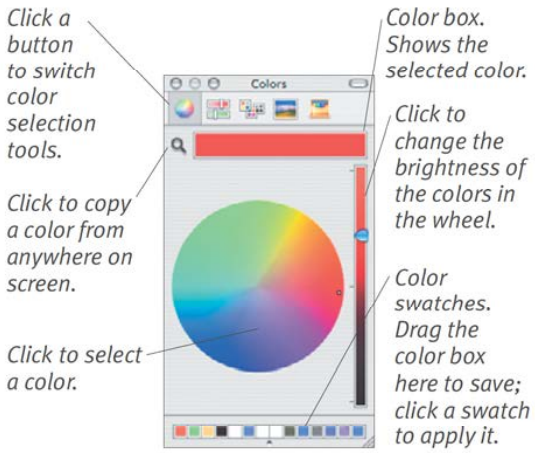

Figure 10.49 Click a color in the color wheel to put it in the color box and apply it to the selected text.

Figure 10.50 Note how iPhoto has underlined the misspelled words in red.

Figure 10.51 To replace a misspelled word with one of Mac OS X's guesses, Control-click the word and choose a guess from the contextual menu.

Talking Captions

For longer spans of text, select all the text (Cmd A), Control-click it, and from the Speech submenu, choose Start Speaking. iPhoto will read your text to you, which can help identify mistakes.

Checking Spelling as You Type

You won't be typing much in iPhoto, but since its editing environment is crude, typos are likely. The last thing you want in a beautifully designed card, calendar, or book is a glaring typo, so I recommend you use Mac OS X's built-in spell checker to verify the spelling of your titles and captions as you type them.

To check spelling as you type:

1. Click a text box, and from the Edit menu's Spelling submenu, verify that Check Spelling While Typing has a checkmark next to it.
2. Type your text in any text box.
   iPhoto displays a red line underneath any words that aren't in the system-wide Mac OS X spelling dictionary (**Figure 10.50**).
3. Control-click a word with a red underline to display a contextual menu that enables you to replace the word with one of Mac OS X's guesses, ignore the misspelling for this launch of iPhoto, or learn the spelling by adding it to your system-wide Mac OS X dictionary (**Figure 10.51**).

✔ Tips

- Check Spelling While Typing is on by default and stays on all the time.
- If you quit iPhoto and come back to a book later, you must check spelling manually to find errors in existing bits of text. To do this, click in each text box and choose Check Spelling from the Edit menu's Spelling submenu (Cmd ;). I recommend using the keyboard shortcut.
- Ignore Spelling isn't particularly worthwhile—iPhoto forgets ignored text between launches.

Printing on Your Own Printer

iPhoto makes it easy to print a card, calendar, or book on your own printer, which is faster than waiting for Apple to deliver the finished product, though books and calendars lack bindings, of course.

To print on your own printer:

1. While in a card, calendar, or book, choose Print from the File menu (Cmd P).
   iPhoto displays the standard Print dialog (**Figure 10.52**).
2. Select the options you want (switch among sets of options using the pop-up menu under the page range fields).
3. Click the Print button.

✔ Tips

- You can print individual pages from a book layout to mix photos and text on a single page in ways beyond print projects.
- I also particularly like printing the date pages from calendars for posting in schools or other organizations.
- It's difficult to print cards, since you need to print one page, wait for the ink to dry, and then flip the paper and print the second page on the other side, and the two sides may not match up. Test before assuming it will work!
- Choose Open PDF in Preview from the PDF pop-up menu to see what your output will look like before printing. I recommend that you do this, especially since it simplifies printing only selected pages.
- Choose Save As PDF from the PDF pop-up menu to generate a PDF instead of printing. It's a nice way to share a photo layout with friends via email.

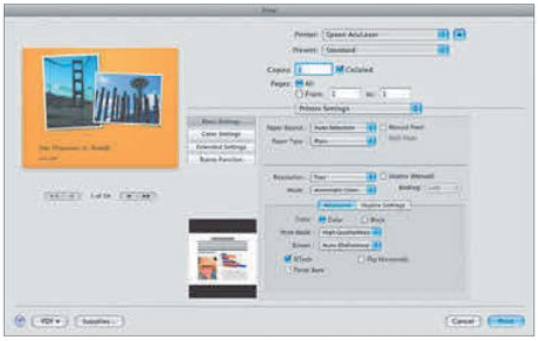

Figure 10.52 To print a book on your own printer, choose Print from the File menu.

Printing Selected Pages

If you want to print just a few pages in your book, you may find it difficult to figure out exactly which page numbers to enter into the Print dialog. That's because iPhoto doesn't assign a page number to the cover, and the inside cover is never printed. Follow these steps for a more obvious approach:

1. Choose Print from the File menu (Cmd P) to bring up the Print dialog.
2. Choose Open PDF in Preview from the PDF pop-up menu to make iPhoto create a PDF and automatically open it in Apple's Preview application.
3. In Preview, review exactly which pages you want to print, paying attention to the page numbers in the page drawer.
4. In Preview, choose Print from the File menu and enter the appropriate page numbers in the Pages fields. Set any other printing options you want, such as number of copies or print quality.
5. Click Print to send your pages to the printer.

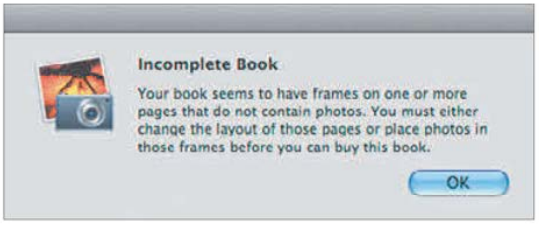

Figure 10.53 If you haven't finished placing photos on your pages, iPhoto warns you with a dialog like this.

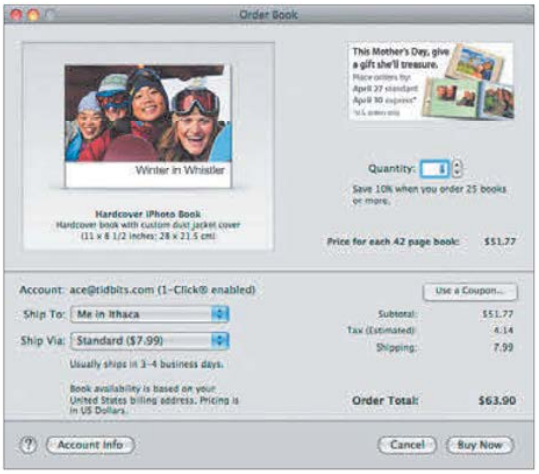

Figure 10.54 Convey the details of your order to Apple in the Order window.

Pricing and Shipping Details

Prices vary by style, size, and number of pages; read Apple's pricing page at `www.apple.com/ilife/iphoto/prints.html` for details.

Shipping costs vary by the number of items you order and the type of item, but note that per-item shipping costs are less for subsequent items (in other words, if you buy two copies of a book, you'll pay only a little more to receive the second one, instead of double the normal shipping charge).

Ordering Cards, Calendars, and Books

Once you've designed a card, calendar, or book, ordering it from Apple is easy.

To order a card, calendar, or book:

1. Select the item you want to order, and verify that each page looks right.
2. Make sure you're connected to the Internet, and click the Buy button.

   iPhoto assembles the print job, warning you if some photos won't print well, if some default text hasn't been edited, if other text doesn't fit, or if a book or calendar isn't complete (**Figure 10.53**).

   iPhoto then opens the Order window (**Figure 10.54**).
3. Enter the number of items you want to order in the Quantity field.

   iPhoto automatically updates the total cost as you add and subtract items.
4. Choose the appropriate shipping address and method from the Ship To and Ship Via pop-up menus.
5. Click the Buy Now button.

   iPhoto uploads your pictures and alerts you when it's done.

✔ Tips

- Hardcover books now have photo-wrapped covers and matching dust jackets, so you can't choose cover color.
- Uploading can takes a long time because iPhoto uploads full-size images.
- If you're warned about low-resolution images, see "Dealing with Warning Icons," on page 177.
- If this is your first order, review the Apple ID setup details on pages 164–165.

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11

TROUBLESHOOTING

The world of iPhoto is no more a perfect place than the real world. No one, iPhoto's developers least of all, wants problems, but bugs are a fact of life, and you may have a problem with iPhoto at some point.

One advantage iPhoto has in this respect is that it saves your changes frequently and automatically, so you're unlikely to lose much work even if it does crash. Put simply, if iPhoto crashes (and it has crashed on me a number of times while I was writing this book), just relaunch the program and pick up where you left off. Also be sure to click the Report button in the crash dialog and report the crash to Apple so it can be fixed. If the crashes happen regularly, you may need to do some troubleshooting. One way or another, keep good backups! (See "Backing up Your Photos," on page 26.)

Of course, most of the problems you might encounter won't result in a crash. It's more likely you'll have trouble importing photos from an unusual camera, printing a photo at the exact size you want, or dealing with thumbnails that don't display properly. Those are the sorts of problems—and solutions—I'll focus on in this chapter.

The Trouble with Bugs

Many iPhoto problems that I've seen people report seem to be specific to their photos, a particular iPhoto Library, their Mac, or the phase of the moon, and I have been unable to reproduce them. I still include here the potential problem and any solutions I've heard of or can think of, but this uncertainty makes it impossible for me to say when or if Apple has fixed the incorrect behavior. As such, some of the problems and solutions listed in this chapter may no longer apply to iPhoto '09; there's simply no way to tell.

I continue to include these suggestions even when I can't verify them because bugs are slippery, and just because I can't reproduce a particular problem in this or any other version of iPhoto doesn't mean that you won't experience it. And then one of the suggestions in this chapter may save your bacon (or at least your photos).

Also keep in mind that updates to iPhoto very well may eliminate even those problems I've confirmed in iPhoto '09, so be sure to use Software Update to check for new versions on a regular basis.

General Problems and Solutions

Some problems you may experience in iPhoto aren't related to particular activities. Others are, and subsequent pages in this chapter will address issues with importing, editing, slideshows, printing, and more.

Performance Problems

If you find iPhoto slow to perform certain operations, try these tricks. Some are obvious (if expensive), others less so:

- Turn off title, rating, and keyword display using the View menu.
- Shrink thumbnails to a smaller size.
- Use the triangles next to events in Photos view to hide photos you don't need to see.
- Quit other programs that are running. In my experience, there is usually one culprit, which you can identify by launching Activity Monitor from your Utilities folder and clicking the CPU column title to see which applications are using the most processor time.
- Restart your Mac by choosing Restart from the Apple menu. Restarting is especially helpful if you don't have much free disk space, which cramps Mac OS X's virtual memory techniques.
- Check your disk with DiskWarrior (`www.alsoft.com/DiskWarrior/`); sufficient disk corruption can cause huge performance problems on startup.
- Add more RAM to your Mac. iPhoto works with 512 MB of RAM, but it likes a lot more, and RAM is cheap. I always recommend at least 1 GB these days.
- Buy a faster Mac. That's always fun.

Some Photos Disappear

Some people have reported troubles with photos disappearing, even when the files are still present in the iPhoto Library. Try the following:

- Make sure the photos aren't just in the Trash; it's easy to delete inadvertently.
- Hold down Cmd Option while clicking the iPhoto icon in the Dock to launch it. This causes iPhoto to display the Rebuild Photo Library dialog.

  Try each of the options, and see if one of them fixes the problem. For more info, see `http://support.apple.com/kb/HT2638`.
- With iPhoto as the frontmost application, choose Enter Time Machine from the Time Machine menu in the menu bar. Navigate back in time through Time Machine's backups to the point where you see the missing photos, then click the Restore button.
- If you have the photo elsewhere on your Mac or on another computer, just import it again.

All Photos Disappear

What if none of your photos appear at all? First, try the options listed just above, and if they don't help or aren't possible, try these:

- Make sure you're using the correct iPhoto library. Locate the one you want in the Finder and double-click it to open it.
- Create a new iPhoto library and import the contents of the Originals folder (and, if desired, the Modified folder) inside the corrupted iPhoto library package. Control-click it and choose Show Package Contents to get at those folders (see "iPhoto Directory Structure," on page 19). This won't preserve anything but the photos, unfortunately.

Flaky Behavior or Crashes

Sometimes iPhoto just acts strangely, and I've come up with a few ways of dealing with weird behavior (make sure you have a backup before deleting any files!):

- Quit iPhoto and relaunch it.
- Restart your Mac by choosing Restart from the Apple menu.
- Quit iPhoto. From the Preferences folder inside your user's Library folder, drag the file com.apple.iPhoto.plist to the Desktop and launch iPhoto again. Deleting this file can even resolve missing or truncated text problems with books, cards, and calendars; for details, see `http://support.apple.com/kb/TS1616`.
- Hold down Cmd Option while clicking the iPhoto icon in the Dock to launch it. In the Rebuild Photo Library dialog, try each of the options, quitting and relaunching in between attempts, and see if one of them fixes the problem. For more info, see `http://support.apple.com/kb/HT2638`.
- Use iPhoto Library Manager's Rebuild Library command, which uses the AlbumData.xml file written by iPhoto to re-create the library. This is a completely different method from what iPhoto uses. (It's at `www.fatcatsoftware.com/iplm/`. iPhoto Library Manager's help has other useful troubleshooting information too.)
- Run Disk Utility and use the buttons in the First Aid pane to verify and repair both permissions and the disk.
- Delete and re-install iPhoto.
- Try creating a new iPhoto library and re-importing your photos from the Originals and Modified folders.

Other Problems

Here are a few other general problems and their solutions:

- Don't attempt to read a newer iPhoto library with an older version of iPhoto, or corruption could ensue.
- If other iLife apps can't see your photos, or if some photos or albums are missing, read this support article for things to try: `http://support.apple.com/kb/TS1192`.
- If you have trouble with iPhoto's photo sharing or the sharing tools that upload data, shut off or bypass your firewall to see if it's blocking necessary ports.
- If iPhoto complains about being unable to establish a connection when uploading to MobileMe, make sure the date is set correctly in the Date & Time preference pane in System Preferences.
- If mailing a photo in Apple's Mail doesn't result in an enclosure, and another user on the Mac has successfully attached a photo in the same session, restart the Mac and try again.
- If you've ended up with duplicate photos, you can delete them with the $7.95 Duplicate Annihilator from Brattoo Propaganda Software (`www.brattoo.com/propaganda/index.php?s=1169727148&action=software`). Make a backup before running this program!

Report Your Problems!

Report any problems you may have by choosing Provide iPhoto Feedback from the iPhoto menu and then filling in Apple's Web-based feedback form.

Importing Problems and Solutions

I've had little trouble importing photos into iPhoto. However, because importing involves interacting with an unpredictable outside world of cameras, card readers, and files of varying formats, problems can occur.

Camera or Card Reader Isn't Recognized

Mac OS X and iPhoto support most common digital cameras and card readers, but not all of them. And sometimes iPhoto may not recognize specific memory cards, even if it recognizes the card reader in general. Try the following tips:

- Make sure the camera is turned on, in review mode, and plugged in via USB properly. I know it seems obvious, but we've all made this mistake before.
- Use Software Update, accessible in System Preferences, to make sure you have the latest version of Mac OS X, since Apple continually adds support for more digital cameras and card readers.
- If your camera is incompatible with Mac OS X and iPhoto, buy a card reader that supports the memory card used by your camera.
- If your user account can run only certain applications, that may prevent you from importing in iPhoto. The only fix is for an administrator-level user to increase the capabilities of your account in the Accounts and Parental Controls preference panes.
- Some cameras must be placed in Picture Transfer Protocol mode to communicate with iPhoto. And if that doesn't work, try other modes. Check the manual for help.
- Older versions of iPhoto have had trouble with some large memory cards. People have resolved the issue by reformatting the card in the camera, using a memory card reader, or using smaller cards.
- Try reformatting the memory card in the camera and taking a picture before connecting it to the Mac again. Keep in mind this will destroy any photos already on the card!
- If you have two cameras connected at once, or a camera and a scanner, iPhoto may become confused about which device to use. Connect only one device at a time if this causes trouble for you.

Nothing Appears after Import

If nothing appears in iPhoto after you import files from your hard drive, try these solutions:

- Instead of using the Import to Library command in the File menu, drag the images (or a folder containing them) onto iPhoto's display pane.
- Like all Mac OS X applications, iPhoto is sensitive to proper permissions. So, if you've moved your iPhoto Library and are trying to import from another user, verify in the Finder's Get Info window for the iPhoto Library package and all enclosed folders that the appropriate user has Read & Write permissions.
- The photos might be duplicates, which iPhoto imports only if you tell it to do so. See Chapter 2, "Importing and Managing Photos," starting on page 11.
- If the files you imported were located in the iPhoto Library package, iPhoto may assume they've already been imported and won't do so again. To solve the problem, move the files out of the iPhoto Library package and try again.

Damaged Photos Warning Appears during Import

Sometimes when you import photos, you may see an error dialog complaining about unreadable photos. It can occur for a variety of reasons:

- You're accidentally importing non-graphic files, such as aliases to photos, HTML documents, or other data files.
- The image files may actually be damaged. See if you can open them in Preview or GraphicConverter. If so, you may be able to convert them to another format and eliminate the corruption.
- If your files are in an unsupported format, try using GraphicConverter to convert the images to JPEG. Similarly, if RAW images from your camera aren't supported by iPhoto, see if your camera manufacturer makes a utility that will convert them to a supported format.
- Sometimes the problem may relate to a communications failure between your camera or card reader and your Mac. Try plugging the camera or card reader directly into one of the Mac's USB ports rather than into the keyboard's USB port or a port on a USB hub.
- iPhoto can display the damaged photo error message if your hard disk is full. Since iPhoto duplicates every photo when importing from files, if you're importing hundreds of megabytes of photos from files, it's by no means unthinkable that you could run out of disk space. Clear some space and try importing again.
- Photos taken with Apple's QuickTake 100 and QuickTake 150 digital cameras must be converted from the special format Apple used into the JPEG format.

Other Importing Problems

Here are a miscellany of importing problems and solutions that don't fit larger categories:

- iPhoto may crash if you disconnect your camera while photos are transferring.
- If iPhoto fails to warn you about duplicates, it may be because the date and time on your camera are wrong.
- Make sure there are no aliases among files you are importing; they can cause crashes.
- iPhoto 2 won't recognize discs burned in later versions of iPhoto, although the later versions can recognize older discs.
- If iPhoto complains about not being able to upgrade your library on the first launch, the problem may be related either to incorrect permissions or to locked files. For instructions on how to solve this problem, see `http://support.apple.com/kb/TS1318`.
- If you import a misnamed file—a TIFF file with a `.jpg` filename extension, for example—iPhoto may display the picture strangely when editing, refuse to let you order prints, or even crash. Delete the misnamed picture from your Photo Library; then rename it appropriately in the Finder before importing it again.
- If you have erased your camera and need to recover the original photos, check out the $29 PhotoRescue (a free version will tell you if it's going to work). Learn more at `www.datarescue.com/photorescue/`. Also try the $39.95 ImageRecall from `www.flashfixers.com/software/` or the $29.95 MediaRECOVER from `www.mediarecover.com`.

Editing Problems and Solutions

Most photo editing problems stem from using another program to edit the photos.

Photos Don't Open in an External Program

Although it is unlikely that you'll run into this problem, it could be frustrating. Here are a few reasons it could happen:

- If you have changed the name of the photo's file in the Finder, it may not open when double-clicked in iPhoto. The solution? Change the filename back to what iPhoto expects, and don't mess with any filenames within the iPhoto Library. It's a bad idea!
- Double-check to make sure iPhoto's preferences are set to open photos in an external program (see "Using an External Editor," on page 110), that the program is present on your hard drive, and that you can launch it and open photos normally.

Photos Don't Appear When Edited or Magnified

There are a few reasons why iPhoto might show only a black screen or fuzzy exclamation point when you edit or magnify a photo:

- Changing the photo's filename in the Finder can cause this problem. Don't do it!
- A corrupted photo can cause iPhoto to freak out. Editing and saving the original file in another application might eliminate the corruption, or you could delete the corrupt photo and import it again, assuming you have another copy.

iPhoto Doesn't Allow Editing

Some people have reported importing images from a CD that they later couldn't edit in iPhoto. As a workaround, convert the images in GraphicConverter from JPEG to TIFF, for instance, and see if you can import and then edit those versions.

Also verify that the permissions on the files allow your user to write to the files. To check, select them in the Finder, choose Get Info from the File menu (Cmd I), and look in the Permissions area.

Revert to Original Dimmed

You may see the Revert to Original command in the File menu dimmed after you've made a change. This can happen if you drag a photo from iPhoto to another program to edit the photo. If you do that, iPhoto will be unable to track changes you've made and Revert to Original will be dimmed. There's no workaround, other than making sure to open photos for editing in external applications properly from within iPhoto. See "Using an External Editor" on page 110.

Thumbnails Are Corrupted or Cause Crashes

If a thumbnail doesn't reflect edits, is entirely black, or causes iPhoto to crash, hold down Cmd Option while clicking the iPhoto icon in the Dock to launch it. In the Rebuild Photo Library dialog, select the first two checkboxes to rebuild all thumbnails.

RAW File Facts

Apple's support for RAW files in iPhoto has caused some confusion. The following facts may shed some light on it for you:

- RAW files are considered to be "digital negatives" that aren't to be modified, so changes you make are always saved to a secondary file. As a result, on import, iPhoto converts the RAW file to JPEG and stores the RAW file itself in the Originals folder. Alternatively, you can set iPhoto to save edited RAW files as 16-bit TIFFs.

  You *never* work on the RAW file directly, only on its JPEG or TIFF stand-in. If you wish to throw out your edits and start a new copy from the RAW file again, choose Reprocess RAW from the Photos menu.

- Because of the large size of uncompressed RAW files and the JPEG conversion that occurs during import, the import process can take a longer time with RAW files.

- When you edit a RAW file, iPhoto displays a RAW badge at the bottom of the display pane or in the toolbar in full screen view.

- Scrolling may seem slower when browsing through large thumbnails of RAW files. The problem is that when you're using a thumbnail size larger than the actual thumbnails, iPhoto must load the original photo to create the thumbnail. That's a slower process. To speed up scrolling, press 1 while in organize mode to zoom to thumbnail size (press 0 to zoom to the smallest size).

- To export a RAW file in RAW format, choose Original from the Format pop-up menu in the Export Photos dialog.

- For more info, see `http://support.apple.com/kb/TA22895`.

Slideshow Problems and Solutions

Slideshows can run into a variety of problems; try these solutions:

- PowerPC G4- and some PowerPC G5-based Macs don't support all of iPhoto '09's slideshow themes. See `http://support.apple.com/kb/TS2576`.

- Some transitions, like Cube and Flip, may not work on older Macs with less capable video cards.

- Music purchased from the iTunes Store and used in a slideshow can be heard only on authorized computers. Either pick different music or convert tracks (burn to CD and re-import into iTunes) for use on other computers.

- If slideshows look wrong, try switching to "Thousands" of colors in the Displays pane in System Preferences.

- If a slideshow takes a long time to start, it may be because of a very large music file you've set to play. Pick a smaller file to speed start time.

- If slideshow transitions are slower than you've set, it may be because your photos are too large or your screen resolution is too high. Setting a lower resolution in the Displays preference pane or using smaller photos should speed transitions.

- If you can't see your iTunes Library when selecting music for a slideshow, launch each of these applications in this order: iTunes, iPhoto, iMovie, and then iDVD.

- If Windows users see error -8992 when trying to play your QuickTime movie, have them turn off DirectDraw Acceleration in the Video Settings screen of the QuickTime Settings control panel.

Printing Problems and Solutions

Many printing problems you'll experience will be specific to your particular printer and setup, so read your printer manual carefully and be sure to test before printing at the highest quality on expensive paper.

Prints Don't Appear Correctly on the Paper

You may have trouble getting prints to show in exactly the right location on the paper. Try these solutions to the problem:

- Set the paper size and print size appropriately in the pop-up menus in the print settings dialog. This is key for unusual paper sizes.
- Make sure the margins are set correctly for your printer and paper combination.
- Verify that you load paper into your printer properly. This solution helps particularly with unusual paper sizes.

Printing calendars on your own printer may result in similar problems. Solve the problem by saving a PDF of the calendar and then printing from Preview. For more details, see `http://support.apple.com/kb/TS1073`.

Photos Print at Incorrect Sizes

Even if you ask iPhoto to print a standard size print, the image that comes out of the printer might not be the size you want. This can happen if you change the layout to print multiple pages per sheet of paper in the Print dialog's settings.

Poor Print Quality

The main complaint with printing occurs when print quality doesn't meet your expectations. Here are a few suggestions for addressing print quality problems:

- Make sure your inkjet cartridges aren't clogged. Once my black ink cartridge clogged and it took me an hour to figure out that the clog caused color photos to print oddly. Your printer manual should tell you how to clear clogs.
- Change your ink cartridges. It's possible that one is low on a specific color and not yet reporting the problem.
- Use different paper. You'd be amazed how much better print quality is on paper designed for photo printing.
- Make sure your paper is loaded correctly to print on the printable side. It's usually whiter or glossier than the other side.
- Make sure you select the appropriate settings in the Print dialog for your printer to use high-quality mode.
- CMYK files, which you can create in some programs (but won't come from a standard digital camera), may not print correctly. Try converting them to RGB.
- Verify that the problems aren't inherent to the original image. If so, you may have to edit the image to correct the issue.

Print and Book Problems and Solutions

A few common problems have cropped up when working with prints and books.

Can't Enable 1-Click Ordering

Early on, some people had trouble enabling 1-Click ordering within iPhoto, even though they had a 1-Click account with Apple that worked on Apple's Web sites. To fix the problem, try one of these solutions:

- Connect to `http://store.apple.com/`, click the Account link, and log in to your Apple Store account. Click the "Change Account Information" link, log in again if necessary, and then change your password (changing other data wouldn't hurt either). The goal here is to force the Apple database to update so you can connect to it via iPhoto. (If changing your account on the Apple Store doesn't have the desired effect, try running through the same procedure at `http://myinfo.apple.com/`.)
- Follow the above procedure, but instead of clicking "Change Account Information," click "Change 1-Click Settings." Again, make some changes and toggle 1-Click ordering off and on again to see if that enables iPhoto to connect.
- If you can set up a new email address easily, create it and then add a new Apple ID that uses the new email address. This should work, but isn't an ideal solution, since then you have to keep track of an extra email address.

Errors During Ordering

You may encounter a few problems during the process of ordering items from Apple:

- If you see an error dialog complaining that a network connection could not be established, verify that your Internet connection is working by loading a page in a Web browser or by checking your email.
- You may see a confusing error message that says, "The changes to your account information could not be saved." Ignore the message, and enter your credit card information again, making sure the card hasn't expired. If that doesn't work, try a different credit card.
- If you see an alert that your password is invalid, but it works fine in the Apple Store, change your password to be less than 30 characters. The Apple Store allows 32-character 1-Click passwords, whereas iPhoto allows only 30-character 1-Click passwords.
- Different aspects of iPhoto may request access to your password keychain during ordering. That's totally fine.
- If you have a firewall that blocks port 80, try turning your firewall off, or allowing data to pass through on port 80, to solve upload errors.
- For the latest tips from Apple, see `www.apple.com/support/photoservices/account_troubleshooting/`. (You must log in to see this page.)

Photos Don't Upload

Some people have had trouble uploading photos to Apple's servers to have them printed or turned into a book or other item. Here are a few things to try:

- Try again later. Many Internet problems come and go, so a second try an hour or a day later may succeed.
- If possible, see if the problem occurs when uploading to MobileMe as well. If not, the problem may be limited to the specific servers used for prints or other printed items.
- If possible, verify that you can upload a large file using a different program. If that fails, the problem is likely with your Internet connection. If it works, the problem is probably in iPhoto.
- If iPhoto complains about an error while accessing your account information, make sure the date and time on your computer are set properly in the Date & Time pane of System Preferences. It's a good idea to select Set Date & Time Automatically in that preference pane to eliminate the problem in the short term. If your Mac is several years old and loses track of the date and time regularly, you need to buy it a new clock battery. Macs with dead clock batteries can suffer all sorts of weird problems.
- Contact Apple via the Web forms available from `www.apple.com/support/photoservices/`.

Apple Has Trouble Processing Your Book or Photos

There are several problems that can prevent Apple from printing photos you've uploaded, the two most common of which are damaged files and files that contain a question mark in the filename. You should receive email telling you about the problem, but a few common issues include:

- If a photo has a ? in the filename, it won't print. Export the photo, change the filename, re-import, and delete the original.
- Damaged photos may not print. To identify damaged photos, connect to Apple's Web site at `www.apple.com/internetservices/yourorderstatus/`, where you can look for missing or partial thumbnails for the order in question. Once you've identified the damaged files, try exporting them, opening them in another application, saving a copy of each, and re-importing the copies to eliminate the corruption.
- If you order a print of an image that indicates it may be subject to another person's copyright, Apple may put your order on hold pending verification that you have the right to make a copy of the photo. You must complete and submit an iPhoto Print Consent form; Apple will tell you how to do this when you're contacted.
- Using certain Type 1 PostScript fonts can cause your book order to be cancelled. For more information, see `http://support.apple.com/kb/TA22924`.

- If over half of the page numbers in a book are hidden by photos, Apple may cancel your order. It's easiest to deselect the Show Page Numbers checkbox in the Settings dialog before placing the order, although you could also change the theme or page design to one in which photos don't cover the page numbers.
- If you receive email from Apple saying your order can't be processed, you can wait for Apple to contact you with details, or you can try to figure out what went wrong, cancel the order, and then resubmit it. Apple gives you up to 90 minutes to cancel the order yourself; do this by logging in with your Apple ID to `www.apple.com/internetservices/yourorderstatus/` and clicking the Cancel Order link.

Order Doesn't Arrive or Is Damaged

There are several ways to learn more about your order and to contact Apple if you experience problems with an order:

- Check the status of your order at `www.apple.com/internetservices/yourorderstatus`. You need your Apple ID and password to sign in.
- Contact Apple via the Web forms available from `www.apple.com/support/photoservices/`. Be sure to include the text of your confirmation message from Apple so they have your order details.

Prints or Books Aren't What You Expect

It's highly frustrating to order prints or books that aren't of the quality you expect. Follow these tips to avoid common problems:

- Prints ordered via iPhoto may come back darker than is ideal. This may be because Mac and PC monitors have different color contrast settings, something called *gamma*. Macs usually use a gamma of 1.8, whereas PCs use a darker gamma of 2.2. The belief is that Kodak serves more PC customers and has thus tweaked its equipment so PC users don't think their prints look washed out.

  You can adjust your monitor to use PC gamma settings when working with photos. In the Color view of the Displays pane in System Preferences, click the Calibrate button to run the Display Calibrator Assistant. Then work through the Display Calibrator Assistant, picking 2.2 Television Gamma in the third screen. When you're done, save the profile you created, and select it in the Color view of the Displays preference pane.
- Prints use a three-color process whereas books use a four-color process. Because black is added to photos in books, they can appear slightly darker in books than when ordered as prints.
- If prints in your order from Apple are garbled, the problem may be that the photos were modified in another application (like Photoshop) to use CMYK or grayscale format. To fix the photos, use another application to change the color space to RGB, which Apple requires for ordered prints and books.
- For the latest tips from Apple, see `www.apple.com/support/photoservices/product_troubleshooting/`.

Dealing with Warning Icons

Let's say you want to print a photo in a card, calendar, or book, or via Apple's online print service, but iPhoto is displaying a warning icon on the page thumbnail or next to a specific size you want in the Order Prints window. What can you do to resolve this situation?

Ways to handle warning icons:

- You can simply print at a smaller size. When ordering prints, try a smaller size (**Figure 11.1**); with a card, calendar, or book, choose a different page design or rearrange the photos so the offending one prints at a smaller size (**Figure 11.2**). Or, don't zoom into the photo as far.
- If the photo is too small because you cropped it, you can select it, choose Revert to Original from the Photos menu, and crop it again to a larger size. I recommend this procedure primarily if you think you're right on the edge of receiving the warning icon.
- You can also increase the size of your image using GraphicConverter or Adobe Photoshop. The way these programs scale the photo up might look better than iPhoto's method, though it's harder.

✔ Tips

- For exact details about how many pixels photos must have to print at different sizes, see "Preparing to Order Prints," on page 166.
- To learn how image resolution relates to what comes out of a printer, take a look at "Understanding Resolution," starting on page 204.

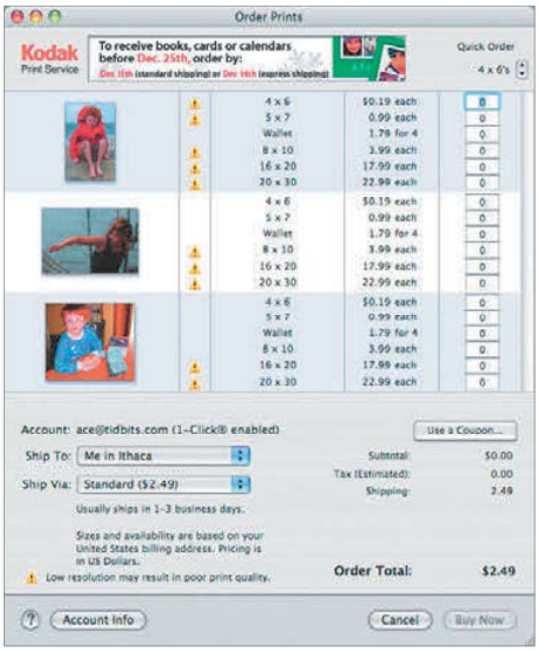

Figure 11.1 Note how the three images showing here have warning icons applied to different print sizes. The first (heavily cropped) image can print well only at wallet size. The second (slightly cropped) won't print well at 8" x 10" or larger. The third image (uncropped) drops out at 16" x 20".

Figure 11.2 Note how all these photos, which were taken with my old QuickTake 100 at 640 x 480 pixels, show low-resolution warning icons in this book layout, except the three smaller photos in the upper left. A 640 x 480 image must be quite small to print acceptably.

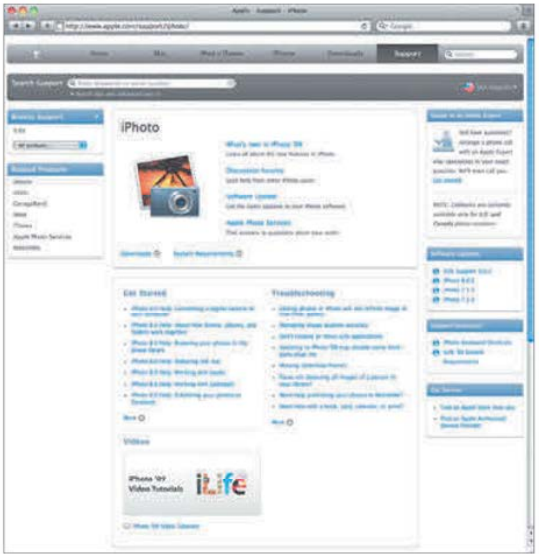

Figure 11.3 Start with Apple's iPhoto support pages for general help and pointers to other resources.

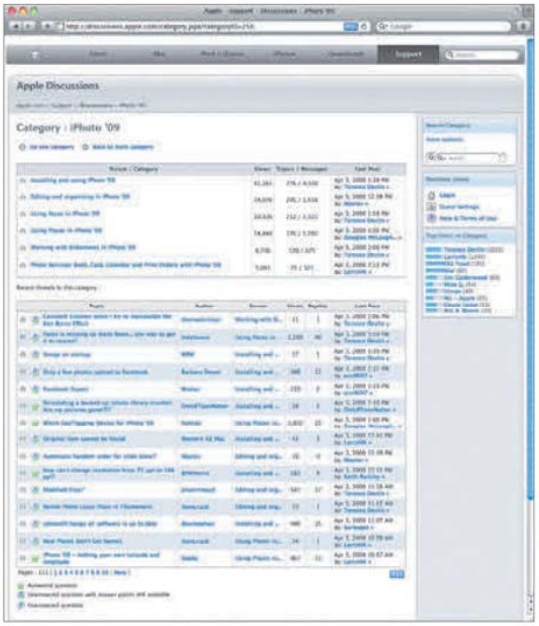

Figure 11.4 If all else fails, ask for help on Apple's iPhoto discussion boards.

Help Resources

I'm sure other problems and solutions will become known after I finish writing. Along with iPhoto's online help (choose iPhoto Help from the Help menu), a variety of Internet resources provide assistance.

Places to look for more help:

- Check Apple's iPhoto support pages at `www.apple.com/support/iphoto/` (**Figure 11.3**) and `www.apple.com/support/iphoto/customerservice/`.
- Search in Apple's Knowledge Base using the Search field on the pages listed above. Narrow your search by adding terms, so if you're having trouble importing RAW files, search for "import RAW" or something similar.
- Try asking a question on Apple's iPhoto Web-based discussion forums linked at `http://discussions.info.apple.com/` (**Figure 11.4**). In my experience, these discussions are good for straightforward questions; harder questions may go unanswered. When posting, state your problem clearly and include relevant information while at the same time keeping the question concise.
- For order-related problems, contact Apple via the Web forms available from `www.apple.com/support/photoservices/`. Make sure you have your order details at hand.
- Check out *TidBITS*, the free weekly Web site and newsletter I publish. It contains tons of useful information on all sorts of topics, including digital photography. Visit `www.tidbits.com` and search on "iPhoto" or "photography" to see relevant articles. You can also subscribe to receive issues in email.

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A

Deep Background

Right off the bat, let me say that you don't need to read this appendix. It's deep background, the kind of detail that you might wish to delve into when you're attempting to understand how iPhoto works, perhaps because you've just printed a photo and you're unhappy with the results.

The following pages contain "Understanding Aspect Ratios," "Understanding Resolution," and "Understanding Color Management." Each of these discussions examines an aspect of digital photography from which iPhoto, for the most part, tries to shield you. That's great most of the time, but if you're trying to understand how cropping removes information from a photo, thus making it print at a lower quality, you'll want to come here for the explanation.

Lastly, although I've called this appendix "Deep Background," these topics are so complex that entire books have been written about each one. If these discussions leave you with more questions, I'd encourage you to visit a library or bookstore and browse its collection of books on photography, digital imaging, and prepress. I especially recommend *Real World Scanning and Halftones, Third Edition*, by David Blatner, Conrad Chavez, Glenn Fleishman, and Steve Roth.

Understanding Aspect Ratios

iPhoto makes it easy to select and crop a portion of a photo using a specific aspect ratio, but why is this important? It matters because aspect ratios differ between traditional and digital photos.

An aspect ratio is the ratio between the width of the image and its height, generally expressed with both numbers, as in the line from Arlo Guthrie's song "Alice's Restaurant Massacree" about "Twenty-seven, *eight-by-ten*, color glossy photographs with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one."

The aspect ratio of 35mm film is 4 x 6 (using the standard print size rather than the least common denominator of 2 x 3) because the negative measures 24mm by 36mm. Thus, traditional photographs are usually printed at sizes like 4" x 6", 5" x 7", or 8" x 10", all of which are close enough to that 4 x 6 aspect ratio so photos scale well. When there's a mismatch between the aspect ratio of the original negative and the final print, either the image must be shrunk proportionally to fit (producing unsightly borders) or some portion of the image must be cropped. (The alternative would be to resize the image disproportionally, which makes people look like they're reflected in a funhouse mirror.)

The equivalent of film in digital photography is the *CCD* (charge-coupled device), which is essentially a grid of many light-sensitive elements that gain a charge when exposed to light. Through much digital wizardry, the camera translates those charges into the individual dots (called *pixels*) that, put together, make up the image. Zoom in on a picture all the way, and you can actually see these pixels. So if your digital camera uses a CCD that can capture a picture composed

Figure A.1 This is a 4 x 3 image with a 4 x 6 landscape selection. A bit of the bottom of the image would be lost, which is fine.

Figure A.2 This is a 4 x 3 image with a 5 x 7 landscape selection. Very little of the bottom of the image would be lost to cropping.

Figure A.3 This is a 4 x 3 image with an 8 x 10 landscape selection. Losing the right side of the image would be somewhat problematic.

Figure A.4 This is a 4 x 3 portrait image with a 4 x 6 portrait selection. A bit on the left would be lost, which is fine (a better crop would take some from the left, the right, and the top).

Figure A.5 This is a 4 x 3 portrait image with a 5 x 7 portrait selection. A very small amount on the left would be lost, which is fine.

Figure A.6 This is a 4 x 3 portrait image with an 8 x 10 portrait selection. A better crop would have cut off Tristan's feet, rather than coming so close to the top of his head.

Figure A.7 This is a 4 x 3 portrait image with a square selection. As you can tell, the square selection is a lousy choice for this image.

of 1600 pixels wide by 1200 pixels high, basic math shows that your photos will have a 4 x 3 aspect ratio.

Why did digital camera manufacturers choose a 4 x 3 aspect ratio when 4 x 6 is the 35mm film standard? It matches the aspect ratios of early computer monitors. Early common monitor resolutions were 640 x 480, 800 x 600, and 1024 x 768, all having a 4 x 3 aspect ratio. Displaying a photo at full screen size without cropping thus requires a 4 x 3 aspect ratio. (And why did computer monitors use a 4 x 3 aspect ratio? Because that's the aspect ratio used by televisions. However, since HDTV uses a 16 x 9 aspect ratio, many monitors now use that or 16 x 10.)

Hopefully the choices in iPhoto's Constrain pop-up menu make more sense now. If you're starting from a photo with a 4 x 3 aspect ratio, and you want a 20" x 30" print (a 4 x 6 aspect ratio), there's no way to print that photo without adding borders or cropping because of the mismatch in aspect ratios. The same applies to other standard print sizes—they don't match the 4 x 3 aspect ratio of most digital photos. Rather than suffering borders or automatic cropping, it's better to crop the image yourself so you can be sure the important parts are retained. **Figure A.1** through **Figure A.7** show how cropping a 4 x 3 image at the other common aspect ratios works for two sample images (results will vary by image).

The 4 x 3 aspect ratio plays an important role in output too, since iPhoto's book designs generally assume 4 x 3 images. The books vary the final image size depending on the page design, and you can zoom in and re-center the image to crop temporarily, but as long as the aspect ratio of your images remains 4 x 3, the layout will work as Apple intended. You can use different aspect ratios in a book, but the layout may not work well.

Understanding Resolution

Understanding how the dimensions of a digital photo relate to what comes out of a printer is hard. That's why iPhoto merely alerts you with a warning icon when a photo won't print well at a specific size. Read these two pages to learn why iPhoto displays warning icons; "Dealing with Warning Icons," on page 177 offers help.

Pixels and Dots

Every digital photo is made up of a rectangular grid of points, called *pixels*, each of which can display one of sixteen million colors or several hundred shades of gray. For instance, photos from one of my cameras are 3264 pixels wide by 2448 pixels high. Monitors also display rectangular grids of pixels, say 1900 pixels wide by 1200 pixels high.

Not all of a 3264 x 2448 photo can fit on a 1900 x 1200 monitor when every pixel in the image is mapped to a pixel on the monitor. To display a photo so it fills a monitor, iPhoto removes pixels on the fly, a process called *downsampling*.

You can't perform the same one-to-one mapping when it comes to print, though, because most printers (which have only four or six colors) can't display a pixel's exact color in a single dot. Instead, they use collections of single-colored dots to fool the eye into seeing that color. For this reason and other more complex ones, the main fact to grok is that, in general, the more pixels in the image, the better it will look printed.

This fact is particularly relevant when you're printing images at large sizes. For instance, why does an image that looks fine when printed at 4" x 6" appear fuzzy at 8" x 10"?

Imagine a knitted blanket. If you stretch it to make it larger, you can see through the holes between the strands of yarn. Expanding a

Figure A.8 The original image at 100 percent.

Figure A.9 Shrink the image to 17 percent of original size and the loss of detail caused by downsampling makes it hard to see the stripes on the penguin's tie.

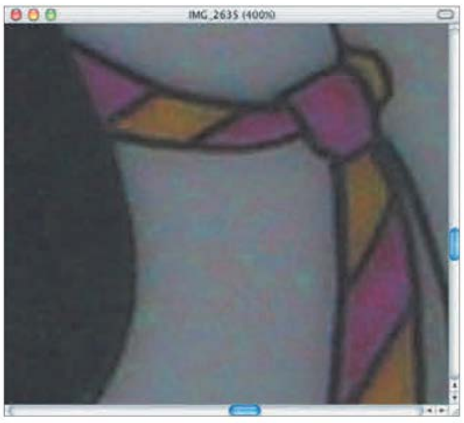


Figure A.10 Expand the image to 400 percent of the original and the fuzziness added by interpolation becomes evident.

Figure A.11 The original 1600 x 1200 pixel image, with a small area to crop selected.

Figure A.12 Crop the image to 206 x 183 pixels and you can see how the horse looks much fuzzier due to all the interpolation necessary to expand it to the desired size.

photo to print at a larger size works similarly, except the printer fills in each hole with dots of roughly the same color as the dots surrounding the hole, a process called *interpolation*. The more pixels in the image, the smaller the holes that need to be filled, and the less interpolation is necessary.

Downsampling vs. Interpolation

Downsampling onscreen works well, since it's easy to remove similarly colored pixels without changing the image much. Even though the photo loses pixels and thus some detail, quality doesn't suffer too much (**Figure A.8** and **Figure A.9** on the previous page). Along with the fact that onscreen images are extremely bright because monitors *emit* light, whereas paper *reflects* light, minimal downsampling helps explain why photos look good on monitors at full size.

Interpolation, particularly on a printer, is different. There's no way to avoid adding dots that didn't exist before when expanding a photo, and because those dots exist only by virtue of the dots around them, they make the image look fuzzier (**Figure A.8** and **Figure A.10** on the previous page). Interpolation simply cannot add details to the image that weren't originally present. Scale an image too large, and iPhoto warns you that so much interpolation will be needed that you won't like the result.

Cropping Implies Interpolation

Cropping exacerbates the problem because it removes pixels, making the photo smaller and requiring more interpolation to expand the image back up to the desired size.

To see this, compare the original image in **Figure A.11** with **Figure A.12**, which shows a heavily cropped version of the same image, displayed at the same size as the original. Notice how the cropped horse is fuzzier.

Understanding Color Management

iPhoto 5 first introduced tools for manually adjusting color saturation, temperature, and tint. Why did it take Apple so many versions to add these tools? Color correction of any sort is devilishly difficult to do right (and as you may have noticed, even the automatic Enhance tool gets it wrong at times). Color correction suffers from two basic problems: color is highly perceptual and different devices render color in different ways.

Color Perception

Everyone sees color in different ways. My wife and I, for instance, frequently disagree on whether a given color is green or blue, and the fact that my opinion generally seems to match what others think as well doesn't change her perception of a different color. Plus, at least 10 percent of the population suffers from some level of color blindness that makes it impossible to perceive differences between colors that others can distinguish.

The conditions in which color is perceived also make a huge difference, as you have probably realized if you've ever purchased a shirt in a store lit with fluorescent lights and were surprised by how the shirt looked when you tried it on at home under incandescent lights. Similarly, when painting a room, you have to consider how the color will look in sunlight during the day and with artificial lighting at night. The differences can be striking.

The lesson here is that you cannot define color objectively—there is no right answer. Always keep that in mind, and it will remove some of the stress about achieving the "perfect" color in your photos.

Rendering Color

Digital cameras, computer monitors, inkjet printers, and commercial photo processing equipment all use different methods of rendering color. Even with monitors, there's little common ground between CRT-based monitors and LCD flat-panel monitors, and sometimes even between LCD monitors from different manufacturers.

When you take a picture with your camera, look at it on your Mac, print a copy on your printer, and order a large print of the image from Kodak, you would like the colors in the image to match closely at each step. The engineers designing these devices have managed to make the color produced by each one match fairly well, but not perfectly. Here's how it works.

Imagine a three-dimensional graph, with the X-, Y-, and Z-axes representing the amount of red, green, and blue in every possible color. (Don't worry about this turning technical; that's as bad as it gets.) Now imagine an amorphous blob in the graph that represents the specific set of colors any given device can capture (for digital cameras) or display (for monitors or printers). That blob is called the *gamut*, and every device has a gamut that's at least slightly different.

The problem with matching color across completely different devices is that each device can render only colors in its gamut. When a color, say a specific dark blue, falls into an area where there's overlap between gamuts, each device does the right thing and renders the exact same dark blue. However, when a color falls outside the set of colors a device can render, it's a problem. The device cannot render a color outside its gamut, so it makes an educated guess about what color to render instead.

Color-Matching Systems

Many efforts have been made to address this problem, but the one you're most likely to have heard about, being a Mac user, is Apple's ColorSync technology. The particular approach it uses to make educated guesses about which colors to render on different devices is immaterial; suffice to say that its goal is consistency. In theory, if you have chosen or set up a ColorSync profile for your monitor and your printer, for instance, it should help ensure that the colors you see on your monitor match those printed by your printer.

Without getting into too many details, you can calibrate your monitor by choosing System Preferences from the Apple menu, clicking the Displays preference pane, clicking the Color button, and clicking the Calibrate button to run and work through the Display Calibrator Assistant. Then, when you're printing, look for a ColorSync setting in the Color Management pane of the Print dialog. Whether it's present or not depends on your printer driver, but if the setting is present at all, it's usually the default. That's all there is to basic use of ColorSync, and on the whole, it works pretty well.

You may not be limited to ColorSync's educated guesses about how to render color (my Epson inkjet's Photo-Realistic mode sometimes produces better results), and in fact, none of the commercial photo processing companies, including Kodak, uses it. Why not? Two reasons.

First, photos are displayed on monitors and on paper totally differently. Monitors *emit* light, causing photos to be extremely bright. Paper *reflects* light, so unless you shine a floodlight on a photo, you can't come close to the amount of light emanating from a monitor.

Second, as I noted, color is highly perceptual, and Kodak and other photography companies have done incredible amounts of research to determine not so much how to match colors exactly, but how to print photographs that meet people's expectations.

In the end, the problem of matching color perfectly among devices is just too hard. Even with technologies like ColorSync, the differences between a photo on a light-emitting monitor and light-reflecting paper mean that the photo-processing companies have a better chance of satisfying customers if they concentrate more on producing a photograph that looks desirable than on matching colors perfectly in an imperfect world where everyone sees color differently.

Should You Correct Colors?

Color correction is complex, and the necessary tools are also usually complex. Apple did a good job with giving iPhoto basic color-correction tools in the Adjust window, and many photos can be improved with judicious color correction. Of course, iPhoto's tools are still limited in comparison to those in programs like Adobe Photoshop; in particular, iPhoto's tools always affect the entire image, rather than letting you select a portion of the image to correct.

Now that you know how hard it is to achieve reliable, predictable results, should you color correct your photos using iPhoto or another program? It depends on how much you want to play. For those who don't like to fuss, don't bother. If you like fiddling with your photos so you can make them just right, go ahead. And for the majority of us who fall between those two poles, I recommend doing manual color correction on those images you like the most and that will benefit from it the most. Remember, the "right" color is the one that looks right to you.

B

Taking Better Photos

iPhoto and your digital camera will make you a better photographer, for the simple reason that the best way to improve a skill is constant practice. Thanks to iPhoto, it's easier to take and review photographs than ever before.

But you need not discover all the ways you can take better photos on your own. Having the best equipment for the kind of photos you want to take will help, as will learning some of the basics of different types of photography. This appendix offers that advice, ranging from choosing the best camera for your needs to tips on how to take great pictures of kids. (Hint: The posed portrait is unlikely to work.)

So skim these few pages to find tips that you can use to create better photos with minimal extra effort.

What Kind of Photographer Are You?

When choosing the camera that will help you take the best photos, it's important to choose one that matches the kind of photos you actually take. But what sort of photographer are you? In one way of thinking, there are two types of photographers: artistic and documentary (and as is usually the case, most people overlap somewhat).

You're an artistic photographer if:

- You care more about the overall look of a photo than the subject of the picture (**Figure B.1**).
- Objects and landscapes fill many of your photos and stand alone as aesthetic representations of your reality.
- Display and print quality is of the utmost importance. You regularly print and display your best photos.
- You're willing to take time to set up the perfect shot, and you do things because they give you photo opportunities.

You're a documentary photographer if:

- Who or what appears in the photo is more important than the overall look (**Figure B.2**).
- The most common subjects of your photos are people and places, and they usually fit into and support a larger story.
- You're willing to trade quality for convenience, ease of use, or speed of shooting.
- You don't have the free time or patience to set up shots, and you prefer to snap a few pictures quickly, hoping that at least one will turn out well. You carry your camera to record events or in the hope of getting a good shot.

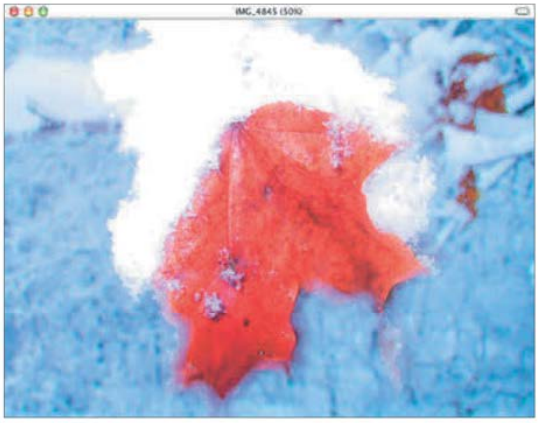


Figure B.1 There's not much of a story in this photo—I was just intrigued by the color of the leaf underneath the new-fallen snow. We're definitely looking at an artistic photograph here.

Figure B.2 In contrast, here we have a picture of me and my grandmother at my 35th birthday party. Whether or not it's a good photo is almost immaterial—what's important is that it reminds me of a special meal with my family. It's a pure documentary photograph.

Choosing a Camera

Once you've determined what sort of photographer you really are (and that may be different from the type of photographer you'd like to be in an ideal world), working through the variables that differentiate digital cameras becomes significantly easier.

Form Factor

Digital cameras come in a wide variety of sizes, and for documentary photographers, small size can be important so the camera fits in a pocket and so the fact that you're taking pictures doesn't overwhelm the event. In contrast, artistic photographers are often willing to carry larger cameras because of their increased quality and flexibility. Most cameras fall in a middle ground, so it's best to hold the camera to see how it feels in your hand before buying it.

Megapixels/Quality

Within the form factor that matches your shooting style, you should usually try to get the most megapixels (larger cameras have larger CCDs and can thus capture more pixels). But lens quality and other variables make a difference too, and the best way to learn about those issues is to read detailed camera reviews. Artistic photographers need to pay the most attention to quality issues.

Lens Capabilities

For documentary photographers, this mostly comes down to whether or not the camera has a decent optical (ignore digital) zoom for capturing far away events. For artistic photographers, zoom capabilities are important for those times when you simply can't (or shouldn't) get close enough to the subject (such as a grizzly bear). Also important are macro capabilities for stunning close-ups of flowers, insects, and other small objects.

Extra Features

Extra features may be important: documentary photographers may appreciate a movie capability, whereas artistic photographers might look for the capability to use an external flash or different lenses. Also pay attention to factors like the camera's battery type. AA batteries are cheap and easily found, and you can buy good rechargeable batteries, but the smallest cameras generally have their own battery packs and chargers.

Price

Everyone has a budget, and here's where you must decide how much to pay. Documentary photographers will pay more for truly tiny cameras with decent quality, whereas artistic photographers pay more for quality, manual controls, and support for additional lenses. Although more money will buy a better camera, you can take good pictures with almost any camera.

Interface

Some cameras are easier to use than others, which is important for documentary photographers who need to be able to set options quickly before missing a particular shot. Artistic photographers care more about control, so the camera interface should help them twiddle manual settings easily.

Speed

Digital cameras can be quite slow, with a few seconds to start up, a lag between when you press the shutter release and when the picture is taken, and a noticeable lag between shots. Documentary photographers in particular should look for faster cameras, so as to avoid missing that perfect shot due to camera lag. Artistic photographers interested in action shots should also pay attention to speed or risk losing great photos.

Where to Read Camera Reviews

After you've determined roughly what kind of camera you want, you have a few choices. You can go to a store and buy whatever the salesperson recommends after hearing your story. You can depend on a friend who has already researched a similar type of camera. Or you can do the research yourself. Be forewarned—if you're not a camera buff, you may find reading numerous camera reviews overwhelming, thanks to the incredible detail provided. I've found the sites below useful for reviews, buyer's guides, news, discussions, and other digital photography information.

Camera review sites:

- *Digital Photography Review* has an especially detailed feature search tool and a useful way of comparing the specs on different cameras, side-by-side.
  Find it at: `www.dpreview.com`
- *Digital Camera Resource Page* offers an extensive camera database through which you can search to find cameras with your desired specifications. Reviews are all on one page, making them easy to read, unlike the other three sites.
  Find it at: `www.dcresource.com`
- *Imaging Resource* stands out from the pack with its Comparometer, which lets you compare sample photos taken with different cameras. The site also offers an easy-to-use model comparison tool.
  Find it at: `www.imaging-resource.com`
- *Steve's DigiCams* offers detailed reviews and a nice summary page listing the cameras the writers believe are the best in each of a number of categories.
  Find it at: `www.steves-digicams.com`

A Better Starting Point

Honestly, camera reviews make me crazy, since I don't have a background in traditional photography to help me understand all the jargon. I've tried to lay out the basics here, but if you want more information about how to think about the right camera for your needs and how to understand the camera reviews, I recommend Larry Chen's *Take Control of Buying a Digital Camera*, one of the Take Control ebooks. Larry also provides advice on evaluating image quality and gives you a comparison worksheet to help you track the different cameras you're considering. Read more at `www.takecontrolbooks.com/buying-digicam`.

Camera Accessories

Although all you need to take good photos is a camera, there are some accessories that can help at times.

Bigger Memory Card

Most cameras ship with small memory cards, and you may feel as though you should shoot at a lower resolution to save space. Don't do it—just buy a larger memory card. Visit `www.dealram.com` to compare prices at multiple vendors for the type of memory card your camera uses.

USB Card/PC Card Reader

If you have friends with digital cameras, a USB or FireWire card reader that accepts all the types of memory cards can make it easy to share photos of an event on the spot, without having to mail them around later. Folks with laptop Macs might also look for a PC Card or ExpressCard adapter that lets you plug your memory card right into the laptop.

Alas, attachments to download photos into an iPod have all faded away, but if you're looking for a photo backup solution while travelling, check out the Photo Safe II or Picture Porter Elite from Digital Foci. For more info, visit `www.digitalfoci.com`.

Monopod/Tripod

In low-light situations, if you don't use the flash, you risk your photos coming out blurry. The solution? Attach the camera (most have the appropriate threaded mount) to a monopod or a tripod. Documentary photographers are less likely to want to use even a monopod (which is smaller and faster to use than a tripod) because of it getting in the way, whereas artistic photographers are more likely to accept a little extra annoyance in exchange for the highest quality photos. Either way, make sure it's easy to use.

Extra Batteries

It's unfortunately common to run out of power at a bad moment, particularly if you're using your camera's flash or LCD display a lot. Avoid missing great photos because your camera is dead by carrying an extra battery pack or set of batteries. Proprietary battery packs tend to be expensive, but my experience is that it's worth buying the camera vendor's battery rather than one from an independent manufacturer. Other cameras take standard AA batteries; you can use any normal battery, but it's cheaper and more environmentally friendly to use rechargeable batteries, such as those available from Quest Batteries; visit `www.questbatteries.com`.

Lens Cleaning Kit

Those of us who have used only digital cameras may not realize that it's well worth getting a special lens cleaning kit that can remove dust and dirt from your lens and LCD (and for cameras with removable lenses, the CCD inside). Normal cloth might cause scratches. Any camera store should be able to recommend a lens cleaning kit.

Printer

With iPhoto, you can always order prints from Apple. But you may want to print them yourself, perhaps for instant gratification, greater control, or privacy reasons. For that you'll need a color printer. There are a number of different technologies, such as inkjet, laser, and dye-sublimation. Inkjet printers are the most common, offer excellent quality, and come in a wide variety of sizes, but have high per-print materials costs. Dye-sublimation printers have the best quality for photos, but can be expensive. And color laser printers are the cheapest to run for many prints, but may not have as good print quality. You can learn more at camera review sites, which also often review photo printers.

General Photo Tips

No matter what type of photos you take, a few general tips will take you a long way:

- Consider the Rule of Thirds. Divide the image into a 3 x 3 grid and try to position the main subject of the photo where the lines intersect (**Figure B.3**). If your photo will have strong horizontal (as in a horizon) or vertical lines (as in a building), try to keep them on the horizontal or vertical lines. Centering can work, but tends to be a bit dull for anything but portraits.
- Pay attention to where the light comes from and try to avoid shooting into strong light. It's better to shoot with light at your back (make sure your subjects aren't squinting) or to one side whenever possible. If you have to take a picture of people who have the sun behind them, turn on your flash to light up their faces, which will otherwise be too dark.
- Don't be afraid to shoot from odd angles or unusual heights. Digital cameras encourage experimentation, and playing around can produce some great shots.
- Avoid a busy background that will distract the eye from the subject of the photo (**Figure B.4**).
- Keep the camera steady, particularly when you're shooting in low light without the flash. The beauty of the LCD screen on the camera is that you can set the camera on a solid object to shoot, even when it's not at a comfortable height.
- Remember that the flash on most small digital cameras works well only to about 10 feet. Relying on room light is tricky, but the more light you can throw on the subject in a normal room, the better.

Figure B.3 Note how the heads of Tristan and his cousin Madeline are at the intersections of the grid, increasing visual interest and emphasizing their interaction.

Figure B.4 This photo shows the value of an uncluttered background—the blank wall helps the eye focus on the man in the scene. Note too that the fact that he's only half in the frame increases the power of the photo. Sometimes in photography, as in graphic design, some "white space" can improve the image.

Figure B.5 Portrait orientation makes all the difference for this picture of the long, deep gorge that runs through Cornell University.

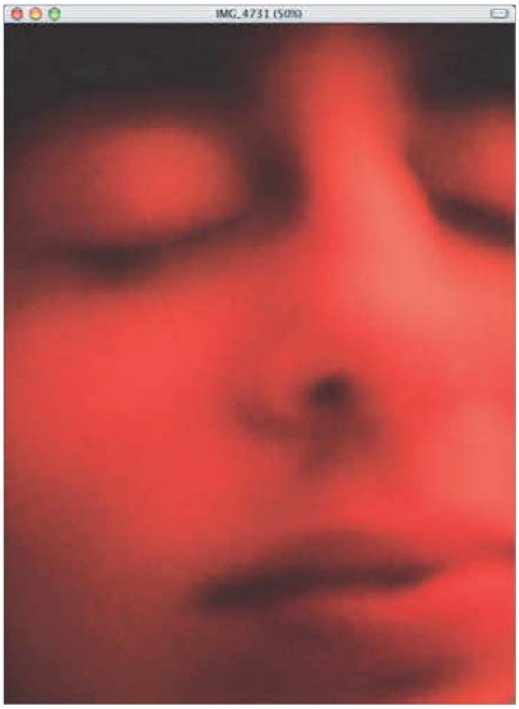


Figure B.6 This close-up of my wife's face works in large part because it's so close and out of focus.

More General Photo Tips

Here are a few more tips that can help:

- Try to match the orientation of the subject to the orientation of the photo (**Figure B.5**). Landscape orientation, where the photo is wider than it is tall, usually works best for landscapes (with specific exceptions, such as the gorge in **Figure B.5**), whereas portrait orientation, where the photo is taller than it is wide, works best for people. Computers and TVs generally use landscape orientation, so keep that in mind if you plan to do a lot of slideshows.
- Try to avoid posing your subjects. Most people aren't very good at describing exactly what they want the person in the photo to do, and most people aren't good at adopting a specific pose without it looking forced. Give it a try and you'll appreciate how hard professional photographers and models work.
- Figure out exactly what interests you about a scene before shooting. That helps you set up the shot and find different ways of emphasizing the subject.
- Take lots of photos—they don't cost anything. This is especially important when the scene is changing, but even with shots you set up, it's worth taking a few, just in case one shot works better than another.
- As a corollary, try alternative ways of taking a given picture, such as with and without the flash. Do this enough and you'll start to figure out when to use certain settings for your desired effect.
- Don't be afraid to get close and fill the frame with the subject, even when it means cutting off parts of people's bodies or faces (**Figure B.6**).

Portrait Photo Tips

For many of us, pictures of people make up the bulk of our photo collections. Use these tips to improve your portraits of family and friends in the future:

- Get closer. A lot of portraits are taken from too far away, lessening the impact of having that particular person in the photo. Of course, since getting closer isn't always feasible, a good zoom lens can help.
- When you're taking pictures of traveling companions, break the previous rule a bit so you can add context to the shot. Signs work well for reminding you of where and when a picture was taken, particularly if they're in other languages.
- For candid snapshots, which are often the best kind, make sure you have enough light and just point the camera in the right direction and shoot from the hip (**Figure B.7**). Lots of these shots will be terrible, but the effort of tossing them is well worth the occasional amazing shot you'll get.
- Don't warn people in advance that you're going to take a photo unless you want forced smiles. If you need people to look at you, prefocus your camera by pressing the shutter release button halfway, then say something to get their attention. As soon as they look at you, and before they realize you're taking a picture, press the button the rest of the way down.
- In group photos, make everyone crunch together and overlap. The presentation is much more interesting than if everyone just lines up by height (**Figure B.8**).

Figure B.7 I took this photo while holding the camera at my waist and walking normally down the street.

Figure B.8 This group photo from my family reunion works well because the different levels provided by the stairs help everyone overlap neatly.

Figure B.9 Getting a cat and a child both looking photogenic at the same moment can be tricky unless you're willing to take lots of shots.

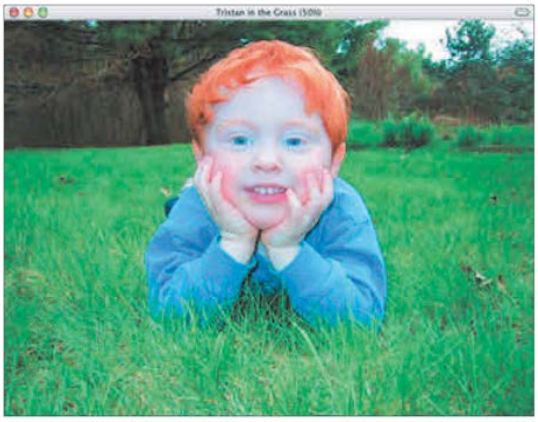


Figure B.10 The fact that the camera is on Tristan's level, about a foot off the ground, provides a good perspective.

Figure B.11 Since Tristan loved trains, these abandoned mine trains at the Last Chance Basin Mining Museum in Juneau, Alaska, were a big hit. He asked me to take this photo and even agreed to pose in it.

Child and Pet Photo Tips

People may be the most common subjects of photos, but I'll bet most of those photos are pictures of children. And those folks who don't have children around often seem to replace kid photos with pet photos. Children and pets require similar shooting styles:

- Adults are usually capable of at least that oh-so-familiar forced smile, but kids often don't want to participate, and it's almost impossible to convince pets to pose. Give it up and shoot surreptitiously.
- When kids or pets are playing, they may not notice you, so work fast and take lots of pictures, perhaps with your camera's burst mode (**Figure B.9**). Try to avoid calling out names, since that will almost certainly break the spell.
- If the kids or pets realize what you're doing, just be patient and stay prepared in case you get another chance.
- If you plan to take pictures of children, encourage them to wear brightly colored clothing. Lots of color can make your photos more eye-catching.
- With both kids and pets, get down on their level (**Figure B.10**). Otherwise you end up shooting the tops of their heads.
- At zoos or similar attractions, try to photograph the child reacting to, or interacting with, the animals.
- It can be great fun to involve kids in the decisions about what pictures to take, particularly if you're on a trip. Ask them what they'd like you to take pictures of, and let them set the scene (**Figure B.11**).
- Outdoor photos often work the best, perhaps because it's easier to get good, uncluttered backgrounds.

Landscape Photo Tips

There are places where it seems almost impossible to take a bad photo (glaciers and mountain vistas, for instance), but a few tips can help improve other landscape pictures:

- Take advantage of the long light early in the morning (less haze) or just before dusk (sunset colors), since you get more interesting shadows and interplay between light and dark. Try to keep the sun at your back or your side.
- Try to keep the horizon level, although iPhoto can straighten a photo if an otherwise good photo is marred by a bit of skew (**Figure B.12**).
- Keeping the Rule of Thirds in mind, if the land is the subject of your photo, make two-thirds of the photo be land, with one-third sky. If the sky is the focus of the photo (sunset photos can produce the most amazing colors), then reverse those proportions so the sky fills most of the frame.
- Try to include an object in the foreground to catch the eye, rather than leaving the entire landscape in the far distance (**Figure B.13**). A foreground object has the added advantage of indicating the magnitude of the scenery.
- When possible, eliminate distracting elements, such as telephone poles or electric lines. Otherwise, try to use them in the composition of the photo.
- Try using reflections in water or windows for interesting effects and perspectives (**Figure B.14**).

Figure B.12 It's hard to take a bad picture of a glacier... unless you can't hold the camera straight. iPhoto's Straighten tool can fix this shot.

Figure B.13 The misty woods in the background evoke a mood, but Tristan running away from the camera down the mown strip in the field lends focus.

Figure B.14 This picture, although seemingly a normal landscape of trees and the sky, is actually a reflection in a pond, giving the scene added depth.

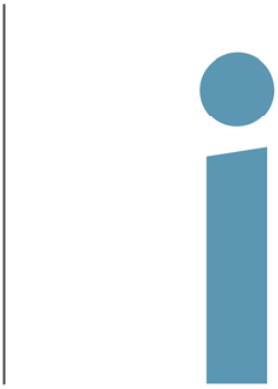
Figure B.15 Having Tristan pose in front of our cruise ship, with its name visible in the background (though hard to read at this size), made for a perfect travel picture.

Figure B.16 Make sure to have other people take pictures of you. You'll especially appreciate having done this if you decide to make a book of your trip in iPhoto.

Travel Photo Tips

Although the tips for landscapes and portraits apply equally well when you're traveling, a few special tips can help improve your vacation photos:

- Include your traveling companions in the shots when possible, because without them, you could just buy a postcard.
- Take photos that remind you of an area or event. Shoot details such as buildings, signs, or natural landmarks, but take them from your perspective and, when possible, with your traveling companions (**Figure B.15**).
- Don't get sucked into the trap of posed shots of your companions in front of whatever the local attraction may be. Have some fun and keep it light, partly so you get better shots, and partly so your traveling companions don't get sick of your camera.
- Ask one of your companions, or a passerby, to take pictures that include you. Otherwise it may seem as though you weren't along on the trip (**Figure B.16**).
- Take pictures of the people you meet (it's best to ask for permission first), and make notes so you remember each person later.
- Plan ahead so you can take lots of photos. That may entail carrying an extra memory card or two, bringing a rechargeable digital wallet drive to store photos, or lugging a laptop along (at which point you can upload photos of your travel photos for friends and family back home). It's also worth doing a bit of culling every night to free space used by bad shots.



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