

Disaster Insurance

OSTA Recommends Protecting Digital Images

Cupertino, CA (February 11, 2009) – When people are facing a natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina roaring up the Gulf or the San Diego fires cascading through the city, the call to evacuate results in a rapid sorting of priorities. Often it comes down to how much you can fit in your car. Space is at a premium, and children and pets typically get top priority. After that, most people consider what things hold special memories that would be hard to replace...High on this list is the family photo collection. You would assume that people have prepared for this possibility by storing their photos in a way that they are not only protected but also easy to transport, but this is often not the case.

When a disaster is imminent people often grab their computer, desktop or notebook, and load it in their car. What people don't realize is that there is a much simpler alternative: carrying copies of their important files and digital images on CD or DVD discs.

“When you consider that you can copy nearly 3000 photo images on a DVD that costs less than a dollar, it would seem to be a logical solution,” says David Bunzel, President of the Optical Storage Technology Association (OSTA). Optical discs are not only a great way to protect your photos and archive them, but they are also simpler to carry than boxes of photos or large albums.

But what about these albums and boxes of photos? They represent important memories but are often too bulky to easily transport. There is a solution for this: scanning photos and saving the resulting images on DVD discs. Often people put this off because of the time involved in converting large quantities of photos to digital images. A California-based company, ScanMyPhotos.com, recognized that people would not necessarily do this themselves but might consider a service if the price was right. Mitch Goldstone, President of ScanMyPhotos.com, notes “When people can have their family photo collection preserved for less five cents a print, it is an easy decision.” The company simplified the process, providing a box for customers to put up to 1800 4x6 photos inside to be mailed to its processing center.

People often have insurance to protect against disasters, but limited documentation to support their claims delays the process. Having a home inventory of personal belongings preserved as digital photos is of critical importance. “Photos are an excellent way to keep account of the entire inventory in your home, especially if you become a victim of a disaster,” noted Jerry Davies, Farmers Insurance Group of Companies spokesman. “The wildfires in California are year-round and having visited claims sites following the 2008 fires, I was very impressed with homeowners who brought their digital photos of the contents of their homes to their claims adjuster meetings. Taking digital photos and placing them on DVDs and storing them in a safe place is very important.”

Making a second or third set of discs is further insurance against disasters. “Carrying your photo collection in an emergency is important, but also having a set of these discs in a bank box or sent to a relative outside of the area is an important way to assure your critical files or digital images are not lost forever, says David Bunzel.

About OSTA:

OSTA was incorporated as an international trade association in 1992 to promote the use of recordable optical technologies and products. For more information see www.osta.org or www.archivemyphotos.org.

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