MANAGING DIGITAL PICTURES WITH
PICASA (Part 2)
Preparing Folders for use in PICASA

A short tutorial compiled
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Why is special Preparation needed?

PICASA performs best when all picture folders are prepared and labeled in a **uniform** way. While PICASA scans the hard-disc for pictures and displays folders it is sometimes almost impossible to find specific folders, which were not clearly or uniformly labeled.
I suggest several steps which I personally found very useful.

Transfer-Control of Pictures.

The transfer of pictures from a **digital camera** can be done in several ways:
1.) Connecting the camera directly with the computer and using software supplied with the camera, (Example: Kodak's "Easy Share"). This technique is specifically required when the pictures have been recorded on the **Internal Memory** of the camera, but I recommend using the Internal Memory only in an emergency (i.e. when you forgot to insert the memory card). It is easy to switch to "External Memory" i.e. memory card operation.
2.) Transfer from the "Memory Card" directly. Most recent computers have a special slot for accepting most standard memory cards, and – as is my personal experience - Windows XP provides the needed software internally.
If your computer does not have this feature and you plan to take a lot of pictures in the future, it may be helpful to purchase an external card-reader, which usually can be connected directly to your computer with an UBS cable.

Please note:
Before you start, it is important to clearly distinguish between **"Files"** and "**Folders".** In the context of this tutorial, a file refers to an **individual picture,** while a folder identifies a **set off pictures** assembled by you. Manipulations of folders **affect all the pictures** contained in it (copy/move/delete, etc.), while manipulations of individual files affect only this particular picture!

As an example, the following steps are required for a clean transfer of pictures when working in Windows XP:

Insert your card in the right-size slot
Go to: **"START", >"MY COMPUTER**", > **click** on the Icon which looks like the card. Two folder-icons will show up on the screen.
>Single left-click on the folder named **"DCIM"**
(ignore the other labeled MCIM).
>Single left-click on **>"Rename this Folder"**.
(Located on top of blue left-side listing)
Rename this folder according to your own labeling system.
This is **very** important if you intend to find this folder again, ever!
If you do not rename the folder, the computer will assign its own number and it will show up anywhere among your files!
(For labeling suggestions see below)
>Single left-click on **>"Copy this Folder".** A listing of possible locations shows up on the screen. I always copy to**: "My Documents"** but anything else will do, as long as you are consistent.

Continuing the Transfer Process. Select either **"My Documents**" or **"My Pictures**"**; > Single left-click** on >**Copy.** The new folder - including all pictures in this folder will now be successfully transferred to your computer and awaits further action.

Important Suggestions:

1.) Do not, and I repeat, do not open the folder before you have successfully transferred it to "My Documents" or a similar location
Always transfer folders **in their entirety!** Otherwise you will end up with endless lists of meaningless file-numbers, each number identifying an individual picture; and it is no fun to sort things out when this happens!

2.) It is advisable to transfer all picture folders first from the camera to a CD-R or a DVD-R, to archive your pictures!
To have your folders on a CD-R or DVD-R preserves the folders for ever, and they can be retrieved in case you have a hard-disc failure, or simply have messed-up a file beyond recognition.
But you have to do a little arithmetic: A picture in normal JPEG format contains about 1 to 1.5 MB of information. A regular CD can hold
700 MB, that means that you can store about 450 to 600 pictures on it (allowing for some overhead).
The situation is quite different when you use a DVD, which can hold
4.7 GB, what means it can hold about 3000 to 4000 pictures!

A second concern is the time required for **picture transfers.**
As a rule of thumb you can assume that it takes about one to two seconds to transfer a picture. The transfer of 600 pictures will take about 10 to 15 minutes. Have your favorite cup of coffee ready !

3.) It is also advisable to delete unwanted pictures ONLY AFTER you have transferred the pictures to the computer, and NOT while they are still stored in the camera!
This avoids eliminating the wrong pictures. The camera controls are usually small; it is difficult to judge the quality of a picture when displayed on the small screen, and finally the screen display needs a lot of battery power. All this makes it easy to hit the wrong control button. Cards with very large memories, present no problem carrying quite a number of "Junk-Pictures" along. Sorting, using the large display of your computer, is much easier and if you eliminate the wrong picture, you will still have it on the disc or in the recycle bin for retrieval.

The Labeling Process

Before you begin the sorting process, you have to decide on a labeling system which is practical and fits your own taste and requirements.
There are several possibilities:

1.) Sort alphabetically by Title..
In this case you have to make sure all your titles have the same format.
Example: Do you list your folder as:
"**O**ur Cruise to Bermuda" or
"**B**ermuda Cruise" or
"**C**ruise to Bermuda".
The computer automatically lists folders in alphabetical order, so in each case the folder will show up at a different place in the listings, and it is difficult to find it (or related folders), especially if you have many folders with similar titles. I do not recommend this approach

2.) Sort by Date on which the Pictures were taken.
The camera records the dates the pictures were taken, but this information is usually not displayed. (You can check it by **Right-clicking** on the picture and then on **>"Properties"**). By choosing this system you may end up with shuffled sequences, where related pictures may end at very different locations.

Note: Every time you change the battery, or remove it only briefly from the camera, it is very important that you **reset the date**. Otherwise the internal camera date-clock reverts back to the default value set by the manufacturer. In this case it is possible that two pictures taken one day apart may show up in files of different years! It will take quite some effort to find the files again! I can tell this, based on my own experience! I also do not recommend this approach.

3.) Sort by your own Identification Numbers.
The easiest way – in my opinion - to assign folder/file identification numbers, is the "Reverse Date Listing". (Year, Month, Day).
Example: April 5, 2008 will be written as: 2008 04 05.
Most computers will recognize this entry both as a number and a date, and will list folders accordingly.
In addition to this date designation, I recommend adding a short text description, such as: "2008 04 05 Cruise to Bermuda".
The date designation is not critical, but it is helpful to choose it close to the actual date of the event.

Advantages:
It is very easy to find a particular file
It is very easy to cluster related files by either listing them
by the **same** date, or by **sequential** dates. If several files have the
same date, most computers will arrange the files in alphabetical order, according to the text following the date.
PICASA will list all your folders by year and date, tell you how many folders you have listed for that year, and how many files are in each individual folder.

Warning: Using this system requires **consistency**: If you decide to use spacing between numbers, you must do it **all the time**.
An example: The computer will read "2008 04 05" as "Two thousand and eight/ zero four/ zero five ….", but "20080405" as:"20,080,405" (twenty million…), This file will end up on the bottom of the listing. Either one of the two systems is fine, but they do not like being mixed.

Manipulating Individual Pictures within a Folder.

After you have transferred all your pictures to either " **My Documents**" or similar locations, you will notice that you have a very large, unwieldy folder, which in most cases has to be broken up into a number of smaller folders, - each to be labeled individually - so you quickly can find individual pictures.

Select and left-click on the original large picture folder.

On the top bar click on >"**View"**
In the query box, click on **>"Thumbnails".** All your pictures will be displayed in a checker board fashion.
In the left (blue) query box click on **>"Make a New Folder**"
A square the size of a picture with a folder icon in its center will appear somewhere. It may be at the beginning or the end of the display, but it is very easy to **"Drag"** it to **any place** you want it.

The "Drag" function is very useful and easy to apply for sorting pictures:
Just **left-click** on the empty frame (or later on a picture) and with your finger down on the mouse- key pull the empty frame across the screen to the location of your choice.
Again in the left (blue) query box click on **>"Rename this Folder"**
Rename this new folder according to your labeling system.

The Editing Process

This is the most time consuming activity, but done once, it will make finding pictures very easy. You can now select, or rotate (right click), change order-of-pictures, or delete junk.
To put a number of selected pictures into your new folder, you just have to **"Drag"** the picture over the "New Folder" icon. At this point the picture will disappear from the display, but it is automatically registered as a file in your new folder.
Repeat this process with all the pictures you want to place in this folder- just like you would place playing cards in a stack.

Repeat this activity making new folders as often as desired.
I suggest that for easy retrieval you do not put more than 50 pictures in a single folder.
Click on your new folder and in the **"File"** query-box (Top Left corner of your screen) **Click** on: **>"Send To"**
If you started with your original folder in "My Documents" it may be helpful if you will send your new folder(s) to the same destination.
All the new folders will now show up in your listing and also in PICASA!

For **adding** individual pictures to an existing folder, or **combining** several folders, just use the standard **"Copy and Paste"** routine as it is used for editing text documents.

I hope these notes will be helpful; if you have any questions or problems, please feel free to contact me at my e-mail address.
Let's try to resolve the issue together!