

Welcome on Friday, October 29, 2004.

Microsoft Photo Story 3

Published By Marc Liron - Microsoft MVP In Digital Media

Introducing To Microsoft Photo Story 3...

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Back in April 2004, I had the opportunity to take a look at Microsoft Photo Story 3, whilst visiting the Windows Media Team building as part of the MVP annual get together.

POPULAR XP NEWSLETTER

And I loved what I saw...

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In fact I was not the only one, even "[PapaJohn](#)" the online Guru for **Windows Movie Maker** and **Photo Story 2** was impressed!

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Actually you probably don't have to imagine to hard if you are anything like me, my laptop is full of family photos etc.

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So what exactly can we do with **ALL** these digital images?

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Animating your photos automatically or creating your own effects with pan and zoom options... Even adding transitions, captions, and titles to give YOUR story a "professional" look.

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You see *Microsoft Photo Story 3* allows *YOU* to get extremely creative with your digital memories...

[0x800A138F](#)

And best of ALL it is **FREE** to *genuine* owners of Windows XP!

[0x8007007E](#)

[0x80072EE2](#)

So Lets Take A Tour Of Microsoft Photo Story 3

[0x80072EFD](#)

(NB - I have provided some samples at the end of this article for you to view and make more sense of some of the features of Photo Story 3.)

[800C0008](#)

[0x8DDD0018](#)

Import And Arrange Your Pictures

[0xc00d1199](#)

When you run Photo Story 3, with the view to making a new project, the first option is to select "Begin a new story"... After clicking this option our first task is to "import" our pictures.

[c00d11ba](#)

[0x800B0004](#)

[wmpdxdm-dll](#)

You can import pictures from your computer, a network folder, or an MSN Groups Web site. For each story, you can import up to **300** pictures, which can be files with .bmp, .dib, .eps, .gif, .jhif, .jpe, .jpeg, .jpg, .pcd, .pcx, .png, .psd, .rle, .tga, and .tif file name extensions.

[wmp-dll](#)

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DIGITAL MEDIA

This is achieved by using the inbuilt File Browser rather than calling upon the familiar Windows Explorer window. Personally I prefer the Photo Story 3 file browser as it is simple to navigate and has a great zoom in/out feature!

[Codec SVCD](#)

[Divx & WMP](#)

You can also import pictures from your Digital Image Library if **Microsoft Digital Image Pro 10** is installed on your computer and you have opened the Digital Image Library.

[Windows XP Codecs](#)

TRIAL SOFTWARE

Your pictures appear in the film strip at the bottom of the page. If you import more pictures, *Microsoft Photo Story 3* adds them at the end of the film strip. (see Fig 1.)

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Fig 1 - Importing images

Website Feed:

[XML RSS Feed](#)

Not sure What RSS is? Find out [more here](#).

Removing Black Borders

Once you have selected your pictures, and they are shown in the "film strip", you have the option to use the "Remove black borders button" if required.

The button is available if Photo Story 3 detects that some pictures in your story do not have a **4:3 aspect ratio** (which is the relation of the width to the height of the picture.) This is a handy feature to make your "story" look professional.

Check out my Windows XP Blog:

Ramblings of an XP Junkie... [XML](#)

[ATI Supports Microsoft Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005](#)

[Microsoft Security Bulletin Re-Releases - October 2004](#)

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Fig 2 - Removing black borders

There is also a "picture preview" facility and this is of particular use if you decide to use any of the picture editing tools available:

- Correct Colour Levels
- Correct Red Eye
- Rotate Counter clockwise
- Rotate Clockwise

Add Titles To Your Picture

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The next step is to **add a title** page at the beginning and end of your story. You can also add titles to each picture in your story or to selected pictures only.

By **default**, when you add a title to a picture, the picture is static. No motion, or panning and zooming effects are applied to pictures with titles. But this can be manually changed using the custom motion tool, if you so choose.

Add Narration And Custom Motion

You can record up to five minutes of narration for each picture in your story (optional). You can narrate the pictures in any order you want and if you do not like the narration for a picture, you can delete the narration and record it again. (see Fig 3.)

Deleting the narration does not delete any of the other enhancements made to your story so far!

(You can also type notes for each picture to aid your memory as you narrate!)



[Click to enlarge](#)

Fig 3 - Add narration

Customizing Motion & Selecting Transitions

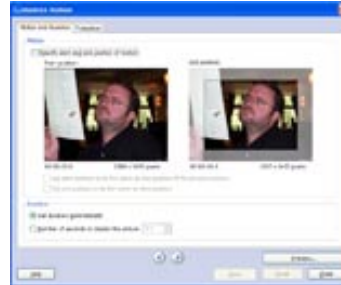
If you do **NOT** want Microsoft Photo Story 3 to determine the individual picture panning and zooming effects *automatically*, you can choose to control these effects *manually* in the "**Customize Motion**" window (see Fig 4).

By setting the motion manually, you can select the general areas of a picture that will appear at the beginning and end of the picture's video clip.

In the Customize Motion window, you can also do one or more of the following:

- Specify the number of seconds that a picture without narration is displayed when your story is played. (The settings you specify in this dialog box only apply to the selected picture.)

- Specify whether a picture starts playing with a transition, and select the transition.
- Specify the number of seconds that a transition is displayed when your story is played. (The settings you specify in this dialog box only apply to the selected picture.)



[Click to enlarge](#)

Fig 4 - Customize motion & transitions

Adding Background Music To Your Story

You can add background music that plays during your story. A different piece of music can play for each picture or for a group of pictures. You can add as many pieces of music to a story as there are pictures in the story. (Though this will increase the overall time it takes to save the finished story and the actual size of the file too.)

There are two types of music you can add as a background to your story. (see Fig 5.)

WMA, MP3 and WAV

You can use music from your computer such as WMA, MP3 and WAV files. Photo Story will then make your story as long as the music you are adding. So a 3:30 minute MP3 track will mean a 3:30 minute Photo Story...

Please note though that if you are trying to use a DRM (Digital Rights Management) protected track, this will NOT work with Photo Story 3.

(e.g. tracks you have bought and downloaded from MSN Music Store.)



[Click to enlarge](#)

Fig 5 - Add background music

The Create Music option

The Create Music option lets you customize pre-recorded pieces and styles of music by selecting the genre, style, bands, mood, tempo, and intensity of the music. These are royalty free so no fear of copyright infringement by using them! (see Fig 6.)



[Click to enlarge](#)

Fig 6 - Create music options

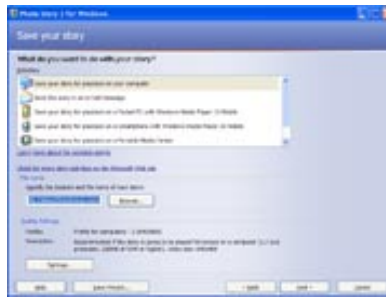
Saving Your Story With "Activities".

You can select an "activity" for your story and save it. The activity that you select for your story determines which profiles or quality settings are available for your story. (see Fig 7.)

Default activities include saving the story to play on your **computer**, sending the story in an **e-mail** message, and saving the story for playing on portable devices such as **Portable Media Center's**, **Pocket PCs** and **Smartphones**.

NB - If you save the story for playback on a portable device, you must use another program to copy the story to the device.

e.g. Windows Media Player 10 is required to copy content onto a Portable Media Center.



Click to enlarge

Fig 7 - Save your project

Sample Story Files I have Created From A Single Project

The finished Microsoft Photo Story 3 files are here: (I suggest you "right-click" and select Save Target As... then save to your hard drive.)

This file is suitable for those with **PC's over** 2.4 GHz

[sailor800x600.wmv](#)

This file is suitable for those with **PC's over** 1.7 GHz

[sailor640x480.wmv](#)

This file is suitable for those with **PC's over** 700MHz

[sailor320x240.wmv](#)

This file is suitable for those with **Portable Media Center's**

[sailorpmc.wmv](#)

This file is suitable for those with **Pocket PC's** & WMP10 Mobile

[sailorpocketpc.wmv](#)

This file is suitable for those with **Smartphone's** & WMP10 Mobile

[sailorsmartphone.wmv](#)

PapaJohn also has a demo of using **Photo Story 3** with **Movie Maker 2**:

<http://www.eicsoftware.com/PapaJohn/MM2/video/PS3-MM2-Echo-Sample.wmv>

...and a sample **Photo Story 3** file here:

www.eicsoftware.com/PapaJohn/MM2/video/PS3-Sample-Sunset.wmv

PapaJohn is also the author of ["Windows XP Movie Maker 2: Do Amazing Things."](#)

Developers Get Ready!

Microsoft Photo Story 3 has an **open plug-in architecture** which means as a developer you can extend the functionality of this fantastic product...

So what could you develop?

- How about a plug-in that allows folk to transcode the final story from Windows Media Video 9 Image v2 to MPEG2 for instance?
- How about a plug-in that will allow you to burn to VCD or DVD?
- How about a plug-in that allows you to upload the final story via FTP?

Microsoft is expecting developers to do just these things and is providing a section on the Photo Story 3 website, called [Photo Story Activities](#), where it will show case these plug-ins!

Final Comments:

1) Microsoft Photo Story 3 does **NOT** use the standard Windows Media Video (WMV) codec but a special codec developed for compressing still images:

Windows Media Video 9 Image v2

In very basic terms this codec can take just **one** frame and apply a set of "motion rules" so that you can create a video story of your images, *without* the usual **25 or 30** frames per second as happens with the normal **WMV** codecs.

Because of this you can have stunning stories created within minutes that have a very small file size! ... Even emailing a video is possible because of this :-)

(Audio is compressed by using the Windows Media Audio 9.1 codec.)

2) In my opinion **ANY** owner of Windows XP should be trying out this **FREE** software! It's just so cool and so simple to use.

No video and audio time lines to worry about!

3) I am so **impressed** with this software that I am now looking at using it to create product recommendations on my website...

For example I have created one already and included it on my review of [WinTasks Pro 5](#) Check it out!

How To Get YOUR Copy Of Microsoft Photo Story 3

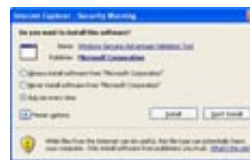
So how can you get **your** copy now?

Well as already described, this is a FREE product. BUT, you **MUST** be running an "activated" version of either:

Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition, Windows XP Professional, Windows XP Media Center Edition, or Windows XP Tablet PC Edition.

Photo Story 3 is part of Microsoft's new [Windows Genuine Advantage validation](#) program. So if your installation of XP is **pirated** you will not be able to use Microsoft Photo Story 3.

If this is your first time using the "Windows Genuine Advantage validation program you will be asked to install an small ActiveX file in order to proceed. (see Fig 8.)



[Click to enlarge](#)

Fig 8 - Install Active X file

Ready to grab your copy?...head on over to:

<http://www.updatexp.com/photostory3>

Thanks for reading and I hope you found this article on **Microsoft Photo Story 3** interesting... why not sign up for my Windows XP newsletter *now*?

Kind Regards



Marc Liron - [Bio](#)

Microsoft Digital Media MVP

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