

Photo organizing complex

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What do people want to save most when there is danger of fire, flood or other peril? Photos. Photos deteriorate or become discoloured with age unless they are stored in perfect conditions. So says Meg Macintyre, professional Photo Organizer and owner of Megabyte Memories Photo Organizing.

Photo organizing sounds like a simple idea but, in our world of technological innovation, collecting, cataloguing, and organizing photographs has become a complex process not to be undertaken by the faint of heart.

It has indeed grown into a new industry with a professional association, The Association of Personal Photo Organizers (APPO), and industry professionals available for private hire. Meg Macintyre is a Caledon woman looking to bring this new way of cataloguing memories to your doorstep.

Before becoming a professional, Meg decided to undertake the organization of her own family's photo collection, with the aim of giving copies to her daughters as Christmas gifts.

Having some natural abilities with software and computers, Meg searched for software that would help her piece together her albums. It was much more complicated than she had originally imagined, and her efforts led her to the APPO where she continued to learn and experiment in the industry. After a few months, the timing was right and Meg decided to launch her own business.

Anyone can scan, says Meg, that's the least important thing I do.

The range of services offered by Megabyte Memories encompasses the print, digital, and complex technological aspects of the process. One of the most valuable services Meg provides is the addition of metadata which, when done correctly, is the equivalent of writing on the back of an old photo.

All information about the photo is entered into a system designed to make it immediately accessible, while also ensuring that everything catalogued is digitally secure and backed up. She points to her own example of losing three laptops with a hundred years worth of family photos in them after a break-in in at her house.

Thankfully it was mitigated by the fact she had backed up her collection on iCloud. A friend who lost her laptop in a car break-in, was not so fortunate.

A main feature of digitally cataloguing information is that Meg can input keywords and meaningful file names to make all photo collections highly searchable.

Digital captions and other specific information can be added according to what the client wants or needs. Meg is also skilled at data recovery of lost photos, and even extracting photos from computers that no longer work.

Photo organizing is a very software-driven business, and requires sophisticated applications not available to or useable by the average person. Especially in dealing with large collections, hiring a professional is a viable alternative for do-it-yourself memory preservation.

Memories are our most prized possessions, says Meg.

Indeed, her services have therapeutic applications for the elderly and those suffering from dementia. Studies have shown that looking at old photos, especially with the slideshow services Megabyte Memories provides, calms individuals suffering from dementia and makes them happier. One customer, who was given a slideshow of memories for his eightieth birthday, was so enamoured of the presentation that he soon began replaying it so often his caregivers had to look for a way to restrict his access. Meg also believes that photo sharing is a great way to bring families together so children understand what happened in the past, what they have, and feel a connection to their past and heritage.

In the future Meg Macintyre hopes to offer DIY workshops. For now, the services she provides include slideshows, digital flipbooks, facial recognition, document scanning, and working with copyrights for businesses and offices. She also offers free consultations by phone, in which she encourages people to tell her about their photo challenges. Visit www.megabytememories.com or email meg@megabytememories.com for more information.

People love and value their photos, but often don't know how to access and enjoy them. I assess a client's needs, set up a system for them, and teach them how to protect, manage, share and enjoy their collections.