

Software Review: 3D-Album

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The Ultimate 3D Photo Album!

First, I must explain that 3D-Album (www.3d-album.com) should not be confused with other software containing “Album” in the title. What 3D-Album does to your photo collection is nothing less than...droolware. I classify droolware as software that goes beyond the “neat and cool” tag lines. 3D-Album by Micro Research breaks new ground in terms of usefulness, simplicity, flexibility, power, and innovative interfaces. 3D-Album’s primary focus is the transformation of your pictures into an elegantly animated 3D photo presentation—the result looks like an Emmy Award winning producer created it just for you!

The Ultimate in 3D Photo Presentation

One especially nice touch I applaud the folks at 3D-Album for is the inclusion of a tutorial CD. This CD is a fully automated video tutorial to get you quickly up to speed. Not that they needed to add it—3D-Album is about as easy a program to use as I can remember! Also included on the tutorial is a self-running demo of many of the finished 3D Photo Album styles you can compose to get those creative juices salivating. Now comes the best part. Not only can you select from the 23 included TV-quality 3D Photo Albums complete with music, voiceovers, and text, but there exists a “cult-like following” of 3D-Album users allowing you to download additional 3D Styles from the www.3d-album.com site. I think at last count there were something on the order of 70 styles! Keep in mind you have total control over the animation speed, textures, colors, backgrounds, and moving text (you can choose to disable text). Some Album styles have more options than others. I love the personal freedom 3D-Album gives you in adding narration, sound clips, and music. You can select MP3, WAV, WMA, or MIDI formats. All of these special effects come together in a stunning crescendo of professionally rendered fully animated 3D Photo Albums to impress everyone you know...including yourself!

How easy is it to build your own dazzling 3D Photo Album?

1. Simply select a folder that contains the photos you wish to use in your 3D Photo Album. You can use as many photos as you like.
2. Next choose a presentation style from the left hand pane of 23 styles (mine is up to about 36 from new downloads—my favorite so far is “Gateway #4”).
3. Now click the preview button to see if you want to tweak your settings such as speed, size, or interval time.
4. Then just tell 3D-Album what project you want to build. Your choices are Stand-Alone Album, Screensaver, Web Page (I will be using this one), Zip File for emailing, and making your own Self-Running CD!

5. You're done. By the way, if you choose the "organize" button you can drag and drop the order in which your photos will appear for any given project.

Savvy User Tech Notes...

In case you are wondering if other people can view your deliciously created work of art without having the 3D-Album software on their computer, the answer is yes. 3D-Album achieves this by including the vaengine.dll file (viewing engine) by default with your Album creation. Should you want to mix things up a bit, just choose the "Random Play" button in the upper right corner. There is also an album mixer feature which allows you to play multiple 3D-Album creations in a combined presentation. The latest version of 3D-Album is 2.03, and it supports a language pack with 15 languages should you need to go international. 3D-Album does not include a manual (and it is so simple you don't need one) but the included multimedia tutorial CD plus the exhaustive context sensitive help provides smooth sailing should an explanation be needed. This program receives my highest recommendation and for \$39.95 it is worth every cent! Please visit the www.3d-album.com site to learn more.

Minimum requirements are as follows:

- PC with 200MHz or higher clock speed
- Win98, Win 98 SE, Win ME, Win 2000, NT 4.0 or Win XP Home/Professional
- 64MB of RAM (256MB recommended)
- 100MB of available hard-disk space
- 24 or 32 bit color depth computer (3D Video Card with 16MB RAM)
- Internet Explorer 5.01, 5.5, or 6.0 (updated with applicable Service Packs)
- CD-ROM drive
- Color monitor