PHOTO ALBUM DEVICE AND SYSTEM

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

This Application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) from earlier filed U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/700,009, filed Sep. 12, 2012, by Marisa Cox, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

1. Field of the Invention

The present disclosure relates to the field of digital photo albums, particularly a digital photo album device capable of storing, organizing, and displaying digital pictures.

2. Background

Viewing photo albums have been a method of enjoying and reliving memories for generations. Many people enjoy assembling photo albums to collect, organize, and display their photographs of vacations, family celebrations, school events, childhood memories, and other life events. It can be a treasured experience for families to go through photo albums together. For example, it can be an intimate and enjoyable family experience for a parent and child to curl up on a couch with a photo album to view family photos, with the parent explaining family history through the photos or describing events that the child was too young to remember.

In the past, most photographs were taken on film. Photographers generally then developed the entire roll of film, which resulted in the photographer receiving physical paper copies of each and every picture he or she had taken. These physical prints were easy to insert into photo album pages, and therefore a photo album was both a practical way to physically organize and store the pictures, as well as a convenient way to display and view them.

However, recently it has become more common to take pictures digitally with a dedicated digital camera, or with a digital camera that is incorporated into a mobile phone or other device. Photographers often take many more pictures of an event with digital cameras than they would with film cameras, because there is no expense associated with buying rolls of film. This can result in a large collection of pictures for every event that is photographed. These digital pictures initially exist only as bits of information on a memory storage device, and must be printed out if one desires to have physical copies of the pictures. Although services and photo printers exist that can print physical copies of digital photographs, due to the potentially large number of pictures taken it can be expensive and/or impractical to print out physical copies of every picture. Consumers instead often select individual pictures that they would like to have printed, but this process can be inconvenient and time consuming. As a result, digital pictures often remain trapped on memory cards, hard drives, or other storage devices. Additionally, a single photographer can often have digital pictures stored on a variety of devices, such as a mobile phone, camera, computer, or other device, and never take the time to copy them all to a single location.

Services exist that allow users to upload their pictures and create photo albums that are then printed for them. However, these solutions share the problems that it can take time and effort to select the specific pictures to be used, upload them, and then arrange them into a photo album that must then be purchased and shipped to the user. While many users desire to have these types of photo albums, they often never find the time to prepare them.

Digital devices such as computers, mobile phones, tablet computers, digital frames, and other such devices can store and display digital pictures. However, these types of devices often have drawbacks over the simplicity of traditional photo albums.

Some computers have large enough hard drives to store a user's entire collection of pictures. However, the experience of viewing those pictures on the computer's screen falls far short of the traditional photo album experience. Computers generally only display one image at a time, in comparison to a photo album page that can have many pictures on it. It can also be cumbersome to sit down with a child to show pictures to him or her on a computer. These problems also exist with pictures uploaded to websites.

Additionally, computers and other digital devices can be capable of running multiple programs or applications at the same time. The multipurpose nature of these devices can intrude on the experience of viewing a photo album. For example, a family can gather around a computer to view photos but be interrupted when an alert pops up indicating that an email has been received. Similarly, users can be easily distracted from the task of organizing or viewing digital photo albums due to the temptations of other tasks or activities that the digital device can perform.

Many other devices, such as mobile phones, tablet computers, and digital frames, have limited storage space. This limitation requires a user to select which photos to load onto the device, which can be time consuming. When only a subset of the user's entire collection of pictures is on each device, the entire collection can become fragmented and disorganized.

What is needed is a device for storing, organizing, and displaying a user's entire collection of pictures. The device can have two screens arranged side by side, which can emulate the intimate and dedicated photo viewing experience of a traditional photo album.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** depicts a view of an embodiment of a photo album device in an open position.

FIG. **2** depicts a view of an embodiment of a photo album device in a closed position.

FIGS. **3**A and **3**B depict views of an alternate embodiment of a photo album device wherein the panels are separable.

FIG. **4**. depicts a view of an embodiment of a photo album device comprising input mechanisms and other hardware components.

FIG. **5** depicts an internal view of an embodiment of a photo album device.

FIG. **6** depicts a side view of an embodiment of a photo album device in a closed position.

FIG. **7** depicts a view of an embodiment of a photo album device in communication with one or more external data storage devices.

FIG. **8** depicts a flow chart of a system for organizing, storing, and displaying digital files stored on an embodiment of a photo album device.

FIG. **9** depicts embodiments of digital files capable of being stored on a photo album device.

FIG. **10** depicts a computer system capable of running embodiments of the system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. **1** depicts an embodiment of a photo album device **100**. In some embodiments, the photo album device **100** can comprise two panels **102**. Each panel **102** can comprise a screen **104**. In some embodiments, one or more of the photo album device's screens **104** can be a touchscreen capable of