



*Low cost and lots of fun!*

**By: Ellen Wardle**

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## **About the Author**

Ellen Wardle has been making scrapbooks for several years.

Ellen started using a computer in her work and bought her first computer just a couple of years ago.

She started using a desktop publishing program for letters and also stationery for a community organization which she belonged to.

Then, she realized that this could also be a great help with producing her scrapbooks as well.

Ellen says that she is not interested in the technical aspects of her computer. She just wants to use her computer to make scrapbooking easier and to improve the results she gets without spending very much money.

This is her first book and she hopes it will introduce many people to the delightful art of scrapbooking and also help many hobbyists, who have some experience with traditional methods, use their computers to improve the results they get.

## Introduction

I wrote this ebook to help scrapbookers to get better results from the time and effort they put into their projects.

Scrapbooking is a very enjoyable hobby and useful for recording and sharing the most important and interesting events in our lives.

I will show you how you can use your computer to improve your scrapbook projects while saving time and money.

If you have been making your pages and projects without using your computer, I will show you how you can use your computer to improve your scrapbook projects while saving time and money.

This book will explain that it is easy for almost anyone to use their computer for their scrapbooking even if you don't know much about computers.

I'll answer your questions without any technical language because I am not an expert at all aspects of this hobby and especially not with computers.

I will tell you what works for me. This book gives you the short-cuts and plain explanations based on my own experience and what I have learned from other scrappers I have met face to face or through the Internet.

The results you get will depend, as they do with the traditional methods, on the quality of the materials you use and, above all, the thought and care which you give to your pages.

I have focused on computer programs which work on the Windows operating system because that is what I use.

I will give references for Macintosh users where I got information from people I believe are reliable.

Although most of the explanations are done with my favorite programs, I have looked at several others which might better suit you.

Some are quite expensive but there are some which are very low-cost or even free.

You don't need a very fast modern computer to produce great results. My PC still has the XP operating system because I can do everything that I need to with it.

If you are using Vista, Windows 7 or a different operating system, you will have to adjust the instructions at times.

The different computer programs will often have similar features with different names and the way that their menus and screens are arranged will differ. This can be a nuisance, but I was told that companies can take legal action against other companies which may have copied the layout which they developed.

I've included a range of resources which I either use or have had recommended to me.

Comments about sites, programs and services are just my own opinions. I never make any comments which are negative about the quality or other aspects of any company or its products. I don't mention those programs or companies in the book.

If I don't like the results I get, I take it up with them directly.

You can print out a copy of this book for your own reference.

I hope that it will help you to get the sort of satisfaction and enjoyment which I do from digital scrapbooking.

## What is Scrapbooking?

Scrapbooking is a popular way to collect and preserve our family history and other memories. Scrapbooks are records of people and events but they include relevant mementos to enhance and give background to the pictures and words.

Scrapbooks may focus a family's history, a person's life or a special event (such as a journey or a wedding), hobby, pets or other personal interest.

Scrapbooks become family treasures to be shared with relatives and heirlooms which are handed down through generations.

Scrapbooks grew in popularity from the time when it became possible to make multiple copies of photographs and more advanced but cheaper and easier to use cameras were developed.

Computers are becoming more popular with scrapbookers (often called 'scrappers') for preparing and organizing their projects.

One drawback has been that the papers and inks used with computers did not have the durability of the archive grade paper used for traditional scrapbooking.

Some printer companies, such as Epson, have enthusiastically supported scrapbookers. They produce kits of acid-free, lignin-free matte and semi-gloss papers and low-cost Guides to help scrapbookers use their products.



## **Is Digital Scrapbooking Better?**

Digital scrapbooking is a different way to produce parts of your scrapbook projects more quickly and often more cheaply.

You can even use your computer to produce complete projects.

It hasn't replaced traditional methods but it is a valuable addition to any scrapper's tool chest.

Our computers also make it possible for people like myself, with limited artistic ability and limited time, to produce scrapbooks which are much better than we ever could do without them!

Even people that are very good with the traditional methods can use their computer to organize their raw materials, enhance their projects, and save time and money.

Your computer will not remove your personality from a project. It gives you more options for expressing yourself and presenting the information.

Let's get started.

Ellen Wardle 2010

## What You Need

You need very little that you probably haven't already got, to get started with your first digital scrapbooking project.

You need:

A computer with an Internet connection. The computer which you used to buy this ebook probably has all the power you need to organize and create your projects.

Photos and other material to make your scrapbooks from.

A camera for taking photos which you will use in projects.

If you have a digital camera, you can easily transfer your new digital pictures into your computer with the cable and program which came with your camera.

### Scanning Your Pictures

If you want to use photos which were printed from a developed film and not taken with a digital camera, you will need to either to pay someone to scan them and then save them on to a DVD for you to use or get a scanner and do it yourself.

You might get a scanner or a printer combined with a scanner and perhaps a fax (usually called a multi-function printer).

Your scanner should have the highest resolution and bit depth (check the information provided on the box) which you can get.

You may not always use the maximum settings available because pictures produced at those settings are likely to be much larger computer files but buying a machine which has low values means that you will find yourself restricted from doing more detailed work when you have a project which needs it.

It is also useful if your scanner has the accessory which enables you to scan photo slides and film negatives if you are likely to want to use them in your projects.

## **Printers and Supplies**

If you are going to produce printed versions of your scrapbook projects to the same standard and specifications as traditional scrapbooks, you will need a printer which can print on twelve inch square paper, the traditional size for scrapbook pages.

Many of the printers available cannot handle that width of paper, but you can produce nice scrapbooks with them. A lot of people produce smaller books, including pocket-size “brag” books or others with pages that can be printed on their printers.

The inks supplied for most computers printers are dye inks in four colors which can produce good results and they are getting better all the time. But, they are not likely to last or give the results which can be obtained with the more expensive pigment-based inks

You have to decide if that is worth the higher cost to you.

### ***Paper***

You also need to consider whether you will pay the higher cost of the special archive quality paper which is suitable for use with computer printers. Epson has been supplying packs of this type of paper but there may also be other sources.

This paper is expected to be able to be stored for over 100 years where most paper produced for computer printers may only last about twenty years.

With regular computer paper supplies, you might use gloss finish paper where you are producing bright highly-colored pages. Paper with a matt finish is possibly better for softer images.

Some suppliers produce papers with different textures. You might check these out where you are producing commemorative scrapbooks about a particular event such as the first year of your child’s life etc.

## **Computer Programs**

There are specialized computer programs available just for producing scrapbook pages. This is probably the easiest way to produce and fill your pages with your content.

These programs vary in price and features. There are even some which are free!

I'll describe some which are currently available later in this ebook. I'll try to give you some general guides which you can use to compare the features and possible limitations of other programs which are currently available or which could be released after this book has been published.

But, you don't have to get one of those dedicated programs.

### ***Start with what You already Have***

You can use a program which is designed for desktop publishing or general picture editing (called “graphic editing”) to produce a scrapbook.

If you already have an image editing program of any kind on your computer, I suggest that you use that first and see if it has all the features you need for your first few scrapbook projects.

After trying out the programs which you got for other purposes or which were supplied with your scanner, printer or digital camera, you can decide if you need a program with other features or which produces better quality results for your projects.

You will also have a better idea of what features you really need from any program that you decide to buy.

The chapter, “Choosing Your Image Editor” explains some of the features you should look for in the program you use to create and edit your pages and pictures.

The chapter, “Editing Pages and Pictures” has a demonstration where I make a page and fill it with sample content of various kinds.

### ***Download a Trial of a Commercial Program***

Most suppliers of commercial programs offer trial versions which will work for a set period, usually from ten to thirty days. You can download these trials from the suppliers' web sites on the Internet.

This can be very helpful.

You can test a program which you are interested in without buying it first. Returning a computer program to a store or a refund after you have opened and perhaps installed it may not be as straight-forward as returning a physical item such as a toaster.

One drawback to these free trials is that the files you have to download are often very large. They take time to download to your computer and use up part of the bandwidth which your Internet Service Provider allows you before applying an extra charge. You need a good broadband connection to handle them.

I only use trial versions where I have seen good, preferably independent, reports about the program and am seriously considering buying it because there are other factors which may limit their usefulness.

If you decide to buy that program, you may have to download a different version which can be unlocked with the serial number which the supplier sends to you after getting your payment. With some trial programs, you can use that serial number to unlock the full features of the paid version and you don't have to download the program twice.

Many trial versions have fewer features than the full packages. This lets you experiment and see whether the program is one you are comfortable using, while encouraging you to invest in the full version.

Some trial programs limit your ability to print the pages you produce and some put watermarks on pages which are printed from trial versions. Otherwise some people would try to use the free trials to produce commercial products and sell them without paying anything to the provider of the program.

You can also get trial versions or even full, superceded versions of some programs on the CDs or DVDs which are attached to computer magazines which you buy.

You pay a few dollars for a program that was probably selling a few months ago for maybe more than a hundred dollars. Another point is that the disc will usually have a variety of programs on it.

You may also get a special offer to upgrade to the current version of the program over the Internet for significantly less than the store price for the full boxed version.

### *Start with What You Already Have*

If you have a digital camera, you may have got an image editing program on the CD or DVD which came with it. That program may have enough features to get you started with your first few projects or, at least allow you to become familiar with how to manipulate your pictures so that you know how to decide which more advanced program to get later on.

Or, you may already have an image editing program which you bought for another purpose. You may have got one as part of the deal when you bought your computer.

Give it a good try before buying a program or even downloading one from the Internet. You may be pleasantly surprised.

**Please be careful!** Always scan any file which you download from the Internet or get from any other source. Even if you know the supplier, their files may have been infected without them knowing.

Use your anti-virus and anti-spy ware programs before you open the program.

If you get an illegal copy of a commercial program, there is a good chance it will be corrupted or could corrupt your computer by installing viruses or programs which could steal your personal information.

### ***Download a Free Program from the Internet***

If you don't want to buy any new programs, you can download and install one or more free programs from the Internet.

I will include information about some good free programs and some commercial programs in this book.

I am amazed by the quality and variety of image editing and other programs which are available legally for free on the Internet.

You don't get the pretty boxes and cannot expect personal help with any problems that you have with the programs. But, you can save money over the cost of buying equivalent commercial programs.

Some of the better programs are produced in their own time by highly paid programmers or expert hobbyists who want to produce programs that are different from those which they work on for their employers.

They sometimes share their personal projects without commercializing them.

Many free programs have Terms of Use which should always be followed.

Some may not be used for any commercial purpose.

Some may not be shared but you can tell your friends about the suppliers' website where they can download the program like you did.

This may seem strange but there are two major reasons:

- 1)** Because the programmer only permits downloading from their web site, they get some recognition and maybe some donations for their work.
- 2)** If there is only one web site where the program may be downloaded, there is less chance of virus-infected versions being distributed.

I've listed some which I have used or had good reports about in the resources section later in my book.

## **Benefits of Digital Scrapbooking**

While some people are firm believers in the superiority of either traditional or digital scrapbooking over the other, I do both.

I produce some traditional scrapbooks with real buttons, newspaper clippings and other materials for sharing with and handing on to other family members.

I also produce some scrapbooks in digital form so that I can send them to other family members and friends over the Internet.

This lets me share information and images much more widely than would be possible if I only had the printed and bound scrapbooks. The people I send the digital scrapbooks to can keep them and read them as many times as they want to.

I don't risk losing any original documents or the scrapbooks when I share digital copies.

I also use my computer to organize the materials, notes, resources and sources of information and supplies for my Scrapbooking. This saves me hours of time and reduces the chance that I will buy some supplies but forget that I have them.

Re-using clippings, pictures and other items which have been glued into paper scrapbooks is difficult and, of course, ruins the project I take them from. Digital images of those items can be copied and use for as many projects as you want.

When you use real pages to assemble a project, you have to be careful not to damage any of the supplies – they can all only be used once. Most computer-based supplies can be used over and again.

Real pictures, clippings, tickets etc cannot always be fitted into a page together because of their original size. When you prepare a digital version you can usually adjust the size of each item so they will fit.

When you use a memento in a paper scrapbook, you cannot use it for anything else and you may forget where it is after a while.



If you put an image of it in a digital scrapbook, you can store the original item away safely or give it to another family member who has a special reason for wanting to have it.

Despite the reasons for making scrapbooks on your computer, you will find that making traditional scrapbooks has unique appeal. You can read them with other family members and discuss their contents and the people or events which they are about more comfortably with other people than you would if you had to both read the same computer screen.

There is something wonderful about handling and reading a lovingly prepared traditional scrapbook with original mementos that you don't get from any kind of computer simulation.

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