

PCMAG.com – Reviews, First Looks

[http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,1411869,00.asp`](http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,1411869,00.asp)



Bring Your Photos to Life

By Sascha Segan

December 12, 2003

[Total posts: 1](#)

- Product: SoundPix Plus 2.0
- Direct price: \$39.95
- Requires: To record, 16MB RAM; SoundBlaster-compatible sound card; microphone; Microsoft Windows 98, 98 SE, NT 4.0, Me, 2000, or XP. To play back, speakers; Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher; Microsoft Windows 98, 98 SE, NT 4.0, Me, 2000, or XP
- Company Info: SoundPix Inc., www.soundpix.com

Editor Rating: ●●●●○

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but sometimes it can use a little help telling its story. SoundPix Plus 2.0 (\$39.95 direct) provides a wonderfully easy way to enhance digital photos with audio captions, musical sound tracks, text captions, and Web links. And you can keep the pictures in the universally compatible JPEG format.

Everything you can do in SoundPix, you can also do in a video-editing program like [Pinnacle Instant Video Album](#) or [Microsoft Windows Movie Maker 2](#), but that said, SoundPix's strength is its simplicity: PC novices ages 5 to 80 will have no trouble recording simple audio captions and sending annotated photos by e-mail.

The software also employs some ingenious technology. Rather than creating movie files, which can be too big to download easily over slow connections, SoundPix embeds highly compressed PCM audio into JPEG files. Each second of narration adds only 10 to 15K to the file, so pictures with a few seconds of chatter or giggles are easily small enough to e-mail. To hear the audio attachments, recipients must install a special Internet Explorer plug-in and view the images in the browser. The company is working on a Mozilla Firebird version and says Mac support is coming in 2004. Recipients who choose not to install the plug-in can still view the pictures but cannot hear the audio.

Although not a photo editing program per se, SoundPix lets you rotate, crop, and resize images (a necessity if you're going to cram multimegapixel digital camera photos into e-mail), create simple slide shows, and attach your own narration (recorded in SoundPix) as WAV, AU, or MP3 files. You can e-mail your new creations directly from the program or save them on your hard drive.

You can also file SoundPix JPEGs in photo-organizing programs just like you would ordinary digital shots, but keep the audio intact; you can even edit in graphics programs and resave the images, although doing so may cause the audio to evaporate. We tested this feature with [Adobe Photoshop](#) and [Apple's iPhoto](#), however, and had no trouble filing and editing our SoundPix photos.

SoundPix Plus 2.0 won't replace photo-organizing, photo-editing, or movie-making programs, but it does provide an easy and entertaining way to help technophobes get the most out of their digital photos.