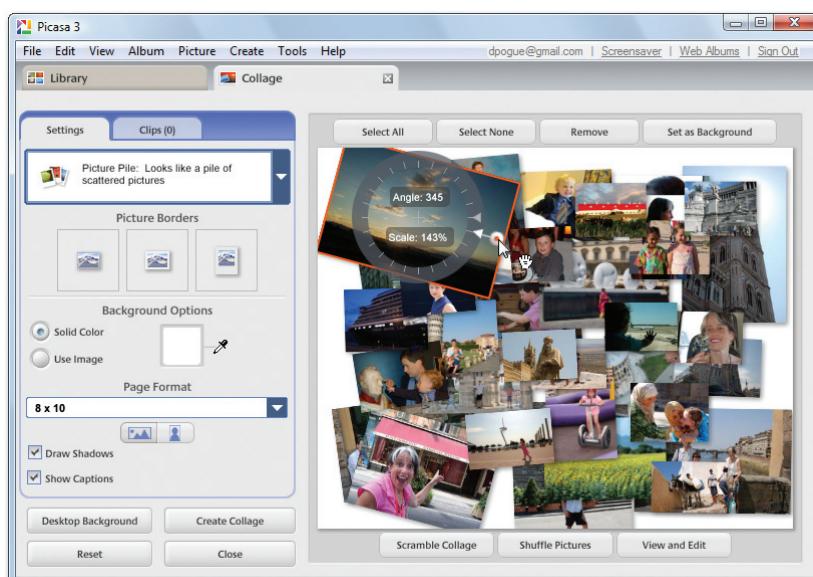


Picasa Collages

Sure, you can print out one photo at a time, but that's just so—so—linear. If your left brain has been chomping to get out a little more, set it to work with Picasa's Picture Collages.

Select some photos, or an album, and then choose Create→Picture Collage. This dialog box appears:

Figure 1:
The Collage dialog box contains all the controls you need to make this remarkable visual concoction.



As you can probably guess, the point of this feature is to create a single-page print with a lot of creatively arranged pictures on it. It's unusual and kooky, which is not something you can say about a lot of software.

The controls on the Settings panel are pretty straightforward:

- **Style pop-up menu.** This menu starts out saying Picture Pile, and it's shown above; your photos appear to have been tossed, willy-nilly, onto a coffee table. Nonetheless, you can still click one and rotate or resize it; a circular handle appears on it, which you can rotate or tug, as shown in progress in the illustration.

There are other options here, though. The Mosaic themes, for example, place all your photos on the page, tightly tiled together, all perfectly upright this time. Grid ensures that all the photos are the same size.

Tip: For these more squared-off layouts, a Grid Spacing slider appears so that you can adjust the gaps between the pictures.

Contact Sheet prints thumbnails; it's not so much for artistic expression as it is for ease in perusing a set of photographic options on paper. And Multiple Exposure works by making the photos transparent and superimposing them, for unknown artistic reasons. (Hint: By the time you've superimposed more than a couple of photos, all you get is a big brown mess.)

- **Picture Borders** lets you add white borders around the selected photos in the pile. (The rightmost option adds a thicker-than-usual bottom border, so that the captions, if you choose to include them, have someplace to go.)
- **Background Options**, available only for themes where the actual page is visible behind the photos, lets you choose either a solid color or another photo to fill in the gaps.
- **Page Format** lets you specify what size print you intend to make with this work of art. (The icons just below it let you turn the page 90 degrees.)
- **Draw Shadows** controls the drop shadows that appear behind the photos, lending a slightly 3-D look.
- **Show Captions** shows any captions you've typed so far.
- The **Clips** tab and its Get More button let you add new photos to the pile.
- **Scramble Collage**, available only for the Picture Pile theme, randomizes the photos in their front-to-back stacking order.
- **Shuffle Pictures** is a roll of the photographic dice; it scatters the existing set of photos in a newly random way.
- **View and Edit** lets you open a selected individual photo for editing and close-up examination. (Click the Collage tab to return to the collage layout.)

Tip: You can drag individual photos within any of these layouts to move or rearrange them. You can also click one (or several) and then click Remove, above the preview screen, to delete them from the layout.

When you've got the whole thing looking good, you can click Desktop Background to turn it into your wallpaper—not a bad idea if they're pictures of attractive people (or people you love). Or you can click Create Collage to create a single, finished graphic rendering of what you saw on the preview screen. It winds up—where else?—in Picasa, in the Projects folder, ready for emailing, uploading, screensaving, and so on.