

# BigPhotoHelp

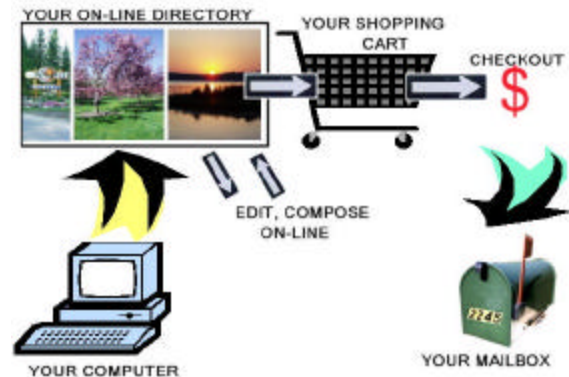
## Uploading Files and Ordering Prints On-Line

This PDF covers everything you need to know about uploading files and ordering prints on-line. However, this PDF does **not** cover on-line editing, stitching, or composite creation. Those subjects are covered in two separate PDF files which can be downloaded and printed separately.

### Creating an on-line directory

There's no cost or obligation to set up an on-line directory.

1. Using your browser, go to [www.BigPhotoHelp.com](http://www.BigPhotoHelp.com). Click "set up a new on-line directory now".
2. Supply your e-mail address. We use this only to confirm your orders. We won't divulge your email address to anyone else.
3. Choose the button that says, "yes, establish a new account for me."
4. Supply a password, if you want to have one. You don't have to have a password. If you don't want to have a password, just leave those fields blank. Click "submit."



There. You have created your on-line account. Later, you can go to the home page, enter your email address (and password, if needed), and get instant access your on-line directory.

### Choosing a file format

Most digital cameras let you save your pictures in JPEG (JPG) format. If you have done that, and you have no need to do any editing (e.g., in Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro), you do not need to do anything more. You are ready to upload your files.

If you do need to do some editing, consider doing that on-line. You can make color adjustments, add text, even combine various photos and text into a composite. The on-line system knows how to expand your files so that

everything is as sharp as it possibly can be, but doesn't make you wait a long time to upload large files. *The primary benefit of doing your editing on-line is that it can save you a lot of uploading time.* A secondary benefit is that many people find the on-line tools easier to use than Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro. If you want to do on-line editing, there is another PDF document available which covers this.

If you are editing on your own PC, and you are only adjusting color, you need not adjust the size (number of pixels horizontally and vertically) of your image. If you increase it, it does no harm, but doing so will increase your file size and make it take longer to upload. Do not decrease the file size of the image unless you have a good reason for doing so.

If you are combining various photos and/or adding text, you need to make the overall file size (number of pixels in each direction) high enough so that every object within your image has as much detail as it possibly can have. If you are unsure how to do this, a good rule of thumb is to create the file at the size of the print you will ultimately want, and then make sure that the resolution is at least 150 PPI (pixels per inch), but not more than 300 PPI. For example, if you are planning to make a 16 x 20 print, you would want to have at least 2,400 x 3,000 pixels, or 7.2 megapixels.

In most cases, the best file format to use is JPEG (or JPG). RGB is better, for us, than CMYK. If you haven't changed your image to CMYK, it is almost certainly RGB. If you aren't sure what this means, your images are almost certainly OK. If you are using Photoshop, when you click "save as", and specify JPEG, the system will ask you for some preferences. Use "baseline" image format, and file size option "12" (for the largest file with least compression loss).

We support a variety of file formats (JPEG or JPG, TIF, GIF, PNG, BMP, PSD, and PDF). If you choose PSD (Photoshop) format, check the thumbnail you see after uploading to make sure our file format converter didn't have a problem related to "missing fonts". (This is an issue only if you have text in your image.)

If you use the PDF format, check carefully the thumbnail image you see after uploading. Large, complex PDF's do not always transport well. This can be seen simply by making a large, complex PDF and then importing it into Photoshop with rasterization at full size (300 PPI). Portions of characters might get lost, or entire sections might be missing. Moreover, bullets may get converted into other characters. If you have the option of converting the PDF into another format before uploading, it makes it easier for you to check the conversion thoroughly before you send it to us.

There are two common areas of confusion. The first misconception is that, inasmuch as JPEG files have some compression loss, that TIF would be a better format to use. There is a very small grain of truth in this. However, if you make a

print from a TIF file, and make another print from a file that has been properly JPEG compressed, it is very unlikely that anyone will be able to tell which is which. In general, the TIF file will take anywhere from 10x to 30x as long to upload, and that is a big price to pay for an imperceptible quality difference.


The above assumes files which have been “properly JPEG compressed”. In Photoshop, that means that the file size option (a number from 1 to 12) is at least 10. Poor JPEG compression (numbers less than 8) can produce very large compression ratios (better than 30:1) and very small files, but JPEG compression artifacts (usually appearing as waves around sharp edges) are visible. This is especially an issue when a small file is used to make a big print, with ultimate resolution lower than 100 PPI (pixels per inch).

A second common area of confusion relates to file size and sharpness. A large file isn’t necessarily any sharper than a smaller file, if the large file is simply an expansion of the smaller file. Suppose you are starting with a 1.5 Megapixel file (1,500 x 1,000 pixels), and you want to make a 20 x 30 print. The print will have a resolution of only 50 pixels per inch. When you start to place an order, our system (seeing only 50 PPI) will advise you that the print will be somewhat blurry. It is tempting to stop there, go back to the original file, and expand it in Photoshop to, e.g., 6,000 x 4,000 pixels (24 Megapixels). When you upload the expanded file, our system calculates that it will be printed at 200 PPI, and does not show any warning about it being blurry. However, when you expanded it in Photoshop, all Photoshop did was interpolate between the pixels. (When we print the file, our system will automatically expand it to 9,000 x 6,000 pixels (54 Megapixels.) The expanded file is *no sharper* – just bigger.


## Uploading your files

After you have created your on-line directory, and have files ready to upload, the next step is to upload the files into your directory. You have two ways of doing this. You can put your files on a CD ROM and mail them to us (see “contact us”), or you can upload them. (Sorry, we don’t accept files by email.) Over 99% of the files we receive are uploaded to us.


The first step is to click “Upload Image File(s)”

A rectangular button with a light gray background and a thin black border. The text "Upload Image File(s)" is centered in a dark gray font.

Click “Browse” and select up to 10 image files to upload. We support JPEG (JPG), TIF, GIF, PNG, BMP, PSD, PDF, TGA, and PCD files. Do not upload more than 100 Megabytes (total for all files) at a time.

A rectangular button with a light gray background and a thin black border. The text "Browse..." is centered in a dark gray font.

Click “Upload Files”. Your browser might show a progress bar; unfortunately it is usually not accurate. Your screen will change when the files have finished uploading.

A rectangular button with a light gray background and a thin black border. The text "Upload Files" is centered in a dark gray font.

We will retain your directory on-line for at least 6 months. Any action which requires a change in your directory (uploading another file, deleting a file, making an editing change, etc.) resets the clock back to zero for deleting unused directories.

**Please check your file edges.** If you are editing your files in Photoshop, it is easy to obtain discontinuities in the outer few pixels of a file. This stems from the fact that it is difficult to define a clip region that goes all the way to the edges. To check for this, magnify your image to 100% (in Photoshop) and scroll all the way to the left, right, top, and bottom edges.

Our policy is that if there is a discontinuity (e.g., a white line) that is less than 1/16" wide, and you have ordered the print to be cut to size, we will trim the print undersize to remove the discontinuity. Otherwise, we will send you the print with the discontinuity.

### **Will the color be accurate?**

If you are using a good digital camera, with good lighting, the color is almost always very good. Moreover, if you have a fairly new monitor (CRT is, unfortunately, usually better than LCD) and are using the default settings, what you see on your screen is a very good approximation to what the prints will look like. Poor color usually results from one of the following:

- Poor lighting. Under poor illumination, digital cameras do the best they can, at the expense of a lot of noise or graininess.

- Non-default monitor calibrations. In the old days, every monitor was different, and so monitor calibration programs were created. They did a poor job, at best. Today, monitors are very well calibrated as they come out of the box. A monitor calibration program can easily do more harm than good. If you are editing, based on a poorly calibrated monitor, what you see will **not** represent what you will get.

- Use of CMYK image mode. Various file format converters treat CMYK differently. RGB is better. As mentioned above, if you're not sure, your files are probably RGB mode, which is good.

### **How large a print can you (or should you) make?**

A lot depends on the distance from which you will view the print. In general, the larger the print, the farther back you will stand. A lot also depends on the subject matter (e.g., sunsets need less sharpness than is needed for large groups of people). Finally, a lot depends on how much you are charging for your print. The more you intend to charge, in general, the sharper it should be.

Although there is a lot of room for argument, we suggest the following:

8 x 10	2.5 Megapixels or better
16 x 20	4.0 Megapixels or better
30 x 40	6.0 Megapixels or better
40 x 60	10 Megapixels or better

If your images contain text, in general you should have more Megapixels than we suggest, above. If you are willing to tolerate some blurriness, you might be able to use smaller files than we suggest.

We accept orders for prints from 4" x 4" to 40" x 72", although lengths longer than 72" can be ordered (at a 20% surcharge) if you go to "account details" and acknowledge reading our terms and conditions for lengths longer than 72".

We print **any shape or size** within this range. For example, if you want a print that is 10.567 x 57.234, we will print it for you, and charge you for just that size, not a next higher "standard size".

**Our specialty is large prints.** For large prints (8 x 10 and larger) we are extremely price competitive.

**Pricing.** To determine the cost for a print of any size, multiply the horizontal dimension, in inches, by the vertical dimension, in inches, and divide by 38.4 to get the price in dollars. For example, to determine the price of a 22.5 x 28.5 print, multiply 22.5 x 28.5 to get 641.25. Then divide that by 38.4 to get 16.69922, and then round to the nearest penny. The price of the print is \$16.70.

Shipping and handling costs start at \$4.85 per order, and are priced based on the number of prints, the estimated total weight, and the estimated number of packages required. Most customers choose USPS Priority Mail as a method of shipment. Shipment via FedEx is also available.

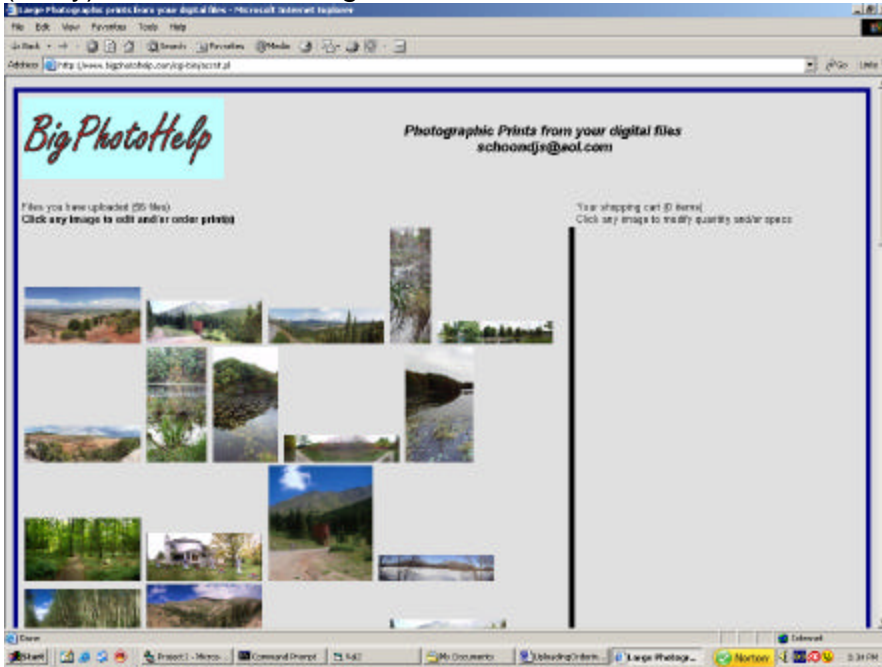
**Delivery Time.** Nearly all orders received by 12:00 Noon, Central Time, on a business day (Monday-Friday, except holidays) are shipped the same day. Rush processing, bundled with FedEx shipment, is available. If that is chosen, we guarantee (subject to a few conditions; see on-line "Policies") that if the order is received by noon, we will ship the same day.

**International Orders.** Sorry, as of this writing we ship only to USA addresses.

### **Optimize your On-line Directory's Navigation Style**

You can upload, into your on-line directory, up to 500 files. When you have just a few files, the default directory appearance (shown top next page) is probably

optimal. The files you have uploaded are shown on the left. Your shopping cart (if any) is shown on the right.



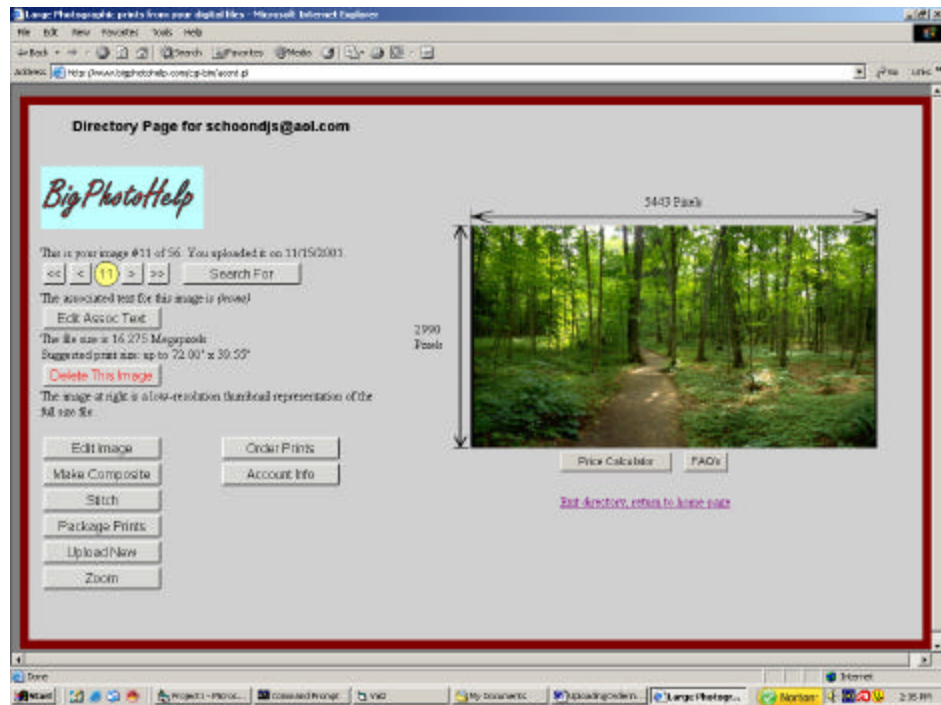
When you get a lot of photos, your directory can appear very cluttered, and it may take a lot of time to refresh your screen every time you come back from another operation. You can change your directory appearance by doing the following:

- Click "Account Details."
- Click the radio button for "View Images one at a time".
- Click "change navigation style."

Your screen should then appear something like the following:

You can use the arrow keys to move up one or down one in your directory, or to the beginning or end. You can also use the "search for" button to look for a specific file.

If you aren't able to see the entire



page as it appears at right without having to scroll left and right, it could be that your display is set up for fewer pixels than that for which our pages are designed. Most graphic artists like to have a high-resolution screen, and we have designed our pages to work best with about a 1152 x 864 screen display. If you would like to change your screen display, and you are using Windows, go to “control panel” and select “display”, then “settings”.

## Aspect Ratio and Print Size

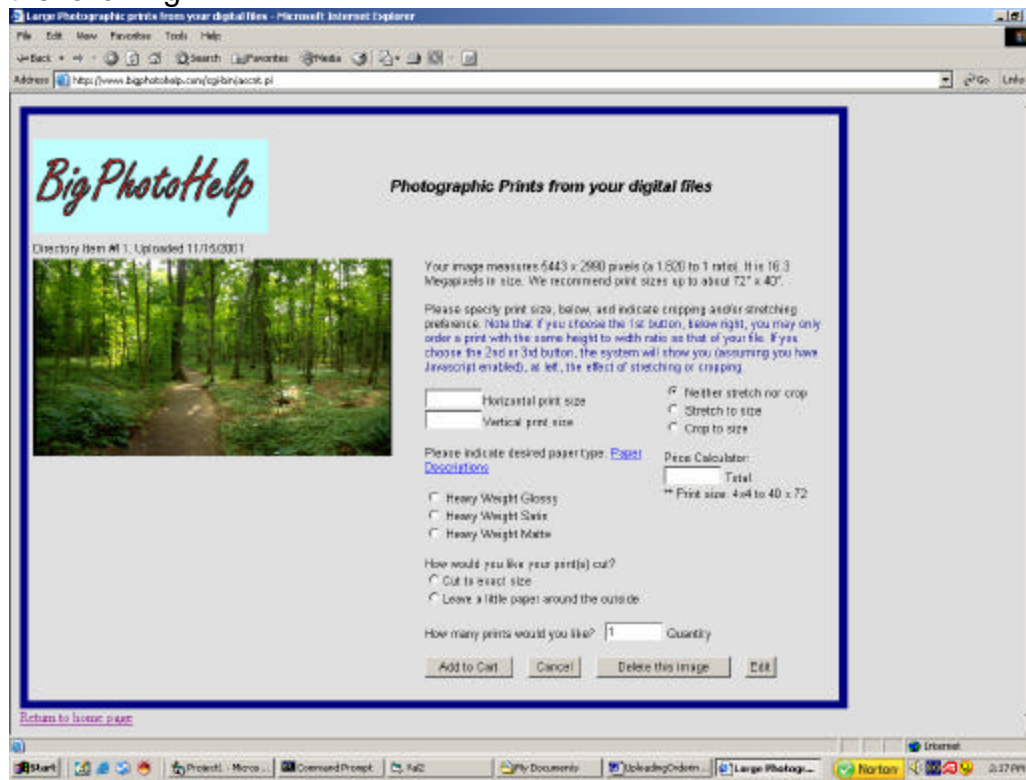
Most digital cameras have a 2:3, 3:4 or a 4:5 aspect ratio. 35mm cameras have a 2:3 aspect ratio. The aspect ratio is the ratio of the vertical to horizontal number of pixels in the file. For example, with a 4:5 aspect ratio file, you can make 4x5 or 16x20 prints easily, because the sizes are in the ratio of 4 to 5.

However, if the aspect ratio of the file doesn't fit the aspect ratio of the print, the file will need to be cropped or stretched, or some of each.

You can crop your files on your own PC, or you can crop on-line.

## Creating a Shopping Cart

Start by clicking an image (on the left 2/3 of the screen) to select it (If you are using the other directory format, click “order prints”). That brings up a page like the following:



From this screen you can order prints, or proceed to edit your image and return the edited image back to your directory. Editing is the subject of another PDF document, so we'll just cover ordering prints.

Enter the horizontal print size. If the radio button at right is still at its default setting, "**neither stretch nor crop**", the system will automatically enter for you the corresponding vertical print size. E.g., if you enter "20.00" for the horizontal size, the system will enter "15.00" in the vertical size.

Continuing with this example, let's say that what you really want is a 20 x 16 print. To get that size, you must choose one of the other radio buttons, either "Stretch to size" or "crop to size".

If you select "**stretch to size**" (and if your browser has Javascript enabled), the image at left will change shape to reflect the numbers you have entered.

If you select "**crop to size**", the image at left will also change to reflect the numbers you have entered. The system does a symmetrical crop. If it needs to trim left and right, it will do so equally. Likewise, if it needs to trim vertically, it will cut the same amount off top as it does off the bottom.

Once you have entered the print size, continue by selecting paper type, cut type, and quantity. The price calculator box will change to show the price for these prints.

The following is a brief description of the paper types:

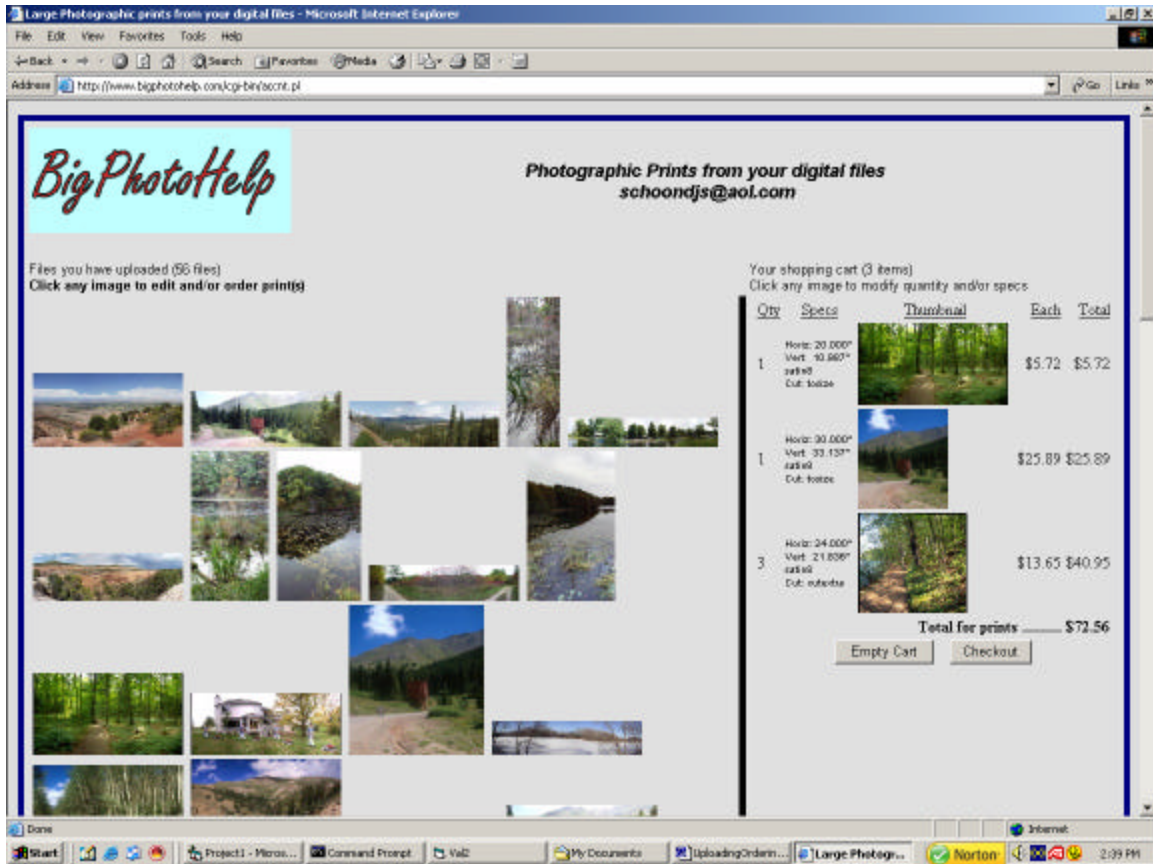
Glossy	Shiny, smooth finish.
Satin	Sometimes called Lustre or semi-gloss. Less reflection.
Matte	Virtually no reflection, very flat, like "plain paper."

Most customers choose the satin finish. All papers are Kodak Professional Photographic papers, 8 mils in thickness.

If you order the prints "leave a little paper around the outside", a ¼" additional border of paper will be added. For example, if you order an 8 x 10 print with the additional border selected, the image will be 8 x 10, and you will pay for 8 x 10, but the paper will be 8½ x 10½ in size.

## Placing Your Order

Once you click "add to cart", the image you have selected, together with size, cropping information, quantity, paper type, and cut preference, is added to your shopping cart. You can then go back to clicking other images and adding prints of them also to your shopping cart. The shopping cart items will accumulate on the right side of your screen, as shown at the top of the next page:



If you make a mistake, or want to change one of the items in your shopping cart, just click it (the thumbnail image), and that will bring up a page which will allow you to change specifications for that item, or delete it from your cart.

You might want to build your shopping cart a little at a time. Your shopping cart will be retained for up to seven days. You can upload files, add to your shopping cart, exit the site and return another day, and resume building your shopping cart.

When you are ready to place your order, simply click "Checkout" and proceed thru the checkout process. The order is not entered until you have entered your credit card number (Visa or Mastercard) and the system has acknowledged that your order has been accepted. You will get an acknowledgement email.

When this happens, your shopping cart is automatically added to our printing queue. In many cases, your order is printed within a few hours of submission, even if submitted during the night or on a weekend. Our equipment operates automatically.

After you have placed your order, you can review past orders by going to "account details" and clicking hyperlinks at the bottom of the page to show you the contents of previous orders.

## **Blind Drop Ship**

You can have your order shipped as though from you to your customer. If this option is selected, special paperwork is generated and our name will not appear anywhere on the order. Also, confirmation of delivery tags are added. To enable this, go to “account details” and select that option.

Then, when you place your order, you will specify your address and your customer’s address. The blind drop ship option will be the default.

After your order has been shipped, you can return to “account details”, scroll to the bottom, and select a page which will show the confirmation of delivery number for your recent orders.

## **Caring for your Prints**

When you receive your prints, be sure to follow the directions on the tube for removal of the prints, so as to avoid wrinkling them.

If you need to return your prints to a tube, be very careful to roll them up without introducing wrinkles. Photographic paper has a natural curl (an undesirable but inevitable quality). If you roll up the prints *perpendicular* to the curl, they are less likely to wrinkle.

We use white gloves to avoid leaving fingerprints. If you are in the business of selling prints (as most of our customers are), handling the prints with white gloves is a good idea.

All photographic prints, and especially ink jet prints, can be damaged by water. Be sure to keep the prints dry.

If the prints are neither framed nor laminated, they will usually last at least 10-20 years, in indoor lighting, before there is the first hint of fading. The primary things that make prints fade are UV light and ozone. If they are framed under glass and/or laminated, they will last longer. We don’t offer lamination, but some of our customers have this done locally after they receive their prints. Pressure lamination is somewhat more reliable than thermal lamination. Lamination degrades the appearance of prints slightly, so we advise against lamination unless it is really needed, e.g., to protect against water, ozone, or UV light.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Q. Can I, or should I, embed an ICC color profile in my file?

A. It will do no good to do so. We have found that we need to rely on more than just the ICC color profile in order to get good color. We use a closed-loop color correction, based on a scans of printer output. The ICC profiles will properly reflect out-of-gamut colors, but will not properly reflect color fidelity within the in-gamut range.

Q. I placed an order earlier today. Now I want to place another order. Will they be combined?

A. Your first order might already be packaged. Even if not, some of our customers have very definite reasons for wanting separate orders packaged separately. If you want the orders combined, send us an email (or call us). If we can, we'll combine orders and reduce your shipping and handling charge.

Q. I just placed an order. Will you check my color before you print the order?

A. Sorry, no. If you want us to check your files, call us or send us an email (and wait for a response) *before* you place the order. Once you place the order, your order is processed and printed automatically. The first time we will see what you ordered is when your prints are already printed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [custservice@BigPhotoHelp.com](mailto:custservice@BigPhotoHelp.com)

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