



Modernizing Your
Memories



WESTINGHOUSE SURE NEWS

www.westinghousesure.org

A Publication for Westinghouse Retirees

Modernizing Your Memories

An Eight-Part Series:

1. Preserving the Past
2. Scanning Slides, Prints, and Negatives
3. Getting Rid of Those VHS Tapes
4. Movies and More
5. Converting Your Vinyl
6. Software Tips & Other Stuff
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This series appeared bi-monthly in the

Westinghouse SURE News

Beginning May 2010 – July 2011

by Nic (John) Nicolaus

Modernizing Your Memories

FIRST in a Series: Preserving the Past

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If your house were on fire, what would you grab on your way out that you would want to save? Income tax files? Your baseball cards? Maybe some heirloom jewelry? Your personal diary? A valuable piece of art?

Or—how about all those snapshots, slides, and home movies that you've taken throughout your lifetime that document the family vacations, trips, holidays, celebrations, and special occasions? That's what I would choose. But if you're like me, those things are not all in one place, and there is no way I could gather them up fast enough to save them.

I've decided to do something about that. Many of us are at or near that point in our lives when we begin to contemplate our own mortality. It's time to get organized (at last!) and clean up after ourselves. That means doing something with all those old files, documents, and photos. First, I want to deal with the photos. Most of them were created in an era that can be called BD: Before Digital. Today we have the means of converting our old-fashioned formats to digital files.

There are several important reasons for doing this:

- Preserving
- Safeguarding
- Reminiscing
- Managing
- Viewing
- Sharing

My films are as much as 50 years old. Yours probably are, too. Digitizing is a way to capture and preserve the fast-fading photos before it is too late. Snapshots and slides lose their color, and slides and movies become brittle, torn, or warped.

Digitized files can be readily safeguarded against fire or theft or other disaster. I store my files on

CD/DVDs and also on my computer, using an on-line service for real-time data backup. (Ask me if you're interested in this type of service.) You can also make extra discs and give them to other family members for safekeeping, or put them in your safety deposit box at the bank.

My wife and I want to be able to re-live and enjoy our family memories and the travel experiences we've had since our retirement. Together with our travel journals (also digitized), these pictures enable us to take our trips over and over again. This is a great way to spend those long winter evenings!

With digitized photos, you can easily store, sort, manage, and view them. How you do this will depend on the type and age of your computer, its operating system, and any photo management software you may have.

I am using *Windows Photo Gallery*, which came bundled with Microsoft *Vista* on my computer. This has been very useful for editing and organizing files and for viewing images. But there are many other programs as well—perhaps software that came with your digital camera. (BTW: If you're not using a digital camera by now, you should be!)

With *Photo Gallery*, I can arrange and sort the images into slide shows, using folders, keywords and/or dates, and view them with my computer and (cloned) television set, much like using a slide projector. (How many of you still have—or use—a Carousel projector to show your slides?)

And—I can make all the disc copies I want and pass them on to my children and grandchildren—a far better gift than 50 shoeboxes of disorganized snapshots, slides, and movies!

In this series, I will be sharing my experiences in accomplishing conversion to the modern digital world, with tips that will—I hope—help you to do the same.

Next: Scanning Slides, Prints, and Negatives

Modernizing Your Memories

SECOND in a Series:

Scanning Slides, Prints, and Negatives

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Your old photos may be in the form of prints, slides, or negatives—most likely, some of each. How you go about scanning them and converting them to digital image files will depend on the numbers and types that you have.

There are essentially two choices: scan them yourself, or pay someone else to do it. It depends on the quantities involved and how much time and effort you are willing to spend. To do it yourself, you will need a scanner, which you may already have. This will work for your snapshots, but 35mm slides usually require a different treatment.

Today you can buy a good “all-in-one” inkjet printer for under \$100—one that can copy, scan, print, and even send/receive a fax—such as Epson, HP, Dell, Lexmark. Scanning slides is a little trickier, but you can get an attachment for your machine or buy a standalone scanner (around \$100) that can scan slides and negatives. (How well? I dunno!)

[**Aside:** Do you remember the days when you could get a free Gillette razor during the World Series? “Just send your name, address, and \$1 for postage....” the announcer said. The catch was, you had to purchase *Gillette Blue Blades*[™]—they got you by the blades! Today, you can buy a very reasonable printer for your computer—but the catch is, they getcha by the ink cartridges!]

Scanning your own photos is very labor intensive for the home amateur. It’s a tedious, one-at-a-time process. At my age, I figured I’d rather spend money than time, so I set out to find a commercial service that could do the scanning for me. (You might make a different decision for your situation.)

Safety and security of the original photos is of prime importance. The closer you keep them to home, the safer they will be. There are local services that can do the job: Ritz Camera at various malls, ABC Photo in Wexford. Ritz charges 30¢ for prints or slides (negotiable) and ABC charges 79¢ for slides and 99¢ for prints—a little pricey!

I decided to “let my fingers do the walking” and used Google and the Internet to surf for commercial scanning services. The search may not have been exhaustive, but I considered things such as price, quality, FAQs, customer comments, and proximity and location of where the work would be performed (no offshore subcontractors!)

Carefully—but not scientifically—I chose FotoBridge, a laboratory in New Jersey. Prices are 18¢ for prints, 36¢ for slides, and 40¢ for negatives—in batches of 250. Larger quantities cost less.

Sending your originals through the mail has inherent risk, of course. I decided to use standard UPS Ground, as it is convenient and reliable. A package gets from Pittsburgh to New Jersey by the next morning, with just one transfer en route.

FotoBridge returns the originals and a DVD, postage-paid, with all the photos or slides converted to JPEG files. Load them onto your computer, copy them, print them, or do whatever you want.

If you’ve ever shopped online, you know it can be a thankless and endless chore. There are many scanning services, with prices that range from half to double those at FotoBridge. Most are on the West Coast, involving longer and riskier shipping times. I wanted to avoid that.

I was very pleased with the quality of the images from FotoBridge—not perfect, but quite adequate. Some had a little too much contrast, but I had no trouble softening them with the editing tools of *Photo Gallery*. With one particular batch of 35mm slides, I had a roll of *Ektachrome*[™] that had badly discolored after 50 years. My first impulse was to throw them out, but I sent them anyway, and the images came back with the colors restored—*voila!*

If you want to give this vendor a try, they will process a few photos/slides for you on a free trial basis. Go to their website at fotobridge.com. If you decide to place an order, they are offering SURE members a 15% discount until the end of September. At checkout, just enter the coupon code “*SURE15*.”

Next: Getting Rid of Those VHS Tapes

Modernizing Your Memories

THIRD in a Series:

Getting Rid of Those VHS Tapes

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Now that I've written about digitizing snapshots and slides, let's deal with another medium: VHS tapes. When this format was introduced about 35 years ago, it was quite the rage to be able to record TV programs and watch movie videos. Over time, we all have accumulated collections of tapes, comprising everything from home videos to recorded TV shows and commercially produced films from Hollywood, Disney, and elsewhere.

But...by now the VHS tapes have gone the way of 8mm movies and eight-track sound tapes. They are bulky and take up too much space. They must be played in sequence—no direct searching. They are getting old and deteriorating on our shelves. Solution? Convert them to digital DVDs and then pitch 'em!

Again, we are faced with the choice of do-it-yourself or pay someone else to do it. If you've already advanced to a DVD recorder, you are ahead of the game. If that recorder has VHS capability, then it is a simple matter to plug in the old VHS tapes and make a DVD recording. You may be able to connect your old VHS player to the DVD recorder. A combination VHS/DVD recorder costs between \$150 and \$250.

Or...have your tapes converted by a commercial service. Locally, Ritz Camera and ABC Photo both charge about \$30 (plus tax) for a two-hour tape, but they impose copyright restrictions and will not copy commercial material or TV shows.

You can also shop the Internet for these services. I found one at southtree.com, a lab located in Chattanooga. They charge \$9 per tape (any length) plus \$9 per order for return shipping (no tax), and they do not impose copyright restrictions as long as you order only one copy. I have not used them, so I can't share any more information than that. They have offered SURE members a 15% discount, good through the end of the year. Use coupon code "SURE15" at checkout. And check their photo scanning services, too. Foto-

Bridge recently announced a new service of converting videotape to DVD. It works the same as their photo scanning packages. They charge \$130 for up to five 2-hour tapes, including return shipping (no tax). I have not tried this, but I have had favorable experience with FotoBridge in scanning my photos, and they are easy to work with. Copyright restrictions may apply. Visit their website at fotobridge.com for more details. A 10% discount is available to SURE members. The 15% discount still applies to photo scanning. Use coupon codes "SURE10" or "SURE15." Both discounts are good until the end of this year.

Another way to convert the video tapes is by using your old VCR player and your computer with special software. This is the route I took, because I had over two dozen VHS tapes, and this was cost effective for me. And no copyright problems! I purchased *Roxio Easy VHS to DVD*, costing \$60 plus \$8 S&H. (You need to buy a physical copy, because it comes with a special connecting cable to your computer's USB.)

BTW: Whenever I buy software online, instead of just downloading it, I try to get an actual DVD, even if it costs several dollars extra. That way, I have a backup in case I have to restart my computer, and (unfortunately) I have had to do that on two occasions in the recent past. My photos and data files were safely backed up by an online service, but I had to reload all the software I had added since buying my computer. (All the original stuff is always there.) Another solution: when downloading new software, select "Save" instead of "Run" and save it right on your desktop. After installation, simply copy the installation program to a DVD for safekeeping. Avoid buying it again!

To obtain *Easy VHS to DVD*, go to roxio.com and follow ordering instructions there. Unfortunately, I was unable to negotiate a member discount, but they do periodically have special promotions.

If you do this yourself, be prepared to spend considerable time, as each tape has to play out in "real time" during the transfer. But you don't have to just sit there. What I did was to set it up at night and then go to bed. Next morning: done!

Next: Movies and More

Modernizing Your Memories

FOURTH in a Series: Movies and More

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Movies: Long before digital cameras and camcorders, home movies were popular—especially for recording your children growing up and family activities. If you still have these old films and want to keep the memories, you should convert them sooner than later—before they become physically unusable. Your old films may be Super 8mm, 8mm, or even 16mm. But they are extinct!

I don't know of any way to convert these films yourself. In fact, I have no idea how the commercial labs do it! Unfortunately, it's rather expensive to have them converted to DVD. Here are some options:

- ABC Photo - \$80 for the first 250 feet plus 19¢ per foot (\$108/400-foot reel).
- Ritz Camera - \$30 for the first 50 feet plus 30¢ per foot (\$135/400-foot reel)
- FotoBridge - \$70 for 250 feet; \$135 for 500. (Equivalent to \$108/400-foot reel.)
- Southtree - \$16 for every 50 feet plus \$9 per order return S&H (\$137/400-foot reel)

I don't have experience with any of these services for movies, because 20 years ago I converted my movies to VHS (at 8¢ per foot!) and had only to copy the tapes to DVDs. Check them out to see what suits your needs the best.

The SURE discounts still apply until the end of the year: 15% at Southtree; FotoBridge, 15% for slide and photo scanning, 10% for videotapes and movies. At checkout, use coupon codes “SURE15” or “SURE10.”

[Note: You'll get the discounts as long as you place your order by year-end; but there is no deadline for sending in your materials.]

Photo Management: Previously, I mentioned the importance of good software to manage your digital photo collection. I am using Microsoft *Photo Gallery*—included with *Vista* when I bought my computer. If you have a later version (i.e., *Windows 7*) you would probably have to go to the Microsoft website for a free download from the *Es-*

entials Suite. Other apps include Google *Picassa* (free); *PicaJet* (free) or *PicaJet FX* (\$); *ACDSee* (\$); Apple *iPhoto* (free) and *Aperture* (\$\$\$); Adobe *PhotoShop* (\$\$\$). I don't have any experience with these, but I found them by searching the Internet and you can do the same.

Digital Filing: You probably have a safety deposit box at your bank where you keep important papers and original documents. (If you don't, maybe you should!) An additional way to safeguard important documents is to scan them into digital format and store them on your computer or on disks—and then put them in safekeeping. Examples that come to mind: birth and marriage certificates; wills, living wills, and powers of attorney; property deeds; documents concerning investments and insurance policies.

And—how about this? Do you travel? You know that you (and your travel partner) should have backup copies of your passports, visas, tickets, and immunization records. Copy these into digital form, attach them to an email, and send them to yourself. They will be available to you anywhere in the world where you can access your email!

If you have a scanner, then this is the easiest way to scan and copy these documents. If not, you can use your digital camera to photograph them. Use the close-up or the document setting, if your camera has one.

Digital Inventory: Heaven forbid! But if you ever have a major fire in your house, or a flood, or get robbed, how will you ever be able to itemize all your possessions to make a claim with your insurance company? You can quickly and easily take a photo inventory of your household with either a camcorder or your digital camera. Take lots of pictures—they're cheap and easy to store. You don't have to take every single little item. For instance, if you simply photograph a room and the major pieces of furniture, you will be able to call to mind the items in those closets or chests of drawers. If your device records voice, turn it on and include a narrative (description, age, value, etc. of major items). And, of course, it is important to safely store the disk containing the data.

Next: Converting Your Vinyl

Modernizing Your Memories

FIFTH in a Series: Converting Your Vinyl

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Do you have a stash of vinyl LP albums with your old favorites: Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Mills Brothers, Rosemary Clooney, and all the golden oldies from yesteryear? You probably don't bother to get out your turntable to play them anymore. Oh, you can shop around and find some updated versions of these oldies on CDs, but somehow they aren't the same as your own old collection!

I have a carton of about 75 records that are my favorites from years past, and I decided to convert them to digital files and then transfer them to CDs. I can also play them directly from my computer.

The first thing I did was to replace my out-dated record player. Imagine this—I still have a 50-year old Westinghouse changer—a product of the Small Electronics Division in Edison, NJ! It has served its purpose, but it isn't very good anymore.

There are many turntables available today for playing these old records. I shopped around and found an ION PROFILE LP, which comes with a connector to the computer USB plus software that helps manage the transfer and even helps you document the sound tracks from your records. I bought it from zzounds.com for \$80 (free S&H). For \$30 more, you can purchase model LP DECK, which allows you to also copy the records directly to an iPod, if you have one. Or—you can shop for something else. Just Google “USB turntable.”

That takes care of the hardware/software part of the procedure. But a key to success is to make sure your old LPs are clean and free of oil, dust, fingerprints, and grunge. And this may depend on where you have been storing them all these years. If they have been carefully stored in their dust covers and cases, you will be ahead of the game.

I followed a procedure for washing vinyl records that I found on the Internet. You use everyday dish soap, warm water, and a wet record brush. The detailed steps are described at this website: instructables.com/id/cleaning-vinyl-records/. This is the procedure I used and it worked quite well.

Finding a record brush was a little tricky, but at sleevetown.com/record-brushes.shtml I discovered one for \$17 plus \$5 S&H. You can spend more—or less. But be sure to buy one that can be used as a wet brush.

[Tip: To dry the records, instead of laying them on a flat surface, per instructions, I balanced them on Manhattan glasses lined up on my dining room table so both sides could dry at the same time.]

Following the cleaning, I used my new turntable and the (supplied) MixMeister *EZ Vinyl/Tape Converter* software to convert the records. The software works in conjunction with Apple *iTunes*, which you can download free from apple.com if you don't already have it on your computer. (The instructions cover this.)

Converting the records is a one-at-a-time process that must be done in real time, so it takes a while. But you'll have the enjoyment of listening to all your old music! You can take advantage of the capability for documenting the titles, artists, and soundtracks—or not.

I was well pleased with the final results. The recordings are captured as MP3 files that I play from the playlist in Apple *iTunes* or with Microsoft *Windows Media Player*. I burned CDs as well so I can play them on my CD player or in my car. To make a CD, you simply create a playlist in *iTunes* and burn the CD. You want to create an “Audio CD” (CDA)—not an MP3 or Data CD. Check the results to make sure the disk plays on your machine.

[Note: You can usually squeeze two albums onto an 80-minute, 700-megabyte CD.]

Now bear in mind I am not an audiophile, and my hearing is not like it used to be, so I would have to say these copies are “good enough.” My records are now digitized and I can listen whenever I want, wherever I want, and I know that my collection is safeguarded. You can do it, too!

[Newsflash: FotoBridge has extended its SURE discount offer through March 2011. Take advantage of it while you can!]

Next: Software Tips & Other Stuff

Modernizing Your Memories

SIXTH in a Series:

Software Tips & Other Stuff

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In previous articles, I've identified a number of software programs for managing photos and converting VHS tapes and LP vinyl records to digital formats. Here are a couple more situations that I have encountered and want to share.

Video files: I discovered that when using *Windows Slide Show* to view the photos I have stored with *Photo Gallery*, I can mix in the videos—also produced by my digital camera. (Most new digital cameras have this capability.) When viewing the folder of photos and videos, *Windows Media Player* kicks in every time a video file is encountered, and that livens up the show.

This works fine as long as the videos are AVI or WMV type files—i.e., they are *filename.AVI* or *filename.WMV*. But *Media Player* will not open or play other video file types. I discovered this when I bought a new camera (same brand) and the videos wouldn't play; they had changed to another protocol, and the new files were MOV type—i.e., *filename.MOV*. This is a type supported by Apple and requires *Quick Time* to open them.

I downloaded *Quick Time* software (free) from apple.com and was able to open the files, but they would not play automatically with *Slide Show*!

To solve this problem, I purchased Xilisoft *MOV Converter* software at xilisoft.com for \$40 (optional backup CD \$9 extra). This package handles a long list of file types and conversions each way. Check their website to see full capabilities.

Now when I download files from my camera to my computer, I also have to run the conversion—an extra step, but it completes my slide shows.

Text Files: In cleaning up old files and trying to convert to modern standards, I found several folders of old *Multi-Mate* documents that I would like to preserve. Today's versions of Microsoft *Word* will no longer support these old word processing programs, as they once did.

Searching the Internet, I found *DataViz Conversions Plus*, which can convert many types of files, from and to, including *Multi-Mate*, *Word*, *Word-Perfect*, and *Text* files. And more. For further information, look at dataviz.com. You can try a free download, or purchase it for \$70.

PrintScreen: Here's something that has nothing to do with modernizing memories, but it's pretty handy. Ever wish you could hit the "PrtScr" button and capture what you want from your screen? It gets pasted onto your clipboard, and then you have to paste it into some other application.

A very useful screen capture utility is an app called *SnagIt* from TechSmith. With *SnagIt* you can choose whether to capture the entire screen, a window, or a portion of a window. You can select whatever you want, including unseen areas of a scroll-down (or scroll-across) window or the details of a drop-down list. And you can edit the results. I'm still learning about its capabilities! You can download a free trial or purchase it for \$50 plus (optional) \$7 for a backup CD.

BTW: I learned about this app from David Radin's column in the "TechBusiness Section" of the *Sunday Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. I enjoy reading this section and often get tips and ideas about computing, audio-visual, telecommunications, and other technical subjects. David is trying to start an online *TipLetter* with secrets and tricks, product updates and software tweaks, and other useful tips.

He will start the *TipLetter* when he gets enough charter subscribers (special rate of \$15/year) to cover his start-up. If you're interested, you can learn more or sign up at megabyteminute.com.

Aside: The word "app" was recently chosen by the American Dialect Society as Word of the Year for 2010. It means "an application program for a phone or computer or other electronic device."

Reminder: SURE members can take advantage of the discounts at FotoBridge until the end of March. Place your order by then and it won't matter when you send your photos in for processing.

Next: Disc and Storage Issues

Modernizing Your Memories

SEVENTH in a Series: Disc and Storage Issues

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Discs: How long will they last? The jury is still out, but estimates range from a few years to more than 100. Just like the recording media that preceded them (film, tape, vinyl) it depends on factors such as disc quality; recording quality; handling and storage; and environmental conditions.

It's a good idea to stick with name-brand discs—such as Memorex, HP, Verbatim—and avoid *el cheapos*. Shop online, where you can find them for around \$20 - \$25 for a 100-disc spindle. Or watch the Sunday newspaper ads for places like Office Max, Staples, and Office Depot. They often have sales for as low as \$13 - \$20 for a spindle.

Storage: For long-term storage, it's probably best to use hard plastic cases—not paper or cardboard sleeves. I like the slim Jewel cases, because they take up less space. (But they aren't as sturdy.) These can also be found for less than \$25 per 100.

There seems to be disagreement over whether discs should be stored flat or vertically. We have had it drilled into us that LP records should never lie flat, because they can warp. But remember that they would be supporting the weight of the records on top of them, whereas CDs and DVDs in rigid cases do not bear any such weight. From the articles I've read, it would seem it really doesn't matter which way you store them—your choice!

Like LP records, discs will last longer if stored in a moderate environment. Handle them by their centers and edges, and keep them in their cases when not in use.

Tip: If you want to play it safe, simply copy a new set of discs every few years.

Labels: When creating new discs, you'll want to label them clearly. The simplest method is with an ultra-fine point permanent marker, such as a Sanford Sharpie®. Mark them with titles, subjects, dates, run times, and any other information that will help identify the recorded material.

Another option is to create and print your own labels. This is what I do, using Roxio *Express Labeler* that came with my computer. I usually add artwork or photos that relate to the content of the disc. There are numerous labeling apps to be found, many of them free. But make sure you have compatible software and adhesive labels. I buy labels online for about a quarter each.

It's almost imperative that you use a label applicator when affixing labels to the discs. This assures that the label is centered and applied smoothly. Expected life? Who knows? It's a risk.

A third method is to use special *LightScribe*® discs that can be “printed” with your disc burner, if you have that feature. They cost a little more—about 50¢ to 60¢, but you don't have the cost of a label. I tried this, and the results were terrible. I don't know if it was my fault, the computer, or the discs. But I went back to printing adhesive labels.

Verify: Finally, test any CDs or DVDs that you create. Play them in the CD/DVD player that you are going to use to make sure they work. Try them in your car. I have sometimes burned a disc that wouldn't play, so I just made another one.

Title Slides: As an option to spruce up your slide shows, you can create title slides with dates, subjects, or other explanatory information. A simple and very straightforward method is to make them by hand or use a word processor to print index cards. They could be in color or B&W. Print them out and then scan them, selecting JPEG file type (i.e., *filename.jpg*). Then insert them in your files of digital photos, assigning appropriate *file-names* and *dates* to get them in the right sequence.

If you have Microsoft *PowerPoint*, the process is much simpler. Create your titles and then use “Save As” and “Other Formats.” On the “Save as type” drop-down menu, choose “JPEG.” Select a destination (e.g., “Desktop”) and your title slides will be saved as separate JPEG files in a new folder (on your “Desktop”). Now you merely have to move and insert them into your picture files.

Next: Sayonara!

Modernizing Your Memories

EIGHTH (LAST) in a Series: Sayonara!

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Rules to Live By: The three imperatives when it comes to data files, be they photos, movies, music, correspondence, spreadsheets, or other documents:

1. Backup!
2. Backup!
3. Backup!

It is not a question of IF your hard disk fails; it's a matter of WHEN. Believe me, I've encountered this problem, and I would be lost if I'd not had adequate backup of my data files.

In simplest form, you can periodically back up your files on discs, and you **MUST** store them somewhere other than at home. This takes discipline, and you are at risk between backups.

There are hard disc backup systems that take care of the chore automatically, continually. But if this hardware resides next to your computer, it is also subject to loss by fire or theft, and still a risk.

Or—you can use an automated online service to monitor your computer and keep backups of all your data files. It's the easiest way to go, although it involves a service fee. (This is what I do.)

Aside: Are the shortcuts and Internet abbreviations of the modern communications scene leaving you guessing? Most of us are familiar with old standards such as: BTW, PDQ, ASAP, FYI, XYZ, WAG, and SWAG. But today's youngsters (and oldsters as well) are using a whole new set of vocabulary and abbreviations. Some examples:

- LOL: Laughing Out Loud
- ROTFL: Rolling On The Floor Laughing
- LMAO: Laughing My Ass Off
- TMI: Too Much Information
- OMG: OhMiGosh!
- TTFN: Ta-Ta For Now
- IMHO: In My Humble Opinion
- FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions
- TMK: To My Knowledge

See internetslang.com for more!

What's Next? Converting all your old media to CD/DVDs will bring you up to date—but probably not for long. It will assure that the contents of your old photos, films, tapes, and vinyl LPs will be preserved, but it won't be long before the technology changes and we will have new media for storage. I'd guess the next step might be memory devices that don't move—like flash drives or the mini-disks that go in your digital camera.

Or—more likely—we will see a transition into “cloud computing” where all our data and all our apps are out there “somewhere in the clouds.” It's not clear how this will work, or how we'll pay for it (You can be sure, we'll pay!); but we won't have to worry about storing or backing up our data, or keeping our software programs up to date.

Meanwhile, once you have everything “modernized,” you can think about discarding your obsolete materials and equipment: photo albums; slides, movie films, and projectors; VHS tapes and players; LP records and turntables. (Although LPs seem to be coming back into vogue, so there may be some value in holding on to them.)

Sayonara! Well, I think it's time to say, “So long!” More than a year ago, I began to convert my slides and photos to digital formats. One thing led to another, and soon I was working on VHS tapes, and then LP vinyl records. I was asked to write about my experiences in the *SURE Newsletter*, and that led to this series of articles that seemed to grow as I encountered more subjects.

I've mentioned various vendors and their hardware/software products; some I have used and some I merely discovered by surfing the Internet. These are just suggestions to save you time and trouble, but I am not an expert. I've taken what I consider a practical approach and tried to share it. You can also try your own Internet searches. Also, I've assumed that most readers are using PCs with recent versions of Microsoft *Windows* operating systems. Some with older systems, or who have Apple computers, will have to factor that in and adjust accordingly.

Good luck “Modernizing Your Memories”!

Th-th-th-that's all, folks! Sayonara! ...nic

