

19 Quick Tips to Maximize Your Productivity Using Artisan

Hi, my name is Deb Aldape Rodriguez. I've been using and teaching others how to use Artisan (and Storybook Creator in its various versions before it), since the software was first released in 2006.

When I first saw Storybook Creator in action back in 2006, I was in awe. I had worked previously with Adobe's desktop publishing software PageMaker, and I knew that the functionality in Storybook Creator was top notch.

I had tried back in 2001 to create my own digital scrapbook of sorts using Microsoft Word. That was a horrible experience after having used better software. The project was a Christmas present, and an expensive one, once I got the page printed at Kinkos. I never attempted it again, even though it went over well and was a lot of fun. The process just killed it for me.

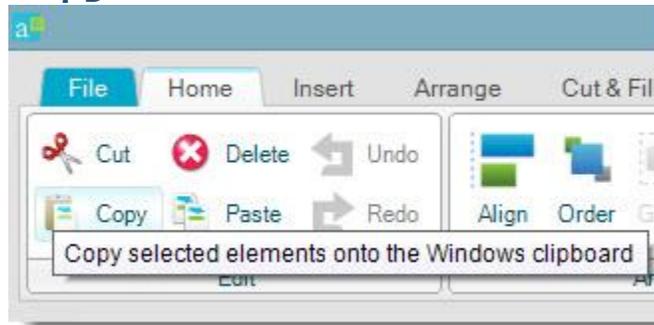
So when Storybook Creator came along, I was so stoked. And I still think this software is awe-inspiring for what it can do.

Quick Tips Cheat Sheet

These are a few of the features of Artisan that I use the most frequently. You may be very familiar with some of them, and less familiar with others.

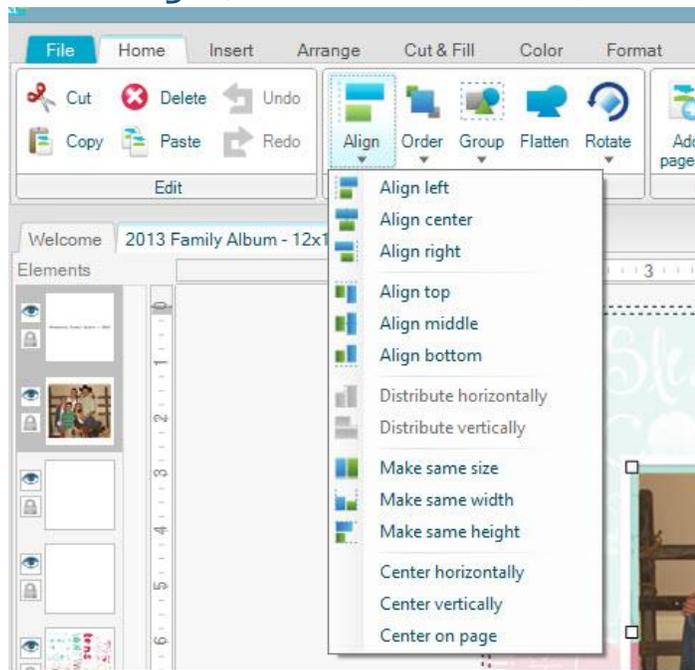
Quite a few of the most useful features are available right from the Home ribbon.

1. Copy, Paste (on the Home ribbon)



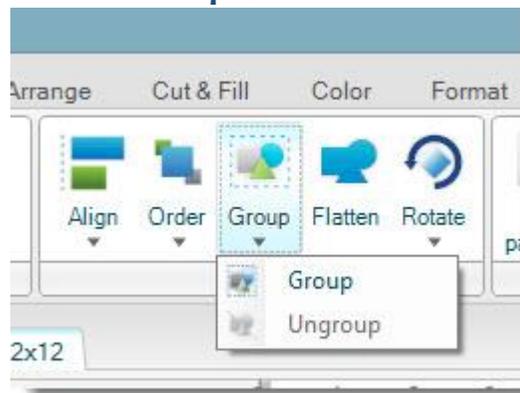
Who doesn't need to copy sometimes? And Paste is right next to it.

2. Quick Align (on the Home ribbon)



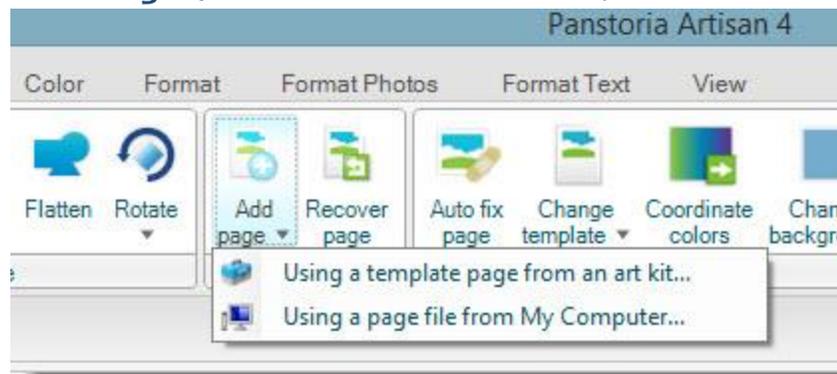
If you select multiple elements (being sure to select the one you want to align the other elements with last), you can easily apply any of these listed features to the items selected. I use this ALL the time!

3. Quick Group (from the Home ribbon)



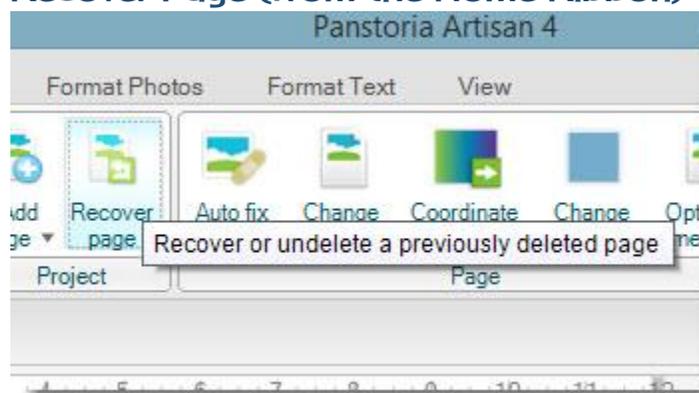
To quickly group or ungroup multiple items.

4. Add Page (from the Home Ribbon)



This is the button that you will use any time that you need to add a page to your Project. In most cases, you'll select **Using a template page from an art kit**, unless you have page files from a different project that you want to include.

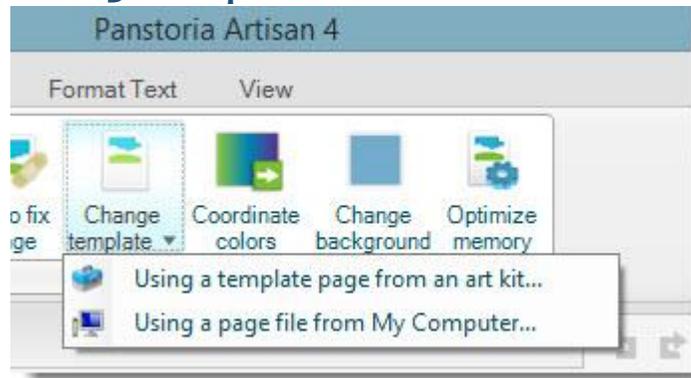
5. Recover Page (from the Home Ribbon)



You may or may not know this, but when you delete a page from your project, whether intentionally or by accident, Artisan puts it in the recycle bin. That means, it's not immediately gone. Depending on which options you have

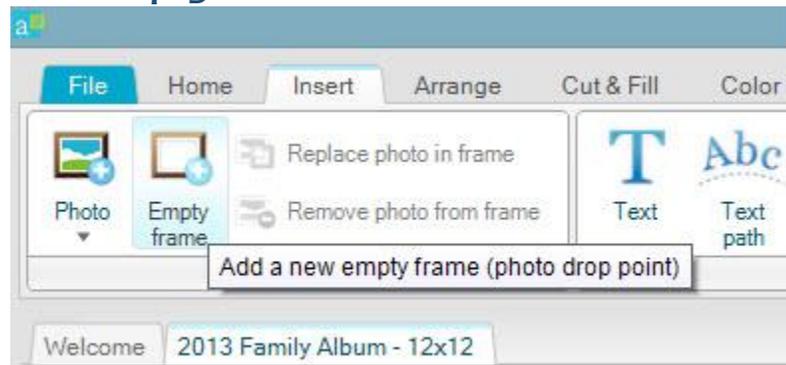
selected, Artisan will only save a certain number of pages to recover. It's not indefinite.

6. Change Template (on the Home Ribbon)



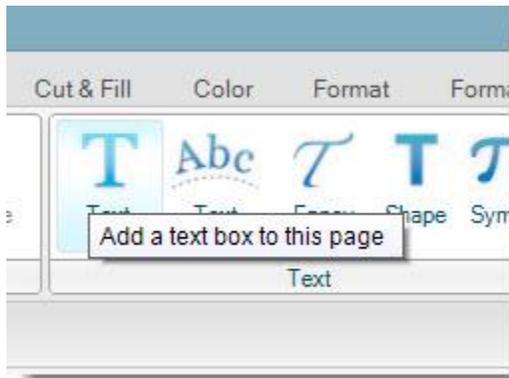
This is the other tab I use in every single project. If you are attempting to change the template on a page that already exists in your project (as opposed to adding a new page to your project), this is the icon you want to click to get the job done. Again, in almost every case, you'll select **Using a template from an art kit**.

7. Add Empty Frame (from the Insert ribbon)



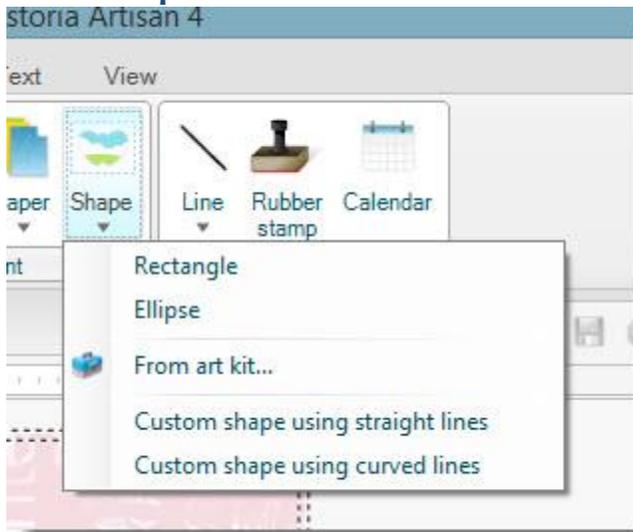
If you're anything like me, you may feel the need to add more photos to some of your pages than are available from the template you've chosen. You can always just drag a photo onto the page, but then you have to resize it and maneuver it into place. The easiest, or cleanest, way to add photos to the page is to insert an empty photo frame onto the page. Just select **Empty Frame** from the Insert tab and size the gray box and position it where you want it. Then it's simple to just add your photo to the empty frame.

8. Add Text (from the Insert ribbon)

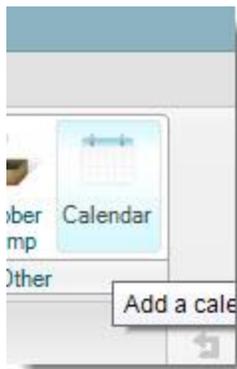


This is the simple way to add text wherever you want on your page.

9. Add Shape (from the Insert ribbon)



This is the quickest way to add a shape to your page. You can select any shape from an Art Kit, but I use the **Rectangle** more frequently than anything else. It's a quick way to mat text boxes (to make them easier to read).

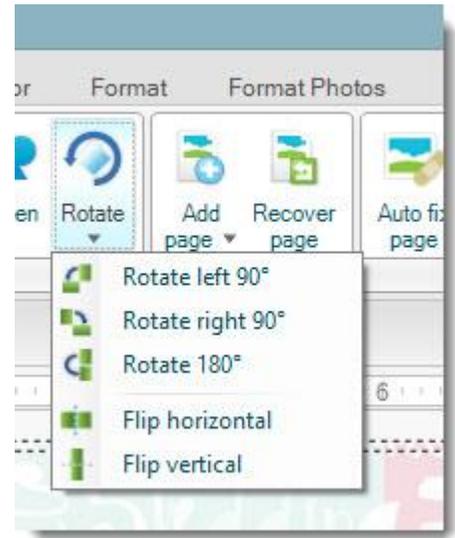


10. Add Calendar (from the Insert ribbon)

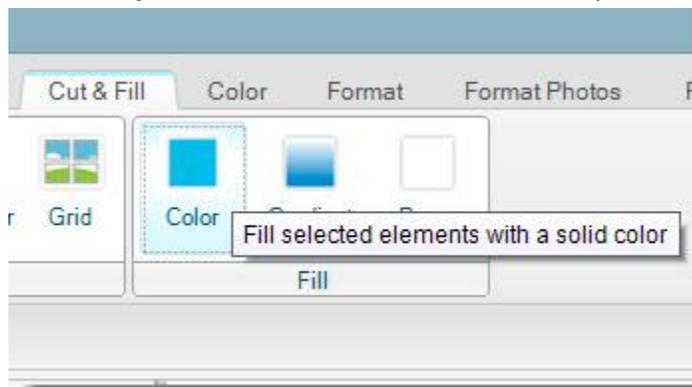
This is one of the neatest features to Artisan, and probably one of the least understood. You can insert a calendar block into any project, anywhere.

11. Quick Rotate (from the Home ribbon)

This is the easy spot to rotate or adjust your image or embellishment (or even your text box – your words don't always have to read horizontally from left to right - ☺).

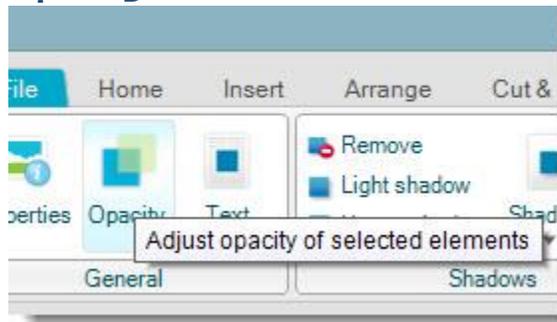


12. Color (from the Cut & Fill Ribbon)



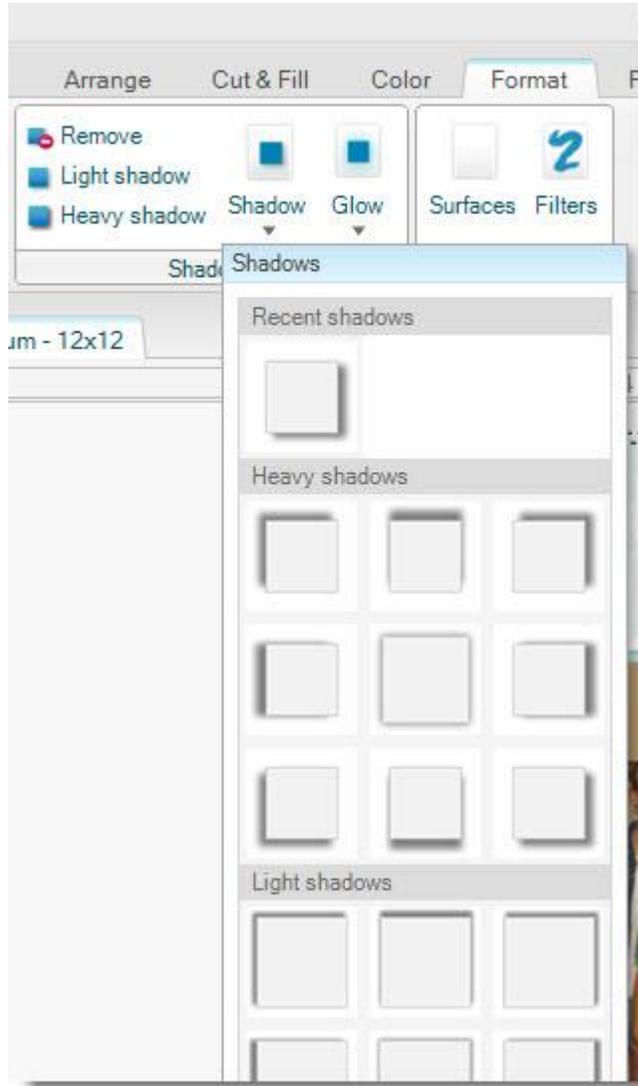
This is the go to place to change the color of things like one of those Rectangle shapes you may have inserted from the Shape icon. This is NOT the option for changing text colors; that has to be done from the Format Text Ribbon.

13. Opacity (from the Format Ribbon)



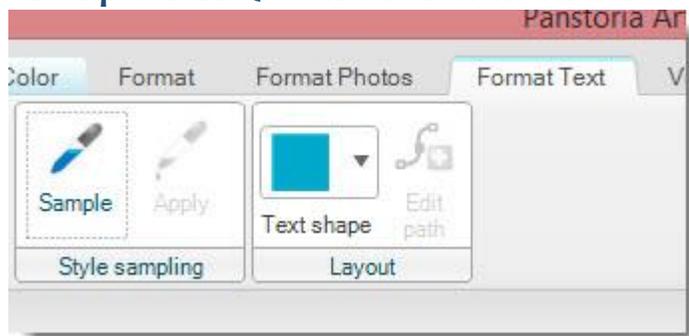
I love this feature, because it does just what it says ... makes your elements opaque. Give it a try! It's great for creating a vellum effect with certain elements.

14. Shadows (from the Format Ribbon)



I love using Shadows on my pages to give dimension to things. It's very simple to do. And the best thing is, you can select all of the elements on the page you want to shadow, and then add the same shadow to all of them in one click. Easy continuity.

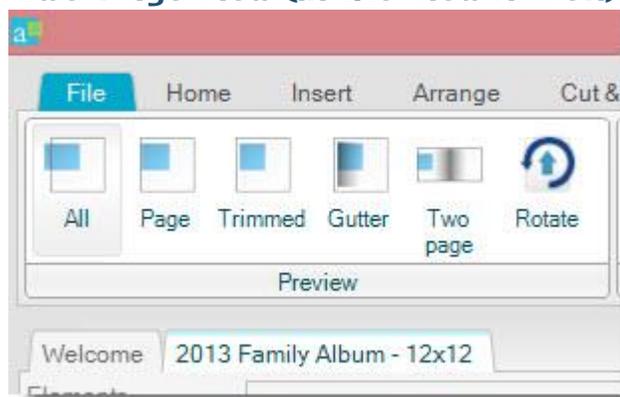
15. Sample Text (from the Format Text ribbon)



This is another really helpful tool. I don't know about you, but when I start a book project, I usually change the text font on the predesigned pages I use. But it is a huge pain to go in and select and change the text on each page in the project.

The **Sample Text** tool lets you sample the text style (font, size and color) in one text box, and then use the **Apply** tool (grayed out above) to apply the same settings to other text boxes. It's like a magic wand ... just click once on the text box to select it and click **Apply** and the text will instantly match the text from the box that was sampled. This is the simplest way to carry the same text style throughout your project as you go.

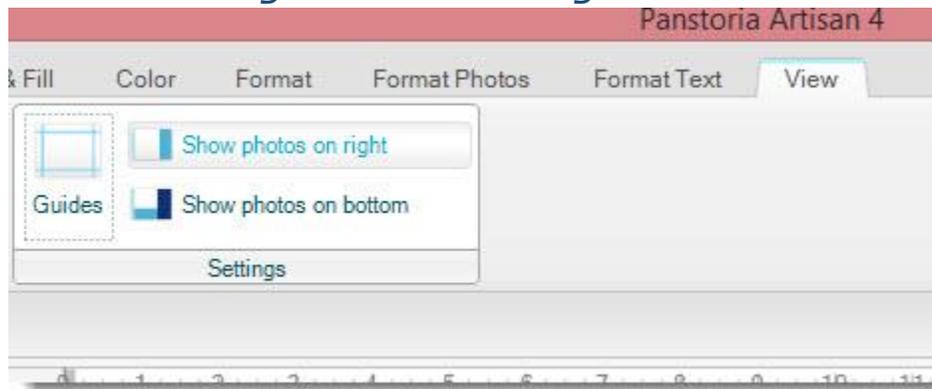
16. Two-Page View (in the View ribbon)



Any time I am working on a book project, I start by going to the View ribbon and selecting **Two page**. There will be a drop down box when you do this asking whether you want to view it with **Lay flat pages** or **Standard pages**. Really, this is going to mean the difference between having a gutter on your page (which you can also view by selecting **Gutter** in the View tab) or not having a gutter.

However you choose to work on your project, I definitely advise you to check out two page view before you order.

17. Placement of your Photo Gallery (in the View ribbon)

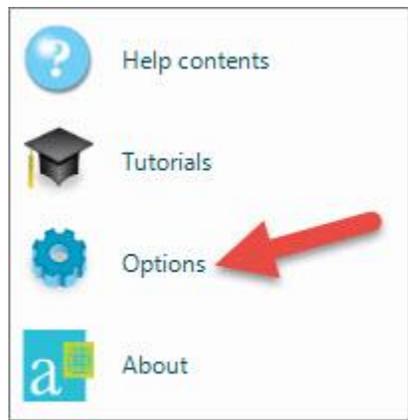


This is something that not all of us think about. Depending on how you prefer to look at your photos while you're working, you can choose to either have them in their own tab on the right hand side (between the Page tab and the Content tab), or you can choose to have the Photo Gallery displayed along the bottom of the screen. That option keeps it handy while you're working, but does decrease the amount of workspace you have available on screen for your pages. It's a personal preference thing, so you may want to try both settings to see what works for you.

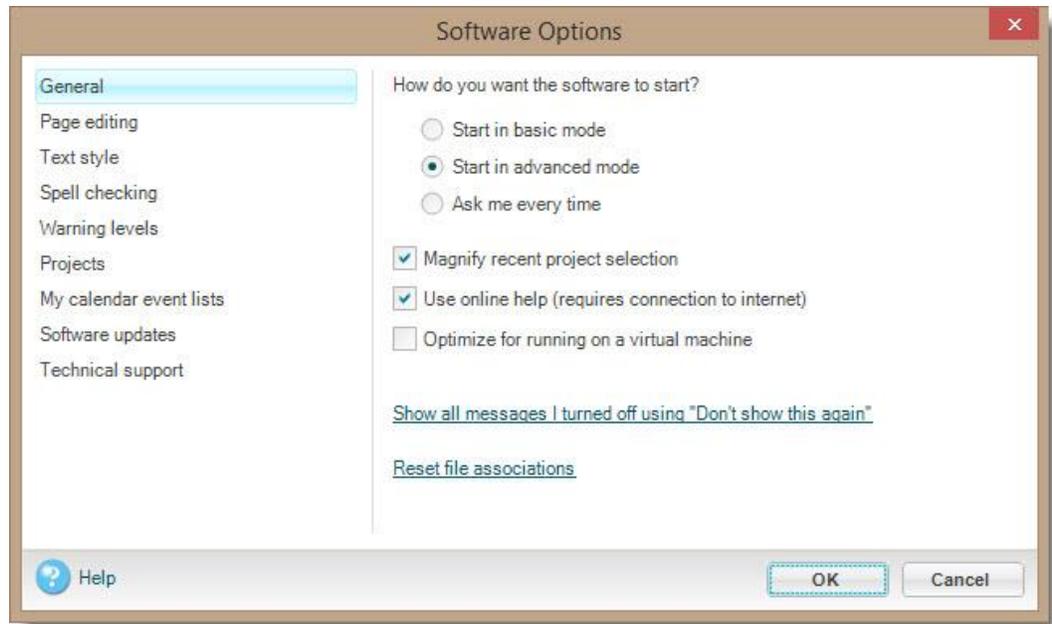
18. Tweak Your Personal Options

This is the part of the software that most of us don't know about. But a few changes here can save quite a bit of time with the details later on.

Click on the question mark icon on the Welcome screen and select Options.



If you work through the different sections in the Options box, you can preset all sorts of things, such as ...



- a. Whether your software starts in Basic or Advanced mode
- b. Setting your default font for use on pages you create
- c. Even setting up your favorite dates for use on your calendars, so you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Look around in the Options for yourself and see what you can do to make the software work just a little better for you. Just don't overdo it.

If you don't know what something does, give it a try and see if it makes a difference, but don't be afraid to go back and reset things to their defaults. There usually is a pretty good reason for the default selections that are set in your software.

19. Follow Deb's Digital Tips for More!

This little cheat sheet is just the tip of the iceberg. This software has so many capabilities, and it wouldn't be possible to squeeze it all into a short report. I plan to offer quick YouTube videos, live Google Hangouts for Q&A, and more easy tips. Please take a moment to sign up for the updates at <http://debsdigitaltips.com>.

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