

# Comic Collector Quick Start Guide

## Software Introduction

The Comic Collector software application is part of a powerful solution for managing comic book collections and digital comics published on the Internet. Comic book information and artwork is automatically populated from Internet-enabled databases. Digital comic series automatically update with new images from the web.

Comic Collector will prompt for an activation code when it is first run. This code can be found on a card included with your product bundle. Enter the code on the card to activate the software.

The main Comic Collector window is used to manage both physical comic books and digital comics. Use the Comic Books and Web Comics buttons in the lower left corner to switch between these views.

## Adding Comic Books

Comic Collector stores comic book information as a list of series and the issues contained within them. Series records must be created before individual issues can be added. To begin, click the Add Series toolbar button, then enter keywords for the series title, e.g. "superman." Click the Source buttons to search for the series in the Internet-enabled databases. Select the matching series from the results, e.g. "DC Comics, Superman, 1939," and click OK. Click the Add button to automatically add the series.

To add issues to an existing series, click the Add Issues toolbar button. Choose the series from the menu, then enter the issue numbers to add. Issues can be specified with ranges, thus "1-4, 7" will add issues 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7. Click the Add button to automatically add the issues to the series. Double-click an issue or series to edit it.

## Barcode Usage

Comic Collector uses barcodes to look up records, edit record locations, and perform an inventory on records. Issues to be tracked with barcodes must have unique barcode values associated with them. Some comics already have retail barcodes, which may be used if they are unique for each issue. Comic books without unique barcodes can be affixed with new, unique barcodes by printing them with Comic Collector's Comic Tags feature. IntelliScanner Asset Tags can also be used if a pre-printed solution is desired.

## Printing Comic Tags

Comic tags are sheets of letter size paper that are printed with comic book issue information and unique barcodes. These sheets can be folded in half and inserted inside comic book bags. Click the Comic Tags toolbar button to begin. Use the menus to specify which issues should be assigned new barcodes; this can be as specific as the selected issue or as broad as all issues. Confirm the changes and click the Print button. To reprint comic tags without assigning new barcode values, choose the "Do not assign new barcodes" option.

## Associating Pre-Existing Barcodes

Some comic books already have unique barcode values. Use the Associate Barcodes feature to associate these barcodes with their corresponding issue records by simply scanning them. To

begin, click the Associate Barcodes toolbar button. Choose which records to change, click Scan Next Comic Book, and begin scanning the barcodes on the issues in the order in which they appear.

## **Inventory**

After associating barcode values with issue records, the Inventory feature makes it easy to audit your comic book collection. An inventory can be performed for a single comic book series or all series. To begin, click the Inventory toolbar button. Choose the type of inventory to be performed, then begin scanning the barcodes on the issues being inventoried. When finished, click the Inventory button to generate an inventory report.

## **Finding Comic Books**

Comic book issues can be found quickly and automatically using any of three methods.

- Scanning the barcode on an issue while browsing through the main window will automatically select the corresponding issue record.
- The Scan List feature, accessed via the View menu, is used to look up multiple issue records simultaneously by simply scanning their barcodes.
- Clicking the Search button allows issue records to be located by a keyword search.

## **ComicSaver**

ComicSaver is used to automatically write your comic book artwork to image files in a specified folder. This folder can then be used as the image source for a picture screen saver. ComicSaver is configured in Comic Collector's preferences.

## **Adding Web Comics**

The Web Comics view stores digital comics published on the web. Several comics are configured by default. To add a web comic, click the Add Comic toolbar button and enter the comic's title and details. Specify how to fetch new comic images and the URL to use when fetching.

- Use "RSS Feed" when the URL refers to an RSS feed with images. If the URL ends in ".rss" or ".xml", this is likely the option to choose.
- Use "Image on Web Page" when the URL refers to a web page that contains the latest comic image. Comic Collector will attempt to automatically locate the desired comic image on the web page.
- Use "Fixed Image URL" when the latest comic image is always found at the same URL. Do not worry about how often the image is updated; Comic Collector will detect when the image has changed.
- Use "Custom Parsing" when the URL refers to a web page that contains the latest comic image yet this image cannot be automatically detected with the "Image on Web Page" option. Using this option requires knowledge of HTML and basic parsing techniques.

Click the OK button to add the web comic and fetch the latest image.

## **Custom Parsing**

Some web comics are difficult to automatically load. In such cases it may be necessary to manually specify how to find the latest comic image on the web comic's web site. These settings, described below, are set by editing a web comic and going to the Source tab.

- Fetch Comic Via: This must be set to “Image on Web Page” to use custom parsing.
- URL: The web page containing the current comic image.
- Image Base: A base URL for the current comic image.
- HTML Image Head: The HTML immediately preceding the image file name.
- HTML Image Tail: The HTML immediately following the image file name.

For example, the latest comic image from a web comic might be found at:  
<http://www.mydomain.com/comic/index.html>

This web page might contain the following HTML snippet.

```
...
</b><p>
...
```

Custom parsing for this source might be specified as:

- URL: <http://www.mydomain.com/comic/index.html>
- Image Base: <http://www.mydomain.com/comic/images/>
- HTML Image Head: <p><img src="images/
- HTML Image Tail: “

These settings will fetch the URL, isolate the “comic853.jpg” between the head and tail strings, add “comic853.jpg” to the end of the base URL, and fetch the resulting image URL.

## Updating Images

Updating a web comic is the act of downloading the latest comic image from the web comic web site, and if it is not a duplicate, storing it in the Comic Collector software. To update some web comics, select the web comics to update and click the Update toolbar button. To update all web comics, click the Update All toolbar button. Comic Collector’s preferences can also be configured to automatically update all web comics at a specified time each day.