

17Photos Users Guide

17-June-2026

Background:

17Photos has two parts: the Desktop App and the Website. Usage patterns for both are provided.

Desktop installation media and instructions are available on the <https://17Photos.org> Website at the [Get 17Photos](#) page.

Expected Usage Scenarios:

There are two anticipated primary 17Photos usage modes: (1) single-user and (2) cooperative-groups.

In **single-user** mode, 17Photos is better than a simple photo organizer, because its core feature (the “5W Tags”: Who, What, When, Where, Why) greatly simplify the task of finding content for themed albums. 17Photos Also allows you to add both written and audio commentary to individual photos.

Group usage, however, is expected to be the more significant usage mode. We anticipate that the primary user in a group will usually be the “child” in a Parent/Child/Grandchild family structure, and the other users in this group would be their siblings. We expect their primary intent will be to document their parent’s lives, to preserve family heritage for their grandchildren.

Efficient media sharing and 5W tagging as a group is most crucial to success. We implement this sharing in a truly private manner, and include no advertising within the program, or community website.

N.B: Group mode is not currently available.

Anticipated Usage Model:

Assume I want to make several albums so my children can get a better sense of who their grandfather was before he was married. I have too few photos of him from that era, so I contact my siblings and some other family members, who agree to help with the project. I provide them with access to the 17Photos group I created, and we get started. Everyone begins adding and tagging pictures of “Grandpa,” which I review until I am happy with the albums I can create. The creative phase of the project is then paused or disbanded.

Anticipated Workflow Detail:

1. Add Photos
 - a. Find relevant photos.
 - b. If necessary, digitize them.
 - c. Add them to the project.
2. Describe Photos:

- a. Add “5W tags” (Who, What, When, Where and Why).¹
 - b. Optionally, add audio commentary.²
 - c. Automatically added: file name, file date, and EXIF data.³
3. Elaborate on Tags (optional).⁴
4. Create Albums.
5. View and Share Albums.

Albums are created by selecting photos, facilitated by 5W tag filtering. They can be published to 17Photos’s Members Only album page, where a selected audience can view them.

Albums can always be edited, added to or removed or replaced.

¹ Who and What tags refer to specific data that is tagged to specific locations on the photo to help identify, for example, different individuals.

² Audio tagged to a photo can be played while viewing the photo. It is anticipated that recording the voice of a family elder will eventually serve as a “living memorial” of the person.

³ EXIF data is a future feature. It is not a priority since most photos will probably be scanned from physical originals, and have no EXIF.

⁴ “Who” tags can be elaborated to specify a person’s birthdate, gender, parents, nicknames, and maiden name. This information allows 17Photos to make connections between people.

Desktop Usage:

Settings:

The dialog presented when 17Photos runs for the first time is Settings. It can also be revisited from the main workspace. Media Locations is where your pictures are stored and often can be the standard Pictures folder. This value can be removed, overridden or supplemented. Checking Recursive instructs the program to walk down the directory tree. Checking Tracked instructs the program to monitor the directory for additions and removals when restarted.. Click Save to continue into Mosaic proper



17Photos is all you need for Family Foto Fun as you stroll down to *5W Memory Lane*. Tell us where your photos are stored on this computer and our *Photo Moto* can help you discover lots of interesting relations!

You can add directories (folders) containing the photos you want to use with 17Photos by using the **Add Tracked Directory** button. The directories you add are checked for changes every time 17Photos starts running, until you remove them from the *Tracked Directories* list.

[View User's Guide in web browser](#)

Add Tracked Directory

W:/bvd0/sample_photo_set

☒ Recursive ☒ Tracked

Change

Change Audio Directory

Audio directory: C:\Users\Victor\Pictures\17photos_audio_comments

Date Format: MM/dd/yyyy

☒ Remember last active dock
☒ Remember main window position
☒ Show 17Photos.org features
☒ Always open web browser without asking when logging into 17Photos.org.

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☐ enable developer functions

Cancel

Apply

Primary Workspace

There are 5 Docks:

Media - Photos (eventually Videos and Audios) known to the system, as filtered/selected.

Describe - Workspace for tagging, adjusting and commenting on media

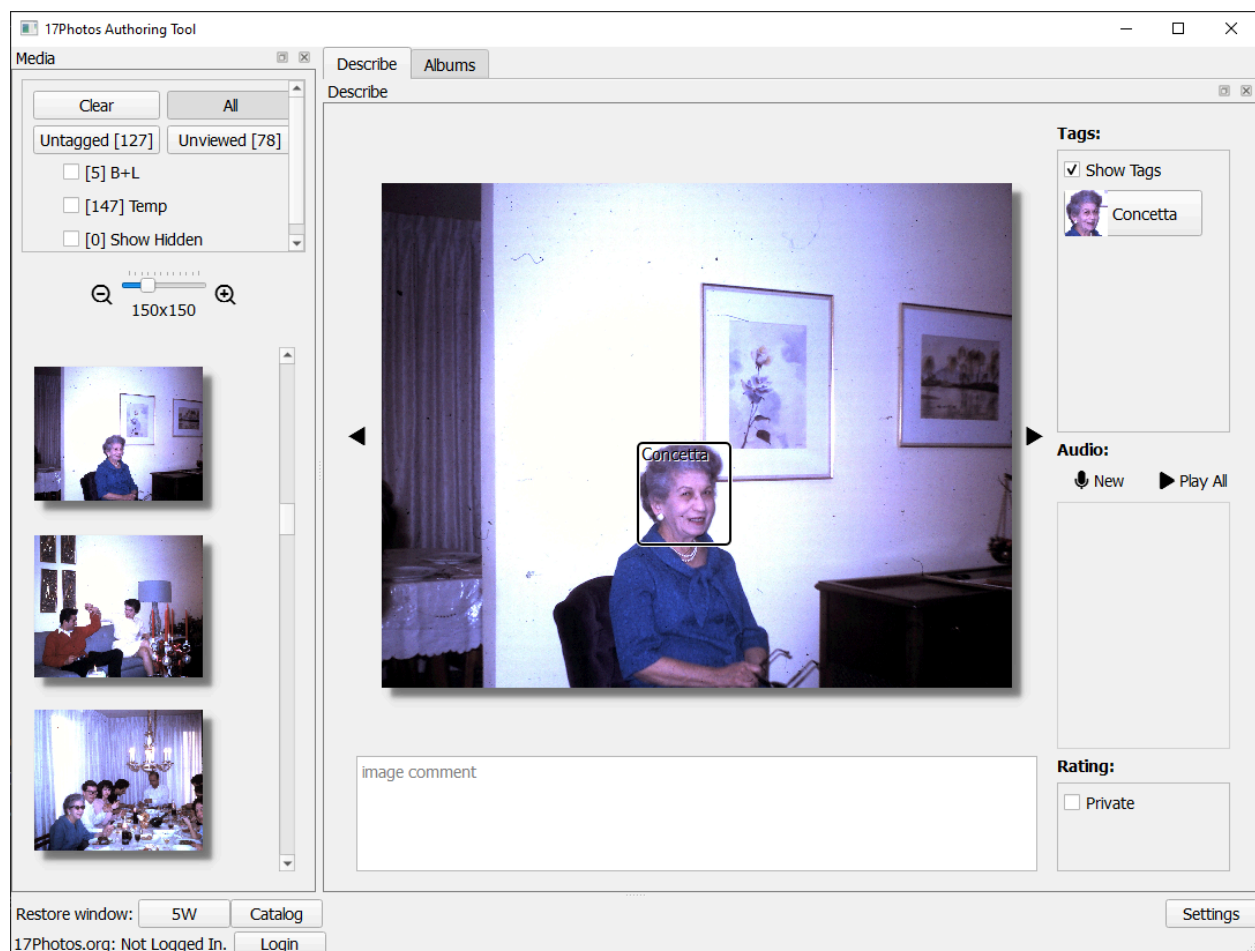
5W - Individuals who have been identified (tagged) by the user (or automated agent) and the other 4 Ws

Catalog - Saved filter/selection rules.

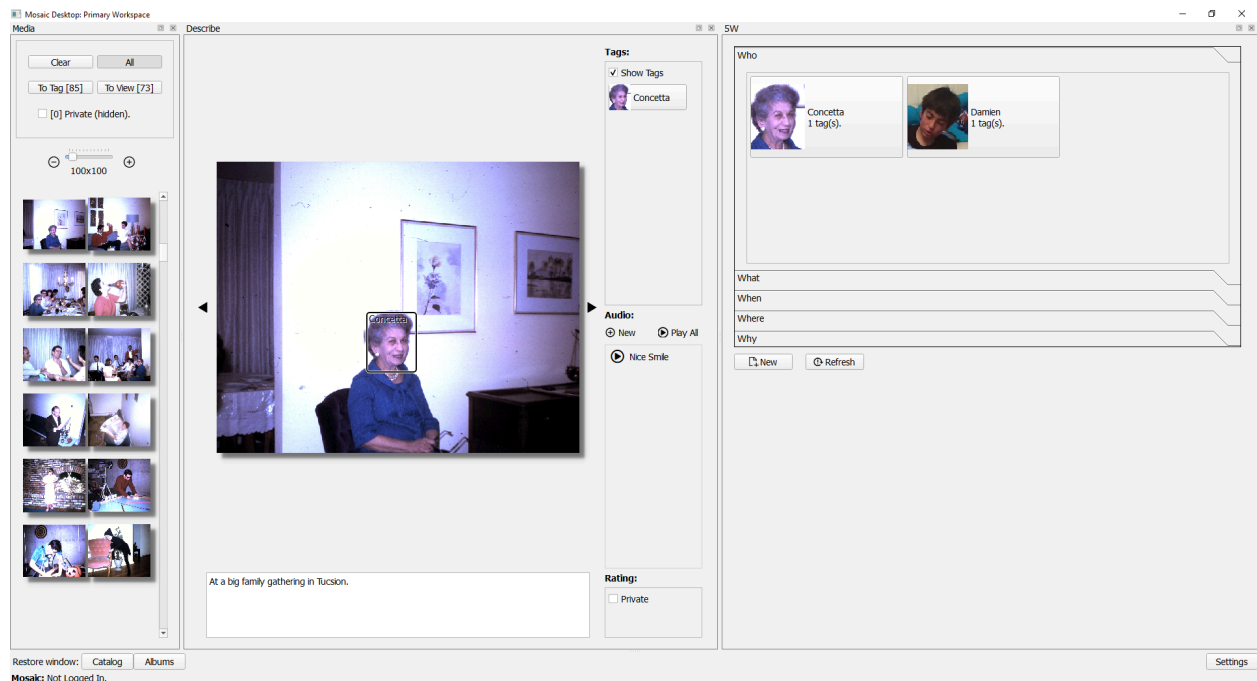
Albums - Creation and viewing of media collections (albums or memoir chapters)

The last 3 docks are initially tabbed (not shown).

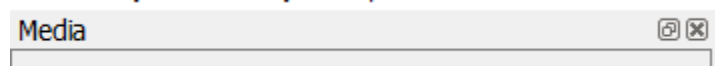
The Settings button allows adjustment of system parameters.



The docks can be floated or rearranged to a user's preference. In the example below, the main window has been maximized and the 5W dock has been moved to the right margin.



Dock location and visibility is controlled by the title bar:



Double click the title bar to undock it. (Or click the  windows icon.)

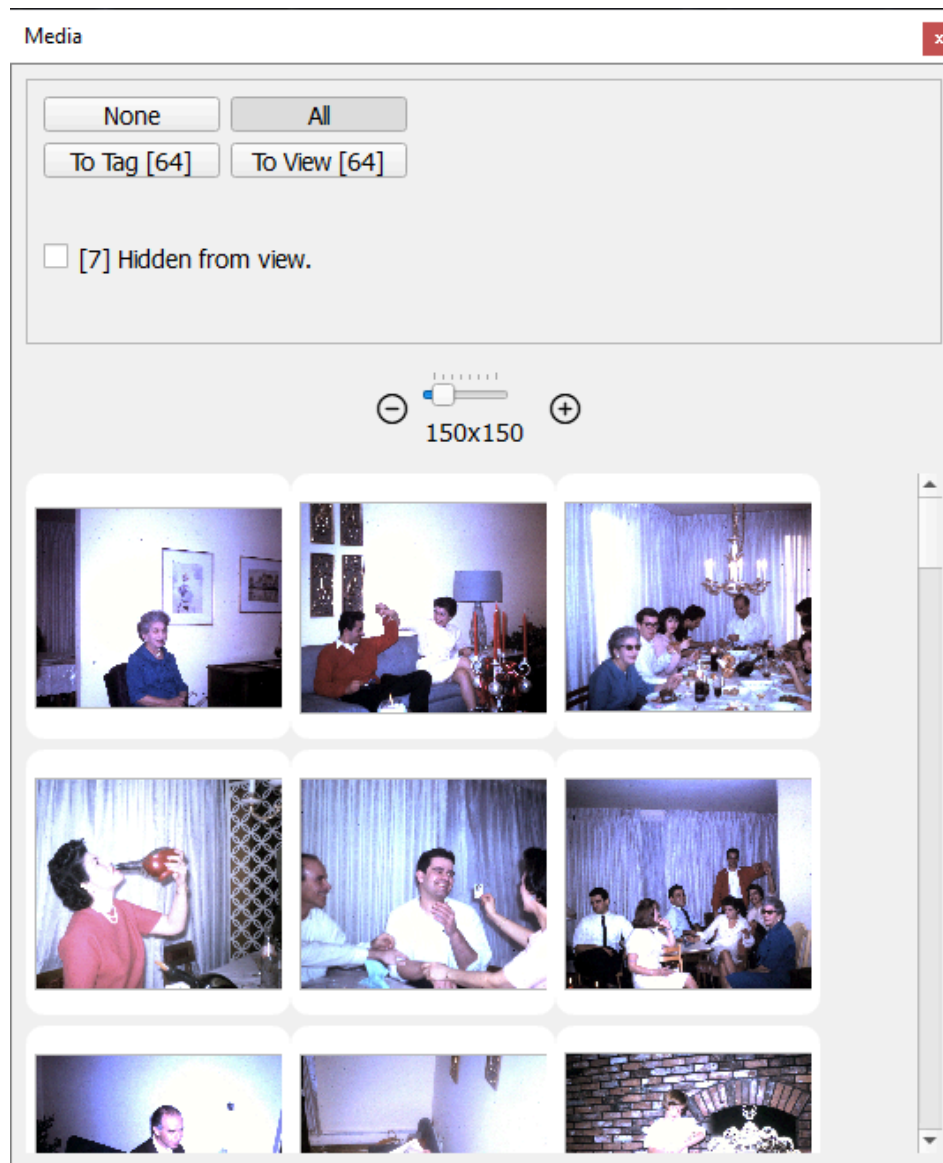
Click the X to close the dock. It's name will then appear in the Restore window row at the bottom of the workspace:



Click the dock name to re-open it.

Docks can be resized like any other window.

Media Dock:



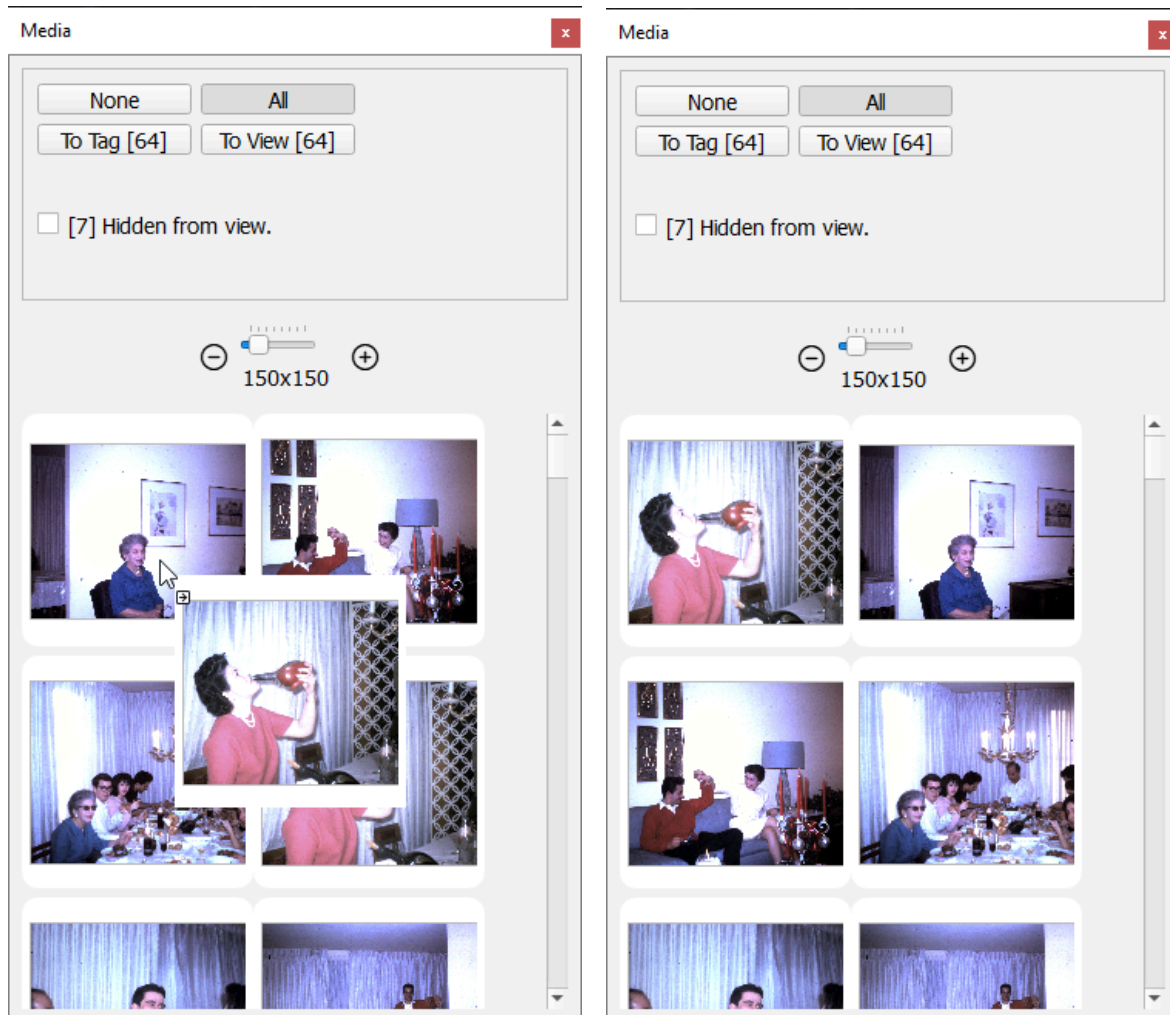
The media shown in the dock is controlled by the buttons and checkboxes at the top of the dock.

The buttons **set** the content to None (empty), All Media, To Tag (items which have not yet had 5W data added) or To View (Items not yet viewed in the Describe dock).

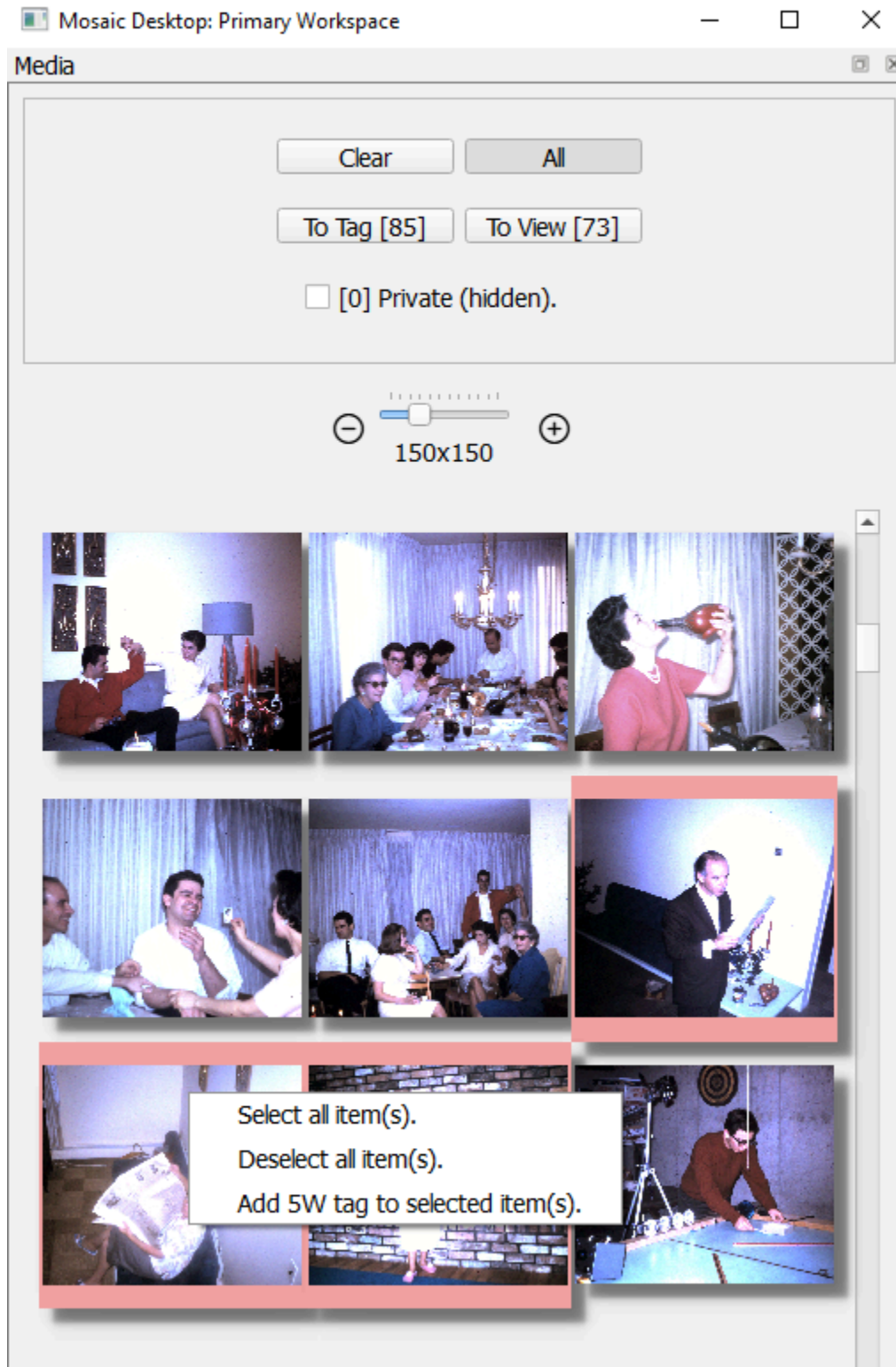
The checkboxes are catalogs (or filters) and are inclusive adding media to the dock. Click None to clear the dock and then click the desired catalog to add media. If two catalogs include the same media item, it will appear only once in the dock.

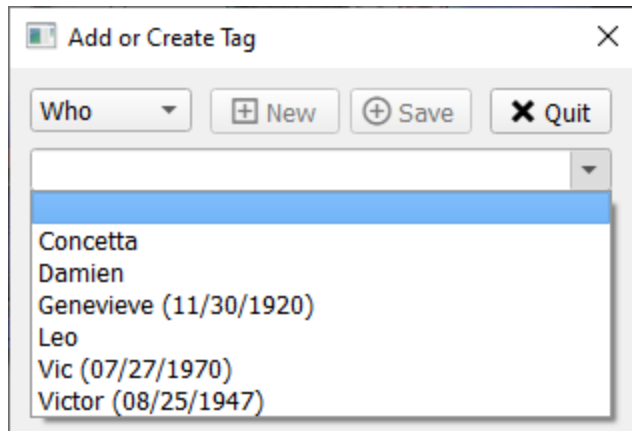
Items in the Media Dock can be dragged and dropped on other docks to add them to the related process. Double click an item to send it to the Describe Dock.

Items within a cardspace can be reordered via drag and drop

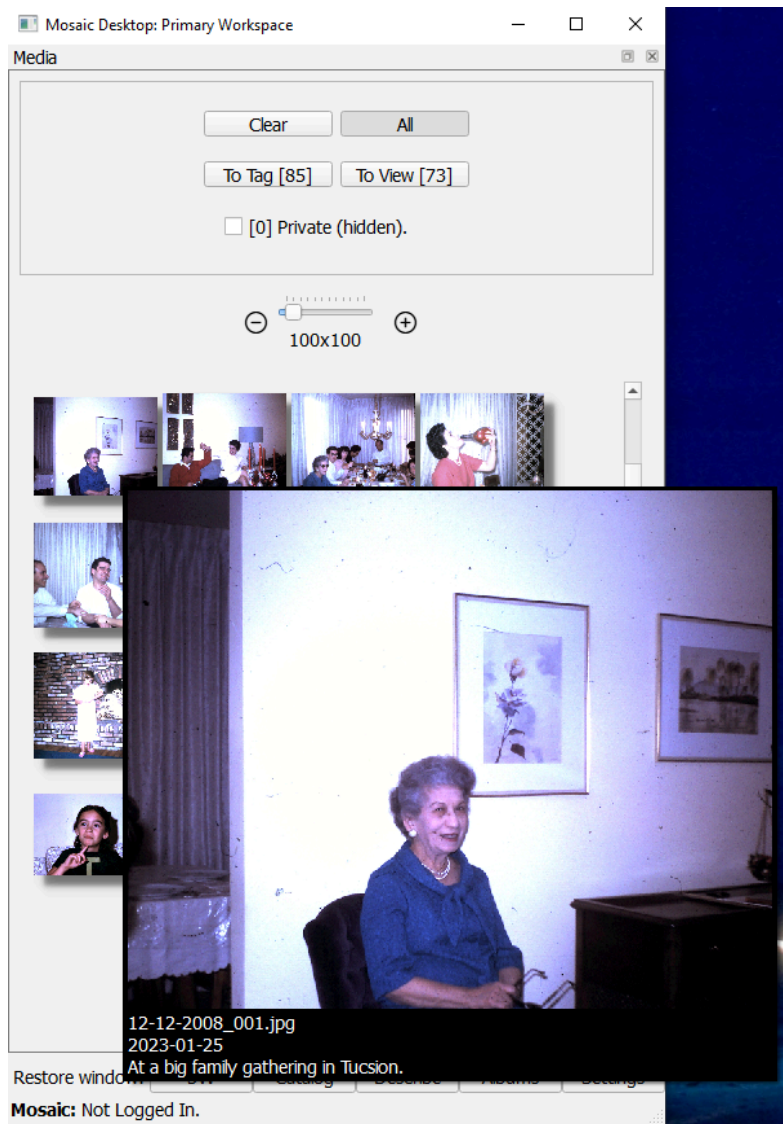


Shift+left Click can select multiple images at once. Right clicking on a selected image provides a menu to add tags to all of the selected items at one time.

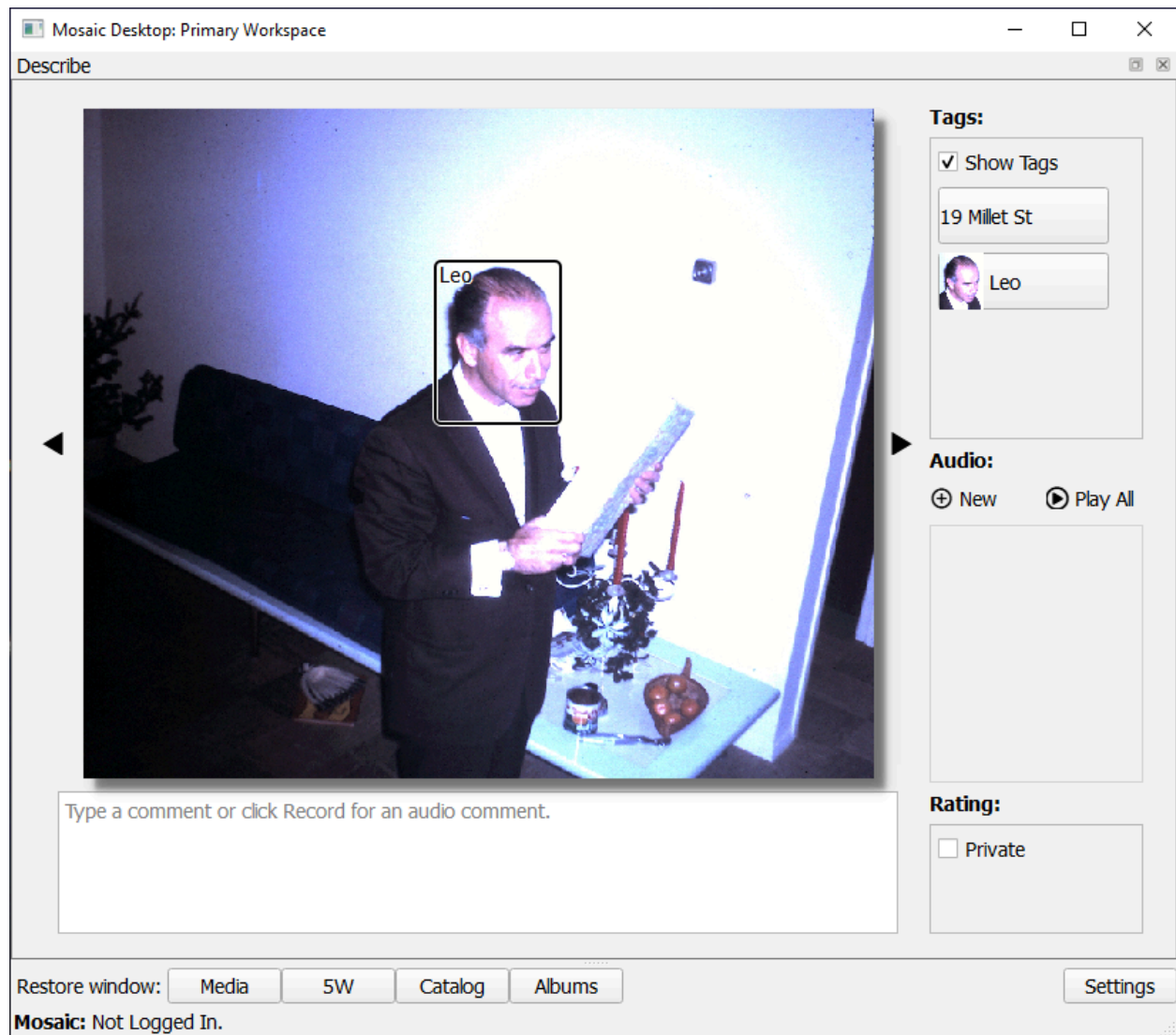




Hovering over an image will display a larger pop-up with photo info and the recorded comment:



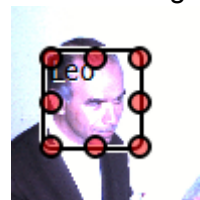
Describe Dock:



Left and right arrows move forward or backward through the current media dock item set.

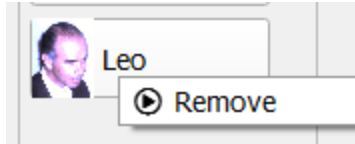
Double click an image in the media dock to open the Describe screen, display the image and position the describe screen at that point in the media order.

Click "Show Tags" to identify Who and What tags with rectangles on the photo. The rectangle

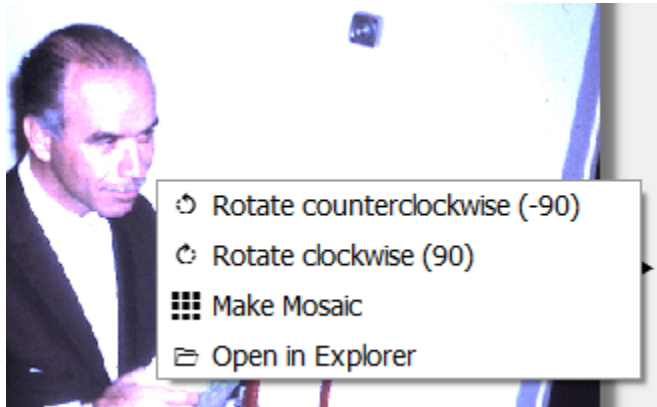


can be resized and moved by clicking within it and grabbing the resize points

All tags are itemized in the right pane. Clicking a tag brings up the tag's editor dialog. Right clicking the tag brings up an action menu allowing the tag to be removed from the image:



Right click on the image brings up a context menu that allows rotating the image, making a Phace (Mosaic) from the image or opening the File Explorer with that image selected. The rotate options are offered only for untagged images. The process of creating a Phace is described in detail later in this document.

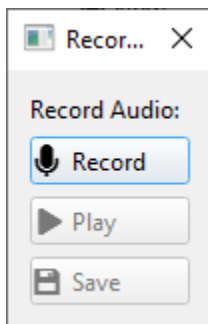


Click anyplace on a photo to add a 5W tag. The tag does not have to already exist within the system, it will be added if the user agrees to the prompt. Click within a tag's rectangle (when NOT displayed) and a dialog to remove the tag will be started.

The media filename and file date are displayed under the image.

Image Audio:

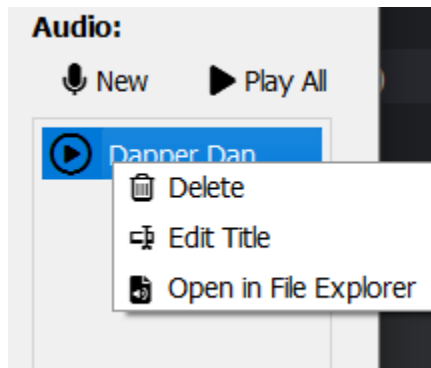
Click "New" to record an audio describing the picture. Multiple audios can be recorded. Playback order can be rearranged via drag and drop.



This is expected to be used to capture for posterity the voice of parents or children reliving the scene in the picture. The audio can be played when viewing the photo in an album or directly from the Describe Dock.

“Play” replays the current audio, whether saved or freshly recorded. Save will save the audio to disk and add it to the media after you specify a title for it. You can discard a freshly recorded audio by closing the dialog, or by simply recording over it.

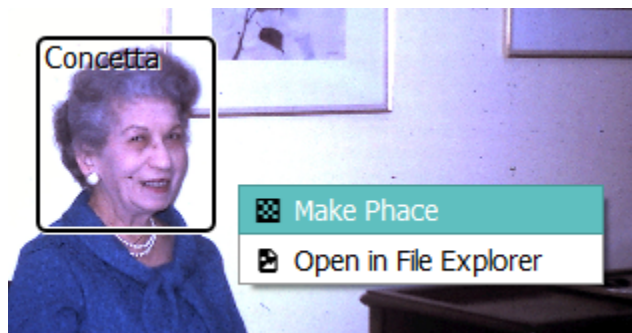
The audios can be played selectively or consecutively. A right click on the audio brings up a context menu that supports (permanently) deleting the audio, renaming it or opening the File Explorer with the file selected. This Open option can be used to load the audio into an editor such as Audacity for cleanup/clipping. However, be sure to NOT store audios in a tracked directory if you plan to edit them.



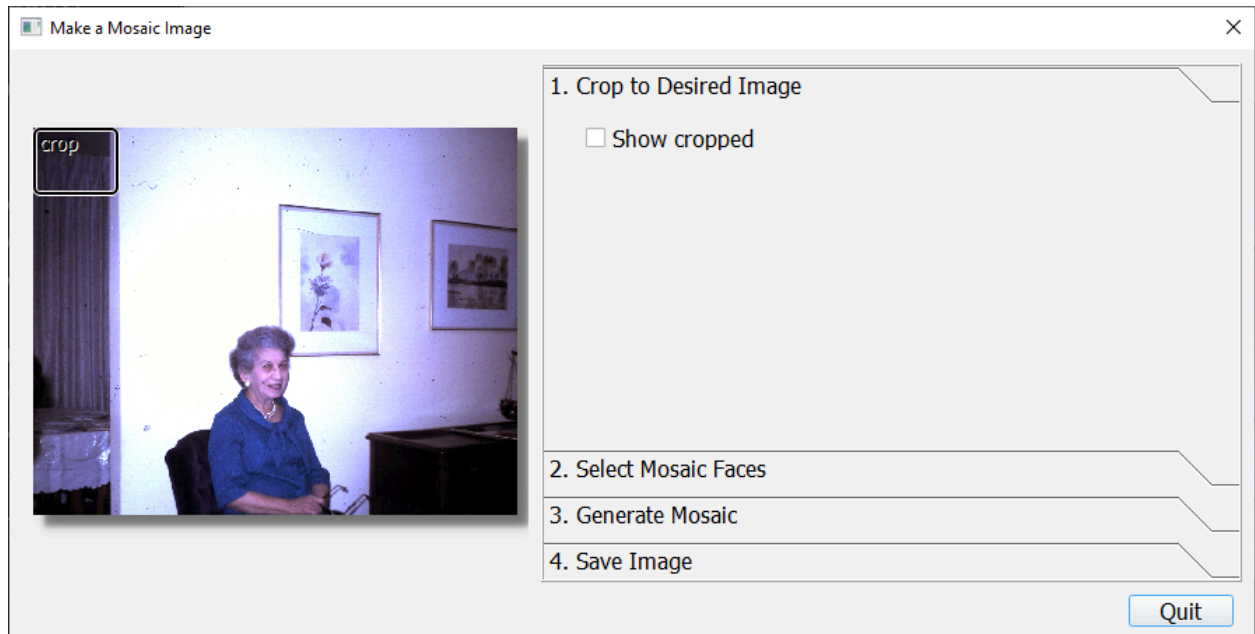
Caption text is displayed on the media dock rollover and will be used in the future for context searching and added to the Album when exported as a book.

Making a Phace:

To make aPhace, right click a picture displayed in the Describe Dock and select *Make Phace*.



The following dialog will be displayed.

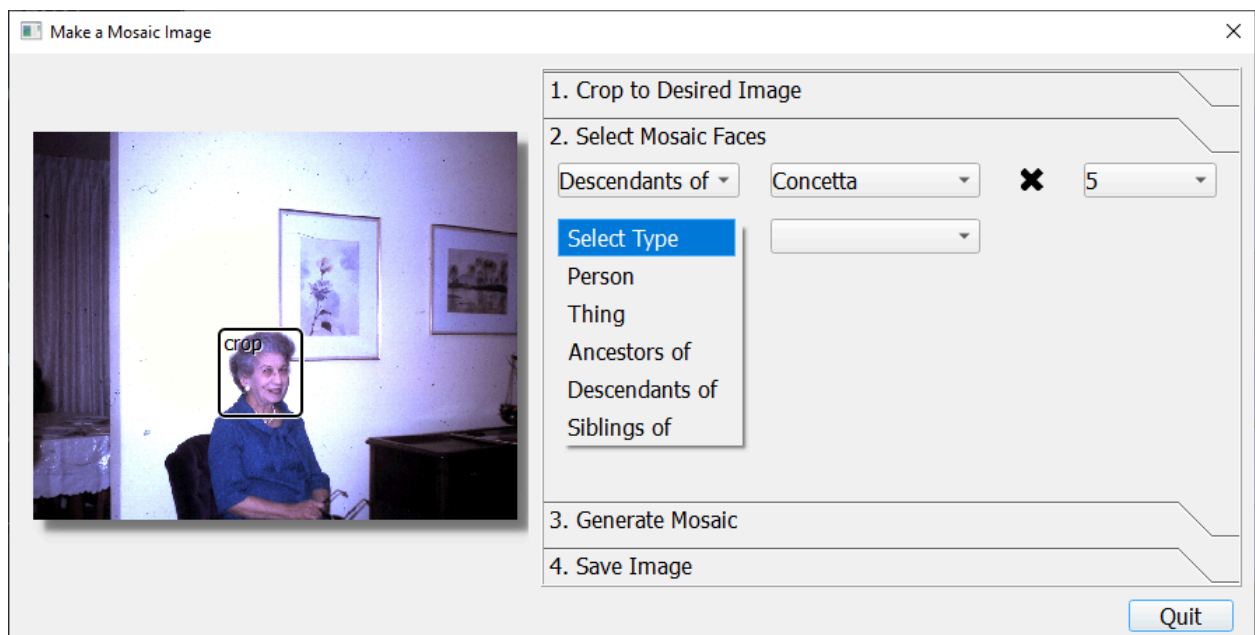


The four steps to creating and saving the image are numbered 1 to 4 in the right portion of the display.

1 Crop to Desired image

Drag the crop rectangle (displayed in the upper left corner) to cover the portion of the image to be made into a mosaic Phace. Toggling "Show cropped" on and off will help refine the area selected.

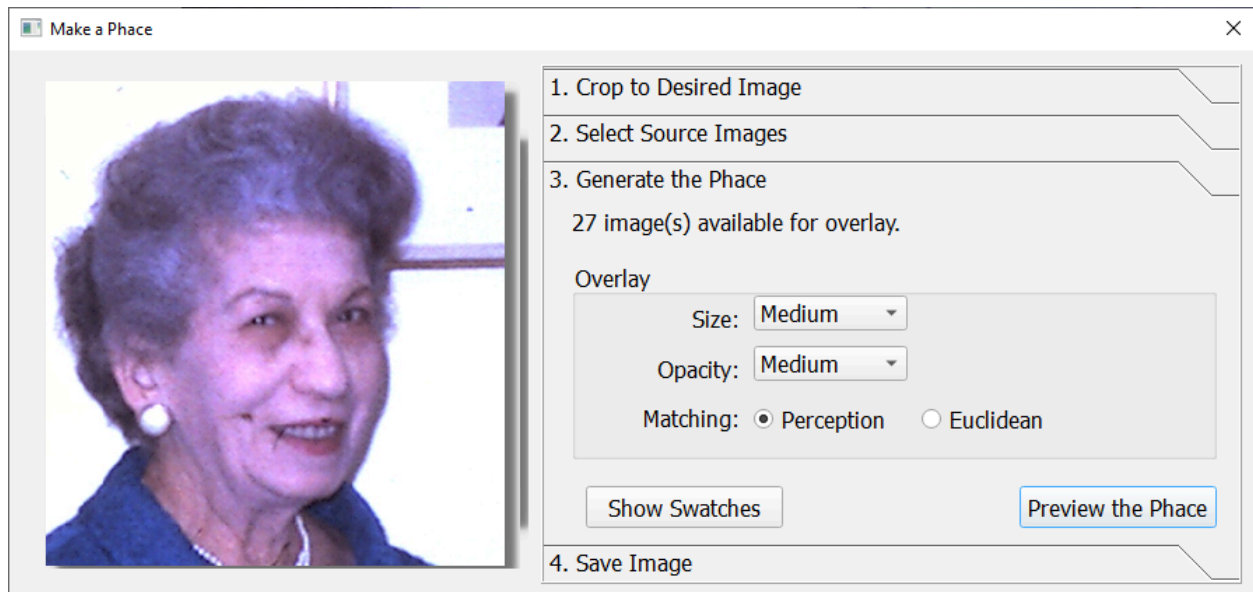
2. Select Faces for the Overlay Tiles



The select Type dropdown allows selection of faces as either specific people/things or as portions of a family tree. In this example, we are creating a mosaic of Concetta and so will select all of her descendents to use in constructing the mosaic Phace.

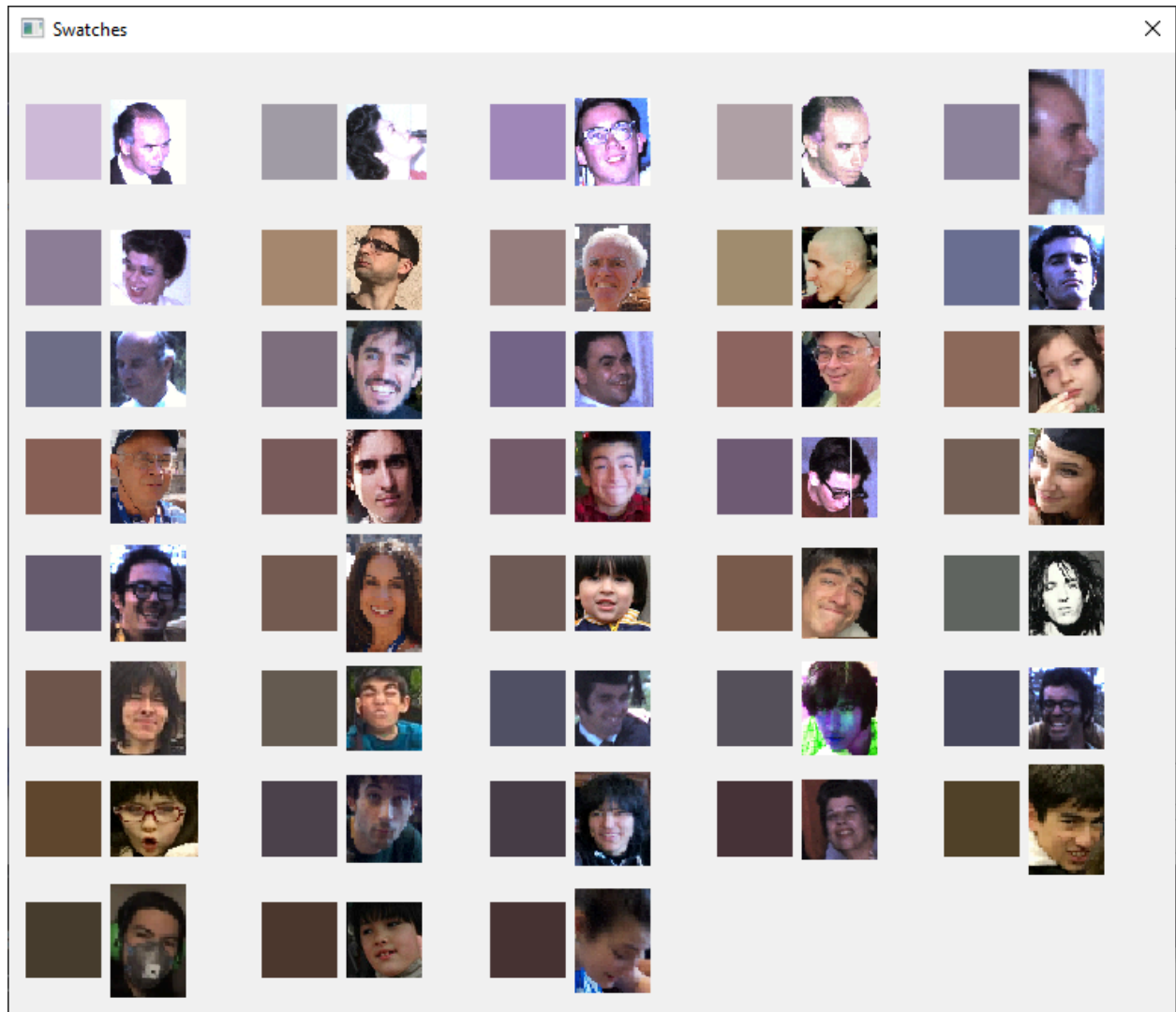
3. Generate the Phace

Here we will set various parameters that affect the image generation.

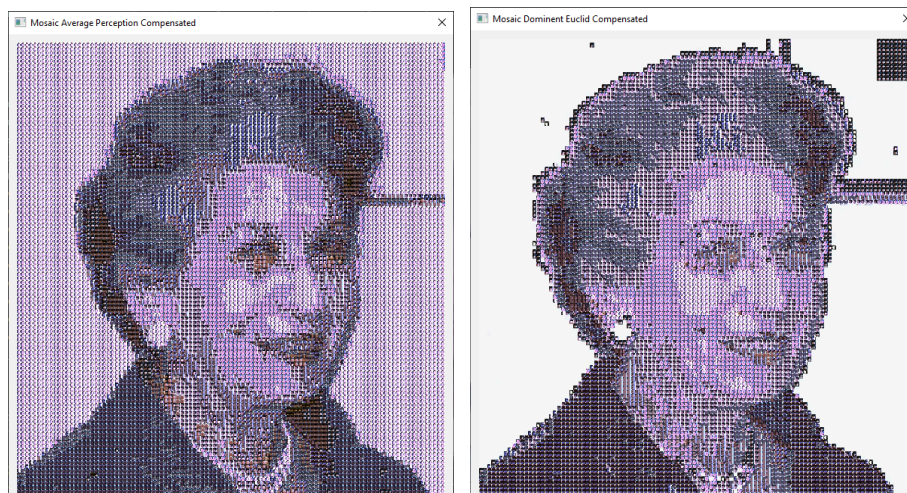


The Overlay section describes the tiles that will overlay the image as cropped. The size of the tile can be selected generically as small/medium/large or specifically as a number of tiles per row. The pixel width of the cropped section determines the actual tile size in pixels. The overlay tiles will be selected by how well the color of the step 2 image matches the grid tile color. There are several options controlling this process, and experimenting with them is the correct path to the best mosaic image. General guidelines are that the more images available, the more faithful looking the Phace will be. Also smaller grid size will produce a closer match.

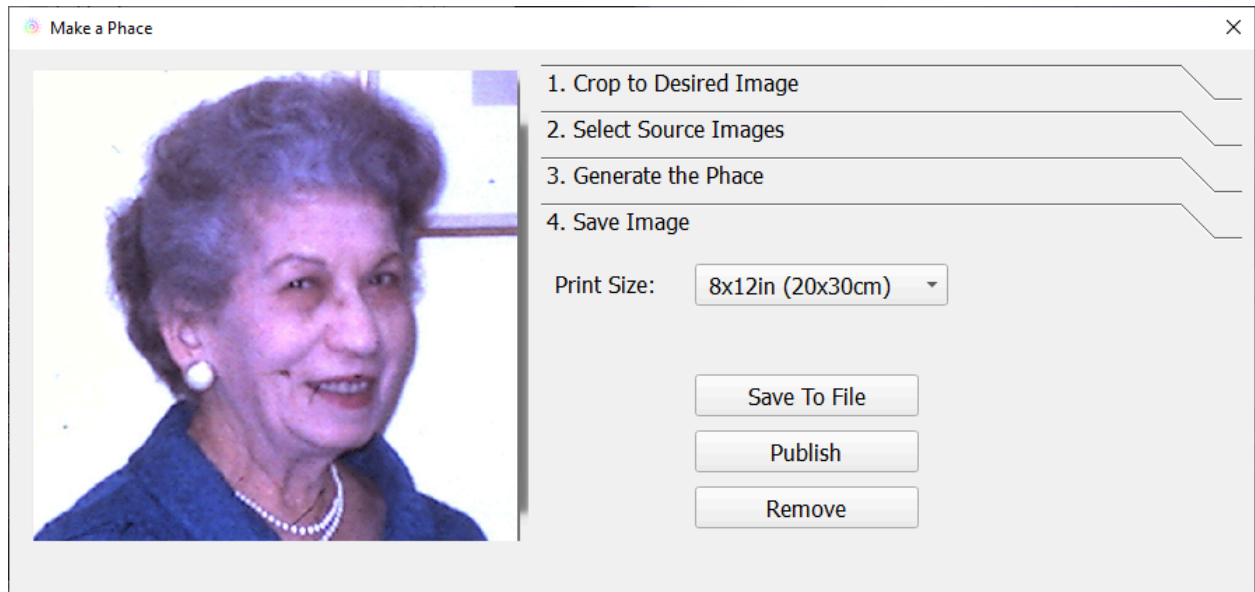
Click the Show Swatches button to view the step 2 replacement images (Often best to set a large grid size for this operation to better view the swatches).



Click Preview Mosaic to see the image generated by the current settings. You can keep many preview windows open for comparison until you have achieved the desired effect.



4 Save Image

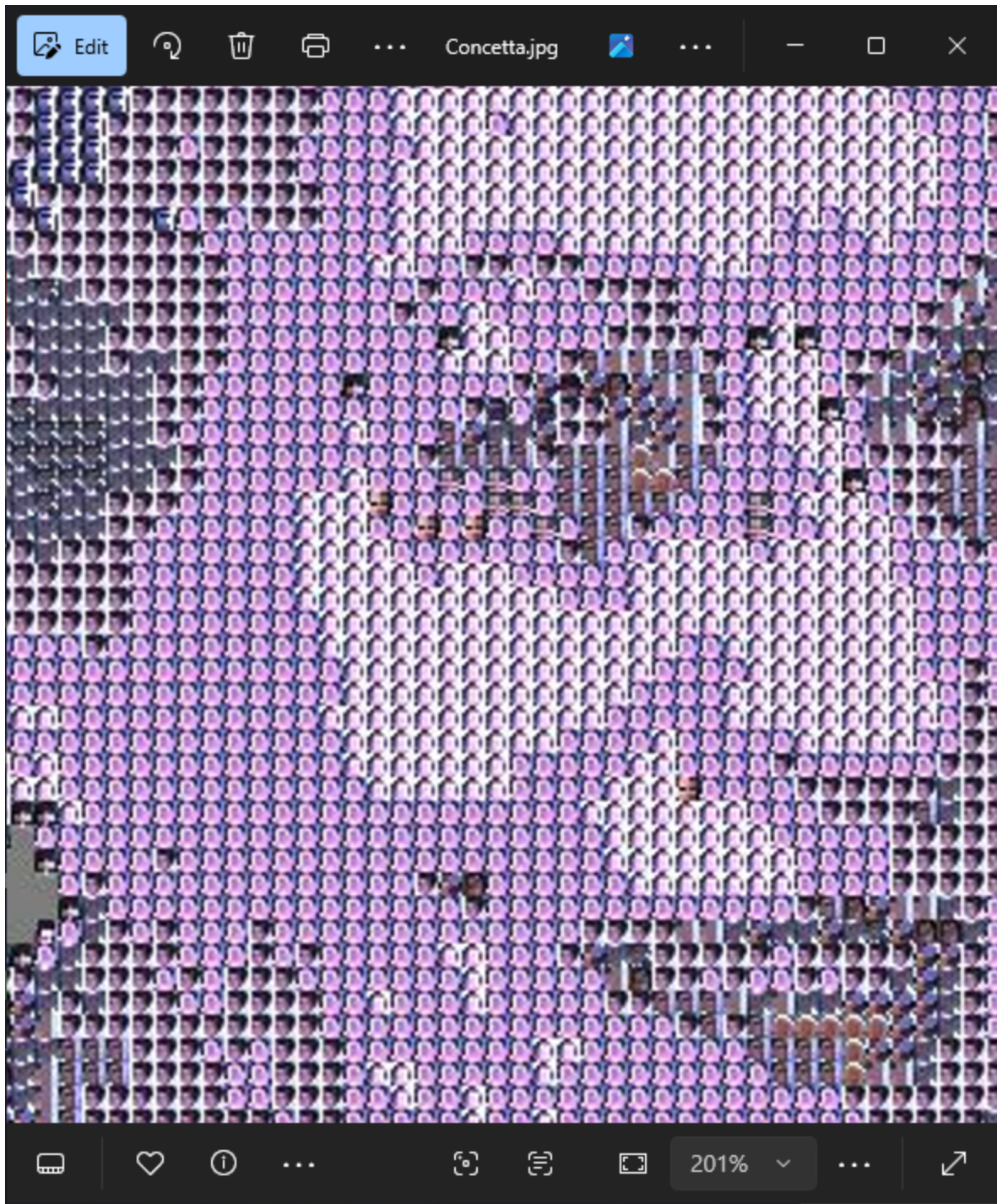


The generated image will be sized at 300DPI for the selected print size. Besides common sizes, there is also a Custom selection that allows your specific dimensions.

Clicking Save to File will open a File System dialog that allows you to save the Phace as a PNG image. This file can be printed directly or sent to 3rd party printing services.

Clicking Publish will upload the Phace and the images used to generate it to 17Photos.org. This is similar to uploading an Album and requires that you register for a 17Photos account. During the upload process you will be given the chance to assign a name to the Phace.

Clicking Remove will remove (delete) the Phace from the 17Photos.org website.



5W Dock:

5W

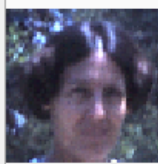
Who



Concetta
2 tag(s).



Damien
1 tag(s).



Genevieve
1 tag(s).



Leo
2 tag(s).



Vic
1 tag(s).



Victor
1 tag(s).

What

When

Where

Why

New

Refresh

The 5W Dock shows the Who, What, When, Where and Why tags that have been created in this combined usage. Clicking “New” allows the creation of a new person record without requiring that it be currently located in a photo. This can be useful when anticipating genealogy trees and the photo set is incomplete. There may be good reasons to define the Who tags beforehand in order to help with consistent naming.

Double click a Who to edit the properties. Setting Mother and Father enables genealogy searching. Other aspects can also be used in tag searches.

Person Add/Edit

Name

Joe

Family Name

DiCara

Birthday

10/26/1949

Gender

Male

Extended Information

Family

Mother



Genevieve

Other Mother

Select

Father



Leo

Other Father

Select

Faces

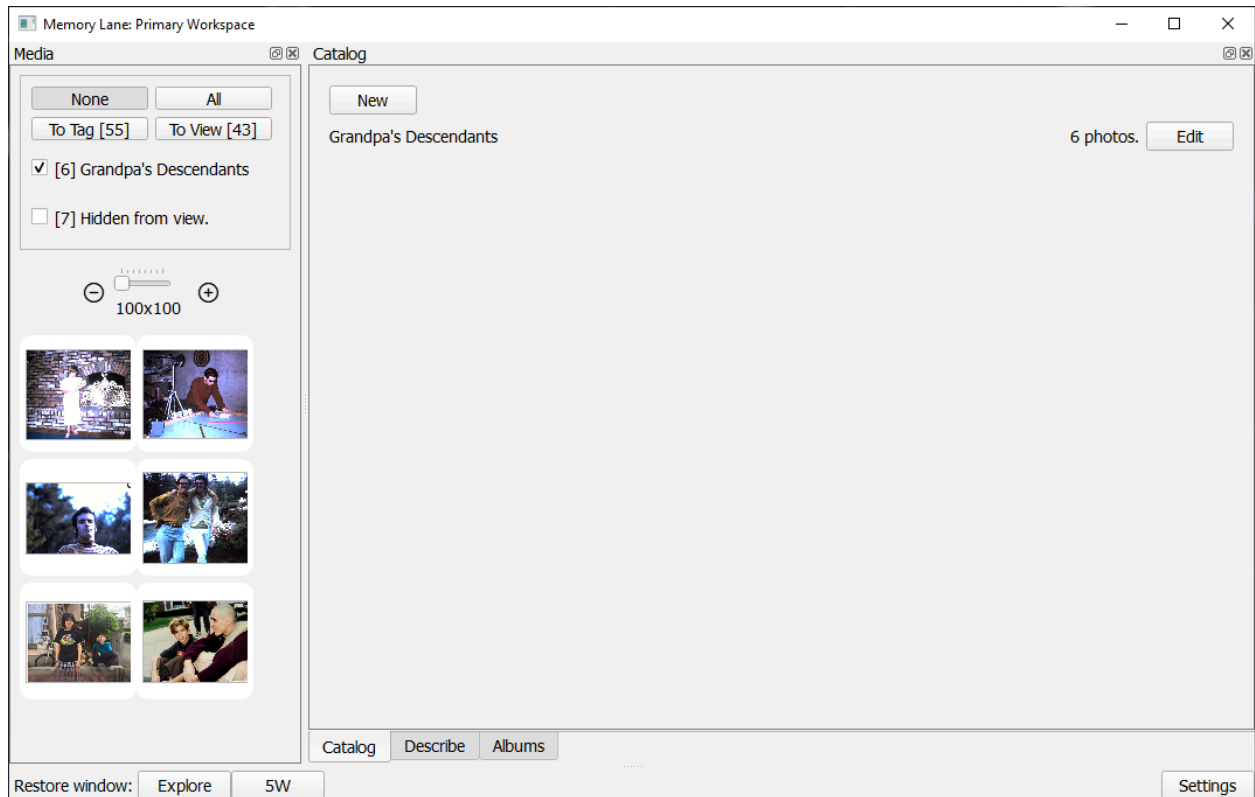
Delete

Save

Quit

Catalog Dock:

Catalogs (filters) are the way to use the 5W information to quickly navigate Memory Lane. The main Dock shows a list of the existing catalogs with the count of their result set and a button to edit the catalog. There is also a button to create a new catalog



Catalog Edit:

Catalog

Catalog Name: 6 items selected.

● People

Select specific people, ancestors or descendants to include in this shoebox

Descendants of

Select Type

☐ Timeline

☐ Life Events

☐ Places

☐ Tag Select

☐ Extended Filter

Timeline allows filtering by file dates (future to do better with event dates) Life Events and Places are not implemented. Tag select provides a means of filtering by any of the 5W data points:

Catalog ✕

Catalog Name: --- items selected.

☐ People

☐ Timeline

☐ Life Events

☐ Places

☒ Tag Select

☒ Must Have

Where ▾

Select Type ▾

19 Millet St ▾

▾

☐ Must Not Have

Select Type ▾

▾

☐ Extended Filter

Checking Must Have means that a photo must have the selected tag to be included in the results. Clicking Must Not Have means any photo with the tag will be excluded from the data set. Exclusion takes precedence over inclusion.

Clicking View shows the selected photos in full screen album slideshow mode.

Catalog ×

Catalog Name: 7 items selected.

☐ People

☐ Timeline

☐ Life Events

☐ Places

☐ Tag Select

☒ Extended Filter

☐ Review Status

☐ Unviewed Only ☐ Duplicates Only ☐ Public Only ☐ Untagged Only

☐ Uncaptioned On ☐ Auto-tagged On ☐ Hidden Only

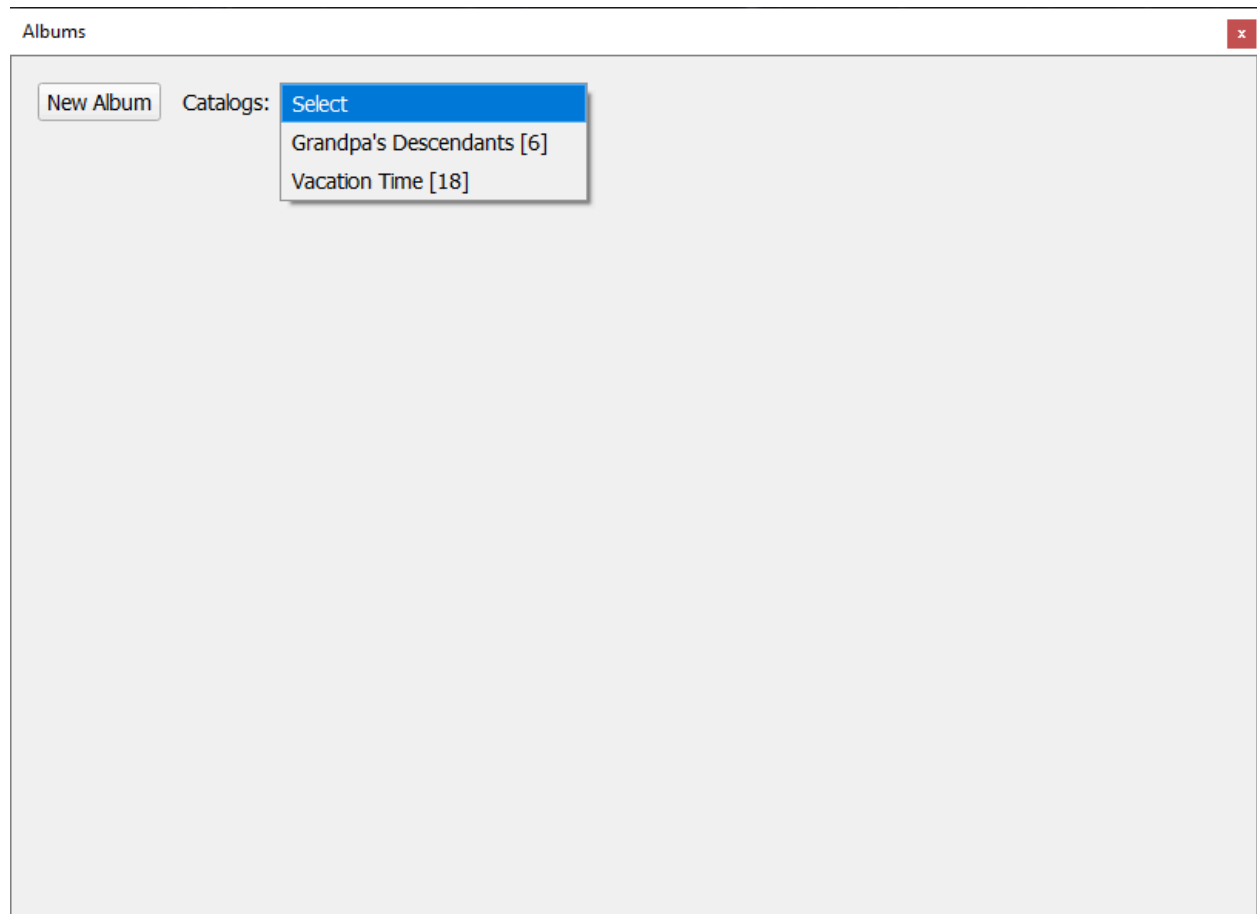
☒ Tracked Directories

☒ vacations

The extended filter allows more technical selections. Under Review Status, the options Unviewed, Untagged and Hidden are always available in the Media Dock selectors.

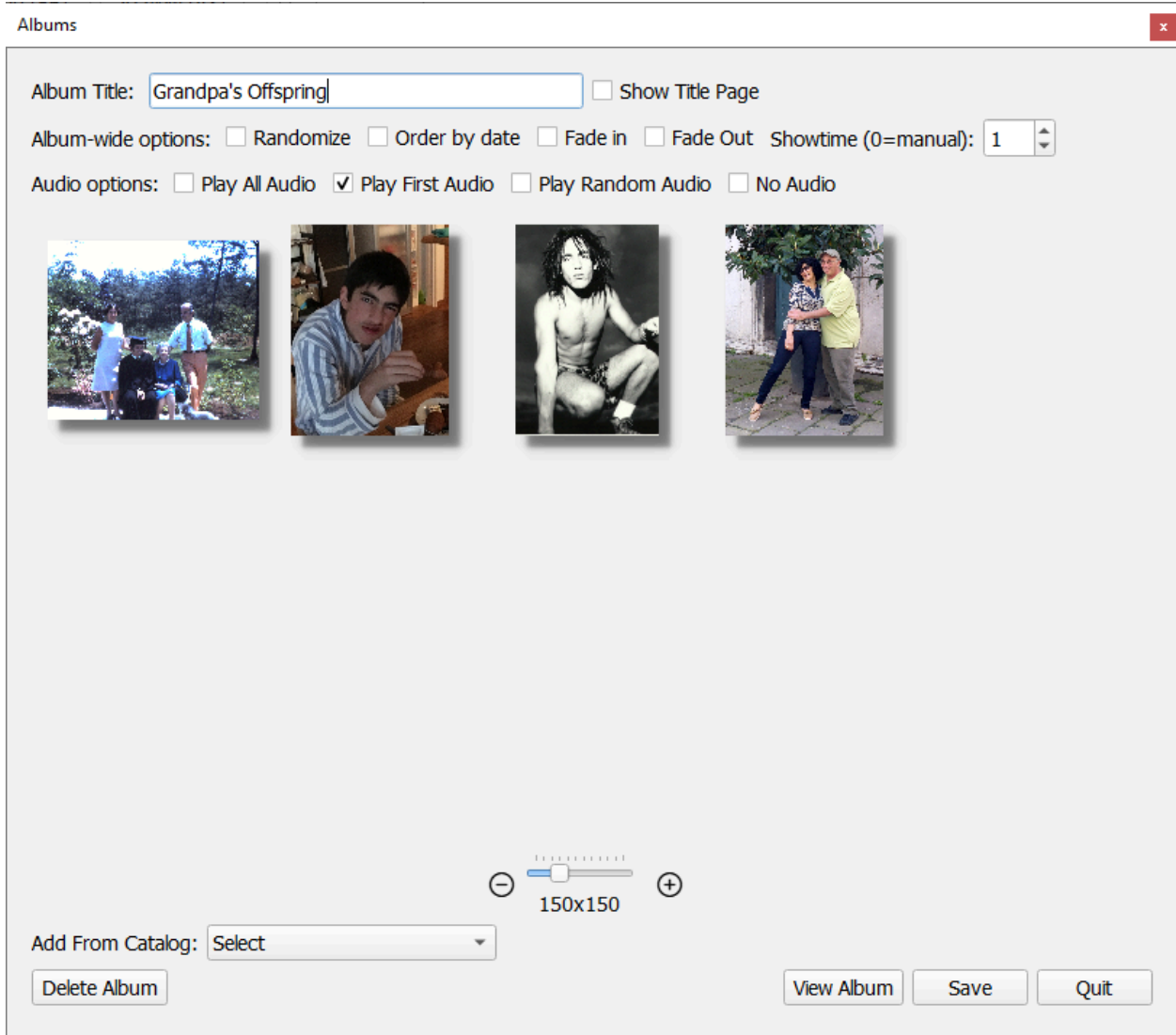
Tracked directories allow one to subset the photos by how they are organized on the disk. If well organized, such as by event, this can be a convenient method of reducing search results. Other selections, such as genealogy will be applied with tracked restrictions, further pinpointing the results.

Album Dock:



The album dock shows all existing albums, a button to create a new album and a catalog select dropdown. The Catalog select dropdown provides “Dynamic” albums, showing all photos that currently satisfy the catalog filter. An easy way to full screen view filter sets.

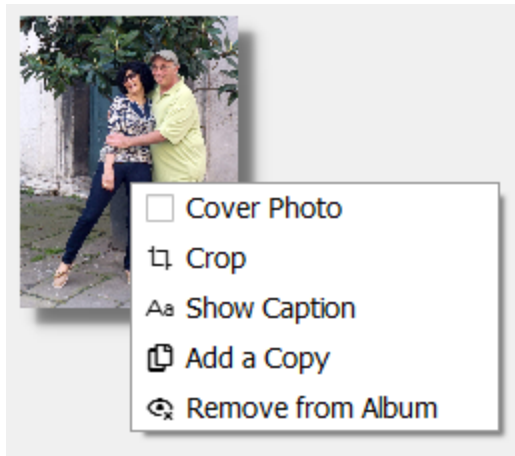
Add/Edit Album:



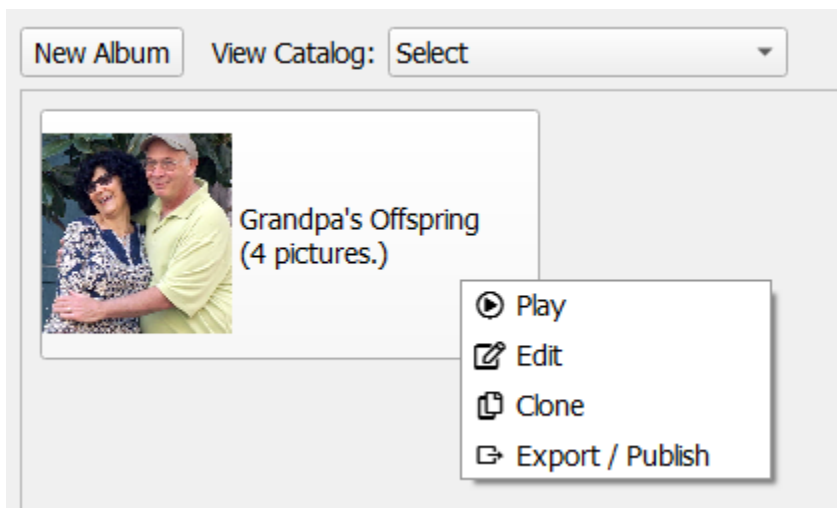
Photos can be added to an album in groups by selecting an existing catalog. Selecting the catalog multiple times will result in multiple copies of the photos in the album. Photos can also be added to the album via drag and drop from the Media Dock.

Various effects can be applied to the album display: Randomize and (File) Date order are mutually exclusive. If neither is checked the photos are displayed in the order shown in the dock. Photos can be rearranged via drag and drop.

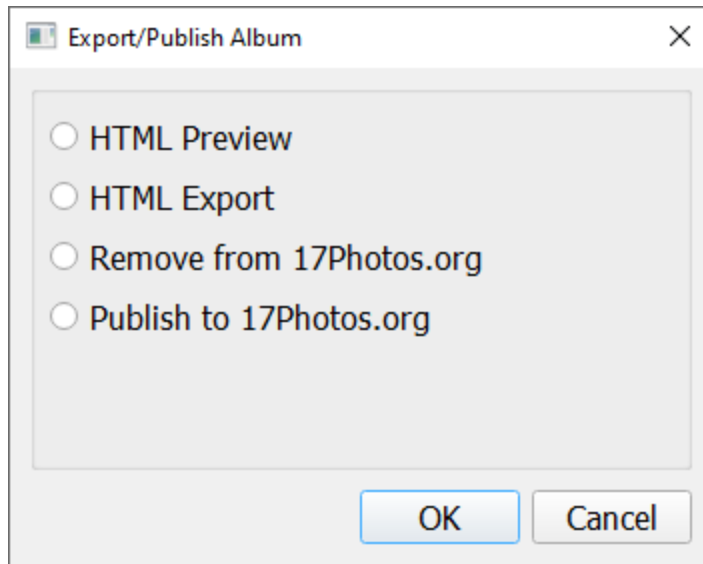
Each photo has a drop down context menu:



Selecting Cover Photo makes this photo the cover on the main album dock. Only one photo can be the cover. Crop allows specifying a subsection of the photo for display in the album. Add/Edit text is not implemented. Remove from the album removes the photo from this album. It has no other effect.



Clicking an album cover plays it. Right click provides a drop down with options to Play, Edit, Clone or Export/Publish. The Export/Publish dialog is:



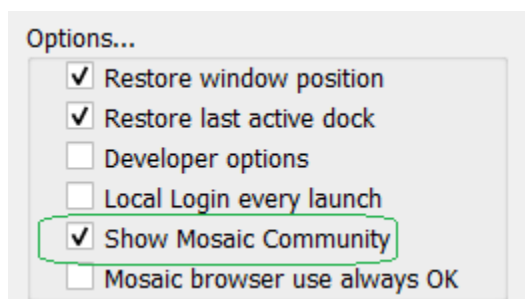
The "HTML Preview" option opens the album in a local browser window so that you may preview what it looks like if published to 17Photos.org.

The "HTML Export" option writes the album contents to a directory that you specify. This directory could be a thumb drive. This option allows separating a finished album from the desktop in a manner that makes it possible to play on another computer. (It can also be "played" as a slideshow on a TV, albeit without the audio.)

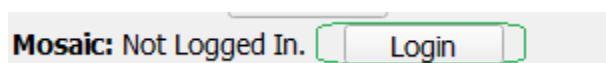
The "Remove from 17Photos.org" option removes your published album from the Website. If the album has never been published or already removed, selecting this option will do nothing.

The "Publish to 17Photos.org" option will publish the album to the Website. The album will appear in the "Member Albums" section. This section is visible only to current Beta members.

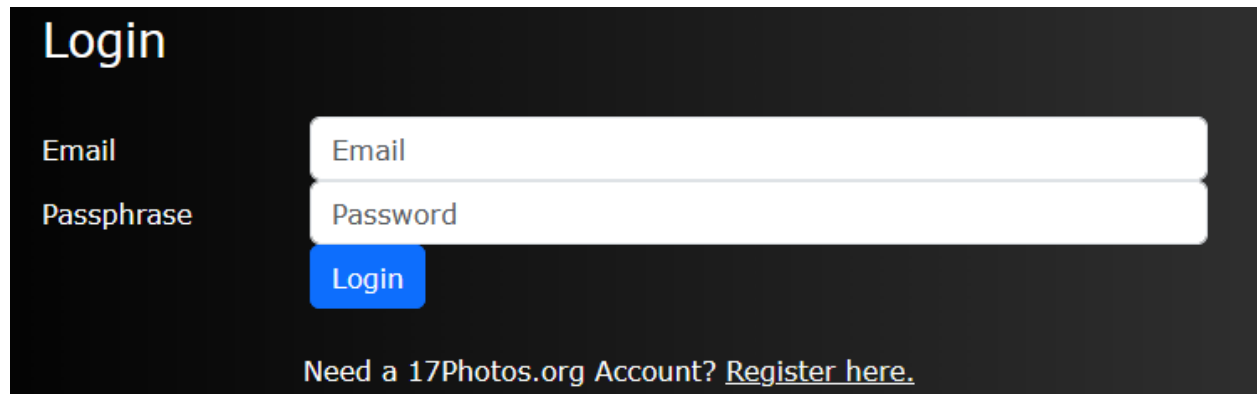
The Publish and Remove options are shown only if you have enabled the 17Photos connection in the settings dialog:



You can create your 17Photos account using the Login button in the bottom row:



(This option will allow you to view other albums without first publishing your own.) You can also wait until you publish your first album to create your account. Either way, the system will open your default browser to the login window:

A login form with a dark background. At the top left is the word "Login" in white. Below it are two white input fields. The first field is labeled "Email" and contains the text "Email". The second field is labeled "Passphrase" and contains the text "Password". Below the second field is a blue button with the word "Login" in white. At the bottom of the form, there is a line of text: "Need a 17Photos.org Account? [Register here.](#)".

Login

Email

Passphrase

[Login](#)

Need a 17Photos.org Account? [Register here.](#)

(Once you have created your account and saved the passphrase info in the browser, the Email and Passphrase will be filled in automatically.)

If you don't have an account, click the [Register here](#) link to get this screen:

Create your 17Photos.org Account

Name	Your name as shown to other users.
Email	Email
Passphrase	Passphrase

☐ Send me your newsletter so I can keep up with 17Photos.

☐ I'm a developer and interested in the nuts and bolts of 17Photos.

☐ I agree to the following terms and conditions.

(Actual Agreement needed.) This data could be lost. Once published to the website it might be stolen. This data could be lost. Once published to the website it might be stolen. This data could be lost. Once published to the website it might be stolen. This data could be lost. Once published to the website it might be stolen.

[Register](#)

Already have a 17Photos.org account? [Login here.](#)