

PostmasterGS Stamp Album Page Generator for Scribus v1.2.1

I. Overview and Installation

1. Overview. The PostmasterGS Stamp Album Page Generator (PMGSSAPG) for Scribus is a script that's designed to automate the insertion of frames, photos, and text onto stamp album pages. The script allows the use to build a frame to display the stamp, insert a photo within the frame, and surround it with up to four text boxes of custom text. The stamp data and settings are stored in a spreadsheet.

2. System Requirements. PMGSSAPG v1.2.1 requires:

- a. **Scribus.** Designed using v1.4.5.
<http://wiki.scribus.net/canvas/Download>
- b. **OpenOffice** or **LibreOffice.** Designed using LibreOffice 4.3.5.2.
<http://www.openoffice.org/download/>
<http://www.libreoffice.org/download/libreoffice-fresh/>
- c. **NOTE:** Certain previous versions of this software required **Fiji** and **Java SE** due to the photo-straightening feature. This feature has been removed, so those programs are no longer required.
- d. **Known issues.** Previous versions of this script designed for Microsoft Publisher have supported the ability to convert photos to grayscale upon insertion. Scribus currently only supports grayscale conversion through the in-program menus. As soon as Scribus adds the ability to convert photos to grayscale via code, a new version will be released enabling that feature.



3. Installation.

- a. The installation packages consists of the following:
 - i. **PMGSSAPG_scribus_v1_2_1_batchSS.ods.** This is the OpenOffice/ LibreOffice spreadsheet for storing the stamp data and settings.
 - ii. **PMGSSAPG_scribus_v1_2_1_batch.txt.** This is the text file that stores the stamp data exported from the spreadsheet prior to its import into Scribus.
 - iii. **PMGSSAPG_scribus_v1_2_1_settings.txt.** This is the text file that stores the stamp box design settings exported from the spreadsheet prior to its import into Scribus.
 - iv. **pytSAPG_v1_2_1.py.** This is the Python script that imports the data into Scribus and builds the stamp boxes.
- b. The first three files (**i.-iii.**) must be stored in the same folder. The second can be placed anywhere.

- c. Open the Python script (**iv.**) in Notepad or similar text file editor and change the filepaths at **lines 24** and **26** to reflect the correct path to the two text files (**ii.-iii.**).
 - i. On a PC, they should be in a format such as this –
 “C:\Users\Bob\Documents\Stamps\PMGSSAPG_scribus_v1_2_settings.txt”
 - ii. On a Mac, they should be in a format such as this –
 “/Users/Bob/Documents/Stamps/PMGSSAPG_scribus_v1_2_settings.txt”

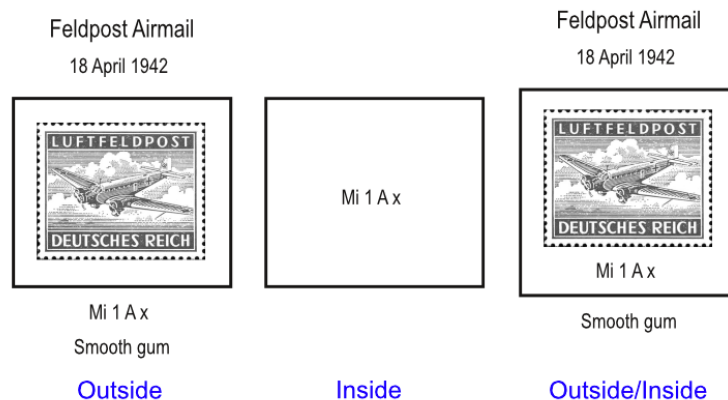
II. The Spreadsheet

1. Understanding the Spreadsheet

- a. Open the spreadsheet in OpenOffice/LibreOffice’s spreadsheet program. You’ll see four tabs:
 - i. **Settings.** This tab contains the settings that control the appearance of the resulting stamp box.
 - ii. **Fonts.** This tab contains a list of fonts installed on your computer.
 - iii. **Feldpost.** This is sample data.
 - iv. **Theresienstadt.** This is sample data.

2. Settings Tab. Below is a brief explanation of the options on the **Settings** tab.

- a. **Style.** Switch between three styles of stamp box.
 - i. **Outside.** A frame with up to four text boxes and a photo.
 - ii. **Inside.** A frame with a single text box in the center.
 - iii. **Outside/Inside.** A frame with up to three text boxes outside the frame, and a photo and single text box inside the frame.



- b. **Singles or Set.** Switch between generating boxes containing a single stamp (**Single**) or boxes for multiple stamps (**Set**).

NOTE: Single DOES NOT mean you are restricted to creating a single stamp box at a time. If you select multiple stamps on the spreadsheet, **Single** will generate an individual stamp box for each stamp. **Set** will generate a single stamp box containing all selected stamps

Vukovar Overprint



Set Orientation. When generating a **Set**, select between a **Horizontal** or **Vertical** stamp box. This selection has no effect when generating **Single** stamp boxes.

Set Internal Spacing (mm). Set the internal spacing between stamps of a **Set**.

NOTE: When generating a **Set**, the Title, Date, Catalog, and Caption can be set to **Individual** or **Group**.

When set to **Individual**, a text box will be generated for each stamp (for example, a separate Catalog for each stamp shown at right).

When set to **Group**, a single text box will be generated for the entire set (for example a single Title and Date for the entire set shown at right).

When using a **Group** setting, the text of the single text box is controlled by the first stamp selected in the spreadsheet (**Mi 6** in the example shown).

When using a **Group** setting, care should be exercised with certain combinations. For example, attempting to insert **Individual** data at Top or Bottom of a **Vertical Set** will generate overlapping boxes because **Individual** boxes are positioned relative to the individual stamps, not the box as a whole.

Vukovar Overprint

October 1944



Mi 6

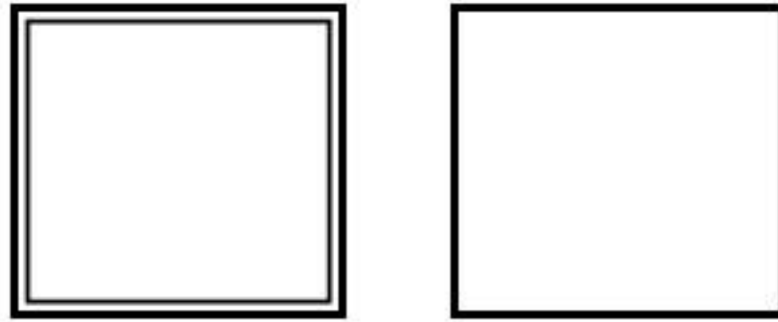
Mi 6 DD

Mi 6 K

Unlisted Variant

- c. **Frame.** This section controls the appearance of the frame into which the stamps are inserted.

- i. **Frame Style.** Controls whether the frame is outside the stamp (**External**) or hidden underneath the stamp (**Internal**). If **Internal**, the resulting frame will be 90% the size of the stamp. When using **Internal**, you are limited to generation of **Single** stamp boxes only (no **Sets**).



- ii. **Double Frame.** Allows for insertion of a double-lined frame.
- iii. **Double Frame Spacing.** Controls the spacing, in millimeters, between the inner and outer frames of a double frame.
- iv. **Outer Frame Thickness.** Controls the width, in points, of the outer frame (single and double frame).
- v. **Inner Frame Thickness.** Controls the width, in points of the inner frame (double frame only).

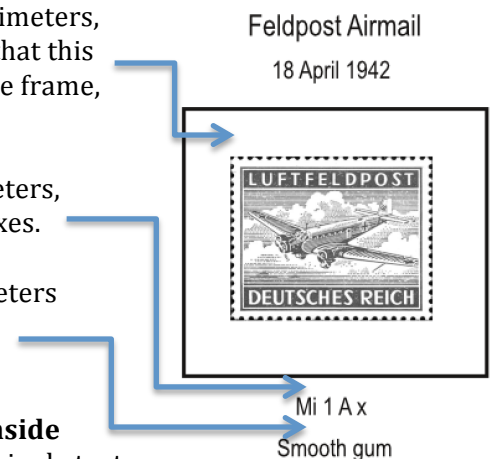
- d. **Padding (Stamp to Frame).** Sets the distance, in millimeters, between the stamp and the surrounding frame. Note that this does not control the spacing between the *photo* and the frame, but rather the *stamp itself* and the frame.

- e. **Margin (Frame to Text).** Sets the distance, in millimeters, between the outer frame and any surrounding text boxes.

- f. **Vertical Spacing.** Sets the vertical distance, in millimeters between text boxes when two or more text boxes are positioned on the same side of the frame.

- g. **Outside/Inside Spacing.** When using the **Outside/Inside** style, controls the spacing between the photo and the single text box inside the frame.

- h. **Text Boxes.** This script allows the user to insert up to four text boxes per stamp. On the **Settings** tab, these text boxes are labeled as *Title*, *Date*, *Catalog*, and *Caption*.



As the options for these four text boxes are identical, they will be discussed here as one.

NOTE: If using the **Inside** style, you are limited to a single text box inside the stamp frame. The **Catalog** text box settings control the appearance and content of the single text box. All other text boxes are disabled with the **Inside** style.

- i. **Include.** This value determines whether the text box is *on* or *off*. If a text box is *off*, any data entered in the rest of the text box's settings will be disregarded by the script.
- ii. **Percentage of Frame Width.** This value controls the width of the text box, measuring the width as a percentage of the frame width (**Single, Set** with **Group** setting) or percentage of the stamp width (**Set** with **Individual** setting).



This is a demonstration of the function of the text box's "Percentage of Frame Width" setting.

100% of frame width



This is a demonstration of the function of the text box's "Percentage of Frame Width" setting.

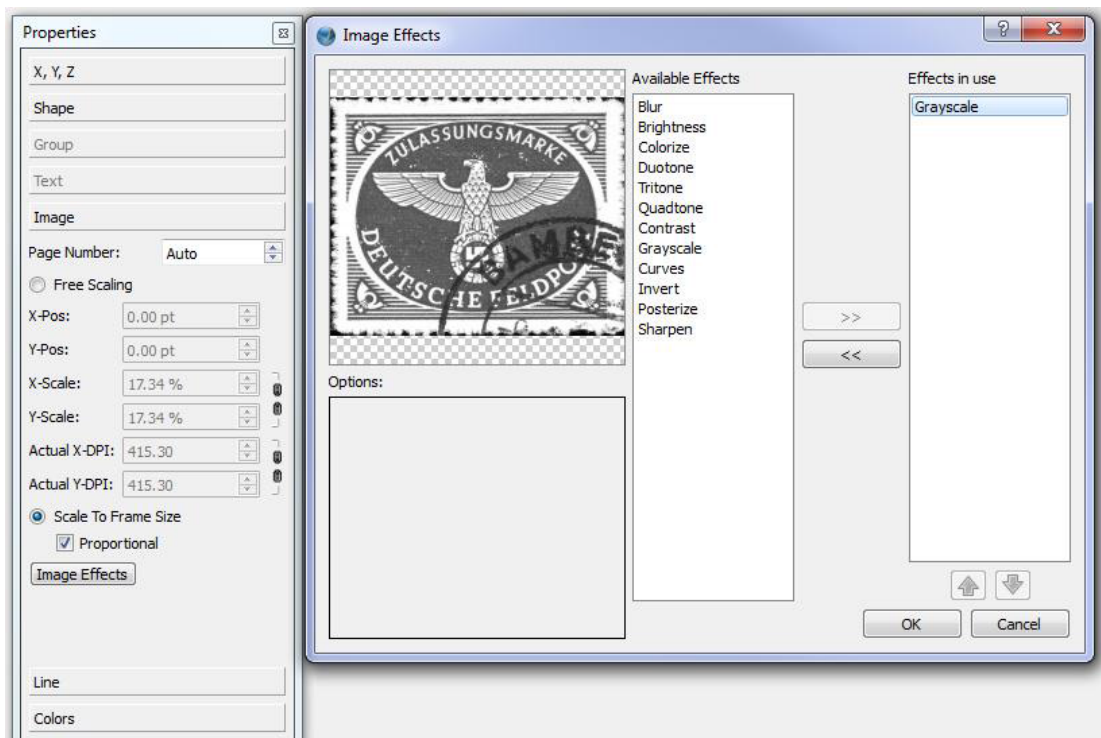
150% of frame width

- iii. **Font.** Set the font of the text box. The font list is pulled from the list of installed fonts on the **Fonts** tab.
- iv. **Font Size.** Set the font size.
- v. **Font Spacing.** Set the font spacing. 1 = single spaced, 2 = double spaced, etc.
- vi. **Text Alignment.** Set the text alignment within the text box to *left*, *center*, *right*, or *justified*.
- vii. **Global and Individual Styles.** In Scribus, it's possible to link text boxes to a particular predefined **character style**. If this is done, editing the settings of the predefined **character style** (accessed using the F3 key) changes the settings of all text boxes linked to that style. For example, if a series of text boxes is linked to a **character style** named "Title", editing the font of the **character style** "Title" changes the font of all linked text boxes.

The **Global / Individual** selection for each text box controls whether the text boxes you insert are linked to a **character style (Global)** or not (**Individual**). If a text box is inserted as **Individual**, its style will not change upon editing the master **character style**. Instead, to change the settings, they must be edited individually.

Also, when **Global** is selected, the master **character style** settings in the document are changed to reflect the settings exported from the spreadsheet. In other words, if you insert a Title text box with a *Times New Roman* font of size 12 and a **Global** setting, all Title text boxes in the document which are linked to the master Title **character style** will be changed to *Times New Roman 12*.

- viii. **Set Individual or Group.** This option determines whether, when using a **Set**, a single text box is generated (**Group**), or a text box is generated for each stamp within the set (**Individual**). See **NOTE** on page 3 of this manual for a detailed description.
- i. **Photo.** The **Photo** option allows the user to insert a photo within the stamp frame.
 - i. **Include.** Turns the photo *on* or *off*.
 - ii. **Grayscale.** Due to current limitations in Scribus, it is not yet possible to automate the conversion of a photo to grayscale. However, there is a manual workaround –
 1. Right click on the stamp box and select **Ungroup**.
 2. Click off the select stamp box to clear the selection.
 3. Right click on the photo and select **Image Effects**.
 4. Select **Grayscale** and hit the >> button.
 5. Select **OK**.



- iii. **Size Ratio.** Sets the size of the photo as a percentage of the actual size of the stamp. This allows the photo to be shrunk slightly so as to avoid being visible behind a mounted stamp.
 - j. **Layout.** These options determine where the text boxes are placed in relation to the stamp frame.
3. **Font Tab.** The **Font** tab contains a list of all fonts installed on your computer. The list should be refreshed on first use of the spreadsheet by clicking the **Refresh Fonts** icon on the **PMGS Toolbar**. This list provides the font names for the **Font** input boxes on the **Settings** tab.
4. **Sample Data Tabs.** These tabs contain sample data.
5. **Important Limitations in Using the Spreadsheet.** The spreadsheet is designed such that the user can keep data permanently in the spreadsheet, with separate tabs for different collecting areas, etc. There are a few limitations, however.
- a. **New Columns.** The user can add new columns to the spreadsheet. New columns must not be inserted between **Columns A** and **H**. When the data is exported from the spreadsheet to the text files, it is in a very specific order and format. Scribus then uses the columns to determine what data goes in what blanks. The addition or deletion of columns between **Columns A** and **H** will throw off the export and lead to unpredictable, incorrect results.
 - b. **New Worksheets.** The user can add new tabs to track other collecting areas. However, to create a new tab, the user should delete the data from a sample tab or copy an existing tab and delete the existing data, not create a new, blank tab. Again, this is to preserve the very strict formatting requirements of the export / import process.
6. **Using the Spreadsheet.** The spreadsheet has a custom toolbar at the top with four options.
- a. **Refresh Fonts.** See 3. Above.
 - b. **Reset Includes.** Resets the **Include?** On all entries to **FALSE**.
 - c. **Export.** Exports the settings and selected stamp data to the text files for import into Scribus.
 - d. **Insert Photo.** Opens a dialog box which allows the user to select a photo. Upon selection, the filepath to the photo is inserted in the active cell. This prevents the user from having to manually enter the filepath to any photos.

IV. Scribus.

1. **Open.** Open Scribus to an existing or new document.
2. **Running the Script.** Select the page on which you want the stamp boxes inserted, then select **Script, Execute Script**, and select the script file (**pytSAPG_v1_2.py**). After running the script once, it should be available under **Script, Recent Scripts**, alleviating the need to re-select the file every time.

Version History.

- v1.2.1 (20150309)** - Added the ability to set font spacing within the text boxes
- v1.2 (20150308)** - Complete rewrite of underlying code to make future expansion possible
 - Added ability to generate Internal frames
 - Minor bug fixes
- v1.1 (20150301)** - Removed Fiji/Jython integration due to compatibility issues
 - Added ability to generate boxes for Sets of stamps
 - Added ability to independently set padding of all four sides
- v1.04 (20130706)** - Added Fiji/Jython script to rotate stamp scans, crop them, and return the stamp dimensions
- v1.03 (20130622)** - Added ability to set vertical spacing between photo and interior text box when using “Outside/Inside” style boxes
- v1.02 (20130622)** - Fixed minor errors in placement of text boxes in certain combinations
 - Added ability to use “Outside/Inside” style boxes
- v1.01 (20130621)** - Fixed minor errors in placement of text boxes in certain combinations
 - Fixed bug with measurements if document was using units other than points
 - Added ability to tie text boxes to custom character styles
- v1.0 (20130619)** - Initial release