



# Preserving Digital Photos



Mark Schulman

# The Promise of Digital Photography



# The Way Things Used to Be



# Rise of Digital Media



- 2002 Digital cameras outsold film cameras
- 2004 Kodak announced it would no longer sell film cameras in developed world
- 2006 Nikon stops production of all but two models of film camera
- 2010 World-wide camera phones > 1 billion

Almost all digital cameras also take video





# Advantages of Digital Photos

- Costs almost nothing
- Easy to take thousands of photos
- Can make unlimited perfect copies
- Editable
- Huge capacity
- Can last forever
- Will never fade, smear, or tear



# The Downside

- Intangible
- Countless digital photos are ***lost*** every day
- Most people don't know how to preserve them



# The Box



# Something to Think About

“ Our family history  
ended the day we  
got a digital camera.”

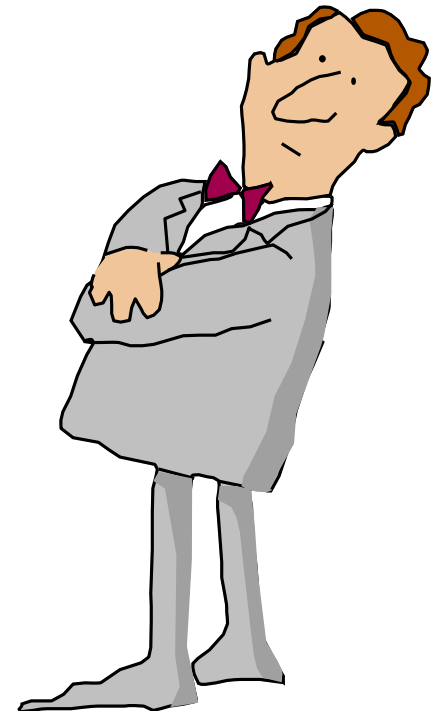


# Preserving Your Photos



You want to make sure that ...

- your photos survive
- your photos are identifiable
- your photos are found



# Making Sure Your Photos Survive



# Copies Copies Copies!

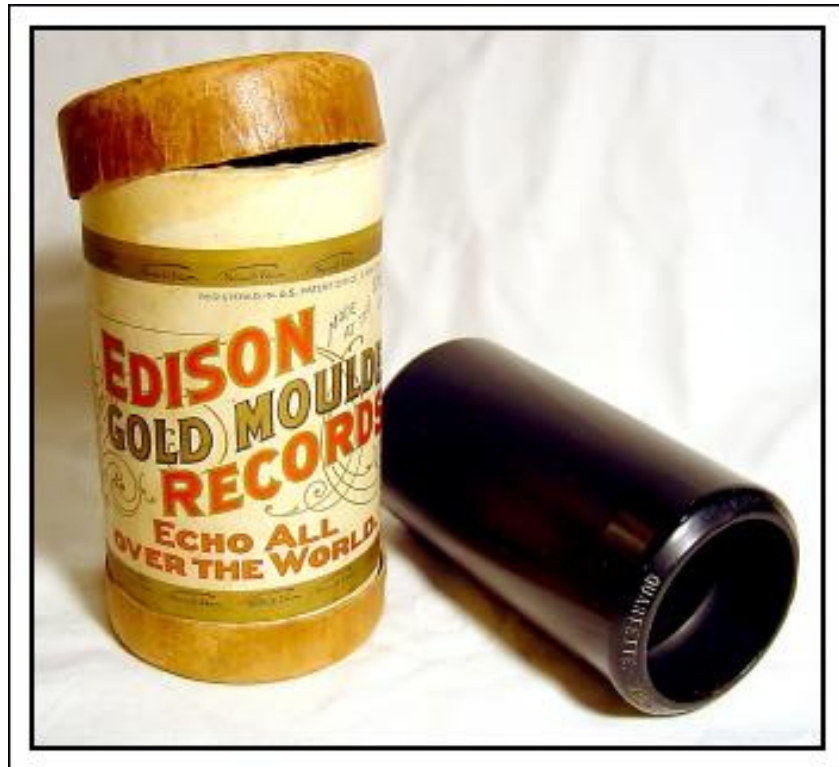
- Your photos should never exist in only one place
- All hard drives eventually fail
- Easy to erase accidentally



# What Will Survive?

100 years from now ...

- What will physically survive?
- What will people be able to use?





# We Thought They'd Last Forever



# Poor Choices



Memory cards (limited life)



Flash drives (limited life)



Diskettes (obsolete)



# The Right Track

- Good quality CDs or DVDs
- Don't use ...
  - re-writable discs
  - Blu-Ray discs

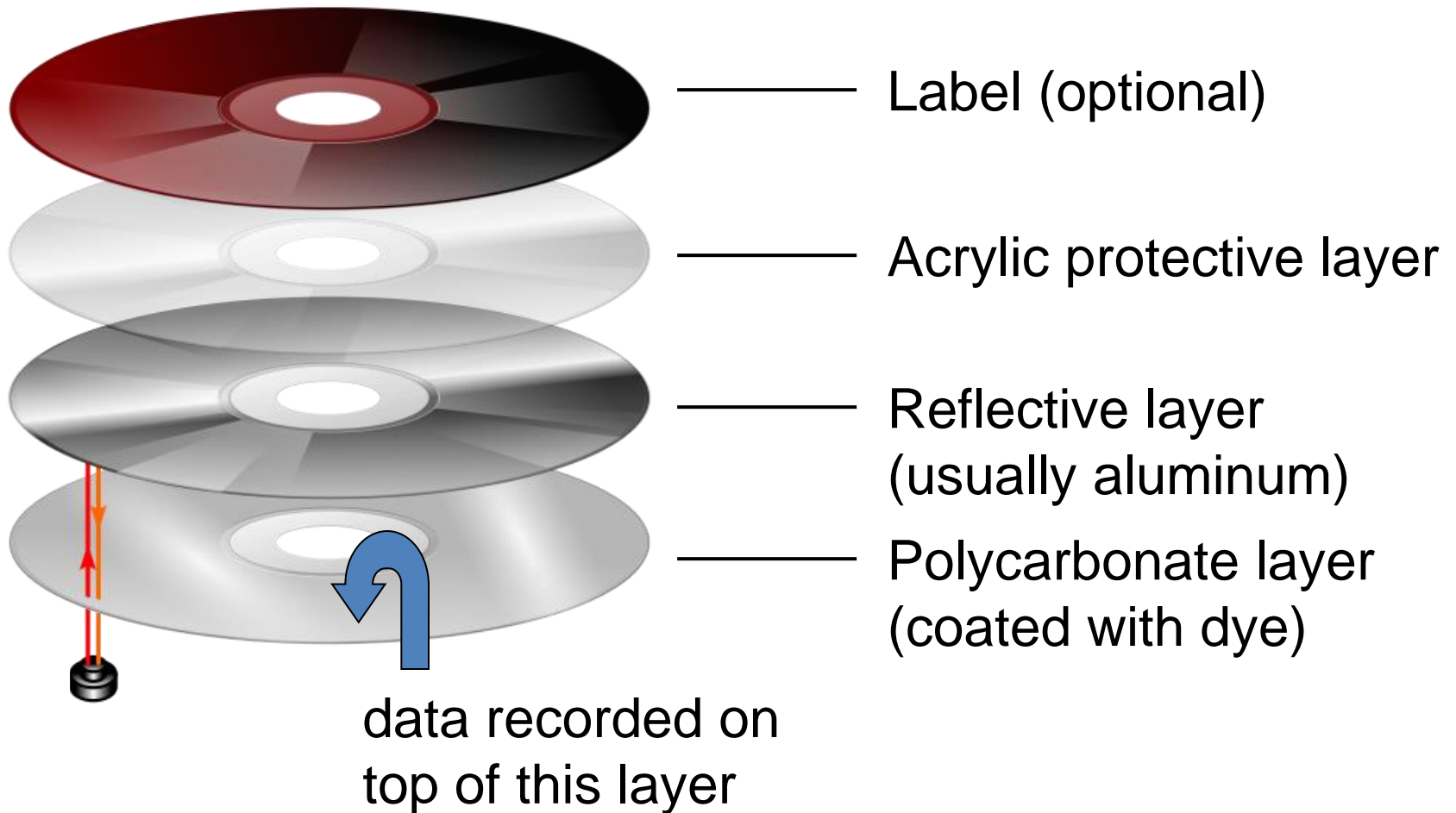


**CD-R  
DVD-R  
DVD+R**



**CD-RW  
DVD-RW  
DVD+RW  
DVD-RAM  
Blu-Ray**

# Anatomy of a CD





# What Can Go Wrong?

- Aluminum corrodes
- Dye degrades
- Physical damage



# Archival CDs & DVDs

- Reflective layer is gold instead of aluminum
- Special long-lasting dyes
- 100+ years (?)



# Archival DVDs

Verbatim UltraLife Gold Archival DVDs  
5-pack with cases - \$10.95 on Amazon



# Help Your CDs & DVDs Survive



- Store in a cool, dry, dark place
- Store in plastic cases
- Label the cases
- Don't write on the discs
- Don't use stick-on labels
- Buy name brand (JVC, TDK, Memorex, Maxell, Verbatim, Sony, others)



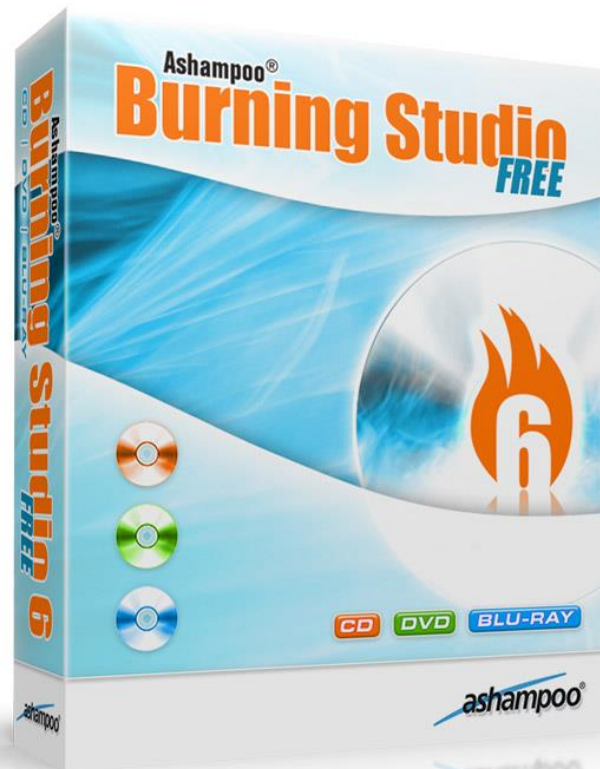


# Make Copies!

- You can make endless perfect copies
- Keep copies elsewhere (work, friends)



# What I Use



[www.ashampoo.com](http://www.ashampoo.com)

# Other Option: External Hard Drives

- Spinning drive, *not SSD*
- Reliable brand name
- Choose lower capacity - stay away from the bleeding edge
- Store in a cool, dry place
- Spin up occasionally





# A New Years Tradition

- Copy DVDs
- Spin up hard drives
- Send copies to friends and family



# Online Services



- Great for sharing photos
- Good for “yet another place” to store your photos
- Don’t count on them as permanent storage



- 
- A collage of ten Polaroid-style photographs arranged in a scattered, overlapping fashion. Each photo features a person, primarily women and children, wearing various styles of necklaces. The necklaces include pendants (like a green square, a red heart, and a blue heart), beads, and chokers. The subjects are shown in different settings and poses, some smiling, some looking directly at the camera, and others in profile. The background of the entire collage is white.

# How Long will Prints Last?



“ In 20, 50, or 100 years, ”  
we’ll know what really  
worked and what didn’t  
... but until then all we  
can do is guess.

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**Richard Seiling**

Photographer and owner of West Coast Imaging

# Our Best Guess

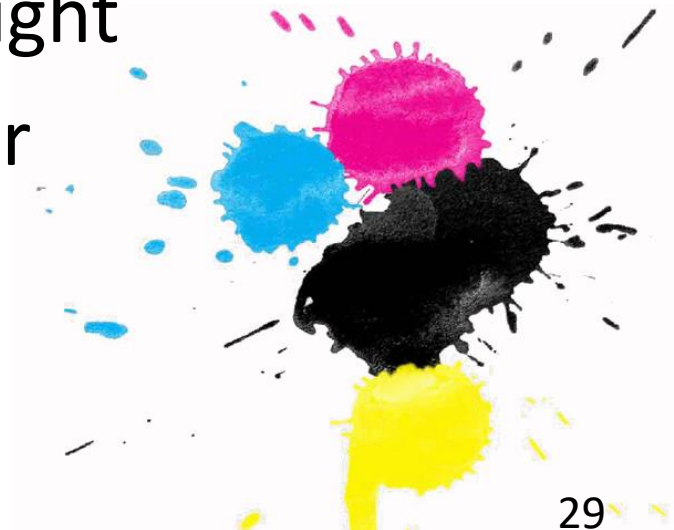


Color prints and negatives	40 years
Inkjet photos under ideal circumstances	75+ years
Most inkjet photos	< 5 years



# Making Prints Last

- Good photo printer
- Manufacturer's ink
- Premium photo paper (not fast dry)
- Keep out of direct sunlight
- If displayed, keep under glass



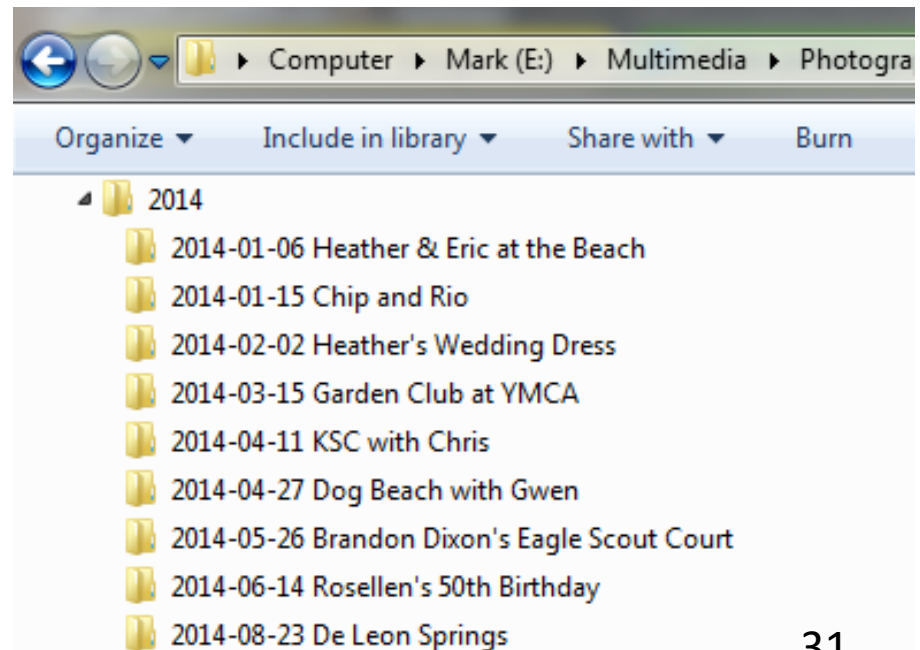
# Making Sure Your Photos are Identified





# Identifying Your Photos

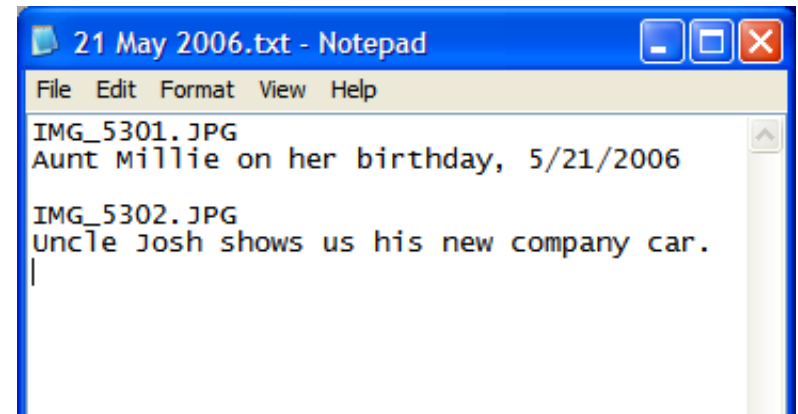
- You can't write on the back of a digital photo
- Organize your photos into meaningful folders



# Identifying Your Photos



- Use Notepad (or something similar) to create text files with information about your photos
- Don't rely on ...
  - Word documents
  - Photo-organizing software, such as Picasa



# Making Sure Your Photos Are Found



# Losing Digital Photos

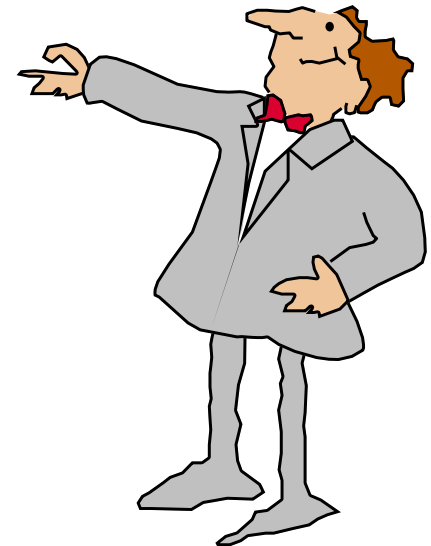
- Digital photos don't stand out like a box of printed photos does
- Photos stored only on your computer's hard drive are easy to lose
- An individual CD or memory card is too easy to miss



# Make Your Photos Findable



- Put CDs, DVDs, and hard drives of photos with your important papers
- Tell people where they are, especially kids
- Label hard drives and CD/DVD *cases*
- Key point: Make sure people realize what they've found





# Create a Book

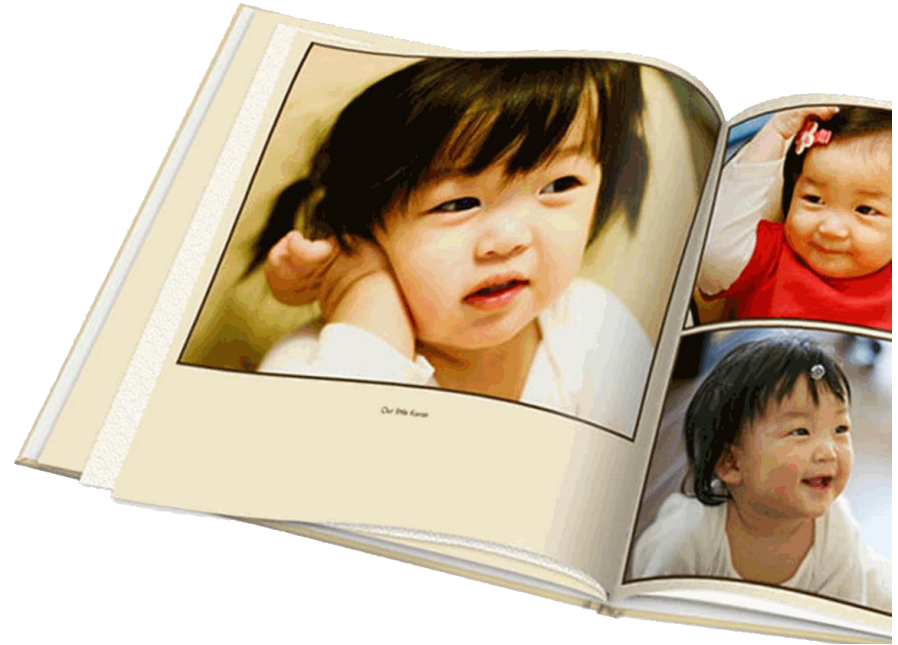
Create a photo book ...



... and put your DVD in the back of the book

# A Few Book Publishers

- [blurb.com](http://blurb.com)
- [mypublisher.com](http://mypublisher.com)
- [shutterfly.com](http://shutterfly.com)
- MixBook
- Pinhole Press



Deluxe hard-cover book with Groupon: \$10  
+ shipping

# Less Expensive ...

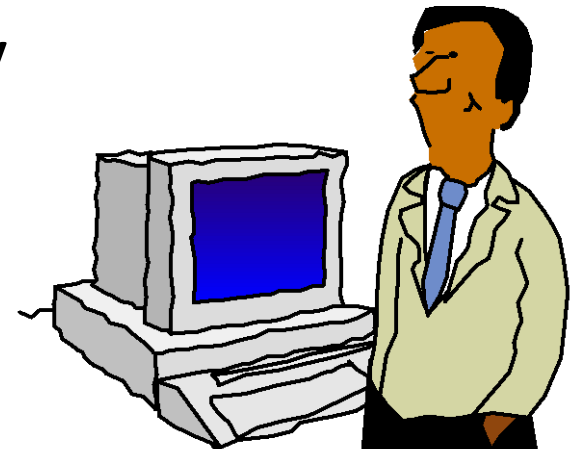
- Print a selection of photos and make a photo album
- Put your CD/DVD in the back



# The Family Archivist

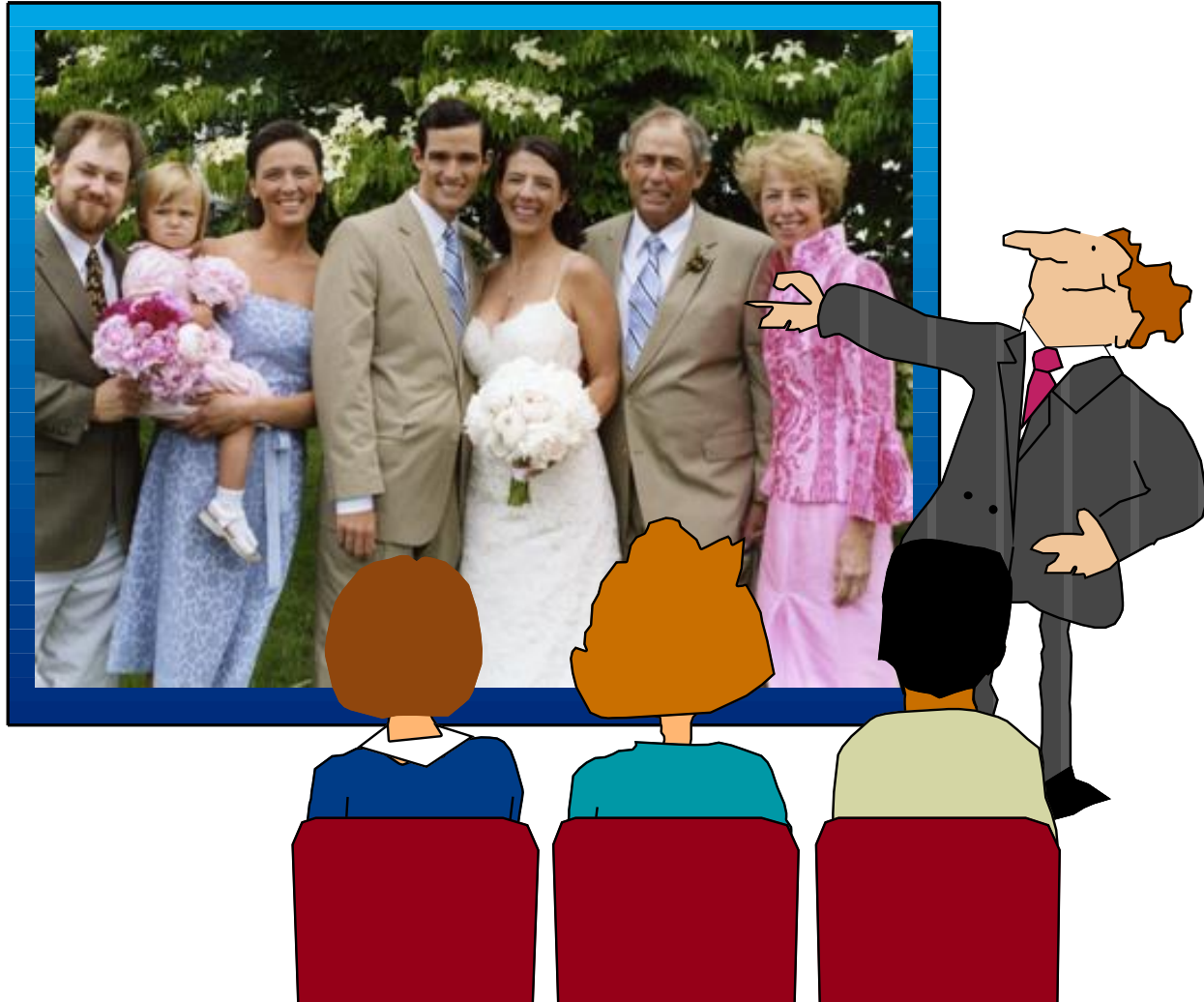


- Collects materials from family members
- Makes photos available to everyone
- Makes sure lots of copies exist
- Makes new “fresh” copies on a regular basis
- Watches for technology changes
  - file formats
  - storage media





# Conclusion





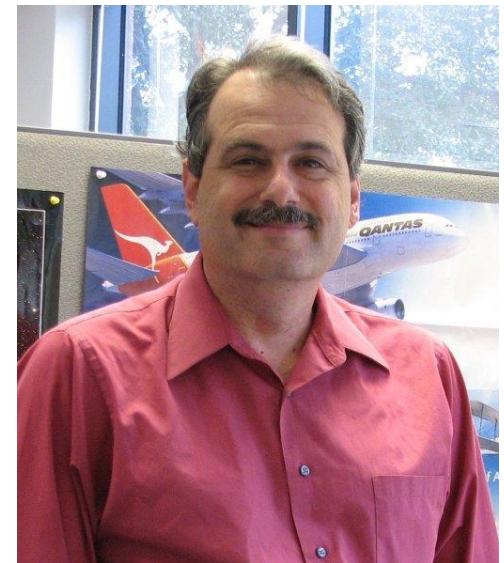
# Questions?

## Preserving Digital Photos

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An International  
Association of Technology  
& Computer User Groups