

# MANAGING DIGITAL PICTURES WITH PICASA (Part 1)) How to use PICASA

A short Tutorial compiled  
by Gerry Sauermann  
<g.h.sauermann@rcn.com>

## What is PICASA?

Picasa is a very powerful managing program issued by GOOGLE, specifically designed for handling large numbers of digital picture folders.

PICASA is **free**, can be downloaded in seconds from the internet by simply calling for "PICASA". Versions are issued both for Windows and Apple operating systems.

When downloading it is important to select the latest version - **PICASA3**, which has several more important features than the older versions.

PICASA is very user-friendly; almost all of the various editing and display functions are clearly explained on the screen and can be executed by simply clicking the corresponding icon. PICASA also offers a several-page user manual for downloads.

## What does PICASA do for you?

PICASA **automatically** collects all your pictures from your hard drive and copies them into its own "Universe", without changing or even touching your original collections or classifications.

All editing and picture manipulations made in PICASA **stay in PICASA** and do not affect your original pictures; you will not lose or damage any of your originals. But you can always copy edited pictures from PICASA back into your original folders as a new file or burn them on a CD/DVD.

## Working from the Home Page/ "Library".

PICASA's home page automatically displays a split screen which is **extremely** helpful, (in PICASA it is referred to as "**The Library**") On the left side appears a full list of all the **folders** located in PICASA, listed either by date or in alphabetically (your choice).

**You** can scroll the list up or down by using the vertical slider **directly** on the **right** of the folder list.

**You** can also identify a specific folder by left-clicking on the title; the selected title turns dark and a thumbnail display of all the pictures of the selected folder appears on the right half of the screen.

(Double-left clicking on the title opens a question box, which lets you **change** the title and other identifications of the selected folder)

**You** can select any folder (set of pictures) by using the vertical slider on the **far right** side of the screen without affecting the list on the left side. The picture display on the right side of all the folders will follow the sliding motion.

(The same result can also be obtained by single left-clicking on a title and with the mouse-key down, moving the marker on the screen up or down)

A **horizontal slider** on the bottom right lets you magnify the thumbnail pictures.

**You** also have a great number of options, indicated by many self-explaining icons distributed around the home page-screen; just one click does displays the desired option

But there are four particularly interesting icons shown in the upper center of the screen, named:

“Play Full Screen Slideshow”

“Create Photo Collage”

“Create Movie Presentation”

“Create Gift CD”.

#### “**Play Full Screen Slideshow**”:

Select the folder you want to play from the list on the left side of the screen. On the **thumbnail** presentation, single click on the picture you want to start the show with (a blue frame will surround the selected picture ). **Single-click** on the icon showing a green arrow. This will start the show immediately.

You can **stop** the show anytime by just moving the mouse slightly. If you want to change the **length of time** a picture is displayed, or the **transition** from one picture to the next, move the mouse slightly; the show stops, and on the bottom of the screen appears a command bar, where you can select different types of picture transition and display times. Click the **Start** arrow in the middle of the bar and you are in business !

A **second method** to create a slideshow gives you the same results: In **Library** click **>Folders** in the top bar, and then on **>Slide Show** in the query box and then follow the same steps out lined above.

### **“Photo Collage”:**

This is the most amazing feature of PICASA !

You can arrange any number of pictures in a collage with only **one** keystroke !

In the “**Library**” screen go to: “**Photo Collage**”. In the new screen go to the “**Settings**” tab and in the “**Frame Mosaic**” box select one of the six possible arrangements for your pictures. Note the “**Shuffle**” command below the arrangement, which in turn lets you change the pictures around.

The **slider in the upper left** part of the screen lets you choose the separation-width between pictures; you can **add shade** between the pictures; you can change the **background color** and you can change from “Landscape” to “Portrait” format.

### **“Create Movie Presentation”:**

This is very similar to the “Play Full Screen Slideshow” listed above, but you have more options for the presentation. Just click on the icon and select your various choices from the query-box. Your newly created movies will show up as icons on top of your PICASA folder list; each movie is represented as a folder.

### **“Create Gift CD”:**

This program gives you the opportunity to present your slides in a very fancy format. All pictures are neatly framed with one as the cover. You can add music and text if you so desire.

After you clicked on: “**Create Gift CD**” you will see two large query-boxes numbered 1 and 2. The commands are self explanatory – but there is one very important issue: The selected and edited pictures will be frozen on the gift-disc and **cannot** be copied.

If you want to give the receiver of your gift the opportunity to copy pictures from the gift disc, you have to check the two boxes “**Include Slideshow**” and “**Include PICASA**” from sections 1 and 2.

### **Editing and Manipulating of individual Pictures.**

PICASA makes editing and manipulating very easy, but this takes a few steps:

**Step one:** On the folder list on the left side of the PICASA home page (LIBRARY) select the folder that holds the picture to be edited.

**Step two:** In the thumbnail presentation on the right side of the home page, left-click once on the select picture.  
A copy of the selected picture will show up on the bottom left corner of the screen.

**Step three:** Double-click on the picture on the bottom and a new query box with three tabs will appear.  
The box shows examples of all the editing possibilities.

**Step four:** Click on one tab and then on the icon which depicts the desired action.

**Step five:** Clicking on the “**Back to Library**” button brings you back to the home page ( “The Library”) and you can start all over with other pictures.

**Important: Do not forget to click the “Apply” button after using each option.**

Working with PICASA, you will note that all of the commands, tool-bars and query-boxes are identical to those used in WINDOWS programs; I assume this will also be true for commands used in the Apple versions and VISTA

**Note: It is worth and a lot of fun trying all the options on a test picture !**

**You will find these activities to be quite amazing!**

### **What PICASA does not or cannot do for You.**

Editing pictures is restricted to the original **size** of the picture. Cropping only makes the picture smaller by cutting off sections.

If you want to use the edited picture in a text or other presentation, and this requires a different size, you have to go into “PHOTO SHOP” or similar programs. PICASA can only change the **format**.

PICASA collects all pictures on your hard disc, with the exception of pictures which were sent to you **via e-mail or copied from an internet site** ! If you want to include them in PICASA, you have to first copy them either into “**My Documents**” or “**MY Pictures**”. They then may be accessible to PICASA, but in some cases, depending on the original picture format, this is not possible – these pictures have to stay in their original context !

Actually, PICASA collects only the pictures which are presented either in **JPEG** format, or any additional other format you have identified. It is advisable to select all other formats, because one never knows what special formats are required for some internet downloads.

It is necessary **only once** to select the acceptable formats. This can be done by opening the PICASO home page, clicking on: **>TOOLS**; **>OPTIONS** and **>FILE TYPES** Tab.

Check all boxes in the File Types tab..

This process can be repeated and the selection changed at any time.