

# The myAlbum Shared Photo Album Format

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## 1. Introduction

The idea of myAlbum2 being a photo management software program that allowed for sharing of albums came as early as SnapShots Photo Viewer. However, back then I did not know of a way to create such an effective way to transport album information. MyAlbum2 spawned the XML Shared Album format – or .xal as its extension puts it. XAL files are simple ZIP files with photos, a XML file and if needed a bitmap file. This document provides you with information for recreating the XAL file format, for use in your software.

## 2. Changelog

27<sup>th</sup> March 04: Minor changes in wording.

3<sup>rd</sup> February 04: Original version

## 3. Tags

The XML file contains several types of Tags. No DTD is required, which means that you should at the very least create a well-formed XML document.

`<album>`

The root element. Required for a well-formed XML document.

`<settings>`

The start of the settings block, and is hence required. Can only be one and must be the first element below the root element `<album>`.

`<ver>`

The version, and must be the first element below the `<settings>` (otherwise myAlbum will not read it). This must be set to 1 and is to allow for cross-compatibility.

`<subset>`

For customized versions only. See Notes.

`<name>`

The name of the album. Simple.

`<icon>`

The icon used. Can be 0, 1, 2, 3 or `custom`. 0 is a folder icon. 1 is a star. 2 is a folder with a spark in the corner. 3 is a folder with a magnifying glass. `custom` requires an `icon.bmp`. See the Files section for information on this file.

`<photo>`

The start of a photo block. Have one of these for each photo.

`<name>`

The name of the photo (or caption).

`<taker>`

The person who took the photo.

`<note>`

A description of the photo.

`<file>`

The file name of the photo. Do not use any paths.

## 4. Files

The following files are required in order to be a usable Shared Album.

- album.xml  
The XML file containing all the information regarding the album.
- icon.bmp  
Only required if `<icon>` is set to `custom` in the album.xml file. Must be a 16x16 bitmap image.
- ...jpg  
All the photo files (must be .jpg images).

Here is a sample album.xml file:

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<album>
  <settings>
    <ver>1</ver>
    <name>Our holiday</name>
    <icon>custom</icon>
  </settings>

  <photo>
    <name>The beach</name>
    <taker>Joe</taker>
    <note>The beautiful white beach!</note>
    <file>Our holiday 0.jpg</file>
  </photo>

  <photo>
    <name>Going out</name>
    <taker>Joe</taker>
    <note>We were on our way out into the water.</note>
    <file>Our holiday 1.jpg</file>
  </photo>
</album>
```

All the files are compressed into a single ZIP files, paths should not be used.

## 5. Usage

The program should extract all files to a folder such as the My Pictures\`(name of album)` folder. (myAlbum2 uses the name of the XAL file). It would read through the XML file and convert it into a format that your program can understand effectively (for example, the underlying engine used in myAlbum2 is the MyLittleBase database component from <http://www.mylittlebase.org>). Your implementation of this may vary.

Once completed, the files album.xml and icon.bmp (if present) should be removed from the location (not the XAL file).

## 6. Notes

Creating customized versions is possible. For example, if you want to add another field then you can easily do so. However, do not edit the `<ver>` tag as anything different from 1 would cause myAlbum2 not to import it. Instead, use `<subset>`. You could put anything in there, for example, `<subset>myprogram</subset>` and then add the tags. That way it won't interfere with other programs that use this format, while allowing other programs to have their own fields. `<subset>` is completely optional and is not required for proper operation (myAlbum2 doesn't even look at this tag as it considers all XAL files to fit to this, unless the `<ver>` is different from 1).