# Sixteen Bits November 2005

**Welcome to Sixteen Bits online**

If you would like to read off-line, **Click HERE** to download, unzip to a folder
you choose, then double click the index.htm file.
If you prefer - you can read as a PDF file. The internal links will
not work in this file which you can download **HERE**

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**The PCUG Centre will be closed from
Saturday 17th December until Monday 9th
January**

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We hope you enjoy this edition of *Sixteen Bits*. We are always on the lookout for
items for the next edition. If you have anything to contribute - please send it to
**pcug.editor@pcug.org.au.** The nominal cut-off date for submissions is the
15th of each month. All submissions gratefully received. Please send us
feedback as to what you might like to see published in your magazine.

*For more* news of *events to come* - don't forget to check the **PCUG***Calendar*
at:  **http://www.pcug.org.au/members/calendar/**

**CTL-A to Select All in current window.**

**NEXT**

# Main Monthly Meeting

There will not be a formal presentation for our December monthly meeting.

Instead, you are all invited to attend a gathering for food, drink and conversation at the PCUG Centre in Holder on Saturday 03 December, starting at 11.00 AM and flowing through till 4.00PM.

This will be an excellent opportunity to familiarise yourself with the location and facilities of the Centre and to meet some of the volunteers who keep it running.

# *From the President*

The new committee for 2006 is now well and truly in place and I find myself filling the previously vacant position of president.  We have a diverse committee made up of a mixture of "old hands" but with quite a bit of new blood.  I hope we can continue the good work done by John Saxon and his committee last year.

The next major event for the group is the Christmas Party on 3rd December (see elsewhere for details).  Come along and meet fellow members and see the Centre at Holder now that we have settled in.  The completion of modifications to our new home will be a major project for 2006.  Another major initiative will be our participation in the Microsoft Unlimited Potential scheme where we are one of 194 UP Centres Australia wide.

Good news is that we have appointed Joseph Tandl as Training Manager and should be able to again offer training courses early in 2006.  If you are interested in participating, either as a trainer or student, get in touch and we can take your needs into account when developing our program.

We will soon be implementing a poll and feedback system on the web site so keep an eye on the home page at http://www.pcug.org.au

The committee appreciates getting feedback on what members want from the group.

Finally, compliments of the season to all, and happy computing in 2006.

*Allan Mikkelsen*

# *From the editor's desk*

Better late than never.
I would prefer to have the magazine released soon after the committee meeting, when we have a good idea of what is happening next, where we go from here, and how we get there.
But this month we have had other constraints that have held us up until now.

Anyway, we have a reasonable complement of articles covering a variety of topics that should provide interest and challenges for most readers.
Prominent again this month is Mike Boesen with major input. I think there are more than 24 hours in Mike's days, unlike the rest of us.

Don't miss the end-of-year function at he PCUG Centre on Saturday 3rd of December, and remember we are giving the volunteer Centre staffers a well deserved break between 17th December and 9th January. They deserve it.

*Enjoy your computing.*

*Terry Bibo*

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# PCUG Meetings 2005/2006

The Main Monthly Meeting will be held on the first Tuesday night each month during 2005/2006. The planned dates are:

| No meeeting in January | 7 February 2006 |
|---|---|
| 7 March 2006 | 4 April 2006 |
| 2 May 2006 | 6 Jun 2006 |

The meetings will commence at 7:30 pm, and are normally held in Lecture Theatre 3, Manning Clark Centre, Australian National University, Acton.
The monthly meetings are free. Members, friends, and the public are welcome to attend. Stay for coffee, tea, biscuits and good company after the meeting!

E-mail inquiries to [mailto:pcug.mmm@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug.mmm@pcug.org.au)or phone 02-6287-2922

Terry Yan

**Earlier this year, Microsoft was pleased and excited to announce that it will be the Official Technology Partner of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.**

To celebrate their involvement with the Games and to share their excitement Microsoft will be running a competition that they would like to run in conjunction with your Unlimited Potential centre. The theme of their competition is **'Realising Potential Through Sports'**.

**The competition will:**

- Be open to your existing members and also to new members who register with your club. It will not, however, be open to general members of the public
- To enter the competition, your members will need to use their imagination and creativity to submit a multimedia presentation that is reflective of the theme 'Realising Potential Through Sports'.
- Entrants will be able to use the materials provided in the Unlimited Potential centres, to create a presentation using either MicrosoftR Photo Story 3, MicrosoftR Movie Maker or MicrosoftR Acrylic or MicrosoftR PowerPoint.

For example, this might involve creating a "photo story" of how you, your friends or family are realising potential through participation in sport. Alternatively, your entry might depict how your life is enriched by participating, watching or being a fan of sport through a digital movie. Entries must be no longer than three minutes in length and no bigger than 6MB in size.

The competition will officially open on **16 November 2005** and will close on **27 January 2006**. Entries will need to be submitted online at www.Microsoft.com/Australia/up/competition. [The link isn't working yet]

This competition will give your members a chance to show off the skills they have learnt by attending the UP centre and give them an opportunity to win a grand prize of a trip for two to Melbourne to attend the Commonwealth Games in March, 2006. The prize winners will also receive overnight hotel accommodation, two tickets to the Games and $300 spending money. Additionally, Microsoft will also be giving away 10 Xbox consoles as consolation prizes.

For more information and recent developments check out the Update Newsletter at
http://www.pcug.org.au/UPdate_Newsletter_No_3.pdf
and as a last resort contact the Office Manager at office.manager@pcug.org.au

# *Software Reviews*

## SEO Administrator

Promotional material. Optimise your website for more visibility in popular search engines.

## Xilokit

Promotional material.  View multiple windows on a virtual loop.

# Use <span style="color:red">SEO Administrator</span> to Drive More Traffic to Your Website

(SEO Administrator version 3.2 was the featured door prize at our November monthly meeting, compliments of FlamingoSoft.

I am happy to promote this product through Sixteen Bits. *Terry Bibo. Editor.*)

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**Optimize Your Website Rankings for Top Positions in Search Engine Results Pages to Drive More Visitors from Popular Search Engines**

FlamingoSoft  announces the release of version 3.2 of its flagship product SEO Administrator.

Designed for the Windows platforms, this application helps you to optimize your website for more visibility in most popular international search engines such as Google, Yahoo, MSN, AltaVista, to name a few.

Using this SEO software, you can analyze the importance of all ranking elements of your web page, update any of these elements and immediately see how this optimization affects your web page ranking.
All these operations can be done with a help of such tools as HTML Analyzer, Ranking Monitor, Link Popularity Checker, Log Analyzer, Keyword Suggestion Tool, all coming with SEO Administrator.

Polylabel.com has been using SEO Administrator to track its keyword positions on search engines for almost two years and this helped the company bring its website to top positions in popular search engines. "We rank in the top three on Google for several of our keyword phrases and SEO Administrator has been of great assistance in achieving and maintaining the high ranking that we have," says Philip Cressman, vice president of Polylabel.com. "The ability to do in-depth analysis of links, competitors and positions on several search engines at the same time makes it necessary SEO software for anyone serious about doing business on the internet."

**High ranking of your web pages is achieved through several powerful tools that are included in the SEO Administrator package.**

- "HTML Analyzer"

This tool is SEO software for analyzing the HTML page content. It provides a full report on the weight and density of keywords and phrases on the web pages. This tool can be used in two ways. First of all, when creating your web pages, you can analyze the content of your website and make it more optimized for search engines. Secondly, you can scrutinize the websites of your competitors, find useful keywords and phrases and consequently optimize your website.

- "Ranking Monitor"

This productive SEO tool uses your website keywords to obtain the ranking position of your website from a wide range of search engines. The list of over 30 major search engines includes Google, Yahoo, MSN, AltaVista, AllTheWeb, Lycos, HotBot and these are a few to name.

- "Link Popularity Checker"

The number of inbound links to your website is a major factor in successful search engine promotion and this SEO tool analyzes these links. With Link Popularity Checker in place, you can study the dynamics of new and out-dated links.

- "Log Analyzer"

This tool's line of duty is to analyze your website log-files. It provides all-round reports of resource usage, numbers of visitors, search queries that have been used to find your website, references on your web project, visitors' countries and other optimization critical information.

- "Keyword Suggestion Tool"

Choosing the right keywords and phrases to target clients to your web pages is extremely important to help people find your website. This SEO tool uses a variety of sources to suggest keywords relevant to each web page.

Other programs, included into the SEO Administrator package, are Site Indexation Tool, Page Rank Analyzer, Google Data Centers and Snippets Viewer.

***SEO Administrator Benefits at a Glance***:

- It brings more visitors. Top positions in search engines results pages make your website more visible to potential customers. This attracts more visitors and improves your sales.
- It is powerful but simple. Professionals and beginners alike have successfully used SEO Administrator to enhance their websites and have found it simple and intuitive.
- It leaves your competitors behind. You can use this SEO tool to compare your website against your competitor and optimize your rankings to stay ahead in search engines.

*Pricing and Availability*:
SEO Administrator runs under Windows 95/98/NT/2000/2003/XP and distributed as a Standard edition, $70.00, a Professional edition, $100, and an Expert edition, $150. Additional information on the package content is available from the following link: http://www.seoadministrator.com/price.html. Registered customers are entitled to free updates and technical support.
Product page link:http://www.seoadministrator.com
Download link: http://www.seoadministrator.com/seoadministrator.exe(10.5 Mb)
E-mail: press@seoadministrator.com
Company website: http://www.seoadministrator.com

# For Immediate Release

# Xilokit Releases Deskloops 1.3 for accelerated navigation in the PC environment

**Windows organization software dramatically increases screen real estate while enhancing user orientation in the loaded PC environment**

New York City, NY - November 11, 2005 - Xilokit today announced the release of Deskloops 1.3, the company's first product leveraging its innovation. Xilokit's patent pending Loop Environment Technology (LET) adds a layer to a PC's physical display, on which all open windows are available to a user simultaneously being placed over a virtual loop. The software is available free of charge.

Deskloops enables a user to arrange all windows into a virtual loop, which can be scrolled, viewed in thumbnail version, saved and even e-mailed to others.  For the growing number of PC users who need to open multiple windows and applications, Deskloops increases screen real estate, eliminates window clutter, and gives users a simple tool for desktop content navigation and organization.

**A more friendly user interface**
"The windows user interface has hardly changed in a decade," said Xilokit VP R&D Gil Lederman. " But now that users are working with multiple windows and applications and surfing several websites at once for research, they are finding the old tools insufficient for handling their overloaded screen. The more windows you open, the harder it is to locate what you want."

Indeed, the Windows Task Bar was designed to handle only a few open windows at once. More than that and windows become difficult to locate as each new one opens on top of the previous one. "Anyone trying to work with multiple applications spends too much time trying to locate the content they need," continued Lederman. "Xilokit Deskloops eliminates this bottleneck to productivity and presents a much more intuitive way of organizing and working with windows."

**More Products Planned**
Deskloops is the first offering from Xilokit, which is planning to roll out a suite of software products that enhance the user productivity by improving PC environment, as well as vertical market applications and enterprise content solutions.

**Availability**
Xilokit Deskloops runs on Windows XP and is available as a download free of charge by visiting
http://www.deskloops.com.

**About Xilokit LLC**
Xilokit is a New York City based software company, focused on improving the user productivity by increasing orientation for multi application working environment. Xilokit's patent pending Loop Environment Technology (LET) adds a layer to a computer's physical display, on which all open windows are organized into a virtual loop for easy and fast navigation. Xilokit Deskloops is the first product to leverage LET and create a new way for users to interact with their windows environment.

Nov. 11, 2005
Contact: David Jenness Company: Xilokit LLC E-Mail: david.jenness@xilokit.com

# Freeware discussion

## Free Computer Protection Programs

If you are connected to the Internet it is essential to have virus protection etc. Protection from various types of malware is summarised below. The more common free programs are listed, however there are a number of other free programs available. Most sites also have a Professional version (with more features) but the free version is all that most home users require. Links to the free versions are sometimes hard to find so (as at November 05) they are indicated below.

ANTI-VIRUS – prevents viruses from infecting your computer. - ESSENTIAL
Avast:          www.avast.com
This program runs in the background and updates automatically.

FIREWALL – monitors incoming and outgoing traffic. - ESSENTIAL
ZoneAlarm:  www.zonelabs.com
This program runs in the background. Click "Preferences" and click "Check for product updates ? Automatically".

EMAIL MONITOR – you can view mail and delete spam, viruses etc before downloading it to your computer.
MailWasher:  www.mailwasher.net
Run this program before receiving mail.

ANTI-SPYWARE – searches your computer for malicious programs.
Spybot - Search & Destroy:  www.safer-networking.org
Enable Spybot resident – click on Tools > Resident
It is necessary to download updates and run the program regularly.

ANTI-ADWARE – searches your computer for malicious programs.
Ad-Aware:  www.lavasoft.de

ANTI-TROJANS – searches your computer for Trojans, which can send back information on your usage to external hackers.
a-squared:  www.emsisoft.com
a2 Free > Download a-squared free now
It is necessary to download updates and run the program regularly.

WINDOWS PATCHES – Microsoft's update service to overcome problems in their software.
Microsoft:  windowsupdate.microsoft.com
Set it to notify you when new updates are available

Barrie Shepherd

## Content Advisor Settings

I have been faced with this problem before - someone has set the IE content advisor settings, so that they are constantly getting asked to allow or disallow access - but they can't change it because they have forgotten the Supervisor password used.

**How to reset (remove) Content Advisor settings**

The Content Advisor program was originally designed by the Internet Content Rating Association and others, but has for some years been an integral part of Internet Explorer. Many people have found that they do not want this kind of censorship, or that the program has behaved in very peculiar ways. Simple instructions for removing the program were available for earlier versions of Windows, but for Windows 2000 and Windows XP users were advised to contact Microsoft Support. Paul Kaufmann, one of our members, has done that, and received instructions from Microsoft Australia and New Zealand Technical Support, which he found to work perfectly. The instructions read as follows:

1. Click on Start then Run and type in "Explorer" (without the quotation marks) and click OK. Click on the View menu and then Folder Options. Click the Select Show All Files and then click OK. Close Windows Explorer.
2. Click on Start, Find and then File or Folders. In the Named field, type "ratings.pol" (without the quotation marks) and change the Look In field to C:. Click on Find Now.
3. Right-click on ratings.pol and choose Rename. Change the name of the file to "ratings.old" (without the quotation marks). Repeat this step for each ratings.pol file found.
4. A registry modification must now be completed. The registry is an important area of a computer, so it needs to be backed up before any changes are made to it. Click on Start and then Run, and type in "regedit" (without the quotation marks). Click OK.
5. Click on the registry menu and then Export Registry File. Change "Save In" to "Local Disk (C:)", then double-click on the System folder.
6. In "File Name" type in "regbackup" (without the quotation marks), and change the Export Range to ALL. Click on Save.
7. Locate the following registry key by expanding the appropriate branches:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE/software/Microsoft/Windows/Current Version/Policies/Ratings

8. Right-click on the Ratings folder in the left pane and choose Delete. Hit Yes to confirm.
9. Restart your computer.

From: John Saxon: Sun, 9 Oct 2005

# Freeware

The two applications below were mentioned in the Freeware Newsgroup on 9 November 2005 by Michael LaPlante:

"This program has been mentioned here before, but it was recently updated. Advanced Diary from CSoftLab at:
http://www.csoftlab.com/

"I've been playing around with it for a few days and am impressed.

"Like both these programs, it uses an Explorer-like hierarchy to organize notes. What's unique though is you can switch back and forth between calendar view and normal notes view. In calendar view, only those notes entered on a particular date appear under their respective sections. In normal view, all notes appear.
"Like Keynote, you can work with RFT text formatting. Unlike Keynote, you can add tables to your notes.

"What usually kills these things for me is the search facilities, which typically will only search the current note. Like Keynote, this will identify all nodes that contain your search terms allowing you to jump immediately to the one that looks most likely. (Unfortunately, no options for AND / OR searches like Keynote.)

"Like both TP and Keynote, you can insert hyperlinks to external files, sites, etc as well as link to other nodes in the database. Although it only works with one database, you use the backup and restore facility to create multiple databases.

"Nice export facilities too. Exports to text or RTF as well as HTML though you have to use the print option(!) to export to HTML." 2nd program: Net Picker from www.netpicker.net

"This one is more useful for archival purposes. It's designed to store information copied from your browser. Works best with IE, but I've been using with Firefox. Information from IE.

"Each 'article' is stored as an individual HTML file in its Collection folder. The program essentially acts as a "wrapper" allowing you to organize the various articles in folders a la Keynote or Treepad.

"You can edit the articles as the program itself has some limited editing capabilities. The program can even be used as a standalone editor in either text or wysiwyg mode for simple tasks. (It does everything I want except add tables. Tables can only be done in text mode.) It can produce an index html file making it possible to use it to design relatively simple websites.

"It has a nice search feature. Search for a word, and it will search through all articles and produce a list of all articles containing that word. Click on the article name, and it will jump immediately to that article with all instances of the search word highlighted.
"It is freeware, though there are references to paying for it. I guess it was shareware at some point, and the developers haven't gotten around to updating all the documentation."

Cheers all, Michael

# Digital SIG

**Useful links to Paint Shop Pro v.9**

Preparing your Photographs for the Web - a beginner's guide
**http://www.eleanorstravels.com/PSPv9/index.htm**

And another about the auto-fix script:

**http://www.eleanorstravels.com/pspv8.htm**

**Ronald Vick**

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**ReaSoft Development releases ReaConverter 4.0**

Image Converter Supports Over 340 Image Formats, Processes RAW Files From Any Digital Camera.

ReaConverter 4.0 is a professional image converter for designers, digital artists and photographers.  The program supports virtually every known image file format, popular and obscure, a total of over 340 different kinds of image files.  In addition to that, the program supports RAW files for all popular digital camera brands (CRW, CR2, DNG, DCR, NEF, RAW, RAF, X3F, ORF, SRF, MRW, BAY, PEF) and works with PostScript based files (PDF, EPS, PS, AI).

Besides converting images from one format to another, ReaConverter is capable of performing batch image editing operations - rotating or resizing images, adjusting brightness or contrast, applying various filters, stamping images with a watermark to multiple images with one button click.

ReaConverter Professional 4.0 also imports EXIF, IPTC and alpha-channel data, a very valuable feature that few image processing applications offer. Plus, the program offers several unique features, such as multitask conversion option and automatic file type detection, meaning that ReaConverter Pro recognizes a GIF file with a .BMP extension as a GIF file, not a bitmap image.

ReaConverter 4.0 can also be used to create thumbnail images as well as compress them (JPEG and LZW compression options) without compromising picture quality. Despite a number of features, the program is quite simple and very well organized, with a newly redesigned intuitive and ergonomic interface.

ReaConverter 4.0 is available for free download and evaluation at http://www.reasoft.com.  The price of registering the program is 49.95 US Dollars.  ReaConverter Professional 4.0 is available for 99 US Dollars.

If you have any questions, would like to request editor's copy, want to inquire about special prices for volume buyers/software resellers, have a business proposal or interested in publishing/distributing ReaConverter, please contact Alexander V. Korostelev at press@reasoft.com

System Requirements: - Windows (tm) OS - Pentium compatible PC

Company Website: http://www.reasoft.com/

Screenshots: http://www.reaconverter.com/screens.html

Download: http://www.reaconverter.com/download.html

Buy Link: http://www.reaconverter.com/buynow.html

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**Plugin for Paint Shop Pro "Vizros Plug-ins is now FREE!!!.**

Check it out **http://www.vizros.com**

You get the registration code by clicking the link that says "Vizros is  free!" on the upper left side of the page.

Features

- Vizros Plug-ins make real 3D page wrapping effect. All images generated are not only high quality and realistic, they are mathematically correct.
- In Vizros Plug-ins. the whole image is divided into different "pages".  Each page has its own properties, such as "Mapping mode", "Transparency",  "Shading", "Position", "Anti-alias", etc. These properties can be set separately for each individual page.
- Traditional filter works with only one image. With Vizros Plug-ins,  user can load additional images from the plug-in interface directly and map them to different pages.
- Vizros Plug-ins work on any selection, not just a rectangular one, as the other plug-ins do.
- Vizros Plug-ins support parameters loading and saving. User can save current setting parameters to a file and re-load it later.
- The user interface is intuitive and you can preview the effect  immediately.
- User can use Vizros Plug-ins to make animations.

System requirements

1. Microsoft Windows 95/98/NT/ME/2000/XP.
2. Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro, or other host installed.

Wendy
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Wendy Madison
C-Tech Volunteer

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# MODIFYING A CADDY AND CRADLE FOR A HARD DRIVE

Author: Mike Boesen

Last updated: 15 October 2005

## 1. Background

I wrote an article recently  about backup strategies. It appeared in the October 2005 issue of the Canberra PC Users Group's "Sixteen Bits" magazine. I have posted an updated version of the article here. In the article I referred to the merits of using a hard drive in a removable caddy as a backup drive. The "caddy" is a removable container in which a  hard drive is kept. The caddy slides into a "cradle" (or "rack") that is mounted permanently in one of the CD or DVD drive bays in the PC.  The caddy containing the hard drive can be completely removed from the cradle. This setup is also referred to as a "mobile rack" but this is a misnomer - what is mobile is the caddy. The rack is fixed in place and is not mobile.

Some caddies are available for hard drives with serial interfaces. However, most caddies are for hard drives with parallel interfaces. This article assumes that if you get a caddy it will be for a hard drive with a parallel interface.

Power is supplied to the back end of the cradle inside the PC's case, and the cradle is connected to the parallel IDE/ATA interface of the PC. When the caddy is fully inserted, a Centronics-style socket on the outside rear of the caddy mates with a Centronics-style plug on the inside rear of the cradle. This mating pair provides a 5v (red) and 12 V (yellow) power line and a pair of ground lines (black) to the hard drive plus  39 IDE/ATA interface lines. If your PC's motherboard has a parallel UATA (Ultra ATA) interface, the cable from the motherboard to the rear of the cradle will be a flat 80-wire cable going to a 39-pin socket (looks like a 40-pin socket but one pin is absent). If it is not UATA, it will have either a flat 80-wire cable OR a 40-wire cable going to the 39-pin socket. (An 80-wire cable will work fine with a non-Ultra ATA interface because all the extra 40 wires in the 80-wire cable are simply ground wires designed to eliminate "cross-talk" between the data wires.)

I have been using such caddies for about 8 months and have found that the system is very effective in the context of  creating clones or compressed images of my master drive, for these reasons:

- The speed of data transfer is as fast as data transfer from one internal drive to another internal drive (about twice the speed of data transfer for the same type of drive in a USB 2.0 "High Speed" rated external enclosure).
- The caddy can be removed and stored in a secure location or off-site.
- The drive in a removed caddy is totally isolated from the PC and hence can not be corrupted by malware.
- The caddy can be inserted if required into another PC if it has a matching cradle.
- The cradle and caddy comes as an inexpensive set about $25 (AUS) for the set.

If you decide to implement a cradle and caddy arrangement, there are three matters that require some thought:

- Effectiveness of the air flow through the caddy to ensure that the hard drive does not overheat.
- Noise associated with the fan in the cradle.
- Improving the mating of the caddy and the cradle.

## 2.  Effectiveness of air flow through the caddy

To ensure that there is a cooling airflow over the hard drive inside a caddy, it or the cradle should have at least one fan.  This is particularly important for modern, fast (7,200 rpm) drives because they

get very warm in enclosed spaces.

Such fans have to be small - about 40 mm diameter and small fans have a low air shifting ability. Therefore some caddy setups have three such small fans - two in the cradle and one in the caddy. I don't like those at all because of the noise.  In any event, I think that one fan in the cradle is quite sufficient, providing that:

- The PC case has an adequate hot air exhaust system. Ideally this should be accomplished through a good exhaust case fan as a supplement to the fan in the power supply unit. PCs that have a lot of heat-producing components may also require a good intake case fan which sucks air into the PC's innards.

- The structure of the cradle and caddy is such that air is forced to flow from the outside the front of the PC case, into the front of the caddy, across the drive and out the back of the cradle into the PCs case's innards. Some caddy units are not designed properly to ensure that happens. In one version I have seen, there are large air gaps between the caddy and the back of the cradle, so that all the fan was doing is circulating air around the fan and not drawing air across the hard drive.

I have found that "Laser" brand caddies are very well designed in terms of maximizing the effectiveness of airflow. When fully inserted, the cradle butts up flush against the back of the cradle, and the air can only be sucked in through the front of the caddy, across the drive, and then out the rear of the cradle.

So I suggest that if you buy a caddy/cradle setup you should have a good look at its design from this point of view.

## 2. Fan noise

Because the fan/s in a caddy have to be small - no greater than 40 mm in diameter - it/they add to the PC's noise emissions somewhat, especially if the PC is on the desk close to your ear. So the fewer the fans, the quieter is the PC.

The Laser brand caddy setup has one 40 mm fan mounted in the back of the cradle. I monitor the temperature of my drives using a nice little freeware utility called HD Health. I have found that the single fan Laser rig keeps the temperature of my 7,200 rpm 250 Gb drive mounted in the caddy at about the same as that of the 120 Gb 7,200 rpm drive mounted inside the PC case. This is the reason for my view that providing that the design of a caddy and cradle is effective in terms of air flow, one fan is quite sufficient.

In all the caddy/cradle types I have seen (including the Laser brand), the fan (or fans) are running all the time, irrespective of whether or not the caddy is inserted. This is doubly annoying, because (a) if there is no caddy inserted, there is no need for the fan to be running at all and adding noise, and (b) there is unnecessary wear on the fan, and that will shorten its service life.

To avoid  unnecessary noise and wear, I have mounted a microswitch in my Laser cradles. This switch acts in a way that if there is a caddy fully inserted, the switch is closed and current is supplied to the fan. When the caddy is extracted more than about 5 mm the switch is off and no current goes to the fan.  Hence, the only time there is any fan noise at all is when the caddy is pushed in all the way. The switch I used is is a sub-miniature microswitch (Jaycar SM1036 costing $3.30. Go to Jaycar and search for microswitch).

The photos below show how the switch is mounted. The way I did this mod is as follows:

Cut one of the insulated wires in the pair of wires that runs to the fan at the back of the cradle (red or black - either is OK)

- Solder a 150 mm length of insulated wire onto the middle lug on the microswitch.

- Solder another 150 mm length of insulated wire onto the lug on the micro switch that is closest to the pivot point for the flat switch lever (at the end of the body that does NOT have the switch lever overhanging it).

- Using a suitable adhesive, mount the microswitch onto the body of the cradle, so that the lever will be in the closed position (i.e. the lever is flattened onto or almost onto the body of the switch) when the caddy is fully inserted.  This means that the switch will be open when the caddy is withdrawn about 3 to 5 mm.  Before I mounted the switch I bent the end of the flat switch lever down so that it would not foul the side of the caddy.  I have explained my adhesive approach in Appendix 1.





- Pull the two wires through the space between the 50-pin plug at the back of the cradle and the rear face of the cradle, emerging close to the fan

- Connect one of the emerged wires to one of the cut ends referred to in step 1, and the other emerged wire to the other cut end. The switch is then in series with the fan.



- Before mounting the cradle in your PC, test it: Turn off your PC.  Plug in a 4-wire power lead from the PC's power supply unit into the matching plug on the rear of the cradle. Turn on your PC. Make sure that the fan is off when there is no caddy in the cradle, or when a caddy is in the cradle but not fully inserted, and that it is on when the caddy is fully inserted.  Turn the PC off. Remove the power lead.

- If all is well, mount the cradle in your PC.  This involves sliding the cradle into a CD/DVD bay, securing it with screws on BOTH sides so that there is no movement on either side when the front is pushed, attaching the 80-wire UATA cable (or the 40-wire ATA/IDE cable in older PCs) to the rear of the cradle and attaching a 4-wire power lead from the PC's power supply unit.   After the cradle is mounted, check to make sure the fan is turning when an empty caddy is inserted all the way.   Also check to make sure that the 4-wire power lead is firmly inserted and that the light on the caddy does not flicker on and off when the power plug or power cables are wiggled gently.

## 3.  Improving the mating of the caddy and the cradle

On one caddy system of mine I noted that on some occasions I was not getting reliable transfer of data and the hard drive operated slowly and erratically.  I have had a report of a similar problem from at least one other user of caddies.  The problem may be caused by inadequate mating of the big 50-land plug at the outside rear of the caddy with the big 50-land socket at the inside rear of the cradle.  With my problem caddy, it seemed to slip into the cradle with very little insertion force being applied and I became concerned that caddy and cradle contacts were unreliable.

After I fine tuned the caddy's socket in the way described below, my problems vanished and have not recurred in the subsequent six months of frequent use of caddies.

The Laser system has a 50-land Centronics style socket at the rear of the caddy and that mates with a 50-land Centronics style plug at the rear of the cradle.  My preference is for the caddy's socket to mate with the cradle's plug only after a bit of pressure plus a nice "thunk" indicating that the mating has been effected and all the lands (flat gold-plated springy thingies) in the plug and socket are in firm contact.  If your caddy already has to have such pressure exerted to get the caddy fully inserted, then I'd leave it alone unless you are getting unreliable data transfer.  However, if the caddy slides in with very little resistance, I'd do the following fine tuning.

For the sockets on all my (3) caddies, I have raised the arching of all the lands very slightly, by only about 0.75 mm.  The high-tech instrument I used to do that is a number 9 darning needle carefully inserted under each land in turn.



If you do the fine tuning, **do not lever a land up too much**.  If you do, the pointy end of the land closest to you will pop up out of its bed.  However, if that happens, it is easy to recover the situation:

1. Using a small flat-ended screwdriver or something similar, push the end of the land that is popped up back towards the inside of the socket very gently, until it pops back into its bed.
2. When the land is back in its bed, it will probably be bent up too far - more than 0.75 mm.  So insert a VERY small needle into the very small rectangular hole in front of the land's bed, and press the bent up part of the land down onto the small needle so that it becomes less arched and has the right amount of elevation (curved about .75 mm above the plastic inside face of the socket).

This may sound complicated, but it only takes about 5 minutes to do all 50 lands in the caddy's socket.

If you do that fine tuning, when you insert the caddy into the cradle, you will find it now meets with more resistance at the point when the caddy is almost fully inserted (all but about 5 mm to go).  The ideal resistance is one that:

- requires you to make the caddy go in the last 5 mm only by pushing firmly with your thumbs on both sides of the caddy,
- but with that pressure, it DOES go in all the way and stays in.

If the caddy is a bit tight, it will slacken over time.  A little bit of WD40 or other lubricant that is suitable for electrical switches will help a caddy that is a tad tight to fit in properly.

The lands in the cradle do NOT need to be touched.

# 4. Conclusions

If you get a caddy/cradle set:

- Make sure the airflow induced by the fan/s will be effective.
- Providing that the airflow will be effective, get a set that has a single fan.
- If the fan noise worries you at all, or you are concerned about wear and tear on the fan, consider installing a microswitch.
- If the caddy socket mates too easily with the cradle plug, or if you are getting unreliable data transfer, try raising the lands on the 50-land socket on the outside rear of the caddy.

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**Appendix 1 - My way of fixing the microswitch in place**

I attached my microswitch using a very stiff mixture of two-part epoxy resin (West Systems epoxy) and a microfibre-silica thickener.  Technical stuff, but those were the things I had on hand.  Instead of this stuff, you can use any 2-part epoxy (e.g. Araldite, Bote Cote) and any thickener.  A spoonful of VERY fine sifted sawdust is OK as a thickener.  You can ask your friendly chop saw operator at your local hardware shop for a cup of sawdust - take it home and sift it, keeping only the very finest particles.  Mix enough fines with 2-part epoxy to make a VERY stiff consistency that will not slump.

Place a bed of thickened epoxy into the cradle and sit the switch on top with the spring lever pointing towards the 50-pin plug.

Put a tad of epoxy/thickener mix in the two holes through the body of the switch.  Stick two shortened round-head nails or short lengths of wire through the holes.  Then lay the switch onto the bed of epoxy/thickener, with the nails or wire pushed into the bed.

Slurp a little epoxy/thickener over the nail heads for good measure. The nails or wire will guarantee that the switch is kept firmly in place when the epoxy is set.

The position of the switch should be such that when the caddy is fully inserted, the switch will be in the closed position, but the caddy is not prevented from being fully inserted so that it touches the rear of the cradle.

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# UPDATED REVIEW OF PICASA2
# PICTURE ORGANIZER VERSION 2.1

Author:  Mike Boesen

Last updated: 9 November 2005

**Contents**

## 1.  Introduction

A copy of this article is on my web site.  It could be worthwhile occasionally checking to see if it is more up to date than this article.

Picasa2 ("P2" hereinafter) is a freeware application from Google.  You can download it from here.  The version I am now using is 2.1.0 (build 27.60.0).

This article is a consolidation and update of the content in an article that I originally wrote for the July 2005 issue of the Canberra PC Users Group's magazine "Sixteen Bits" and a couple of subsequent articles.  In the first article I reviewed the first release version of P2.  Most of the contents of this article is still applicable to the first release;  all of it is applicable to the latest (version 2.1) release.

While the first release of P2 was designed to work with Windows 98, Me, 2000 and XP, the Google web site states that the latest release (version 2.1) only works with Windows 2000 and XP.  There must be an error in the Version 2.1 Help/About screen because it indicates suitability for all four operating systems.  The inapplicability to 98 and Me is most unfortunate.

However, for the fortunate folk that have Windows 2000 or XP systems, version 2.1 is now available.  However, I must say that I can't see very much difference at all between the original release and version 2.1.  I have noted that the bug in the delete keywords function has been fixed.

The functionality of P2 is summarized on this Google web page.  The functionality that I find particularly useful includes:

- Organizing and managing a collection of digital camera files and other digital files.
- Finding image and movie type files.
- Making quick fixes to poor quality pictures.
- Preparing a gift CD containing a collection of digital photographs I want to sent to friends.

I first used P2 in preparing some CDs containing a selection of digital photos in JPG format which I wanted to send to some friends overseas. The reason I wanted a gift CD is that I did not want to assume that the recipients could download them from a Web site.  I also did not want to make any

assumptions about download speed and quota.  However, I felt it safe to assume that they could play a CD on their PC at no cost to them.

## 2.  Attributes that I wanted in my image management application

At the time I first started to use P2, I was looking for an application that had these attributes:

- Functionality for managing a growing collection of picture files on my hard drive.

- Functionality to do quick and effective editing of my pictures. The types of editing I wanted to do were basic things like cropping, rotating, straightening, fill lighting, highlighting, adjusting colour temperature and sharpening. I was not after industrial strength editing, because if I wanted to get really fancy and spend a lot of time, I could do that in a dedicated editing application like Photoshop or Paintshop Pro .

- Ability to easily find and select a particular set of pictures of interest – such as those to be put on a gift CD.  I wanted this to be achieved by using keywords or folder names or captions or file names to find the target pictures, irrespective of where they were located on my hard drive.

- Ability to create "keywords" that will be encapsulated with the original source picture (the JPG file on my hard drive) as an IPTC (International Press Telecommunications Council) field, rather than being data stored in the application's database. I wanted the keywords to be portable across picture management applications and not to be only usable within P2.  For that reason, I wanted the keywords to be IPTC-compliant so that they are able to be accessed in any photo management application that reads/writes and edits IPTC fields. As with EXIF data, this means that the keywords are not application-dependent, and are able to be accessed in any photo management application that reads/writes and edits IPTC fields. P2 is one such application, as is IrfanView and Adobe Photoshop V7. This article gives an interesting account of the IPTC standard, which seems to be an evolving one.  Note that lots of photo management applications have functionality for assigning "tags" or suchlike to pictures and these tags can be used by the specific application to search for pictures that have the tags of interest. However, many applications set up the tags in a database that is specific to the application, so that a different application will probably be unable to access the tags.

- Ability to add "Captions" to be permanently encapsulated within the original source picture as an IPTC field.  As with keywords, I wanted portability of captions across applications, with them being embedded in the pictures, not in an application-specific database.

- Fast and easy assembly of the pictures in a "slide show" written to an autoexecuting CD.  I wanted this writing process to be one that would automatically resize the pictures to a small format so it would show on just about any monitor and that would allow me to set up the pictures in separate groups on the CD.

I had a look at a number of applications, including P2, Irfanview, PhotoAlbum, PhotoshopAlbum and others. I settled on P2. While it has some limitations, it works very well, achieving virtually all of my desired objectives, and it's freeware.

More recently I have been using P2 mainly because it is an application that makes organizing and managing a collection of pictures (including FINDING the pictures that I have on my PC somewhere) and making quick fixes to them very easy to achieve.

Here are the many good and the few not so good aspects, relative to each of the attributes that I have listed above.  In section 10 below I have provided links to a number of screen clips that might be of interest to you when you are reading the article.

## 3.  Managing a collection of pictures

P2 puts no constraints on where and how you put pictures and movie type files into folders and sub folders. There is no P2 folder as such; P2 simply watches folders that you tell it to "watch" or "scan" and it then displays the images that are located in those folders and allows you to operate on those images. You can do your folder and file management outside P2 if you want to, or you can use P2 functionality to do just about all the management. Changes such as additions, deletions, moves and renamings of folders and pictures made outside P2 (e.g. within Windows Explorer) are recognized by P2 in most circumstances. Therefore, in most cases you do not need to reorganize anything within P2 when you make such changes.

For the folders to be watched, P2 can be configured to display any or all of the following types of files: JPEG, JPG, TIF, TIFF, BMP, GIF, PSD, PNG, RAW and similar formats, movie formats (AVI, MPG, ASF, WMV, MOV). Movie files are played within P2 and you do not need to exit to any other player.

P2 has an unusual way of displaying folders, because the folder tree is not shown on the main viewing screen, just the folders themselves. Each folder is shown irrespective of its nesting within other folders. Initially I found this disconcerting. However I have become used to this now. Because the folders can be displayed sorted by Name or Creation date, and because words in folders' names are used in a search operation, it's extremely easy to find the folder of interest. A right-click on any folder and selection of the "Locate on disk" option will show the folder's location in Windows Explorer.

Functionality exists for hiding (and unhiding) pictures and folders, renaming and deleting folders (careful!), and for renaming, deleting, moving and copying (via "export") of files.

Pictures in each folder are shown as thumbnails of user-controlled size, with either captions or file names (but not both) underneath the thumbnail.

The order in which pictures are displayed within each folder can be changed by a drag and drop method.

The scrolling icons and the way they operate is a bit idiosyncratic and for me, not all that easy to control.

With a few exceptions, file and folder management functionality is very good. I can see some folk disliking P2's style, but I think that with a little use, most people would feel that it's fine. I am quite used to it now, and can get around it quickly and effectively without stress.

## 4. Quick and effective editing of pictures

Quick and effective simple editing of pictures can be achieved in P2. Itgroups editing functionality under "basic fixes", "tuning" and "effects". Of the functionality that is available, I found these to be effective in achieving quick fixes to badly taken pictures:

- cropping
- rotating 90 degrees left or right
- straightening (rotating by an infinitely variable amount)
- fixing redeye
- increasing fill light
- increasing highlighting
- increasing shadow
- changing colour temperature
- sharpening (using an unsharp mask technique)
- changing saturation

In fact, I found that for most straightforward adjustments that I wanted to make, I could achieve as good a result or better in P2 than I could achieve in industrial strength picture editors, and much quicker. P2 does not have functionality for working with layers, modifying histograms, de-noising, modifying specific areas within a picture, fixing blemishes, deleting spots and cracks, fudging pictures, and fiddling with separate colour channels. So for that type of heavy editing, P2 is not the application

of choice, and does not pretend to be. So the type of user that P2 will appeal to is not a person who is into heavy tweaking of pictures but rather a person who wants to make quick fixes and then to move on to the next subject of interest.

P2 maintains a full history of the editing of each picture.  This means that you can come back later and undo one or more or all changes that you made, and make additional changes.  Fixes made in P2 persist across sessions.  However, an interesting (and initially hard to grasp) feature is that editing in P2 leaves the original picture totally unchanged.  So if the file that for the image that is visible in P2 is viewed in another editor, the changes made in P2 are not incorporated.  I have been trying to find out how P2 does this and have a partial answer, which is that the editing data are kept in "picasa2.ini" files in each folder and elsewhere (but where that "elsewhere" is, is a mystery).   So if you were to uninstall P2 and delete all the Picasa2.ini files and all the other folders that are used by P2, you would lose all the editing that had been undertaken in P2.

However, a picture which has been "edited" in P2 can be "exported" (i.e. saved) as a new picture, in which all the P2 editing is applied.  Pictures saved to the CD in the slide show are new versions of the original pictures with the editing applied and if you specify, with downsized resolution.

What's the advantage of this approach? One is that after doing quick fixes in P2, you still have the original image that has not been degraded at all by applying the P2 edits.  So if you wanted to fiddle with the original file later in some industrial strength picture editor it's still there, with all its original detail – zero information will have been lost through your P2 quick fixes.

## 5.  Finding pictures

To find pictures using P2 is a dead easy and an extraordinarily fast operation.  This is of great merit to someone who has a large number of pictures, a poor memory and an aversion to writing things down or maintaining things in a catalog (like me).

When you are in the P2 main display screen (with the folder pane on the left, and thumbnails shown in panels on the right) there is a search box in the top right of the screen.  In this box you can type one or more complete or partial "words" (which can be numbers) and P2 will find and display only the pictures that contain ALL those terms.  By "contain" I mean that the complete or partial term (or terms) are in either the name of the folder in which the picture's file is located, or in the picture's file name, or included as a keyword or caption in the picture.   Keywords and captions are explained below. However, insertion of a keyword or caption as an IPTC field in a picture, enhances greatly your ability to find a picture or set of pictures located somewhere on your hard drive.

One unintended consequence of using P2 has been a simplification of my picture filing strategy.  In the past I used to create generic nested folders such as: \Family\Brendan & Kate\Cian\   and \Family\Brendan & Kate\Rachel\. Then I put pictures into those folders as I created them.  A consequence of that was that each folder would have pictures created at different times. This led me to spending a lot of time changing camera-assigned file names like "DSC01134.JPG" to "Cian Xmas party 2004.JPG".   Now when I download a batch of pictures from my camera to the PC (using the import function in P2), I simply create a new folder with the year first, plus a few words of description like: "2004 xmas party home".  Inserting the folder within a nested tree is just wasted effort.

I then use P2 to put keywords into the pictures in the folder. A lot of that can be done quickly in batch mode, so for example, all pictures in a folder get the keywords "2004", "xmas", "weetangera" and "party".  Then I would add the keyword "cian" to all pictures with Cian in them, and the keyword "brendan" to all pictures with Brendan in them, and so on.  I leave the name of picture in the camera's "DSC01134.JPG" type format, because I can find pictures easily by keyword, so why bother spending time renaming the file?  Later if I want pictures of Cian at ANY xmas at my home, I do a search in P2 by typing the words "cian" and "xmas" and "weetangera" into the search panel.   Works like a treat and is lightning fast.

In fact, the search engine looks for the search terms in the folder names, file names, keywords and captions.  So if you don't insert keywords or captions, but do use verbose folder names (e.g. "2004

xmas party home") a search can still be very productive.

Even more easy:  a search word starts being used effectively by the P2 search engine after there are 3 or more letters of the word typed in.  So you can be lazy.  For example, in most cases typing in the words "cai xma wee" would turn up the same set of pictures as would the words "cian xmas weetangera".   Searches will also include pictures in folders or files with names that contain the search terms, but the names do not have to match precisely the search terms.  For instance, if you search using the term "200" it will show all pictures in folders such as "Home at 2003 Wilson Promenade", files such as "DSC_2004.JPG", pictures with a keyword like "2005", and pictures with a caption like "Windows 2000 screen".

## 6.  IPTC keywords

In P2 one or more IPTC-compliant Keywords can be added to individual pictures or to a batch of pictures.   Multiple keywords can be added to any picture or to a batch of pictures.

The P2 keywords are IPTC-compliant, because you can see, edit, delete and add to the keywords in Irfanview and Adobe Photoshop (which also have IPTC viewing and editing functionality).  All three applications will each see each other's keywords (and Captions – see below).

Having keywords in a picture enhances your ability to find pictures that you want quickly and easily. While a search in P2 will take into account folder names and file names, because it also takes into account keywords (and captions), use of keywords will enable you to find very specific subsets of your pictures.

Keywords must be single words (of 3 or more letters), not case sensitive, and each keyword can be up to 64 characters.

In the first version of P2, there was a bug in the keyword deletion functionality. That bug has been fixed in version 2.1.

## 7.  IPTC captions

In P2, IPTC-compliant Captions can be inserted into a single picture (but not to a batch of pictures). Captions can then be displayed under the thumbnail of the picture, and they will be included under the picture when displayed in a slideshow written to a CD.

However, the editing of what has been typed in as a caption (or entered in a batch captioning job) is quite inadequate.  To change words you have entered or to correct a spelling mistake, you have to backspace to erase prior text, then retype from the point that you backspaced to.   That's very primitive and clumsy.  In the end I got into Irfanview to do caption editing – much easier.  Photoshop also does caption editing better than P2.

P2 will not add the same caption to a batch of pictures.  So I use Irfanview to do that.

## 8.  Preparing pictures for a CD slideshow

I wanted to create a gift CD containing pictures to be mailed to my friends and for the CD to have these attributes:

- Self-executing on any PC - simply insert the CD and everything required for the slideshow to run has to be on the CD.

- Because I don't know what resolution the viewers' PCs are capable of, I wanted all pictures to be resized automatically during creation of the CD to suit a 640 x 480 display.

- Opening screen in the CD's slideshow to allow the user to select from different groups of pictures.

- Pictures in a group to be all or a subset of selected pictures that are in a folder on my PC, with the order of the pictures to be displayed to be set by me.

- Viewer to be able to control the speed of the display and to pause and resume.

- Caption to be shown for each picture.

- Picture files to be included on the CD so that the user has a copy.

These are the steps that you would follow to achieve that:

1.  Select a folder containing pictures to be used.

2.  If you don't want to include all of the pictures in the folder, "hide" the ones that you don't want to be included:  select the picture or pictures to hide, right click one of them, click Hide.  (NB: Set the top menu option of "View/Hidden Pictures" to on (ticked), because you can than still see the hidden pictures as greyed out thumbnails.  If that option is not ticked, the pictures have no thumbnails visible at all and you may forget that some pictures are hidden, and wonder why they don't show as thumbnails later on!)

3.  Arrange the non-hidden pictures within the folder in the order that you want in the slideshow.  Do that by dragging the thumbnails around.

4.  Repeat steps 1 to 3 for each folder of interest.

5.  Click on any one of the folders of interest and then hit the "Gift CD" button towards the top of the Picasa main screen.

6.  In the next panel displayed towards the bottom of the Picasa screen, click the "Add More" button in panel 1.  Then select all the folders of interest

7.  In panel 1:

    - Make sure that the "Include Slideshow" button is ticked.

    - Select a Picture Size - specify one of these sizes: "original size", 640x480, 800x600 or 1600x1200.

8.  In panel 2, make sure that "Include Picasa" is ticked.

9.  Hit the "Burn Disk" button.  You can burn to an write-once CD or to a rewritable CD.  If there is stuff on the rewritable CD, Picasa will ask you if you want to erase it.

The processes after you hit the "Burn CD" button are few and trivial. Creation of an autoexecuting slideshow on CD is all done automatically and quickly.  The burning is done by Picasa, not through use of some other application.

If you want to include pictures from different folders in just a single set of "slides" on the CD (i.e. not having separate folders shown on the splash screen when the CD is run), you would need to do a bit of fiddling first. "Hold" each of the pictures that you want on the CD irrespective of their location within folders. Hit the "Export" button to copy all the "held" pictures to a temporary new folder. Then drag the pictures in the temporary folder around into the desired order and then create the CD from this single folder. Finally, clean up by deleting the temporary folder and all the copies of the pictures in it. This works OK but is not a simple solution.

Once the CD is created, it will boot as an autoexecuting CD.  The pictures are shown with a stop/pause button on each screen. The user has an option for continuous play and is able to control

the time each picture is displayed.

One irritating problem is that above each picture the name of the file is shown (white on the dark grey border).  I have not been able to find an option for NOT including the file name during creation of the CD.  For that reason, when I import a batch of pictures into P2, I then change the file names to very short and innocuous ones.  If the picture has an IPTC caption, it is also shown (below the picture; white on the dark grey border), so the viewer has a nice narrative there (e.g. "Brendan, Cian and Rachel, Xmas 2005").  If there is no caption, nothing is shown below the picture.

The type of transition effect (movement from one picture to the next one) is good. There is no facility for selecting other transition effects but that does not worry me because the result is nice and smooth. There seems to be no facility for including background music on the CD, but who needs that anyway?

The CD created contains all the required executables, so the recipient does not need to have any picture viewer on their PC.  In addition, all the pictures are sent to the CD as image files which are visible on the CD using any browser. These files are created on the fly and have all the edits and resizing applied, so they are "normal" image files. They could be loaded into any viewer or copied to hard drive, if the viewer wished to so do.

## 9.  Other functionality

There is a lot of other functionality in P2 that I have not mentioned above.  The more interesting ones are these:

- Importing from various devices (e.g. a camera, scanner, memory card), folders and drives.

- Moving and deleting files and folders.

- Renaming files and folders.  The file renaming function is rather simple and I prefer the greater functionality in Irfanview.

- Printing.  This functionality is limited.  Includes a facility for printing a contact sheet.

- Creating a magnified set of pictures from one picture, enabling a poster size picture to be printed.

- Creating an email with selected pictures attached.  The pictures are resized automatically to a size that you select in the Options/Email menu.  This is a VERY effective facility.

- Creating a web site from a selection of pictures.  This includes a LOT of functionality, turning a collection of pictures into an index.html page showing thumbnails and an expanded image for the thumbnail selected, plus all the supporting folders and images.

- A system for sharing pictures over the web.  This is called Hello.

- Backing up pictures.

- Blogging

## 10.  Screen shots

These links will take you to a number of screen shots which I have created to give you an idea about how Picasa looks.  The pictures are low resolution to cater for readers that have limited bandwidth.

- Importing screen (via Import button on main screen)
- Folder manager pop-up (in Tools/Folder Manager menu)
- Folder pane at left of main screen
- Bottom pane of main screen

- [Basic fixes](#) tabbed screen (via double-clicking a thumbnail)
- [Tuning](#) tabbed screen (via double-clicking a thumbnail)
- [Effects](#) tabbed screen (via double-clicking a thumbnail)
- [Keywords](#) pop-up (select picture or pictures then hit Ctrl+K)
- [Search](#) text input panel at top right of main screen
- [Email options](#) tabbed panel (in Tools/Options menu)
- [Print options](#) tabbed panel (in Tools/Options menu)
- [Print](#) screen (via Print button at bottom of main screen)
- [Export](#) pop-up (via Export button at bottom of main screen)
- [CD](#) options (via Gift Cd button at top of main screen)
- [CD folders](#) (via Gift Cd button at top of main screen)

## 11. Help

Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any comprehensive or organized help system for P2. This [Google site](#) has a list of frequently asked questions and links that will be of some use.

In addition, in Appendix 1, I have listed a number of usage tips for P2 users; some of the content will overlap with stuff on the Google site.

## 12. Conclusions

I have been using Picasa2 for more than six months. It is an excellent application that can be used very effectively to organize and manage digital image files, to find image files very easily, and to make easy and quick fixes to pictures. It has considerable additional functionality that may appeal to other users. It is well worth trying.

Mike Boesen

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### Appendix 1 - Picasa2 Usage Tips

In using P2, you may find some of the following suggestions and ideas useful.

1. You can assign IPTC keywords in bulk: select all the thumbnails of pictures to which you want to assign a common keyword (like "xmas") and then add the keyword (hit Ctrl+k). The keyword is then applied to ALL the selected pictures. Then select subsets that can have another common keyword, and add that keyword. Then select any picture that is to have a keyword unlike the others, and add that keyword. And so on. This does not take much time when you know how to do it.

2. To add a caption, double-click the thumbnail to get the expanded screen view of the picture, then type in the caption below the picture.

3. Adding captions in P2 is a pain, because if you make a spelling error you have to backspace to the point where you want to make the change. A better way is to use [Irfanview](#) to write and edit the captions. I have installed Irfanview and associated it with JPG and all my other image file types. This is how to use Irfanview to add or edit captions:
   - In P2, right-clicking a thumbnail or larger image pops up a context menu.
   - Click "Open file" (or "Open with ...") to open the picture in Irfanview (without exiting from P2).
   - Hit the Information icon on the Irfanview toolbar, hit the IPTC button, hit the Caption tab, then type in the caption.
   - Hit Write, OK, and exit Irfanview. You will then be back in P2.

4. In Irfanview you can also assign captions in bulk (e.g. "Xmas party at Weetangera 2004") very easily to a group of pictures. You can then then add extra endings to individual pictures' captions (e.g. a caption relating to the Turkey can then become "Xmas party at Weetangera

2004 - Turkey from the Saxon Turkey Farm").  To do the bulk adding of a caption:

- for any picture in the P2 folder do an Open file or Open with...,
- When in Irfanview, click on the thumbnails icon (multiple rectangles) on the top Irfanview tool bar.
- Highlight all the thumbnails of interest.
- Hit File/JPG lossless operations..../Set IPTC data...
- Type in the caption to be applied, hit Write, OK, and exit Irfanview.

5. When creating folders to hold pictures, make your folder names meaningful.  Include the year in your folder names.  e.g. "2004 Xmas Weetangera".  This means that in P2, the left-hand folder display pane will list your folders in Alphabetic within Chronological order, making them easy to find if you are scrolling the pane.  To show the pictures that are in the folder of interest, simply click it in the left-hand folder pane.  No pain!  Keep in mind that a Search operation in P2 will include scanning of folder names, so typing "xmas" or "2005 xmas" will display all the folders that have that in the folder name (or in a picture's caption, or in a picture's keywords, or in a picture's file name).  So the search function can get you to the folder of interest very quickly, too.

6. When I import files into P2, I don't waste time renaming them.  I leave them with the cryptic camera-assigned names (e.g. DSC01236.JPG).  Time spent typing text is better spent in adding keywords and captions as a bulk plus individualized operation.   Another benefit is that very short unobtrusive file names will not be irritatingly obvious if you burn some images to a Gift CD (note that P2 always includes the file names in the Gift CD, above the picture, plus the caption below the picture).  On the Gift CD, the information that the recipients will get most information from is the Caption, which will show nicely underneath the picture.

7. If you want to order your pictures within a folder into some meaningful sequence or groups, you can drag and drop the thumbnails around in P2.  This means that if someone gives you some additional pictures that you want to put into the same folder, the file name can be anything.  After they are in the folder, simply drag them around to get the required ordering or grouping.  The order you then have will determine the order of the slides if they are written to a Gift CD.

8. Having determined the order of pictures in a folder by dragging them around, I then do a bulk renaming of them so that (a) the names are as short and unobtrusive as possible, and (b) the order is set when I am looking at files in some other viewer (e.g. Irfanview, Windows Explorer).  For example, I could rename the pictures in a folder to something like xw01.jpg,  xw02.jpg,  etc.  For this example, xw stands for Xmas at Weetangera.  I could have named them simply 01.jpg, 02.jpg, etc, but if I am collating pictures for some other purpose (don't ask me what) I could have problems in that there might be some other file also named 01.jpg in other folders.

9. P2 has a file renaming function and you can rename a batch of files in the one folder.  However it is primitive and has a problem - say you rename everything with a start string of AB.  The first picture will be renamed AB, the second will be AB-1, the third will be AB-3, etc.  The problem is that AB-1 has alphabetic precedence over AB, so AB appears LAST in the set when written to a Gift CD, or viewed in Explorer or Irfanview, or whatever.  There might not have been a problem if the first picture was named AB-0.  Also some sort algorithms will give AB-19 precedence over AB-2.

10. Irfanview is much better for renaming files.  So:

- for any picture in a P2 folder do an Open file or Open with...,

- When in Irfanview, click on the thumbnails icon (multiple rectangles) on the top Irfanview tool bar.

- In the Irfan folder explorer, go to the folder of interest

- Drag the thumbnails into the desired order

- hit File/Start batch dialog

- Put in a Name Pattern (as an example:   xw##)

- Hit Start then when the process has finished, Exit.
- Exit Irfanview.

- P2 will have lost track of the new names, so hit Folder/Refresh Thumbnails.  The files will now be named xw01.jpg to xw67.jpg.  Very neat. Very easy.

11. Keep in mind that when you do a search in P2, the words (or partial words) that you enter into the search panel will identify files that have the words embedded within:

- the file's keywords or caption
- the file's name
- a folder's name (so all files in that folder will be found in the search)
- the name of any sub-folder which is located under that folder (so all files in the sub-folders will be found in the search)

12. This search process can be very useful when you know what's going on.  I could not understand why some searches were displaying ALL my pictures when I searched for pictures into which I had inserted the keyword "mike".  The reason is that the search found the folder c:\documents and settings\mike\ and all the folders under that that had pictures in them.  Like, EVERY picture on my PC!  I reigned that in by making appropriate settings in Tools/Folder Manager.  Set "Remove from Picasa" and "Watch for Changes"  carefully.  However, once I knew what was going on, I found the Search facility very useful, and stunningly fast.  So for example, searching for "xmas" will show all the folders that have xmas in their names plus all the children folders below that, and adding 2004 to the search pane will narrow the search to show only the folders that have xmas AND 2004 in their names (plus all the children folders below that).  Plus of course, files that have xmas AND 2004 in their names or captions or keywords would be shown.  The consequence of this search technology is that providing that you have an idea about SOMETHING that you put in a folder name or file name or caption or keyword, you can generally find the target file/s you want VERY easily and quickly.  Beats the heck out of searching for the files in Explorer.

13. One thing that did not work properly in the original release of P2 is the keyword Delete function.  This problem has been fixed in version 2.1.  However, in the first release, after deleting a keyword in P2 it IS erased from the keyword list, but not from a database that P2 maintains.  To correct this fault, after you delete a keyword from a picture or pictures in a folder, then go to Tools/Folder Manager, assign the Remove from Picasa setting to the folder, exit the folder manager, then re-enter the folder manager and assign the Watch for Changes setting to the folder.  Exit the Folder manager, then all is fixed.  That's painful, and as I have indicated, the bug has been fixed in version 2.1.

14. If you are preparing a Gift CD or DVD, if you only want some of the pictures in a folder to be included, hide the pictures that you do not want to be written to the CD.  To hide:

- Set the top menu option of "View/Hidden Pictures" to on (ticked), because you can than still see the hidden pictures as greyed out thumbnails.  If that option is not ticked, the pictures have no thumbnails visible at all and you may forget that some pictures are hidden, and wonder why they don't show as thumbnails later on!

- Highlight the pictures to be hidden, right-click one, select Hide.

- To set the order for the remaining unhidden pictures to be shown on the Gift CD, drag them into the desired order.

- Do the hiding and reordering for each of the folders to be included, before hitting the Gift CD button.

- After doing the CD writing, remember to unhide the pictures that you hid.

15. Final tip: If you want an expanded view of a thumbnail file, double-click it. If you want a full-screen view, hit the Slideshow button.

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# More humour from the net

**Senior Driving 1**

As a senior citizen was driving down the freeway, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, "Herman, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on the interstate. Please be careful!"

Yea," said Herman, "It's not just one car. It's hundreds of them!"

**Senior Driving 2**

Two elderly women were out driving in a large car - both could barely see over the dashboard. As they were cruising along, they came to an intersection. The stoplight was red, but they just went on through.

The woman in the passenger seat thought to herself  "I must be losing it. I could have sworn we just went through a red light." After a few more minutes, they came to another intersection and the light was red again. Again, they went right through.

The woman in the passenger seat was almost sure that the light had been red, but was really concerned that she was losing it. She was getting nervous . At the next intersection, sure enough, the light was red and they went on through.

So, she turned to the other woman and said, "Mildred, did you know that we just ran through three red lights in a row? You could have killed us both!"

Mildred turned to her and said: "WHAT! Am I driving?"

**Word Play**

**A selection of word definitions by The Washington Post. Sent by Mike Purcell.:**

1. Abattour: The line of rubberneckers driving slowly by the scene of a traffic accident hoping to see some gore.

2. Beginity: The other end of infinity.

3. Cabbage: Taxi fare.

4. Docyoumeant: The letter you SHOULD have written.

5. Earnigma: A Tax Office form.

6. Epoxy: Infected with a computer virus.

7. Flabbergasted: appalled over how much weight you have gained.

8. Gethsemoney: Thirty pieces of silver.

9. Hste: When there's just no time for spelling the whole word.

10. Internapping: Web browsing with a dial-up.

11. Jestation: That pregnant pause between joke and punch line.

12. Kimchihuahua: Asian food made with secret special ingredients.

13. Liverworst: The unkindest cold cut of all.

14. Meander: A lovers' stroll.

15. Negligent: Condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.

16. Osteo-witticism: A humerus play on words; a bone mot.

17. Pi-eyed: 3.1415962653 sheets to the wind.

18. Queery: To ask the question that dares not speak its name.

19. Robust: Underwire bra.

20. Slumber: Sawing logs.

21. Thesaurus: Extinct lizard-like creature with good language skills.

22. Unaqueue: The single line that should be formed when waiting before two ATMs, rather than forming a separate line before each.

23. Vomittee: A work group that spews out report after report.

24. Westhamptonboroughminsterburginshire: A small village in England, pronounced "Wesher."

25. Xxylophone: A percussing instrument.

26. Yearner's-permit: A credit card.

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# PCUG Help Directory

**The people in this directory are volunteers, so please observe the times given. The Help Directory is designed to help individual**
users and should not be used as a substitute for corporate support calls to vendors. This service is provided for members only.
**Please quote your membership number to the helper. Additions or amendments to this directory should be sent to**
editor@pcug.org.au

| Region | Subject | Name | Email | Phone | Days | Times |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Home Installation Team (HIT) | John Telek | tweek@pcug.org.au | 0418605930 | All days | Any decent time |
| | Hardware, modems, Linux, Open Office | Anthony Glenn | | 6286 3903 | All days | Any decent time |
| Chifley | WinXP, PC hardware, Connections | John Saxon | jsaxon@pcug.org.au | 6161 1524 | All days | 9am to 7pm |
| Dickson | WinXP, Mozilla, Office XP | John Agnew | jfa@pcug.org.au | 6249 7911 0411147321 | All days | 9am to 9pm |
| Fisher | MS Word, Excel, Lotus WordPro, Agent | Derek Jordan | Derek.Jordan@tpg.com.au | 6288 7810 | All days | Any decent time |
| Flynn | Flight Simulator | Roger Lowery | bandrlowery@optusnet.com.au | 6258 1583 | All days | Any decent time |
| Hall Village | Noteworthy Composer | Andrew Purdam | apurdam@pcug.org.au | 6230 2231 | All days | Any decent time |
| Hawker | Home Installation Team (HIT) Internet connections, software and hardware. | Gordon Urquhart | gordonu@pcug.org.au | 6254 5480 | All days | Any decent time |
| Holt | FrontPage, Publisher, Internet Explorer | Gary Potts | gjpotts@pcug.org.au | 6254 2818 0402342818 | Mon Wed Sat | 9:00am to 12:00 noon |
| Macquarie | Linux | Rod Peters | rpeters@pcug.org.au | 6251 2580 | All days | 9am to 7pm |
| O'Connor | Digital Photography, Paint Shop Pro, Paint Shop Album | Jeff Colwell | jeffmeg@webone.com.au | 6247 7756 | All days | 9am to 8pm |
| Page | Free software - installation and advice | Terry Bibo | tbibo@pcug.org.au | 6255 2168 | All days | 9am to 7pm |

## Some handy links

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|---|---|
| **Committee Members** | **http://www.pcug.org.au/members/committee/index.htm** |
| **Monthly Calendar** | **http://www.pcug.org.au/members/calendar/** |
| **Special Interest Groups** | **http://www.pcug.org.au/activities/sigs.htm** |
| Members' Services & Charges | http://www.pcug.org.au/member_info/services.htm |

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