Using AutoCollage 2008

AutoCollage 2008 makes it easy to create an AutoCollage from a folder of Images. To create an AutoCollage:

1. Click on a folder name in the Image Browser.
2. Once at least seven images have loaded, click on the Create button.

AutoCollage uses complex technologies such as face detection, saliency evaluation and graph-cut segmentation. It takes time for AutoCollage to process your pictures, so please be patient. As a rule of thumb, a typical PC needs half a minute plus one or two seconds per image to make an AutoCollage. If you make an AutoCollage from a folder with 150 images, that means anywhere from three to six minutes before you see the finished collage. It may sound like a lot, but it's a fraction of the time it would take to make a similar collage any other way.

After you've finished your collage, if you want a different collage from the same folder, just click the Create button again. The next collage will come up much more quickly, as AutoCollage has already loaded and analyzed that folder's images.

AutoCollage is designed to make it easy to automatically create collages. It provides several options for customizing collage results:

- You can pick the image folder to make collages from
- You can specify how many images to include in the collage
- You can choose output collage sizes suitable for printing, such as 4"x6", 5"x7", and 8"x10". You can also create an AutoCollage the same size as your computer desktop, or define a custom output size from 1"x1" to 48"x48".
- You can choose advanced options that affect the size and blending of images in the collage.

Once you've created a collage you like, you can save or e-mail it, or use it as your Windows desktop background.

Browsing Images

Choosing images for your collage is an important part of using AutoCollage. There are two different ways to select images for AutoCollage: the Image Browser, and Windows Live Photo Gallery. This section discusses how to use the Image Browser. For more information on using Windows Live Photo Gallery to choose images, see Using AutoCollage with Windows Live Photo Gallery.

The AutoCollage Image Browser feature lets you select a folder and review pictures before building a collage.

The image browser consists of two parts: a small Image Browser pane in the lower right corner where you can choose a folder to browse, and the main Image Preview pane in the left side of the application which displays images from the selected folder.
Using the Image Preview Pane

Once images start loading in the image preview pane, you can interact with them in several ways.
- Placing the mouse cursor over an image will show you the image's file name.
- Clicking on an image will zoom it to 200%. Clicking again or moving the mouse off the fully zoomed image will return it to normal size.
- If the folder has many pictures, some will be buried beneath others. Use the mouse scroll wheel or the F7 and F8 keys to sift forwards and backwards twenty images at a time.

Once you've selected Create, you won't be able to sift collages in the Image Preview pane until the collage is completed.

See also: Image Requirements for AutoCollage, Using AutoCollage with Windows Live Photo Gallery

Browsing Images with the Image Browser

By default the image browser displays a tree of folders underneath your Pictures or My Pictures folder. Click on a folder name to view the pictures inside that folder. AutoCollage loads images in the selected folder one by one, displaying them in the Image Preview pane. The Image Browser pane title bar acts as a progress bar, with a green bar moving from left to right as images load.

The number of images found in each folder is listed inside [square braces] next to the folder name. For example, if the Image Browser shows Monuments [15], it means you have a folder named 'Monuments' containing 15 images in formats AutoCollage understands.

The folder you select may not have enough images to generate an AutoCollage. If this is the case, you'll receive an informational message in the image preview pane. Select a folder with more images before attempting to generate a collage.

Conversely, some folders may have more images than AutoCollage can load. If such a folder is selected (usually with [300+] listed as the number of images in the folder), AutoCollage 2008 will only load the first 300 images from that folder.
If you select a folder where some images don't meet AutoCollage image requirements, you will receive a warning, and AutoCollage will ignore those images. You will be able to make an AutoCollage from the remaining images in the folder. Note that the number of images listed next to each folder name sometimes includes images too small to use in AutoCollage.

See also: AutoCollage Image Requirements, Setting Your Image Browser Root Folder

Setting Your Image Browser Root Folder
If you want to load pictures located outside of your Pictures or My Pictures folder tree, you can change the image browser root folder. To do this
1. Select the button on the right side of the image browser title bar.
2. In the dialog which comes up, choose a folder which contains either the pictures you want to use in AutoCollage, or is a parent of the desired folder.

Using AutoCollage With Windows Live Photo Gallery
When installed, AutoCollage is available as an 'Extra' in recent versions of Windows Live Photo Gallery. If you have AutoCollage and Windows Live Photo Gallery installed, you can select a set of images in Windows Live Photo Gallery, then choose Add To AutoCollage... from the Extras menu.

When you add images to AutoCollage from Windows Live Photo Gallery, the AutoCollage Image Browser pane title changes from 'Image Browser' to 'Live Images [n]'; where [n] is the number of images added to AutoCollage.

You can add several images to AutoCollage at once. If you want to add more images to AutoCollage in 'Live Images' mode, select those images and use the Add To AutoCollage... item in Windows Live Photo Gallery. This will add any newly selected images to the AutoCollage image preview pane.

Note that you cannot use this interface to remove images from AutoCollage, only to add them.

See also: Browsing Images, The Image Browser Pane

AutoCollage Image Requirements

Image Size Requirements
AutoCollage uses advanced image processing and blending techniques which only work with images larger than a certain size. AutoCollage will only load images which have more than 76,800 pixels, and which are at least 240 pixels wide and 240 pixels high. For example, a 320 x 240 picture can be loaded by AutoCollage because it is at least 240 pixels wide and at least 240 pixels high, and has 76,800 or more total pixels. An 800 x 200 picture cannot be added even though it has more than 76,800 pixels, because it is less than 240 pixels high.

Image Format Requirements
AutoCollage is able to load .bmp, .dib, .gif, .jpg, .png, .tif and .wdp images at a minimum. It may be able to load other types of images, depending upon your computer's configuration.

See also: Browsing images

Creating an AutoCollage
To create an AutoCollage:
1. Select the number of images you want in your AutoCollage using the AutoCollage Image Count Slider.
2. If desired, change the output collage dimensions using AutoCollage Output Options.
3. Click on a folder name in the Image Browser, or use Windows Live Photo Gallery
integration to add images to AutoCollage.

4. Once at least seven images have loaded, select the Create button. To create a different collage from the same folder, select the Create button again. The next collage should come up much more quickly, as AutoCollage has already loaded and analyzed that folder's images.

To return to the image browser view of the folder, hit the Esc key.

The AutoCollage Image Count Slider

Use the Image Count Slider in the Actions pane to choose how many of your images will be used in the next AutoCollage. To use the slider, select the slider and drag it left or right until the tooltip shows the desired number of images.

An AutoCollage can include between 7 and 50 images, drawn from up to 300 input images.

See also: Setting AutoCollage Output Options, AutoCollage Tips and Tricks.

Setting AutoCollage Input Options

AutoCollage uses advanced image processing technologies such as face detection and image entropy to select collage images. These techniques are heuristics, and though they often work well, you may wish to override their results.

For example, when AutoCollage detects a face in an image, it makes a note of the face size and location. This information is used to:

- Choose images for the collage. AutoCollage is more likely to create collages using images containing faces.
- Prevent faces from being obscured. When a face is detected in an image, it's very unlikely AutoCollage will allow that face to be obscured in the final collage.

AutoCollage Input Options allows you to enable display of image ranking and face detection information, and to enable manual revision of that information.
To set input options:
1. If the Options dialog isn't already open, select the Options button in the Actions Pane to bring it up.
2. Select the Input tab.
3. Select the box next to Display detected faces, placing an x to enable it. When enabled, detected faces are shown inside a yellow rectangle in each image displayed in the Image Preview Pane.
4. If you've enabled display of detected faces, you can also enable manual face detection. This option allows you to alter face detection results.
5. Select the box next to Display ranking information, placing an x to enable it. When enabled, ranking information is displayed on images in the Image Preview Pane through a variety of means.
6. Similar to face detection, if you've enabled display of ranking information, you can check 'Allow manual ranking' to allow alteration of autocollage-determined image ranking.

See also: Using Face Detection, Using Ranking Information, AutoCollage Tips and Tricks

Setting AutoCollage Output Options
This dialog allows you to choose your AutoCollage output size. You can select from a set of standard image sizes, suitable for printing, or specify an exact output size in inches, centimeters, or pixels.

Standard output sizes include:
- 4" x 6" portrait or landscape
- 5" x 7" portrait or landscape
- 8" x 10" portrait or landscape
- Your screen resolution, for example 1280 x 1024

Portrait images are taller than they are wide, while landscape images are the opposite. The screen resolution option lets you create an AutoCollage the perfect size to use as your desktop background.
To set the AutoCollage output size to a standard image size:
1. If the Options dialog isn't already open, select the Options button in the Actions pane to bring it up.
2. Select the Output tab if it isn't already selected.
3. Select the 'combo-box' beneath the Size: label. This brings up a list of the AutoCollage output image sizes.
4. Select the size you want, and click on OK.

To set the AutoCollage output size to a custom image size:
1. Select the button to the right of the Size 'combo-box.' This invokes the Output Size dialog box, shown below.

![Output Size Dialog](image)

2. Choose inches, centimeters, or pixels from the unit combo-box.
3. Input the width and height desired for the output collage. There are several limitations on dimensions. AutoCollage will warn you if it doesn't support the dimensions you choose.
4. Select OK to save your output size choice. The final output size is shown as a 'custom' size in the Output Options tab.

See also: Setting Advanced Output Options

**Advanced Output Options**

AutoCollage does the following when creating a collage:
1. Evaluates all images in the selected image browser folder, and internally ranks them from most to least interesting.
2. Chooses the most interesting regions of the \( n \) most interesting images, where \( n \) is the number of images you specify for the AutoCollage.
3. Expands the most interesting and second most interesting image regions to be larger than the remaining image regions.
4. Arranges the interesting regions of all the images in the final collage, so that interesting regions don't overlap, but other image parts do.
5. Generates an interesting boundary between images following image features, and then smoothly blends them together.

Advanced Output Options allow you to change some of AutoCollage's operational parameters.
The Advanced Output Options section is located on the AutoCollage Options Output tab.

To bring up the Advanced Output Options section:
1. If the Options dialog isn't already open, select the Options button to bring it up.
2. Select the Output tab if it isn't already selected.
3. Select the triangle button next to the 'Advanced' box to display the Advanced Output Options, if they aren't already visible.

The Top-ranked image slider allows you to choose how much larger to make the interesting region in the highest ranked image, relative to other selected images. The Second ranked image slider does the same for the second ranked image.

The Image Overlap slider allows you to specify the minimum overlap factor for adjacent images before boundary generation and blending. A smaller number means that some adjacent images may have abrupt transitions. A larger number tells AutoCollage to ensure adjacent images overlap enough to allow interesting boundaries and blends.

To set each of these options, select the slider and drag it to the desired value. A tooltip will tell you what value you've chosen.

If at any time you're unhappy with the values you chose, simply click on the Reset button to restore the default Advanced Output Option settings.

See also: Setting AutoCollage Output Options

**Working With AutoCollages**

Once you've created a collage you like, you can review it in the AutoCollage View pane, and perform additional actions against it.
Viewing the Current AutoCollage

After AutoCollage creates your collage, the Image Preview pane is replaced with the AutoCollage View pane. The collage is displayed in this pane, which allows you to zoom in and out to view the collage at different scales, and also lets you pan to parts of the collage you can't see.

To zoom in and out, you can either use your mouse scroll wheel, or select the zoom control at the bottom left of the application and choose the desired zoom factor. Choices range from 12.5% to 800% zoom. There is also an 'Auto' choice which will fit the displayed AutoCollage to the size of the AutoCollage View pane.

If the AutoCollage is larger than the view pane, the scrollbars to the right and bottom of the view window become active. You can select the scroll bars to choose which part of the AutoCollage to view, or use the mouse to click on the collage and drag it until you can see the part you're interested in. Alternately you can select the AutoCollage View pane and use the arrow keys to pan.

AutoCollage Actions

In addition to viewing the AutoCollage in the AutoCollage View pane, you can use AutoCollage actions to perform several useful activities.

The Actions pane in the upper right hand side of the application provides icons to perform the following additional actions with your AutoCollage:

- Save it
- Send it via e-mail
- Use it as your desktop background
- Using other Windows programs, print or delete your saved collages

See also: The AutoCollage Actions pane, the AutoCollage View pane.
Saving Your AutoCollage

AutoCollage lets you easily create AutoCollages for each folder of images, and to save the ones you wish to keep.

To save an AutoCollage

1. Click on the Save button. This button is not enabled unless an AutoCollage is being displayed in the AutoCollage View pane.
2. Choose the folder to save your collage in. By default AutoCollages are saved to your AutoCollage folder underneath your Pictures or My Pictures folder.
3. If you want a different file name, replace the suggested File name field with a name of your choice.
4. Click on Save to save the AutoCollage.

See also: Browsing saved AutoCollages

E-Mailing your AutoCollage

After you've created an AutoCollage, it is displayed in the AutoCollage View pane. If you have an appropriate e-mail client configured, you can ask AutoCollage to mail your collage.

To e-mail your displayed AutoCollage, click on the E-Mail button. AutoCollage 2008 will make a temporary copy of your AutoCollage, invoke your e-mail editor, and create a new e-mail message with your AutoCollage attached. You can fill in the rest of the e-mail and send it.

Note that some e-mail clients will require you to send or cancel the new e-mail before you can interact with AutoCollage again, so don't use the 'e-mail' option unless you plan to immediately send the AutoCollage via e-mail.

The AutoCollage e-mail option has been tested with Outlook, Outlook Express, and Windows Mail. If it isn't compatible with your e-mail client, you can still e-mail AutoCollages by saving the AutoCollage, then manually attaching the saved AutoCollage to an email message.

Setting An AutoCollage as Your Desktop Background

Once you've created an AutoCollage and it is displayed in the AutoCollage View pane, you can set that collage as your desktop background.

To set the displayed AutoCollage to your desktop background, click on the Desktop button. The AutoCollage is saved to a temporary location, and Windows tiles it to make your new desktop background.

To create a collage specifically to use as your desktop background, you should set the Output Size to Screen Resolution in AutoCollage Output Options, and then create a new AutoCollage.

See also: Setting AutoCollage Output Options

Browsing Saved AutoCollages
After at least one AutoCollage has been saved to the default location, the *Saved* button is enabled in the action area. If clicked, Windows Photo Gallery will display the AutoCollages saved to your Windows `Pictures\AutoCollage` or `My Pictures\AutoCollage` folder. If Windows Photo Gallery is not available, Windows Explorer will display the contents of the saved AutoCollages folder.

Note that you can view AutoCollages in other folders by opening the Windows Explorer and navigating to the folder where they are saved.

**See also:** [Saving an AutoCollage](#)

**Printing AutoCollages**

AutoCollage does not have a built-in printing facility. Instead, it is recommended to use the facility built into the Windows Explorer (Windows XP), or [Windows Photo Gallery](#) (Windows Vista).

**See also:** [Working with AutoCollages](#)

**AutoCollage Application Panes**

Like most Windows applications, the AutoCollage window is divided into several different sections called 'panes.' Each pane allows you to perform a different type of activity.

1. The [Image Browser pane](#) lets you choose which folder you want to create an AutoCollage from.
2. The [Image Preview pane](#) displays images in the folder selected in the Image Browser pane, and lets you inspect the images as they load.
3. The [Actions pane](#) provides controls to configure AutoCollage output, kick off collage creation, and shortcuts for working with the resulting AutoCollage.
4. The [AutoCollage View pane](#) lets you inspect your latest AutoCollage before taking any other action.

**See also:** [The Image Browser Pane](#), [the Image Preview Pane](#), [the Actions Pane](#), [the AutoCollage View Pane](#)

**The AutoCollage Image Browser Pane**

Use the Image Browser pane to select which folder to view in the Image Preview pane. You can also use this pane to select a different Image Browser root folder.

![Image Browser](image.png)

The title bar of this pane is usually charcoal-colored. However, when images are being loaded from the folder, it becomes a progress bar, slowly turning green. When 1/4 of the bar is green, 1/4 of the images in the selected folder have been loaded. In the example above, just under a quarter of the [15] images in the `Monuments` folder have been loaded.

To the right of the title bar is a small button with ellipsis. Select this button to change the root Image Browser folder (the `Pictures` folder in this example). Only the root Image Browser folder - or the folders beneath it - can be used for making AutoCollages.

The body of the Image Browser pane contains a folder hierarchy. Sub-folders are displayed
indented beneath the folder they belong to. A folder with a small triangle icon next to it - such
as the faint triangle next to the *Pictures* folder - has sub-folders. If sub-folders aren't
displayed, clicking on the triangle next to the parent folder will show them.

Some folder names have a number in square braces next to them. This is the number of
recognized images in that folder. If the number is [300+], there are at least 300 images in the
folder, and AutoCollage will only try and load the first 300 if that folder is selected.

**Live Images view**

AutoCollage can be used to create collages from pictures selected via Windows Live Photo
Gallery. When images in the Image Preview pane are from Windows Live Photo Gallery rather
than an image browser folder, the title of the Image Browser pane is replaced with 'Live
Images' and an image count, as shown below.

![Live Images count](image)

To return to folder browsing, simply select the back arrow button next to the title.

**See also:** [AutoCollage Application Panes](#), [Browsing Images](#), [Using AutoCollage With Windows Live Photo Gallery](#)

**The AutoCollage Image Preview Pane**

This pane displays images selected via the *Image Browser* pane, and allows you to interact
with them.
You can do the following:

- Resize the Image Preview pane - for example by resizing the AutoCollage window - to redistribute loaded images throughout the pane.
- Click on an image to zoom it by 200%. Mousing off the image before it finishes zooming leaves it zoomed. Mousing off the image after it reaches 200%, or clicking on the image again returns it to its original size.
- Navigate through layers of 20 images at a time. Images are organized into layers of up to 20 images each. Hit F7 and F8, or scroll up or down with the mouse scroll wheel to navigate forwards and backwards through image layers.

Once you've selected Create, you won't be able to interact with images in the Image Preview pane until the collage is completed or cancelled.

The Image Preview pane displays the images selected via the Image Browser. You cannot cancel loading of images selected via the folder view or Windows Live Photo Gallery. To prevent a large folder from loading its images, click on a different folder in the Image Browser containing fewer images. To cancel images being added from Windows Live Photo Gallery, select the back arrow button on the Image Browser title bar.

See also: AutoCollage Application Panes, Browsing Images, The Image Browser Pane

### The Actions Pane

Use the Actions pane to create a new collage, change the number of images in the next collage, set output options, view the default saved AutoCollage folder, or as a shortcut to other activities.

For more information on these activities, refer to the Working with AutoCollages topic.

See also: AutoCollage Application Panes

### The AutoCollage View Pane

Once AutoCollage creates a collage, the Image Preview pane is replaced by the AutoCollage View pane. Use this pane to examine your latest collage before saving it or taking other actions.
You can make the collage small enough to fit in the View pane by zooming out, or take a closer look at any part of the collage by zooming in and panning.

To zoom, select the zoom control at the lower left of the pane, and choose the zoom factor you want. Zoom factors range from 12.5% to 800% zoom. There is also an 'Auto' zoom factor which will fit the collage to the AutoCollage view pane. In addition to using the zoom control at the lower left of the pane, you can select the view pane and use your mouse scroll wheel to zoom in and out.

You can pan a zoomed image in three ways:
1. Select the scroll bars and move them until the part of the collage you're interested in is visible.
2. Select the AutoCollage View pane and use the arrow keys to pan.
3. Move your mouse over the collage, hold down the left mouse button, and drag the mouse in the direction you want to pan.

See also: AutoCollage Application Panes, Working With AutoCollages

AutoCollage Tips and Tricks

AutoCollage is designed to automatically generate pleasing collages. By default it provides very little control over the collage contents and organization. This section provides advanced user tips for achieving specific AutoCollage results.

General Tips
You'll usually get the best automatic results from AutoCollage if you do the following:

- Use the Image Count Slider to choose an odd (rather than even) number of images for the AutoCollage. AutoCollages with 7, 11, and 13 images usually look best.
- Make several collages using the same settings, and keep the best one. Each time you select Create in a session, AutoCollage makes a different collage.
- Try different output sizes, especially alternating between portrait and landscape output. Results will be dramatically different.
Choosing Collage Input Images

If you want more control over the images your AutoCollage contains, you can:

- Use Windows Live Photo Gallery to select the images you want in the collage.
- Create a new image folder, and copy the images you want AutoCollage to choose from to that folder.
- Influence the image selection by manually changing image ranking.

Influencing Image Blending

AutoCollage may obscure parts of an image you want shown. When this happens, one option is to use manual face detection to prevent it. Even if the image part you want shown isn’t a face, drawing a face detection rectangle around a region it makes AutoCollage very unlikely to obscure it.

Sometimes image blends are dramatic, following the contours of objects in an image. Other times they’re linear, following the edge of the image. You can influence this behavior by changing the Image Overlap Advanced Output Option. Setting image overlap to a small number makes straight blends following image edges more likely. Setting it to a larger number makes contour-hugging blends more likely.

See also: Advanced Output Option, Using Face Detection, Using Ranking Information,

Using Face Detection

AutoCollage face detection helps select images for Collages. When AutoCollage detects a face in an image, it makes a note of the face size and location.

Face detection is an active research area. The face detector used in AutoCollage is good, but not perfect. In some cases you may wish to preview detected faces, and to change the results.

Once face detection display options have been enabled via the Input Options dialog, detected faces are shown in each image in the Image Preview Pane, surrounded by a yellow rectangle.
AutoCollage prefers images with faces when selecting pictures for inclusion in collages. It also prefers not to obscure detected faces in collages. Note that the yellow rectangle is only shown in the image preview pane, not in the final collage.

If *Enable manual face detection* is enabled in *Input Options*, you can force AutoCollage to ignore automatically detected faces in a given image. You can also draw a rectangle containing any faces in the image, replacing automatic face detection results.

To instruct AutoCollage to ignore faces detected in an image:
1. Select an image in the Image Preview Pane, and wait until it's fully zoomed.
2. Hold down the *Ctrl* key and right-click on the zoomed image, then release the *Ctrl* key.

Any yellow rectangles on the image disappear, and AutoCollage treats the image as if it contains no faces.

To draw a manual face detection rectangle:
1. Select an image in the Image Preview Pane, and wait until it's fully zoomed.
2. Hold down the *Ctrl* key and then press and hold the left mouse button at one corner of the face. You may release the *Ctrl* key any time after clicking down the left mouse button.
3. While continuing to hold down the left mouse button, drag the mouse to the opposite corner of the face.
4. Release the left mouse button. If you're not satisfied with the result, draw a new rectangle, or *Ctrl* right-click to remove it.

In the image below, the user identifies the dragon's face by holding down the *Ctrl* key and left-clicking at the upper left of the dragon's face, releasing the *Ctrl* key, dragging the mouse to the lower right corner of the dragon's face, and then releasing the left mouse button.

If you create a collage and find features you want shown are being obscured, return to the image browser view of the folder and use manual face detection to make this less likely.

1. Press *Esc* to return to the image browser view
2. Zoom the desired image
3. Draw a face recognition rectangle containing the obscured feature
4. Select Create to create a new AutoCollage with the same settings.

Manual face detection is an advanced feature, and has several restrictions.

- A manual face detection rectangle removes any previous face detection rectangles - automatic or manual - for that image.
- An image may have multiple automatically detected face rectangles, but only one manual face detection rectangle.
- Face detection rectangles for each image are only retained until you close AutoCollage or browse to a different image folder.
- You can draw a face rectangle anywhere inside an image. For best blending results, leave a margin of 1/8 of the image size or greater around all four edges of the image.

See also: Setting AutoCollage Input Options, AutoCollage Tips and Tricks

Using Ranking Information

Before creating a collage, AutoCollage must choose which images to use. It does this by examining each of the images it has loaded, ranking them from most interesting to least interesting, and preferring the highest ranked images for inclusion in the collage.

Ranked images can be divided into four categories:

1. The 1st ranked image. Usually presented larger than other images in the collage, and usually in the collage center.
2. The 2nd ranked image. Usually smaller than the 1st ranked image, but larger than the rest.
3. Included images. Images which are not 1st or 2nd ranked, but which are included in the collage.
4. Excluded images. Images ranked too low to be included in the collage.

For example, if you make a 7-image collage from a folder with 50 images, then the 3rd through 7th ranked images are included images, and the 8th through 50th ranked images are excluded images.

To review and modify image ranking, enable ranking information display and manual ranking via advanced input options. This will allow you to review and influence the ranking of images for collage creation.

Interpreting Image Ranking

When you select a set of images, those images are loaded one by one into the Image Preview pane. After all images have loaded, AutoCollage ranks them. If display image ranking is enabled in input options, images will be rendered one of four ways, depending upon their rank.

The 1st and 2nd ranked images have an icon with their rank superimposed on the top of them.

Other included images are rendered normally, but may have another icon superimposed when they are zoomed. These icons are shown and explained in Changing Image Ranking.
Excluded images - those which will not be in the created collage - are rendered with diagonal lines across them.

Since the number of images included in the collage is determined by the Image Count Slider, changing this slider will affect the set of included and excluded images.

See also: Setting AutoCollage Input Options, Changing Image Ranking, AutoCollage Tips and Tricks

Changing Image Ranking

AutoCollage allows you to change each image ranking category. If allow manual ranking is enabled in advanced input options, you can change an image ranking category as follows.

1. Click on the image in the image preview pane. This will zoom the image in the preview pane, and display one of five icons in the upper left corner of the image. This icon shows how the image ranking category is determined for the image.
2. Click on the image ranking determination icon, or use your mouse scroll wheel to change its value. This will cycle the icon to its next value, with an appropriate affect on the image rank.

The five image ranking determination icons are shown below, along with an explanation of their affect on ranking for a given image, and its likelihood to be included in the next AutoCollage.

- **Top ranked image**. This image becomes the 1st ranked image. If it wasn't already 1st ranked, the previous 1st ranked image will be made 2nd ranked, etc. AutoCollage will try to place the top ranked image in the center of a collage.

- **Second ranked image**. This image becomes the 2nd ranked image. If it wasn't already the 2nd ranked, the previous 2nd ranked image will be moved into the set of images that the user prefers to include in the next AutoCollage.

- **Prefer this image**. Promotes this image to the top of a list of preferred images, which will be added to the AutoCollage after the 1st ranked and the 2nd ranked images.

- **Avoid this image**. This effectively makes the image the least desirable image. The image may still be included in the next AutoCollage if there are not enough other images to complete the set required in the AutoCollage Image Count Slider.
Automatic ranking. You can reset manual settings back to automatic ranking for an individual image by reselecting the automatic ranking icon.

Images are automatically ranked once, when the first set of images has finished loading. If you later add images to the set of AutoCollage images - for example by copying them to the selected image folder after the folder has already been loaded, or adding them via Windows Live Photo Gallery - the added images are ranked as if you manually selected 'prefer this image.'

You can ask AutoCollage to discard any manual ranking changes, and to re-rank all images by pressing the "Esc" key after at least one image has had a manual ranking change made.

Ranking is a critical part of AutoCollage, and the ability to modify image ranking provides tremendous influence over AutoCollage results.

See also: Setting AutoCollage Input Options, Using Ranking Information, AutoCollage Tips and Tricks