Smart Ways to Organise and Store Your Pet Photos

How many pet photos do you have? Hundreds? Thousands? Can you find anything quickly? If you are like me, the answer is a guilty, slightly worried, no, what can you do?

How do you get organised, and how can you safely store images so you can find them again for use online as a blog image or a social media post or to share with family and friends?

Let me tell you the best way to organise and store your pet photos.

As this a long post I am adding the text as a pdf so you can print it out or read offline later.

How to Organise Your Digital Pet Photos

Since I started taking a lot more photographs with my DSLR camera they are starting to pile up. You know what I mean by piling up? Like a single snowflake might look gorgeous but thousands of them are suddenly an overwhelming blizzard.

Being organised is critical before you get overwhelmed by dozens of kitten photos or handfuls of rabbit snaps. This means sitting down, opening your computer or tablet, and doing something positive to create order out of chaos.

Let's take those first steps to organise and store your pet photos. First you need to get your photos into order

Use a Folder Structure to Organise

The best folder structure for photos is the most simple one. One that is friendly for you and easy to use.

On a Mac, PC, or Linux machine if you click on yur hard drive icon you see that everything is in a ‘folder’. It's like a virtual office filing cabinet and this concept is the best way to imagine you are storing your digital images.

- Keep it simple
- Start with your main folder. Name it.
- Then be consistent with the labels you use e.g. Events (cat show, dog agility) or Harvey's Birthday,

Your pet images can be organised inside or outside your photo application. Mac’s have a folder structure you can tailor to your needs, and PC’s save your photos to a specific folder where you can start to sort out images

NOTE: If you use Photos in Mac OS Catalina a lot of the organising is set up for you. Add your own folders to the structure.

Within your main folder add another folder for:

1. Each year and within that

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2. Add one for each month
3. Then add one Each Event/Date/Theme/Product (e.g. Cat Show, Dog Agility Contest)
4. No. 3 is your choice

You can create folders as you need them. They do not need to be created right now.

However you decide to organise your pet photos - be consistent.

You will find that a simple setup will be used regularly because you made it easy on yourself. There is no limit to the number of folders you can have. A dozen events in 2019 is fine. 9 folders is 2018 is fine.

Here's an example of a folders and photo set up :-

Year (2020), Month (July), Event (Cat Show), Photo (First Prize Toulouse)

Then you need to take an extra step to add tags to your images. Here's why.

Adding tags and keywords

This is the boost that speeds up searching for an image you remember and want to get beck from your organised store. Use tags or keywords. Every photo editing suite allows you to do this and even a tag like cat, brown rabbit narrows down your search and makes it manageable.

If you know you look for a particular photo type on a regular basis, create a tag e.g. 'tabby' 'cat closeup' 'Basepaws'. You can search for the tag and pull up any images with the tag, regardless of their folder.

Use the Favourite Button

It is important to remember that you need to be sparing and very selective about favouriting photographs or you end up back in clutter central.
Software programs allow you to label your photographs in some way.

Tap an iPhone to heart an image
P for pin works in Lightroom
Google has a star ranking in Google Photos
Photos/My Rating in pre-Catalina iPhoto (not available post Catalina).

Organise with the Delete Button

You can't keep every photo and you don't need to anyway.
If you have a series of tack sharp photos celebrating a pet show win, keep the best two or three. You don't need 27 blurry shots of brown fur or blurry whiskers.

If you are in serious doubt about keeping an image open an 'I'm Not Sure About This' folder and add it there. Then review these images later.

When to do your sorting

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Do your sorting when you feel fresh, calm and focused. You will have a balanced attitude towards what you will keep or discard. I suggest this because there will times you do not feel up to sorting through anything.

It may be sad news from a friend or the pressure of something else at home.
If you feel stressed don't be a hero, set aside the work for another time when you feel more focused.

Download Photographs Regularly

Make it a habit to download your camera and smartphone images on a regular basis. This minimises losses from device failure and theft.

You may have read of a frustrated traveller robbed on their phone and all their precious images on a trip, or maybe you have dropped your phone one time too many.

Download your images by connecting your phone to your computer or by Air Drop (Mac).

Yes But How Do I Do All This?

You start small when you organise and store your pet photos. One skill at a time.

- Learn to label your photos. Your image editor will have how to's and videos.
- Find out how and where your image editing software saves your images.
- Create a Main Folder
- Make mistakes and try again!Create sub-folders and add images.
- Take it one step at a time.

Your photo software may be different to mine. It will work differently but as a newbie, give yourself a pat on the back for getting started.

How big is a single digital pet photo?

Your digital images take up a surprising amount of space and the amount of space you use will depend on your camera and the settings you are using. Check your manual for your own image size settings.

Photos you take to be printed off are much larger as the quality needs to be higher. 300dpi for a canvas print versus 72 dpi a digital image.

Storing Your Digital Images

What is the best way to store digital images

There are plenty of options for storage from flash drives to cutting edge NAS servers* Your storage option needs to meet three important criteria. If it doesn't tick these boxes look elsewhere.

Durability. Storage needs to be as physically strong and future-proof as you (or your provider) can make it.

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Accessiblity. You are going to be going back to the image store often. It is easy to get to or will you avoid going because its such an effort to get an image?<

Regular backups. Is you digital storage backed up regularly? Or, do you have the option to back it up elsewhere?

Options for Digital Media Storage

You have two options, you can store your images online, using a cloud storage service or you can keep your images at home. Let's take a look at the options so you can make an informed choice.

Many organisations will offer a *limited* free storage option if you do not have many images this is great, but most people will need more than the minimum and the bad news is that you will need to pay for your storage.

The good news is that there are some great places to store your images online and some include a professional showcase for your photography as part of the package.

SmugMug (paid options) Unlimited uploads and personalised web front page for the enthusistic photographer.

iCloud For Mac users. Links to Photos (iPhoto) and provides storage

Google Photos **https://photos.google.com** gives you unlimited storage at no cost. NOTE: With a FREE plan your photos cannot have a resolution any more than 16 megapixels, which is the size of an 28 x 35 cms (11X14 ins) photograph. You can store larger photos with a paid plan, which starts at $1.99 per month for 100GB.

Pixpa Similar to SmugMug. Great to show off online images and sell them with professional polish.

Adobe Portfolio **https://portfolio.adobe.com** Free for 60 days then approx $10 per month. Includes access to Photoshop and Lightroom.

Home Storage for Digital Photos

Portable Hard Drives (PHD)

Great for backing up your images. These are powered by your computer (USB) so you don’t need an extra power source. These are portable and can fit in a pocket. The capacity of a hard drive means you can store terabytes of images and data.

External Hard Drives (EHD)

Similar to portable drives these are designed to stay in one place connected to your computer and often have a separate power source. If you have a Mac OS Time Machine active you may be using one or a NAS server (see below) these are a life saver when you organise and store your pet photos safely.

The biggest 'against' is the fact that if you drop one you can lose your images.

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Working on the Move

If you want storage on the move it needs to be portable and small. If you take your laptop on holiday you can plus a card or drive in to download daily.

Memory cards and flash (pen) drives are also great if you are travelling with a laptop. They are inexpensive and reusable. On the downside their small size means they can be easily lost.

How Much Space Will I Need For Digital Storage?

“How long is a piece of string?” as the old quote goes. It will depend on how many photos you have. How many you want to store and critically how much you want to spend

Once you have done all your hard work organising images into folders, you can check your hard drive and see how much space your images are using and you can price your storage options.

For those serious about their image storage and keen to maximise their storage capacity the NAS server is worth exploring. If this is on your radar, do a lot of reading before you make your choice of service.

The NAS (Network Attached Storage) Server

The ultimate in home storage has to be the Network Attached server which will become mic more common over the next 18 months. One of the most popular NAS serves right now is the Seagate IronWolf which is perfect for home use.

Most NAS drives let you send web links to people to allow them to access remotely certain files or folders located on your NAS. Servers come populated (with hard disks) and diskless (without).

The technology has advanced so much that the basic family unit is recommended as a two or three part populated unit.

Displaying Your Pet Photos

As I mention in a previous post. You can't enjoy a photo stuck on a flash drive so as a bonus, I am adding some of the fun things you can do to keep your pet photos where they belong - in your life.

If you have images you love you need to have them on display. You can have an iPhone cover or a high resolution photo canvas, or a whole image wall. You can wear your pet with pride on a t-shirt or even a shower curtain!

These photographs are part of your life and should be enjoyed. Thanks to Red Bubble you can even have photos you love displayed on cushions and garments.

Several companies will help you print images. Each has a slightly different focus:

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- Red Bubble - Garments, phone cases, laptop covers, Cards stickers and a lot more. Dash Kitten has a Red Bubble store.
- **Snapfish** (Europe, North America, Asia) Books, canvases prints and cards
- **Harvey Norman** (New Zealand & Australia) Books, cards, block prints.
- **Zazzle** (Worldwide) Prints your photo on garments, cards, stockers and Otterbox phone cases

Start today, or soon, and move forward being organised, creating folders, adding tags you will already making a start. It's what I am doing.

I am working on small batches for an hour a week. This might not seem much but there are fifty two weeks in a year and some weeks I might be able to work for an extra half hour.
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Each action is a small step towards success.

Digital Image Storage Resources

- A breakdown of the NAS server (not too technical)
- What is the difference between dpi and ppi?
- How many MB in a GB
- How to use Air Drop on your Apple iPhone
- How big can you print with your megapixels?

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