

Scrapbooking 2.0: Crafting for the next generation

By SUZANNE KENNEDY

Scrapbooking has been popular since the 1980s. There are camps, weekend getaways, home businesses, and friendly get-togethers that cater to the scrappy scrapbooker looking to create amazing projects that showcase their family and vacations. The problem is that real-life scrapbooking is expensive and space-consuming. Purchasing all the necessary equipment, embellishments, tools and books can run you into the hundreds, even thousands, and where do you store it all? Not many of us have a dedicated craft room. (Oh to dream!)

The answer to your prayers is online scrapbooking. It takes up no extra space – just a computer or tablet (yes, you can scrap on a tablet). The prices start at free and head up through reasonable, only bordering on expensive if you feel like it.

The first step is to decide what your purpose is. Is it a vacation? A child's first year? Wedding? How many pictures do you want to include? Do you want to tell a story or simply show pictures?

How much time and effort do you want to spend on your project?



You can drag and drop pictures into a professionally created template or start with your pictures and build the page around them.

Making those decisions is going to help you narrow down which program you want to use. Your choices are to download a software program (like Smilebox) or use an online program (like Heritage Makers or Mixbook). Some of the “do-it-while-you’re-online” sites charge a monthly fee and some are free, but you pay when you order a book.

Obviously, the monthly fee sites of-

fer more templates and embellishments than the free sites.

For beginners, I recommend using a site with no monthly charge. Most will have plenty of cute templates and extras for you to get started. Plus, if you're anything like me, I start off gangbusters, but by week two I'm back to being forced to carve out some time at one in the morning to work on my project. Using a site with no monthly fee allows you to work whenever you can, guilt-free. Then, when your project is almost done, you have the option of paying for one month if there's something that isn't offered for free. You can finish it off and order without paying a bundle.

That brings up an important topic. Cost. One of the best things about using Snapfish or something similar is knowing the cost up front. You choose the size book you want, the number of pictures on a page, and the like. Most sites will let you add pages on the end of the book, but it can get pricey.

Before you start working on a project, you'll want to gather your photos into one file. Most computers come pre-loaded with programs in which you can crop your pictures. You can crop them if you want, or just size and move them when you drop them into the template. Any other editing will need to happen prior to uploading your pictures. You can get rid of red eye, soften colors, or change some pictures to black and white with a program preloaded onto your computer – but you won't be able to do much of that once your pictures are on the page.

Once your pictures are loaded into the template or layout, you'll want to add embellishments and other accessories. In real life, these would be stickers or cut-outs, ribbons, etc. On the computer, they're just graphics. Be careful not to go overboard with these as your main focus should be the pictures themselves.

The last piece you will want to add is the journaling. You can write a whole story, or simply use captions to tell the “who, what, where, and when.” It's a personal preference and really depends on the type of book you are creating.

Before publishing the book (purchasing a copy), check to make sure that the final product is pleasing to the eye, and not chaotic. It will be a joy to look at and bring back great memories ready to share with future generations. Happy scrapping!

Suzanne Kennedy is a former middle school teacher who lives in Pendleton with her husband and four children.

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