

# Organizing Your Digital Photos with Picasa

## Using Google's Free Software to Organize and Edit Digital Photos

Once you have taken your digital photos, usually the next step is to move them to your computer for storage.

Most cameras come with some sort of software to help this process, but Google's Picasa program is most likely a much better way to organize and modify your images.

Google makes Picasa available for free. The current version is version 3. It is available for PCs and for Macs.

You need to download and install Picasa from <http://picasa.google.com> to use it. When you install Picasa it first searches your computer's hard drive for photos to include in its index. This can take a while. Picasa does not move the photos on your hard drive, it just locates them. It adds a small file to each directory on your drive to help it keep track of the photos in it.

Once your photos are in Picasa's index, you can very quickly browse through them and organize them in a several different ways, and can use Picasa to search for photos meeting your criteria.

You can sort the folders containing the images according to date, or size, or how recently they were modified. Use the sorting tools in the left column.

You can select a folder and use Picasa to display a slideshow of the images in that folder. Select the folder and then click on the slideshow icon.

You can create an album with photos from many different folders. Once you create an album, you can run a slideshow, make a collage, or create a movie of just the photos in that album. You drag photos to the album, and Picasa learns that those photos should be considered part of the album.

You can add captions to individual photos. When you print or email your photos you can include the captions. Double-click on the photo in the index to add the caption to it.

You can also add "tags" to individual photos or to groups of photos. Tags let you find photos from all of your images that match the tag you enter in the search. Use the tag tool at the bottom or right-click on the photo. Each photo can have any number of tags assigned to it.

When you search through your tags, Picasa will show you the photos that match all of the tags you enter into the search box.

You can browse your photos and then double-click on one to open it in an enlarged view. From this view you can modify the image.

In the “Basic Fixes” section you can crop, straighten, retouch, and lighten and darken your photo. The adjustments don’t change your original photo; Picasa keeps track of them in a separate file.

Under “Tuning” you can adjust the highlights, shadows, and the “fill” light, and can adjust the color balance or white balance of the photo.

Under “Effects” you can give the photo a focus effect, a tint, a sepia tone, film grain, and several other effects.

In all cases you can undo what you did, even later on. Picasa isn’t changing the photo, but just keeping track of the changes you want applied.

You can create a collage of a selection of photos and then you can print your collage. There are several options for collage layout and size. Select the photos you want to include and then select the collage setting.

You can select a group of photos or an album and create a movie presentation from them. You can change the order of the images in your movie and can adjust how the movie will animate your photos. You can also upload your movie to YouTube from within Picasa if you have a YouTube account.

You can select a group of photos and email them using either Internet Explorer or Gmail. Picasa will resize them for appropriate emailing; or, you can change the setting to adjust the size that they will be sent.

If you are working on a website you can Export photos in size that are more appropriate for your website layout, and in a quality setting that makes them download quickly. Usually your web design will dictate the appropriate size (in pixels); somewhere around 20% (or Minimum) quality is a good place to start.

You can set up a Web Album within your Gmail account and upload photos to it. You can make these photos public (anyone can view them), unlisted (you would have to know the right web address to view them) or private (your viewer has to log in to view them).

When you export or print a photo you can add watermarks and include your captions.

Visit <http://picasa.google.com> to learn more about Picasa and to download a copy.

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