

MontagePlus 1.0 **Companion**



Contents

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1. Welcome

Introduction

Welcome to MontagePlus! With just your PC, printer, and MontagePlus, you can create popular cutting-edge thumbnail image masterpieces.

With a stylish and easy-to-use interface, MontagePlus makes it a cinch to create a unique graphical tour-de-force. Follow the simple three-step, color-coded procedure for the easiest in creating stunning tiled images... MontagePlus handles all of the high-tech matching and sorting, all you really need to do is choose a starting image!

Unleash an additional level of creativity by creating your own themed collections—with an MPG or AVI movie file you can let MontagePlus build a brand new thumbnail image collection to use as tiny tiles when making your montage. So a reworked wedding picture made with tiny images from a digital wedding video is perhaps just a few clicks away!

Other special features include embedding your own choice of logo or other tiny image somewhere in the montage as a **Hide & Seek** fun feature, or your graphic/logo near a corner as an **Autograph**.

About the Companion

This *Companion* is your guide to getting started and achieving fantastic results with Serif MontagePlus—from what to do once you launch MontagePlus to using its powerful output options.

Welcome. Provides key information to get you up and running painlessly and introduces you to the main features of MontagePlus.

Getting Started. Describes the MontagePlus buttons and windows and offers a quick start guide to creating your first montage.

Step-by-Step. A more detailed look at the processes of choosing your starting image, customizing your montage, saving, and printing.

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Installation

What you need to run MontagePlus

If you need help installing Windows, or setting up peripherals, see Windows documentation and help.

Minimum:

- ◆ IBM-compatible Pentium PC with CD-ROM drive and mouse (or other Microsoft-compatible pointing device)
- ◆ Microsoft Windows® 95, 98, 98 SE, Me, 2000, NT® 4.0, or XP operating system
- ◆ Microsoft Internet Explorer 5 or higher (Internet Explorer 5.5 and 6 included on CD-ROM)
- ◆ 32MB RAM (Windows 95/98), see manufacturer's requirements for other operating systems
- ◆ 95MB free hard disk space
- ◆ SVGA (800x600 resolution, 16-bit color) display or higher.

Additional disk resources and memory are required when creating, printing, or saving large images.

Optional:

- ◆ Windows-compatible printer
- ◆ TWAIN-compatible scanner and/or digital camera
- ◆ Stylus or other input device

What you need to know

MontagePlus is one of the easiest and fun programs around. You don't need any design experience or even artistic talent, as the MontagePlus 1-2-3 creation process will do virtually all the work for you!

However, if you're new to Windows computing, you will find it much easier if, before installing and using MontagePlus, you have spent a little time becoming familiar with the Windows operating environment.

- From the Windows desktop, click the **Start** button at the lower left and choose **Help**.

First-time install

To install MontagePlus, simply insert the MontagePlus CD-ROM into your CD-ROM drive. The AutoRun feature automatically starts the Setup process and all you need to do is answer the on-screen questions. If the AutoRun does not start the install, use the manual install instructions below.

Manual install/re-install

To remove or repair the installation at a later date, select **Settings/Control Panel** from the Windows **Start** menu and then double-click the **Add/Remove Programs** icon. Make sure the correct CD-ROM is inserted into your CD-ROM drive, choose **Serif MontagePlus**, and click the **Change/Remove...** button. You'll have the choice of Removing or Repairing the installation, or using the Repair option.

Registration, upgrades, and support

If you see the Registration Wizard when you launch MontagePlus, please take a moment to complete the registration process. Just call Serif toll-free and provide the installation number and code shown. We'll give you a personalized registration number in return. Remember, if you need technical support please contact us. We aim to provide fast, friendly service and knowledgeable help.

2. Getting Started

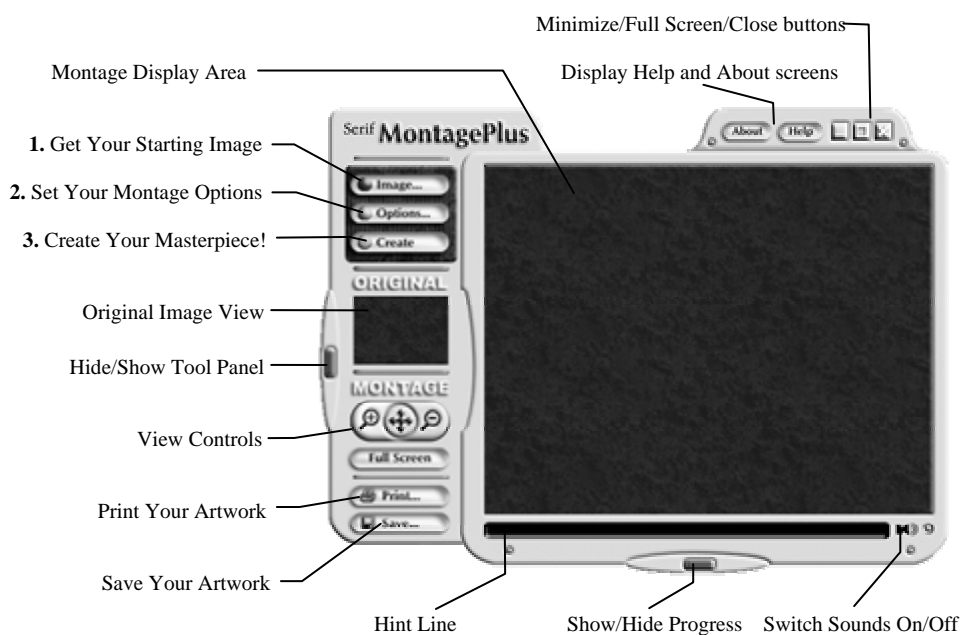
Once MontagePlus has been installed, you'll be ready to start. Setup adds a **Serif MontagePlus 1.0** item to the **Programs** submenu of the Windows **Start** menu.

- Use the Windows **Start** button to start MontagePlus.

The first time MontagePlus launches, you'll see an overlay with helpful information. When you're done with this, click anywhere to proceed to the main screen, as shown below.

MontagePlus Interface

Now you can see the normal MontagePlus screen. The 1-2-3 creation procedure is depicted to the left in the interface illustration below:



A Quick Start Guide to Your First Montage

Let's take a look at some of those buttons and screens in action! If you're using MontagePlus for the first time, here's a recommended sequence:

- ❑ Click the dark gray **Tool Panel** button at the far left of the interface to reveal additional controls, if they're not already visible. The panel slides out to the left side. If you want to close the tool panel, just click the button again.
- ❑ Click the **Image** button. (For full details on opening images from different sources, see the next section, **Step-by-Step**.)
- ❑ Browse to the MontagePlus installation folder (typically C:\PROGRAM FILES\SERIF\MONTAGEPLUS\1.0\), select the image **Face.jpg** and click **Open**. The image will be visible in the **Original View** at the left and in the main MontagePlus display area.

In this first, quick use of MontagePlus, you can skip step 2 (Options) and let MontagePlus choose settings for you. More on customization in the following section.

- ❑ Click **Create** to create your montage!

We've just used the simplest, quickest procedure for creating an original montage! As mentioned, there are options we can explore and these will be covered in the next section of this companion.

Accessing Help

- ❑ At any time from the main MontagePlus screen, you can press **F1** or click **Help** to see useful reminders of the button functions.

When you're done, you may want to branch out on your own—or you can tag along as the rest of us continue a more detailed look at MontagePlus in the next section...

3. Step-by-Step

In this section we'll be taking a closer look at the choices available in getting your starting image and customizing your montage.

Opening an Image

MontagePlus can open images in a variety of formats, including a range of industry-standard file types for images opened from disk, as well as images captured directly from a TWAIN-compatible digital camera or scanner.

Opening an image from a disk

Supported image file formats for use in creating montages are .JPG/.JPEG, .GIF, .BMP, .PNG and .TIFF.

- On the Tool Panel, click the **Image** button.
- Browse to an image of your choice and click **OK**.

If you are opening an image directly from a digital camera or scanner, read the notes below. If you are happy with your opened image, jump to “Customizing Your Montage.”

Opening an image from a TWAIN digital camera or scanner

MontagePlus supports the retrieval of an image directly from a scanner or digital camera. The most popular method offered for these devices to interface with a computer is called TWAIN, a standard used across many programs.

- Click the **Image** button.
- Click the **Acquire from TWAIN** button to the right of the dialog.

Your normal digital camera or scanner software should launch. From here you can adjust the scan area and scan settings prior to actually scanning, or, in the case of a digital camera, choose which image to retrieve. Once you're done, the image will be transferred to the main MontagePlus screen.

Customizing Your Montage

This second stage of the montage creation process offers a significant level of customization, for truly original end results.

- ❑ Click the **Options** button, the second in the red/amber/green sequence at the left of the MontagePlus interface.
- ❑ At the top of the Options screen in the **Thumbnail Size** section, select a thumbnail image size and click **OK**.

The thumbnail image sizes listed are relative to your original image, rather than being fixed sizes. The default size is designated as “Medium.” As a general rule, when you plan to print at standard sizes you’re better off using a somewhat larger thumbnail size. This sacrifices some detail in the overall image, but everyone will be able to see detail in the thumbnails. If you’re printing poster-size output (see details later one), you can get by with smaller thumbnails.

MontagePlus comes supplied with two thumbnail collections—one consisting of images in a “portrait” orientation, the other with “landscape” format images. You can open either of these collections at any time using the instruction below.

- ❑ Click **Options** then **Open** and browse to **Default Landscape.imc** in the Thumbnails folder of your MontagePlus installation. Click **Open** and then **OK**.
- ❑ Click **Create** to process your montage.

Special and Fun Features

Take a look at these fun options to personalize your montage!

Hide and Seek

Add a fun element to your montage by randomly “hiding” an image of your choice amongst the thumbnails. Click the radio button to activate this feature (☐ is enabled, ☑ is disabled) then **Browse** to an image of your choice, clicking **Open** when you’ve selected your image.

Autograph

Like Hide and Seek, **Autograph** embeds a custom thumbnail picture in your montage. Unlike Hide and Seek, Autograph always places the image near the bottom-right corner of the montage rather than in a random location. Follow the procedure outlined above to introduce an Autograph. Try a company logo or a digital photo of yourself!

Making Your Own Thumbnail Collection

MontagePlus offers the powerful capability of creating your own thumbnail image collections for use in a montage. These thumbnail images are the tiny “tiles” that form the montage itself. Creating your own set of thumbnails adds an additional depth to the montage! The fun in seeing a picture made of small images is enhanced when those small images have some relevance to you or the original image.

This allows for fun new poster possibilities. For example, you can enjoy a wedding picture comprised of thumbnail images from a digital movie of the wedding itself. Just point MontagePlus at a folder full of your favorite themed images and you’ll have thumbnails in no time!

Making a collection from images on disk

It’s easy to create a new thumbnail collection for montage-making from images already saved on your hard drive. You can also add files from CD, providing your MontagePlus CD is in the drive.

- If you’re not already viewing the Options screen, click **Options**.
- Click **Manage Collections**, then click **New**.

This will let MontagePlus know not to use the existing image collection and prepare a new collection for some fresh images.

- Click **Add**. Browse to a folder containing images to use. To include all the images in the folder, just click **OK** after selecting the folder name. Or (with a bit more effort) you can select individual images one by one, clicking **OK** each time.

To add more images to the same collection from another location, repeat the last step.

- When you have finished adding images, click **Save**. Choose a suitable location for the image collection file, enter a name and click **Save**.

This will save the list of images as an image collection (an .IMC file) that can be used by MontagePlus in the future without having to add the individual images or folders again.

Making a collection from a movie file

MontagePlus can automatically extract images from a digital movie file, either a .MPG (MPEG Layer 1) or .AVI (Windows video) and build a thumbnail image collection with them.

- In the Options screen, click **Manage Collections...**
- Click the **Extract...** button.

You'll now be able to browse your system for appropriate movie files.

Note that if you wish to use other kinds of movie files to create thumbnail collections, the movies will need to be converted to MPEG Layer 1 or AVI format before MontagePlus can extract from them. This conversion can usually be accomplished using a video editor or some video player programs. Please be aware that the process requires a significant amount of time and hard disk space.

- Using the familiar Browse controls, locate an appropriate movie file and click **Open**.
- When MontagePlus has finished gathering images from the movie, click **Save**, enter a name for this new collection of thumbnails and click **Save** again.

Managing your collections

We've covered how to create new collections different methods—from saved images or a file. Now let's look at how to use the remaining buttons in the **Manage Collections** screen.



via two
movie

You can load an existing image collection for use in a montage at any time by clicking the **Load...** button. This will allow you to browse to and select an existing .IMC file. You can also expand an existing collection, adding more images to it, by first loading the collection and then clicking the **Add...** button to locate more images (or folders of images). When you have successfully added more images to a collection, save the changes by clicking the **Save** button.

If you want to append an existing collection but save it with a different name to leave the original collection unaltered, follow the procedure outlined above but use the **Save As...** button instead of performing a regular save.

Quick tips when managing collections

The Options screen and Manage Collections screen both offer quick reminders of the functions of all of the available buttons. Just move the mouse over each button and read the information displayed in the MontagePlus HintLine at the bottom of the main interface.

Creating Your Montage

The final step, having examined all of the available options, is to create your montage. We'll assume that you are happy with your original image, and the options you've selected.

Click **Create!**

MontagePlus remembers your previous Options settings during the session, so you can click the **Image** button to select a different starting image, then go straight to the **Create** button.

Saving Your Montage

Once you've created your montage and have decided to keep the image, you'll need to save it. MontagePlus offers a range of industry-standard save types including JPG, GIF, PNG and TIFF. Click **Save** in the main MontagePlus screen, choose a format, type a name and click **Save** to keep a permanent copy of your montage.

Choosing a file format

Here's a brief summary of what the different types of image are good for:

JPG – a full-color format suitable for Web publishing. MontagePlus uses medium compression by default, which reduces the image quality but makes the file significantly smaller and therefore quicker to download from the Web.

GIF – a 256-color format also suitable for the Web, especially where there are few colors in the image. GIFs use compression too, but without loss of image quality.

PNG – another full-color image format suitable for the Web, comparable to JPG but with no loss of image quality.

TIFF – A popular full-color format for professional printing.

Image size

MontagePlus offers a slider in the **Save** dialog box. The slider's default position in the middle is a size relative to the original image size.

To reduce the number of pixels in the image, move the slider to the left (great for images to be used online). To increase the number of pixels in the image, move the slider to the right (perfect for images to be used for large output).

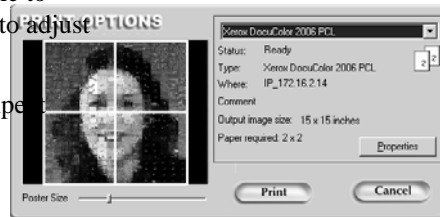
Printing Your Montage

The Print dialog

Once you've clicked on the **Print** button in MontagePlus, you'll see some familiar controls in the Print dialog. You can select which device driver to use from the installed list using the pull-down at the top of the dialog

From this dialog you will also be able to access your normal printer controls to adjust quality and other options.

A preview lets you know what to expect when you click **Print**.



Printed output size

MontagePlus supports **tiled output**, which lets you print out multiple sheets, then trim and assemble them into poster-sized results. Simply drag the **Poster size** slider and watch the preview window until you find the size you want. (The dialog tells you how many pages are required.)

As MontagePlus adds “detail” to the image by recompiling it with many thumbnail images, it's perfectly OK to start with a low-resolution picture, create your montage and still enjoy high-resolution output. If using the slider to create large-scale output, double-check how many pieces of paper will be used before clicking on **Print**!

Carry On Creating!

If you are happy with your saved or printed montage and would like to create another, it's a simple case of clicking on the **Image** button again, selecting an image, optionally changing your montage settings, and clicking on **Create** to roll out another masterpiece!

When you're done creating montages and you'd like to close MontagePlus, just click the **X** in the top right corner and be sure to visit again!