

Peter Bennett:

Hi, I'm Peter Bennett, and welcome to setting up and working with PhotoSweeper. PhotoSweeper is one of, if not the most powerful photo duplicate removal application you can get for your Mac system. Whether you have 5,000 images in your photo collection or 50,000 images, dupes can be a big problem. They clutter up drives, take up storage, and generally make a mess of our libraries. When we can remove these dupes, it not only gives us a little peace of mind, it ensures that we are going to be working with and enjoying the same version of an image each time. Having a lot of duplicates can cause a fair amount of anxiety amongst my clients. Although not as dangerous as being one hard drive crash away from losing an entire photo collection, it is nonetheless a strong visual reminder that their photo library is a mess. Every time they open their library and see 2, 3, 4, or more versions of the same image, it just reinforces that things are out of hand and in need of help.

We are all being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the images we are accumulating. The idea of all these dupes adding to those numbers just compounds the frustration. So while de-duping a collection of images is one of the several practical steps we normally take in organizing a digital photo collection, it is also a symbolic turning point. It represents a new beginning, a starting over. What was a cluttered mess, something we didn't even want to deal with, now feels shiny and new and welcoming. And that can be a powerful thing if it helps encourage and motivates us to start enjoying and working with our photo collections and family history again.

So there's good work to be done here, and the importance of having a good tool to do that work cannot be underestimated. When I was much younger, I worked as a machinist in the San Francisco shipyards repairing large ships. Needless to say, we used a lot of different tools in the course of our work. And it was there I learned how critical it was to have the right tool to do the job at hand. The wrong tool could mean a job poorly done, not to mention possibly adding hours or days to the task. There is no question that PhotoSweeper has more of a learning curve than other de-duping applications, but powerful and effective tools often do require a bit more patience to understand and master. I will walk you through all the steps you need to understand, set up, and use PhotoSweeper. I've broken it down into several lessons.

We'll go over a brief history of dupes. We'll look at how dupes are created, why they are created, and how not all dupes are created equal. This will be important when we want to figure out which dupes we want to keep and which dupes we want to get rid of. We'll talk about first and second generation dupes, the different file formats, and how JPEG compression can affect our decisions. There are a lot of settings in PhotoSweeper, and it can be confusing, but we will go through each setting as well as why we choose them. The Auto Mark settings are the core of how PhotoSweeper identifies and determines which dupes to keep and which to delete. So understanding these settings and how they affect the results is a critical part of the process.

We'll talk about locking down folders and other ways to prioritize one set of images over another. PhotoSweeper uses three methods for finding duplicates, and they can each be effective. But when using all three, the percentage of success is going to be much higher. We will discuss how the three methods work, as well as going through a step-by-step workflow and the strategy I use for each of them. This can be the trickiest part of working with PhotoSweeper, so I will make it a simple and easy process to understand. I will also discuss the advantage of importing libraries versus importing folders, how the deletion process works, and all the features and options that are offered.

The last lesson is a live view of my going through all the steps. Seeing someone go through the process in real time can sometimes really clarify things. So we will put all the information previously discussed into action as I go through all the steps of de-duping a library. It's important to understand there is no one way of using PhotoSweeper. What I will be presenting is a combination of trial and error over the years I've been using it, as well as the talks with PhotoSweeper's tech support for their advice on best practices. But if you're ready to start the journey, join me for the next lesson: a brief history of dupes.