

Moms Internet Guide

brought to you by Health Expressions®

Share a Photo Album with Friends

Hi, I'm Sarah. Welcome to Moms Internet Guide—the place to find straightforward answers to all your questions about the Web. If you're like me, you spend a lot of time sending pictures of your kids to grandparents, aunts, uncles, and even close friends. But ever since I've discovered photo sharing websites, I don't have to make all those trips to the post office—or even remember to take photos with me to family events. These sites let you create picture albums online that you can share with anyone who has Internet access. Last summer, I uploaded pictures from a trip to the zoo the same day, and my mom was admiring them online the next morning. She even ordered prints. This whole process only takes a few minutes, and best of all, it doesn't require any technical skills. Most sites let you share at least some photos for free, and I've found the prints to be really affordable.

The hardest part is choosing the right photo sharing service. Almost every site lets you do three things with your images: share them with friends, group them into galleries or slide shows, and order prints. From there, they each have individual strengths. It's all about picking something that meets your needs.

If you're most interested in letting other people look at your pictures, I recommend starting with www.flickr.com. You can set your photos to private—so only people you know can view them—or share your photography skills with the whole world. Every month you can upload a certain number of photos for free. When you hit the storage limit—sort of like overstuffing your car's trunk on vacation—you can pay a small fee for more space.

Other sites make it a snap to order prints and photo souvenirs. Last year, I used a photo sharing website to create a calendar that featured a different image of my kids each month. It was a great Christmas present, and it only took a few mouse clicks to design. In fact, anyone you share your photos with can order prints or other photo products.

For shopping and sharing, I turn to www.shutterfly.com or www.snapfish.com. Both allow you to store as many pictures as you want and share them with friends. Plus, you can order prints at every size and almost any photo gift you can imagine.

Then there's a site I turn to when I really want to express myself. If you're a scrapbooker like me, you might want to spend some time decorating your online photo albums, and I've found a site that makes it easy.

At www.smugmug.com, I can pick themes to make my online albums really gorgeous. You can choose from existing designs or even create your own, but there is a small annual fee.

Moms Internet Guide

brought to you by Health Expressions®

No matter what photo sharing site you choose, just make sure to read all the details. Some places might delete your images if you don't buy prints after a certain amount of time. Others only allow you to have private photo sets—for sharing with friends and family—rather than completely public ones. Most cameras can plug right into your computer and come with software that walks you through the uploading process. It's generally easy to share and buy photos at all the sites, but you may find some more user-friendly than others. I just spent an hour one Sunday morning exploring until I found a site that felt right for me. Once you upload your images, all you need to do is sit back and enjoy the show—and maybe find something else to do with all those stamps.

Sites to Try:

www.flickr.com

www.shutterfly.com

www.snapfish.com

www.smugmug.com