

FotoAlbum Pro Reviewers Guide



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Introduction

FotoAlbum Pro is a Windows-based software package that provides the organization, editing, viewing and creation capabilities from a collection of images.

With FotoAlbum, users can easily collect, organize, edit and share pictures and videos. FotoAlbum becomes a central repository for images, and from that single location, users can determine from which devices to share their images, whether to share them on the FotoTime website, and how to ensure the safety and longevity of an image collection.

This Reviewer's guide will take you step by step through the process of installing, configuring and using FotoAlbum through the basic operations as well as its more unique features.

Unique Features

FotoAlbum Pro has numerous features that distinguish it from the competition.

- **FotoSync:** FotoSync is an exclusive feature that provides a 2-way sync capability with www.fototime.com. It allows maintaining albums from multiple PC's and/or the FotoTime website.
- **Device syncing with iPod, PSP:** The Device Sync capability in FotoAlbum can sync image libraries with many handheld devices including iPods, PSPs, PDAs and cell phones. The sync can be a 1-way update or a complete 2-way sync.
- **Metadata handling:** FotoAlbum Pro provides lossless auto-update capabilities of all metadata elements such as captions, ratings, keywords, etc. The auto importing and updating of metadata ensures that any tagging will not be lost.
- **Multiple tagging methods:** FotoAlbum Pro provides multiple methods to quickly assign keywords, ratings and albums including a unique Quick Assign approach.
- **Multi-level albums and smart albums:** By providing both manual albums and dynamic smart albums with complex filters, large collections can easily be organized.
- **Support for extremely large image collections:** An optimized indexing approach provides superior performance with extremely large collections (> 75,000 images).
- **Extensive file format support:** FotoAlbum natively handles over 48 different file types including most RAW and DNG formats.

Getting Started

System requirements

To use FotoAlbum Pro, you will need a Windows based system (Windows ME, 2000, 2003, XP or Vista) with a video display capable of at least 1024x768 at 16-bit color. It is recommended you have at least 512MB of RAM and 20GB of free disk space, although the size of your image collection determines these resource requirements.

Differences between FotoAlbum and FotoAlbum Pro

FotoAlbum Pro is the same program as the free version of FotoAlbum (also referred to as Subscriber Edition) but has some additional features. FotoAlbum is provided free only to FotoShare subscribers. FotoAlbum Pro is available for purchase from the FotoTime website.

The following features are only available in FotoAlbum Pro:

- Creating FotoCDs
- Creating FotoShows (video slideshows)
- Creating stand-alone slideshows
- Batch image editing and resizing
- Batch file renaming using rules
- Device syncing (iPods, PSPs, etc)
- Duplicate picture wizard
- Image editing
- Advanced file importing and exporting
- Archiving

This guide will cover the key features in FotoAlbum and FotoAlbum Pro. The evaluation license that was sent to you will activate all features within FotoAlbum Pro.

Location of image files

Before you install and run FotoAlbum Pro for the first time, gather your existing photos and videos into a single location, using sub-folders as needed. This ensures that backups are correctly performed without skipping any images and allows FotoAlbum Pro to identify new images that have been added without scanning your entire system. FotoAlbum Pro can manage images that are spread across multiple drives or folders but you will need to specify a primary picture folder. The single location of your images can have as many sub-folders as needed to organize the files into a meaningful structure.

Downloading and installing FotoAlbum Pro

To install FotoAlbum Pro, download and run the following:
<http://www.fototime.com/ftweb/install/faprosetup.exe>

Running FotoAlbum Pro For The First Time

Once you have finished the installation program, start FotoAlbum Pro by using the icon installed on your desktop. You will be required to register your copy or enter a license key and specify your picture folder before you can begin.

Registering

The first screen that appears will prompt whether you have a FotoShare account. It is best to check “No” and then “Continue” for evaluation since you can specify the FotoTime account for linking at a later time. If you have been given an activation ID to use for your evaluation, click on the “Enter Key” button.

If you do not have an evaluation activation ID, then you can use the free 30-day trial to test all of FotoAlbum Pro’s features. The next screen prompts for registration information including name and e-mail address, which are required to start the evaluation process.

Setting your Picture Folder

Once your initial registration process is complete, you must specify which folder is to be used as your primary picture folder. You should specify the folder that you created above to be your primary image location.

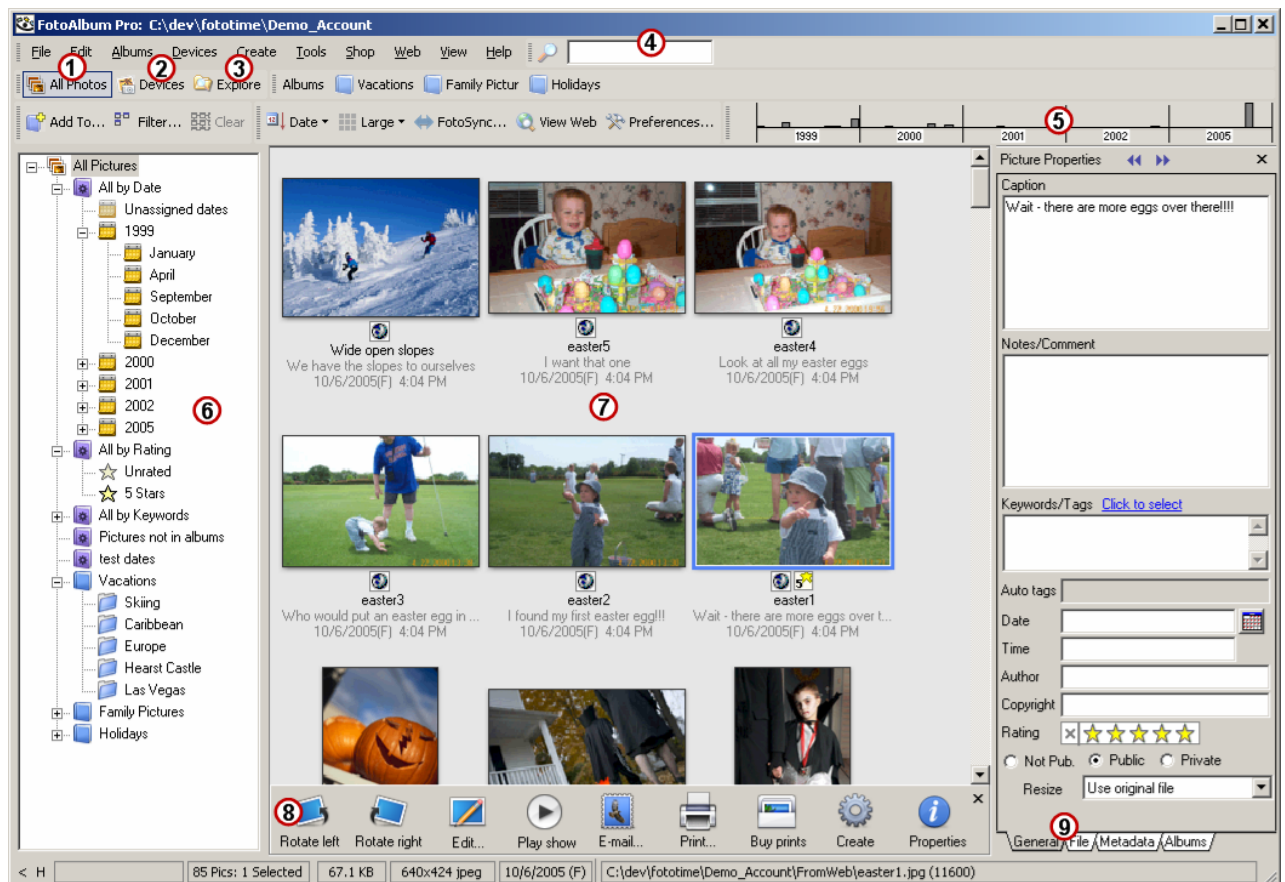
FotoAlbum Pro views

After specifying your picture folder, FotoAlbum will display all the images it finds within that location and build thumbnails for each of the images. FotoAlbum creates a starter set of albums and smart albums to help you start organizing which includes the initial albums you see on the left (“All by Date”, “All by Rating”, etc).

FotoAlbum has three primary views that you can toggle between:

- **Album views:** The “All Photos” view and the individual album views are used to display particular albums or smart albums. “All Photos” view displays your albums and can display all your images if you have the “All Pictures” node selected and no active filters (“Clear” button is grayed out). The individual albums will typically have a button associated with them that appears at the top.
- **Device view:** This view is used to import or sync with removable devices, cameras and scanners. It can be used to add new images to your collection, scan images and sync with iPods, PSPs, and remote systems (other PCs).
- **Explore view:** This is used to view images based upon their location similar to the Windows Explorer. It has the benefit of only showing images and allows easy import into your collection.

FotoAlbum Pro layout



- 1- **All Photos:** When depressed, FotoAlbum will display all albums and smart albums in the organization tree (6). By clicking on any node in the tree, pictures will be filtered to display only those in the particular album, group or smart album.
- 2- **Devices:** When depressed, FotoAlbum will display a list of the devices attached to your system. Selecting a device allows you to import from or sync images onto the device. This view is also used to import images from scanners and cameras.
- 3- **Explore:** This view is similar to the Windows Explorer view and allows you to view or import images based upon the folder they are located.
- 4- **Quick Search:** Search by keywords, filenames and captions by typing the word(s) into this field.
- 5- **Date Histogram:** The date histogram shows the relative number of pictures for a given year and month (taller bars represent more pictures). By clicking on a year (below the line) or a specific month (above the line), you can quickly view pictures for a specific timeframe.
- 6- **Album, device and explore trees:** Depending on the view currently selected (1-3), FotoAlbum will display a tree that shows your current albums, devices or folders.
- 7- **Thumbnails:** The thumbnail portion of FotoAlbum displays the thumbnails for the currently selected album, device or folder.
- 8- **Picture Taskbar:** The bottom taskbar displays common tasks that can be performed on the current selected thumbnails. To perform a task, first select the thumbnail(s) and then click on the task.
- 9- **Picture properties:** The picture properties panel displays the properties for the currently selected thumbnail. You can also change the caption, rating, keywords, etc, for the current thumbnail on this panel. Additional tabs are available at the bottom of the panel to allow viewing of other properties.

Importing and Retrieving Images

Generally you will need to start by importing or retrieving images from your camera or scanner unless you already have a picture folder with existing images. There are several ways to add images to your collection.

- **Retrieving from cameras**

In order to import images from a camera, the camera must either have a WIA driver or show up as a removable device in Windows Explorer. To import images, select the device in the Device view and click on “Import”. The Device Import Wizard provides options to control which images are imported, where the files are saved and what albums to use to assign images.

- **Importing from scanners**

In order to add scanned images into your image collection, you must click on the scanner in the “Devices” view and then click on the “Capture” button. The default dialog for that scanner will appear and provide you with choices on how to perform the scan. Once the scan is completed, the image will automatically be added to your picture folder using the file naming rules specified for that device.

- **Importing from other folders**

By using the Explore view within FotoAlbum, you can quickly import pictures from other drives and/or folders. Select the thumbnails of the images from the location you wish to import from and then use the “Add To” button to import them, or you can drag the images into a specific album or group.

Organizing and Viewing

Once you have your collection of images appearing in the All Photos view, you can organize the images into albums, add keywords, captions, ratings, etc (also referred to as “tagging”). Tagging of images is not required, but does make the viewing and sharing of images easier. As image collections grow quite large, you will want some method of grouping images. One popular strategy is to add keywords to pictures and then have smart albums that refer to those keywords. The benefit to this approach is that keywords can be auto-updated in the metadata of each file ensuring the tagging effort is not lost while maximizing its portability with other applications.

Displaying and modifying picture properties

You can view and modify all of the properties associated with an image by clicking on the “Properties” button at the bottom. If you wish to view/modify a single image, you must click on the thumbnail. If multiple thumbnails are selected, you can modify properties for all the selected images in a single operation.

- **Picture dates**

A primary method of sorting and organizing images is by the date the picture or video was taken. Most digital cameras embed the date and time the image was taken within the file. Since this date tagging is done automatically, it provides a convenient way of providing a timeline of your photos with no effort on your part. FotoAlbum displays a histogram of the # of photos taken for a given year and month at the top. You can quickly select a month, year or range of months by clicking on the dateline. You can also use the smart album “All by Date” to view and select a particular year or month. Scanned images or images without embedded dates can easily be assigned dates by entering the date and time on the General picture properties panel.

- **Albums and Smart Albums**

Another useful method of organizing images is by assigning specific pictures to albums that you create. FotoAlbum creates a starter set of albums such as “Family”, “Vacations” and “Shared Photos”. You can easily remove those albums and create your own using the menu options under the “Albums” menu item. Standard albums, which are shown as the blue folder icons, are used when you want specific images in those albums and don’t want them to change unless you add/remove an image. FotoAlbum albums can be multi-level with groups within the album. FotoAlbum provides an “auto-tagging” feature that can automatically add keywords to pictures when they are assigned to albums. This is useful for tagging images with keywords based upon the albums they are assigned.

Smart Albums, which are shown as the purple folders, are dynamically modified to contain all images that match the filter you specify when creating the album. As pictures are added or changed in your collection, the images will be added/removed from the smart album automatically based upon the picture attributes. Smart albums are a powerful way of creating dynamic groupings of images based upon metadata such as date, ratings, keywords, etc.

- **Keywords, captions, comments, ratings**

Other useful properties associated with images include keywords, captions, comments and ratings. These can be easily assigned using the picture properties panel or keyboard shortcuts. If images already contain any of these properties, they will be automatically imported. Keywords and captions can be searched using the Quick Search at the top of FotoAlbum. By entering a search string into

the Quick Search field, all captions, keywords and filenames will be searched and any matches will be displayed in the thumbnail area. To clear the quick search, click on the “Clear” button or the “X” to the right of the quick filter field.

Viewing albums

Once you have created albums and smart albums, you can view a certain album by clicking on the album name in the “All Pictures” tree. Normal albums can also be viewed by clicking on their album button at the top of FotoAlbum. By default, FotoAlbum displays all pictures in the album or group that you select (including sub-groups). To change this behavior so that only the pictures in the selected group are displayed, you can use the “Display only in the selected album/group” preference.

Applying filters

Once images have been tagged, you can filter the displayed images with several different methods.

- **Quick Search:** By typing in the quick search field at the top of FotoAlbum, you can quickly search by caption, filename or keywords.
- **Smart Albums:** By creating smart albums with specific filters, you can easily view a collection of images that match certain criteria.
- **Temporary Filter:** By clicking on the “Filter” button, you can apply a temporary filter to the current view.
- **Date Selector:** If you click on a year or month in the top date histogram, you can filter the viewed images to only ones in the current date.

Note: To clear any current filter and display all images, click on the “Clear” button at the top of FotoAlbum.

Editing

FotoAlbum has the ability to perform image editing to correct the most common types of image problems including brightness, contrast, sharpening, cropping and red-eye removal. To launch FotoAlbum's built-in editor, select a thumbnail and click on the "Edit" button in the bottom taskbar.

- **Rotating images**

The most common correction needing to be performed is rotating images that are oriented improperly. If your camera has an orientation sensor, then FotoAlbum can auto-rotate images during import to fix the orientation. In order to perform lossless image rotations, select the images that need to be rotated and click on the appropriate "Rotate" button at the bottom taskbar.

- **Built-in editing (red-eye removal, brightness, cropping, etc).**

At the top of the FotoAlbum editor, you have options for auto or manual adjusting brightness and contrast, cropping, fixing red eye, rotating and applying filters. By using these features, you can correct the most common image problems. If you use other editing tools such as Adobe PhotoShop, FotoAlbum provides an easy way to interface with those tools.

- **Using external (3rd party) editors**

FotoAlbum provides an easy way to launch additional editors in order to perform more complex or specialized editing. FotoAlbum can also automatically create backups of your images before the external editors are launched to ensure you can always get back to the original image. To define the external tools and control the optional backup, use the "Tools->Edit Tools" menu option.

Sharing Images

Once you have gathered and organized your images, you can share them with family and friends using several methods.

- **Sharing online using your FotoShare account**

FotoAlbum integrates with the www.fototime.com photo sharing site to provide a seamless online sharing of your albums. By marking images as published, the FotoSync process will ensure that the images are synced to the FotoTime website, including any albums, captions, dates, keywords associated with them. In addition, the bi-directional FotoSync will download any images that were uploaded to the site from another location and/or changes made to your online

albums. The FotoSync process performs minimal updates so that changes to keywords, albums and captions can be made without re-uploading images. To try the FotoSync Process, you merely need to add some pictures to an album (published pictures must belong to at least one album) and then right-click on the thumbnails and choose “Published->Public (or private).” To sync the current state of your albums with www.fototime.com, merely press the “FotoSync” button. You will be prompted to select your FotoShare account or create a new one. For evaluation purposes, create a new account and continue with the sync. FotoAlbum will upload the published pictures. Once done with the sync, you can press the “View Web” button at the top to see your published pictures on the www.fototime.com website. Guests can view, download and print your images if you invite them using the “Share Pictures” link on the FotoTime site, or they can login as a guest with your e-mail address to view your public pictures. Private pictures require an invite to be viewable.

- **Syncing with iPod’s**

FotoAlbum Pro can sync your albums to many handheld devices for display, transferring to another system or archiving purposes. To sync albums to an iPod:

- 1) The iPod must be a model with a color screen (if you wish to view the photos. Non-color models can be used for backup syncing).
- 2) The iPod must be configured to appear as a removable drive in Windows Explorer (“Enable disk use” must be turned on in iTunes).
- 3) On the Device view in FotoAlbum, click on the iPod and use the “Sync Device...” button to add or update the pictures on the iPod. FotoAlbum will create photo playlists that match the albums, but will not modify the songs and song playlists that are already on the iPod.

- **Sharing with a U3 Smart Device**

FotoAlbum Pro can be installed to run from a U3 Smart device, which provides complete album management from any PC that you can plug in a USB flash drive. To install FotoAlbum Pro onto a U3 device, connect the drive and then click on “Devices->Install U3 FotoAlbum”. Once installed on the device, albums can be synced to the device in the same manner as with iPod’s (see above). To learn more about U3, refer to: <http://www.u3.com>.

- **E-mailing images**

For quick e-mailing of images from within FotoAlbum, you can select any number of image(s) and use the E-mail wizard to resize and send them.

FotoAlbum provides several e-mail methods including:

- Built-in e-mail (through SMTP)
- Using your default mail client
- Using an external program

- **Creating FotoCD's, FotoShows and Slideshows**

FotoAlbum Pro can produce standalone slideshows of your images in several different formats.

- **FotoCD:** FotoAlbum Pro can burn directly to CD's or DVD's all or part of your image collection in a format that can be displayed with the same capabilities on another Windows based system. Original or resized versions of your files can be saved onto the CD's or DVD's. To create a FotoCD, insert a blank CD or DVD into your CD or DVD burner and use the FotoCD wizard by choosing "Create->Create FotoCD" where you will be given options to control what albums are placed on the CD as well as how the CD will operate.
- **FotoShow:** FotoAlbum Pro can create videos (AVI or WMV) with transitions and background music. The resulting videos can be easily shared using the FotoSync process or E-mail option. To create a FotoShow, choose the "Create->Create FotoShow" menu option.
- **Slideshow:** Self-contained slideshow executables can be produced that allow an easy form of distributing a self-running slideshow without needing a video player. To start the slideshow wizard which walks you through creating a slideshow, choose the "Create->Create Slideshow" menu option.

- **Printing pictures local or ordering prints**

From within FotoAlbum Pro you can print to a local printer or use the built-in shopping cart to easily order prints or gifts that can be delivered to any location. To print images on a local printer, select the image(s) and click on the "Print" button in the bottom taskbar. To order prints to be delivered, click on the "Buy Prints" button.

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