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ScanCafe Advises Consumers to be Selective When Choosing the Right Photo Scanning Provider

Highlights Quality, Security as Important Factors When Considering Where to Send One's Most Precious Memories

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., (March 25, 2008) – Suddenly there are hundreds of companies to choose from when considering scanning photos, negatives and slides. With so many options available, it's difficult to know which scanning provider would do the best job of preserving one's most precious memories. Given that they are so precious, it's important to be selective when handing over those priceless photos. Here, award-winning photo scanning and restoration service, ScanCafe, outlines some of the things consumers should look for when deciding on a provider:

Quality and Technology
A scanning provider must have the right technology in order to give you the best quality digital images. Top-of-the-line scanning technology and professional touches – such as color correction, cropping, dust, red-eye and scratch removal – should be a standard part of any service provider's basic package, as they constitute the difference between an average photo and a beautiful memory.

In addition to top-of-the-line technology, it is wise to check to make sure a provider is not automatically feeding your photos through their machines. While this may result in a quicker turnaround time, it increases the likelihood of damage to the photo. Just think about how many times you have had a printer or fax machine jam on you – this would be awful with irreplaceable images. Find out whether your photos will be auto-fed through machines or whether they will be manually scanned and retouched by a trained and qualified image-processing technician, and always choose the latter.

Cost
One of the biggest concerns people have in using a scanning and restoration service lies with the cost, so it's best to determine your budget ahead of time. First, take inventory of your photos and figure out how many are damaged and may need additional restoration, and how many simply need to be scanned. If you can provide the negative rather than just a print, the cost may be less.

When comparing costs of providers, be sure to read the fine print. While many scanning services offer an introductory price that sounds like a bargain, they could end up costing you more in the long run. You may find out that the resolution quality they offer was not what you expected, and end up being disappointed with your scans. Many also tack on charges for things like the CD or DVD upon which your images will be saved. Or they may charge you more on the backend for things like restoration, after you've already sent in your photos, or charge exorbitant prices for any photos you sent in over the limit of their introductory price.

Security
Many scanning services require you to mail your photos to their offices. While the idea of sending your grandparents' wedding photos through the mail may make you nervous, a reputable scanning service will use a courier service, such as UPS or FedEx, which allows you to track your photos while they're in transit. This ensures you know where your photos are at all times. In addition, some photo scanning services offer a loss guarantee, to help put your mind at ease.

It's ok to ask what the service's track record is. Some questions to consider are:
- Have they ever lost an order?
- Do they have a loss guarantee?
- How do they ship your photos?
- How do they track your photos internally?

Ease-of-use
While anyone with a scanner can scan their own photographs at home, the scanning process will take up a lot of time. So if you decide to pay a service to digitize your images, make sure you will get what you pay for. Look for a scanning service that doesn't require you to pre-sort through hundreds or thousands of photos. The selection process itself can take many hours, so it's best to choose a service provider that removes most of the labor for you and eliminates this burdensome first step of pre-sorting. With some services, you need only pay for the images you want to keep, so pre-sorting is unnecessary.

By doing a little homework, you can clean up the clutter of old photo boxes and restore damaged photos with the right scanning service. By scanning and preserving your photos digitally, you can share the memories of the priceless pre-digital past with friends and family of today, and ensure the memories won't fade or deteriorate. After all, isn't that what photos are for?

About ScanCafe
Founded in 2006, ScanCafe is an award-winning scanning service that helps photographers and amateur photo enthusiasts preserve their photographic memories by turning them into digital images. With ScanCafe, customers simply mail in their photos, negatives and slides to be manually scanned, professionally restored and organized to their liking. Customers only have to pay for the images they wish to keep, and they receive a copy of all of their selected images on a CD or DVD. ScanCafe has scanned nearly 8 million photos to date and has never lost a single photo. ScanCafe is based in Burlingame, California and has offices in Bangalore, India. For more information on ScanCafe, please visit www.ScanCafe.com.

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