

RT2399 Bring the Family Photo Album to Life on HD Video

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Before we begin: Slideshows of the family picture album are cool, and I will show you some really easy ways to make them, but we are here to make those pictures, and the people in them, come to life! We are here to make movies!

I. Movies Tell Stories

Looking at pictures stirs our memories! If we did not know the people or circumstances in the picture then the photo provides a contextual basis for us to get to know them.

Movies can make memories! They build memories through sight, sound, emotions, and feelings.

Tip #1 Tell real meaningful stories in your movies

II. Building Blocks to a Great Movie (Story)

First and foremost know the story you want to tell. Don't start with the pictures and hope they tell a story. Start with a story and then find the pictures that illustrate the story you are telling. Before you make the movie you are going to have to learn the details of the story you want to tell. Get as much detail as you can about the people, places, and events in your story before you try and tell it.

Pictures

In most cases you will start with the images you already have to illustrate your story. Don't stop with what you have! Consider gathering supplemental images of the places and times of your story. Find pictures in books, magazines, family search, and newspapers from that time period if possible. Remember you are telling a story. If your images are from prints or negatives from the days of film consider high quality options for digital scanning (one of our favorites is Costco.)

Videos

If you have video to use it can really enhance a movie. Try to get the highest quality possible. If you can't get video, or if the story you are telling came before the time of video you can always add video effects like zoom, pan, and scan to your pictures to make them more attractive.

Music

Music conveys emotion in a way that nothing else can. Find the music that goes with the story. My grandmother will forever be tied to The Battle Hymn of the Republic in my mind. A story about her with any other music would not be right. Find that meaningful music for every story you tell.

Music is subject to licensing and copyright laws. If you use music that is subject to these laws make sure that your use complies with the rules.

Words

There is something powerful about hearing or seeing the words from their source. If you have actual voice recordings use them! If all you have is written words use them in written form!

Narration

If you don't have the words from the source simple narration can be very effective. Remember narration is there to fill in the gaps between images not to describe the image. No one wants to watch a movie where the narrator says "... And this is Uncle Charlie when he was 34. And here's Uncle Charlie at 45... and here he is at..." Tell the story in the narration and let the pictures speak for themselves.

Tip #2 A great movie will use many building blocks to tell a simple story!

III. Build it with Software

Computers make the process of lacing all the building blocks together a simple and even fun creative experience.

Editing Software

There are tons of different editing programs on the market ranging in price from free to incredibly expensive. You can get great results with free software but you will need to put in some time to learn the software and how it works.

Software Editing as a Service

There are lots of online video editing services you can use to help you compile and tell your stories. They can be easy to use and very helpful. They generally cost based on usage or subscription.

Tip#3 Identify and learn to use good tools.

IV. Distribution Options

Physical Disk

It's pretty straight forward to burn your movie to a disk for storage. You may also want to make your own DVD or BluRay discs complete with their own custom menu. There are lots of software programs that will help you do this ranging from the free to the expensive.

Online Publication

Publishing your movies to social media sites is great for distribution and ease of access. Consider implications of licensing and copyrights before publishing anything to the public internet.

Saving and Storing your work

There is a rule in protecting any data called the 3-2-1 rule. The rule simple says that you should keep 3 copies of your work on 2 different media types and at least one of those copies should be in a different physical location.

Tip# 4 Use multiple storage and distribution methods.
