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Fortop Album Creator -
Template selection

[Down the Memory Lane](#)

Create professional Flash photo albums fast and easy

There isn't one computer in the world without digital photos on it, no doubt about that. And if there is a computer that does not have such files, there's no worry, they'll soon find their way to it. Images are generally preserved under certain formats for a good compromise between quality and size on disk. JPEG is generally the common denominator in this sense as it is the most popular image format. However, it would be nice if special pictures would benefit from special treatment from us. Just like their palpable correspondents are framed and placed somewhere in plain view, so should happen with digital photos. Fortrop Digital Software comes with a pretty good solution. Their software will not apply frames to the image (**null** does), but will wrap them up into a slick looking photo album with minimum effort from the user. The full version of the application will cost you \$35.95, but it is a one-time fee and you get lifetime free upgrade and unlimited email technical support. Evaluation copy's restriction limit you to loading up to ten pictures, and Fortrop's logo will be displayed on every image. The interface is nothing you can't handle. It is split into four different menus that guide you through the steps of creating your photo album. First of all, you'll have to choose a template to frame your image. That is actually more like a theme for the entire album. There aren't too many choices available as there are only four categories and two of them come with only one template each (Special Event and Application). Summed up, all four categories hold a number of 14 different templates. Photo Collection menu is where you get to embed the images of the photo album. You can also append additional information that will be displayed in the album. You can add a photo title (the replacement of writing on the back of the pictures), the date when it was taken, rate it (up to five stars), add a little personal comment and more. These operations can be applied to each of the images in the album. Next step in completing your job is adding a little music on the background. The audio format range is quite wide and includes the popular types like MP3, WAV and WMA as well as video files (MPG, MPE, DAT, VOB, MP4, MOV, 3GP, WMV, ASF). But, during our testing MPG, MP4, VOB and WMV could not be added into the album as creation process generated an error. If you have a special order the tracks should be played in, just use the on-screen arrows and move them up and down in the list. The last step before getting to the final output options is Special Settings. Eleven options are waiting for configuration in order to create the best digital photo album possible. Zoom option (for both index photos - the little thumbs, and main images) can be chosen between Crop, Stretch and Full alternatives. The size of the photos in the album is also configurable, according to the templated used. In my case I have five options at hand (predefined (750x590), original size, 1125x885, 1500x1180 and 1500x1050) but these may vary. "Floating" template for instance provides a predefined size of 685x530, 1.5x of 1027x795, 2.0x of 1370x1060 and a five inch print (1500x1050) option. An album doesn't mean just mere browsing of the images and supports slide-show option. In Special Settings, the user can choose if the album should start in slide-show mode or not. The four loading styles are designed to show the progress of image loading in the web page (loading bars). There aren't too many of them, but give you a clue on the status of image loading. Scaling and fullscreen are also available options in the menu as well as setting the slide-show time interval in seconds. The last three options in the menu deal with looping the slide-show or the music. You also have control over the order of the music as it can run normally in the user defined order or it can be shuffled. After all the settings have been made, the only thing left is generating the album. Fortop Album Creator gives two choices for the output result: either wrap everything in an executable, or in a SWF file. In both cases, you are going to

need a SWF player. Don't fret, the application already has it prepared for you. Additionally, if you want to view the images in a web browser, there's no sweat, enable "Create loading HTML file" option and you're done. The application has an intuitive interface and will not create any problems, just beautifully wrapped memories. It works the same on XP as on Vista. **The Good** Extremely easy to use, Fortop Album Creator provides a four-step way to creating your digital photo album. All the images are wrapped up in a SWF file played by the built in Flash Player. Slide-show option is included and the time can be set by the user. Transitions between image display are automatically enabled. The slide-show can be accompanied by a wide range of audio files. The resulting photo album window is equipped with various options, from volume control button, slide-show control, printing option and search function to zoom control. **The Bad** In the evaluation screen there is mentioned that you will get two more free templates, although I failed to see this sign of good faith anywhere in the interface. After registering the application, the company logo was still present on the resulting photo album. Adding video files could not be completed as the application would display an error message and stop the process. There are very few options for this kind of money (despite the fact that it is a one-time fee). Only four transition effects and the number of templates is skimpy. **The Truth** The result is amazing and it does not take long to complete the generation of the album. All the user has to do is make a few settings here and there and add the desired images and music files. However, Fortop Album Creator is short on templates and transition effects. There is little variation in this sense and the user does not get the chance of adding or creating his/her own template image. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*