Making a Panoramic Photograph

Tips and Techniques from The Louisiana Photographic Society
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When we hear "panorama", the image that comes to mind is probably a very wide but not very high print covering an extremely wide angle of view. Another way of saying this is that a panorama has a large aspect ratio.

A panorama is eye-catching simply because it appears so different from standard formats like the classic 8x10 print. Although a panorama could be made by cropping, a "true" panorama required a special camera – until digital editing came along. Now panoramic prints can be assembled or "stitched" from independent images.

The first step towards making a panoramic print is to take a series of individual pictures that progressively reveal the full field of view. Allow each individual picture to overlap the previous one by about 25%. Although counter-intuitive, it is often best to use portrait orientation. Use a tripod. Do not use a polarizing filter. Some digital cameras have a special panoramic or stitching mode that can be very helpful, especially for first attempts. If not using the camera's special mode, set both manual focus and exposure.

Sometimes panorama software is included with the digital camera. Adobe's Photoshop includes a stitching module but it is not a popular one. There is a free program, Panotools, that can be found on the Internet; however, it is difficult to use. Some commercially available stitching programs, such as PTAssembler, are based on Panotools. A very good, very simple and popular stitching program, Autostitch, is available on the Internet at AutoStitch.net – and it's free!

Panoramic prints can be challenging because of paper and printer limitations. Some Canon printers are limited to 23" paper length. Most Epson printers are limited to 44" length; however, paper sizes seem limited to 23" length. To make a print longer than 23", it will probably be necessary to buy a roll of paper. To make a print longer than 44", it is probably necessary to use special software.

| More information on panoramas: | http://www.panoguide.com |
| | http://www.luminous-landscape.com |

Stitching software:	http://www.autostitch.net (free)
	http://www.panoramafactory.com
	http://www.tawbaware.com

| Printing software: | http://www.ddisoftware.com |