

PICASA2 DIGITAL IMAGE MANAGER PRESENTATION NOTES

Synthesis of content of a presentation by Mike Boesen
to the PC Users Group on 5 September 2006

The content below is a synthesis of content from the Powerpoint slides I showed at the presentation and my note-guided commentary. It's all a bit cryptic but could be of some value.

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PICASA2 VERSIONS

- Picasa2 is freeware from Google at <http://picasa.google.com/>
- Version 2.0 runs on 98, ME, XP, 2000.
- Version 2.1 and later versions run on XP and 2000 only (??).
- My Version 2.1 review (including tips and tricks):
<http://www.pcug.org.au/~boesen/>
- Linux version: <http://picasa.google.com/linux/>
- No Mac version
- Picasa2 Beta version 2.5 available from
http://www.majorgeeks.com/Picasa2_d4476.html
 - Only for XP and 2000

FEATURES DESIRED IN MY IMAGE MANAGER

- Easy management of many images
- Handle JPG, TIFF, BMP, and at least 1st frame of GIF and movie files
- Cope with existing location and structure of folders and files
 - Need to be able to put folders and files wherever I like
 - the image manager is then simply told to watch those locations (see Tools/Folder manager in Picasa)
- Automatic tracking when I make changes to file names, folder names, folder locations outside the image manager
- Within the file manager, change file locations and names, folder locations and names, folder structures, move files, delete files and folders, split folders
- Import images from different devices and folders into locations that I nominate to suit myself
- Find images quickly using Folder name and/or Keywords
- Keywords (and captions) as metadata:

- Imbedded in pics (not application-specific) as IPTC (International Press Telecommunications Council) fields
- Must be OK for JPG; other formats a bonus
- Easy, quick, effective editing:
- Basic fixes: crop, rotate, straighten, lighting, colour temperature, redeye, sharpen
- Original image file to be retained without loss (so it can be edited later outside Picasa in a heavy-weight editor, if required)
- Easy shell out to other applications then back in. While I don't know how they got into the Open with... list in Picasa, I am able to shell out to:
 - xPloer2 Pro
 - Microsoft Picture and Fax Viewer to view images as a slideshow
 - Microsoft Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006 editor to do heavyweight editing on occasions
- Inclusion of images in an Email, with downsizing to a useable size during creation
- Creation of ordered virtual collections ("albums" in Picasa terminology) of images to be used for other purposes
 - no duplication of images; just collections of pointers to real images
- Web albums with resizing during creation (V2.5)
- Create slideshow on CD or DVD:
 - Automatic resizing of pics
 - Captions on pics, not file names*
 - Group pics into "albums"
 - Ordering within albums
 - No sound
 - Simple transitions
 - Not fancy
- Created CD/DVD easy to run:
 - Autoexecuting
 - Self-contained - all executables on the CD
 - Slide show speed controllable
 - Suitable for all monitors

CONTEXT

- Photography is not my main focus:
- point and shoot for most images
- minimal editing will normally suffice
- occasional fine tuning using MS Digital Image Suite 2006 Editor

- Most images camera-generated JPG files
- Some images scanned from printed pics
- Printing on Canon Pixma iP4000 but not frequent

CLAIMED AS BEING NEW IN PICASA BETA VERSION 2.5

- “Album” tagging – set up any number of “virtual” albums containing collections of images from 1 or more folders
- Picasa Web Albums:
 - send such albums or folders of images or other collections of images to the Google server as “albums” so that other people can look at the albums through the www
 - 250 MB of space free; pay for more if required
 - Try these test albums I have set up:
 - <http://picasaweb.google.com/mboesen>
- Optional folder tree view (nested view of folders) in addition to the old flat view)
- Import images from external devices and folders on any internal or external drive into existing folders (not operating quite right yet); “faster” importing (whatever that means)
- Folder descriptions, location, comments can be displayed
- Improved caption editing
- Starred photo “album”
- Can easily “save” editing made in Picasa:
 - edited images are saved as new image files, implementing the specs in the INI files
 - however the unedited original image files are saved without edits in a Originals child folder that Picasa creates automatically
 - can “revert” the saves if required
- Geotagging of images:
 - can identify the location at which a picture was taken and display it automatically Google Earth
 - not operating fully

NEW TO ME BUT MAYBE WAS ALREADY IN VERSION 2.1 ??

- Generates html pages
- Displays movies with sound and vision

BUGS, LIMITATIONS AND ANNOYANCES

- No “de-noise” function. I use Neat Image for that and it is magical.
- While the Sharpen function (it’s an unsharp mask function) is usually OK, there is no way to control the parameters

- Poor printing functionality
- Thumbnails may be duplicated sometimes
- Some problems can be fixed by rebuilding Picasa database:
 - hold down Shift+Ctrl+Alt and start Picasa from the Start menu
 - be careful – rebuilding the database will DELETE ALL ALBUMS!! (but does not delete any image files and does not un-do any picture editing made within Picasa)
- Search operation may be faulty (should be Boolean AND)
- I cannot work out how to add or delete applications that are listed when I right-click a thumbnail and then click in Open With....
 - This is important because it would be nice to be able to shell out to whatever applications are required to do whatever
- Geotagging function may not be stable

MY HARDWARE

- 5 Megapixel Sony DSC F717 set to save as:
 - 2560 x 1920 pixels
 - Pics about 1.8 to 3.0 MB in JPG format
- 6 Megapixel Canon A700 set to save as:
 - 2816 x 2112 pixels
 - Pics about 2.1 to 3.8 MB in JPG format
- 2.8 GHz Pentium 4
- 1 Gb of memory
- XP Pro SP2

MY SOFTWARE

- Picasa 2.5 Beta Build 32.94 probably now available from http://www.majorgeeks.com/Picasa2_d4476.html
- xPlorer2: <http://www.zabkat.com/> and free version: <http://zabkat.com/x2lite.htm>
 - Does all the things that Windows Explorer should have done from the beginning! (e.g. dual panes; ftp connectivity; lots of other things)
- Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006 editor: <http://www.shopbot.com.au/>
 - This is a great medium-weight editor that is very easy to use.
 - I can do in 5 minutes in this editor what would take me 20 minutes in the heavy-weight editors.
- Neat Image de-noiser: <http://www.neatimage.com/>

- If you are shooting pics with a high ISO setting, or in bad light or at high zoom, or if you are doing a heavy crops you will end up with lots of noise. Some digital cameras are known to generate particularly noisy pics.
- This is a great de-noiser application. Some of the improvements that can be made with very noisy pics are stunning.
- Comes as a free and a pay version.
- Pro version is better than Noise Ninja.
- Access to Gmail (needed to create Picasa Web Albums on the Google serverspace. See <http://picasaweb.google.com>)

IPTC, XMP STUFF

- http://www.controlledvocabulary.com/imagedatabases/iptc_naa
- <http://www.iptc.org/IPTC4XMP/>