

An Overview of Several Free Digital Image Editors for Windows Computers

(Microsoft Office Picture Manager vs. Picasa vs. Irfanview)

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Text insertion examples

My Personal Preferences of Editor for Some Commonly-needed Tasks:

Red eye removal – Picasa (best most of the time),
- Sometimes Irfanview is more faithful.

Lightening or darkening – Microsoft Office Picture Manager
(because of “adjust mid-tones” control, in addition
to usual brightness and contrast controls)

Straightening a tilted photo – Picasa, or Office Picture Manager
(a grid available in both)

Sharpen an Image - Picasa

Cropping – Microsoft Office Picture Manager (more user friendly, IMO)

Adding a text label to a photo –

Text only, overlaying the image - Picasa

Text inside a rectangular box – Irfanview

(examples appear on the next two pages, including instances of
outlined text, shadow-edged text, and semi-transparent modes)

Reducing .jpg file size – Microsoft Office Picture Manager
(provides guidance)

(More complete table of editing features on the next page)

Comparison of Image Editing Features among Several Photo-Editor Programs:

Name of Photo Editor Program:	Microsoft Office Picture Manager (e.g. Office 2007)	Picasa 3	Irfanview 4.37	Windows XP Microsoft-Paint
User Interface Mode, by mouse	Top-tab opens Drop-down Menu	Top-tabs pick Left Pane with Icons	2 Top-tabs, (Edit or Image) open Drop-down Menus, (giving Keyboard short-cuts as well)	Top-tabs
AutoCorrect	provided, one button (doesn't tell what it does)	Autobrightness Autocolor, or both at once.	Auto-adjust colors	no
Manual Brightness adjustment	Brightness, Contrast, and Midtones, individually	Brightness, Highlights, Shadows, but not intuitive!	Brightness & Contrast (hidden in "Color Corrections")	no
Color adjust	yes, hue, tint, & saturation	yes, one button or manually	R,G,B, gamma, and saturation.	no
Red eye removal	yes, by manual selection; iris color is not well preserved (grayer)	automatic id of redeye to fix, with manual override; best looking solution	yes, but must select eye area manually; pupil color is not well preserved	no
Rotate & Flip (90 & 180 deg.)	yes	yes	yes, from menu	?
Straighten image (rotation)	yes, and can call for grid to judge	Rotate vs. grid provided	(requires Paint Plug-in) *	no
Cropping	selectable aspect ratios, and adjust by mouse	selectable aspect ratios, and define area by mouse	selectable aspect ratios,	partly provided
Sharpen edges	no	yes (tool hidden in "pen" group)	yes, one button	no
Add Text Labels	no	text & outline; transparent adj. no text box available	text, outline and background box; transparency independently	yes, in a white box, font, color and size selectable

Name of Photo Editor Program:	Microsoft Office Picture Manager (e.g. Office 2007)	Picasa 3	Irfanview 4.37	Windows XP Microsoft-Paint
Erase a rectangular block to white, black, or colors	?	not obvious	?	yes
Resize	6 x-y pixel size settings	N.A.	yes, manually. Image>Resize/Resample	
Compress	3 sizes of compressed file size, by intended application, (doc, webpage, or email), ganged with total pixels	N.A.	yes, manually. Image> Resize/Resample	
Change image file output type.	no. Output is only JPG	no. Output is only JPG, but accepts input from several	yes, via a plug-in	yes, among PNG, JPG, TIFF, GIF, or bitmap
Soften focus	no	defocuses an adjustable amount outside a circle you select	available	
Add border	no	yes	yes	
Windows version compatibility:	determined by version of MS Office	Windows XP and since	Windows 95 and everything since.	
Portability of Program:	no	?	Yes, to USB or CDROM	

Footnote:

* in Irfanview, could not straighten image because of error dialog: “.ini file lacking write permission;” Workaround – run Irfanview in an Administrator-level account.

Observations about the Picasa 3 Photo Editor

Creates a subfolder “.picasaoriginals” for your source pictures;

Makes a copy of the file you opened and puts it in this subfolder.

Doesn't change the filename for the saved copy;

Modifies the file you opened to work on, keeping the original filename;

even if you do a “save as” by another filename for modifications you have made.

My Gripes About Picasa

Produces duplicate filenames, distinguishable only by the folder they're in, despite the fact one is modified!

Picasa seems to lock up the file properties of the originals it puts in its subfolder (and sometimes the modified original as well),

You may be blocked from renaming the file or clearing its archive bit!

Workaround is to use one's administrator account.

Human Factors design is poor for several of the Picasa editing tools, IMO.

(brightness vs. highlights, etc; not intuitive enough, for example.)

Sequence of tools is sometimes important:

Example: do redeye removal before straightening a picture, because otherwise you'll get a warning that straightening compromises the redeye algorithm.

(actually, Picasa crashed when I closed this warning dialog box).

File size grows when you work on it;

no size reduction tool provided.

Examples: Even doing only redeye removal, size grows.

IMG_0441: orig. 2294KB; redeye removal by OPM, 2004KB;
removal by Picasa, 3038KB

IMG_0448: orig. 2183KB; redeye removal by OPM, 1951KB;
removal by Picasa, 2881KB

IMG_0454: orig. 2314KB; redeye removal by OPM, 2064KB;
removal by Picasa, 2963KB

Text insertion tips:

As the hint in the image says, left-click in the image and start typing.

Nice options for font and color, but the selection interface is confusing, IMO;

The “transparency” slider has multiple effects.

(see annotated help in next slide)

One can type multiple lines of text to place at once.

Text can be rotated to any desired angle.

white text with no transparency, 1/4 black outline

Text can be rotated

Text examples in Picasa, blue,
no transparency, no outline, size 18

Blue with mid-transparency

no transparency, with black Outline 1/4 setting

white text with some transparency, no outline

white text with some transparency, black outline

text drawn as black outline only, 1/4 outline
setting. Center of letters is transparent.



ABC Edit Text

Font: Vrinda

Size: 12 Style: **B** *I* U

Show Text Outline Only Alignment: [Left] [Center] [Right]

[Solid Fill] [Outline Color] [Transparency]

min. (Outline Thickness) max. (Solid color)

Dark Dim

Copy Caption Clear All

Apply Cancel

Note: Moving the "Outline Thickness" Slider all the way left, to position "I", cancels the "Show Text Outline Only" latch button.

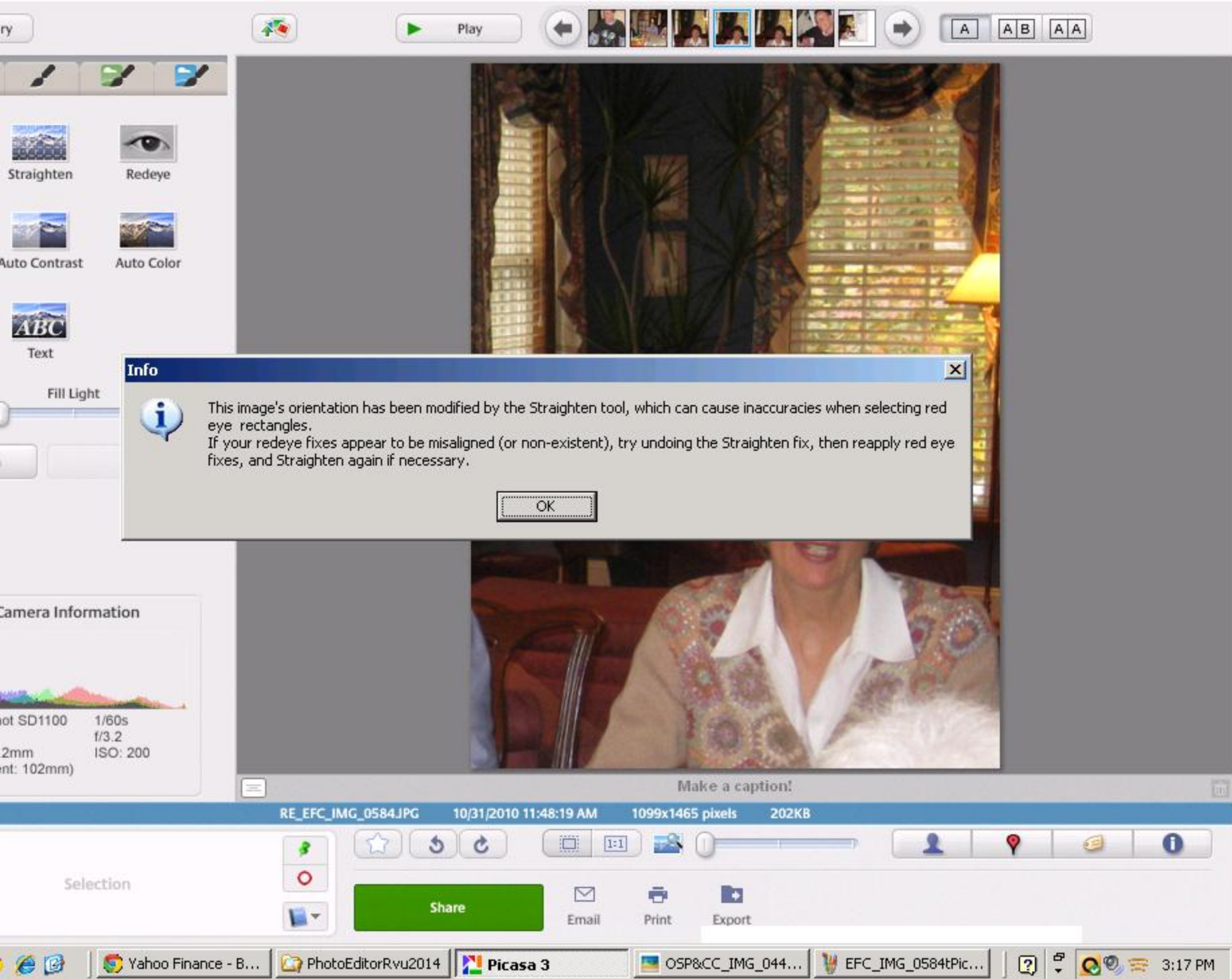


NIKON E3200 1/81s
Focal Length: 10.9mm f/3.7
(35mm equivalent: 72mm) ISO: 50



DSCN2024.JPG 2/2/2014 8:17:57 PM 2048x1536 pixels 605KB





Observations about Irfanview:

Menu lists are quite long; takes a moment to find what you want between “edit” pulldown or “image” pulldown menus, and select what you want.

Keyboard short-cuts available.

Irfanview definitely has a learning curve!

Operation depends upon drawing a rectangle in the picture first, in many instances.

Be sure to Save File after each operation, otherwise risk losing the change.

Text insertion tips:

One can compose multiple lines of text to place in one operation.

Offers a background box for text to help its readability (particularly if writing over a dark area).

Use “Preview” button to place your text, then “OK” to exit.

Clicking to place text centers it on your click (despite having Left Alignment selected)

Transparent background is a misnomer if also using semi-transparent text; Background then defaults to semi-transparent gray box.

Use Copy (to Clipboard) to remember the text you’ve typed, because each time you place text, and click ok, the text tool closes, not remembering your most recent entry!

Gripes about Irfanview:

Selection mode for redeye removal ought to be a circle, not a rectangle.

Slow process: keep zooming in, draw a rectangle around just the pupil, then Shift-Y.

Not exact enough, and you can get:
blue eye shadow on an eyelid,
or a disc of different color than the iris.

Redeye removal doesn’t implement a dark pupil;
whole eye is made iris color. Some red tint sometimes left in the outer iris.

Picture Rotation to a fine angle (degrees) could not be done:

.ini file was lacking write permission;

Workaround: Use Irfanview in an Administrator-level account

Backgr. transparent, Text transp-none, size 72, blue chosen from color chart

Ex. Backgr. Semi-Transparent white, Text
Shadow, solid, size 36, light gray, Left

Ex. Backgr. Semi-Transparent black,
Text solid, size 36, light gray, Left alignment.

Ex. Backgr. Transparency-none,
Text solid, size 36, blue, Left align.

Ex. Backgr. Semi-transparent, Text solid,
Outline 1, size 36, blue, Left align.

Ex. Backgr. Semi-Transparent, Text Solid,
Shadow, size 36, blue, Left align.

Ex. Backgr. Semi-Transparent, Text Solid,
size 36, black, Left align.

Ex. Backgr. Transparent, Text Semi-
transparent, size 36, black, Left align.

Ex. Backgr. Transparency-none, aqua,
Text transparent, size 36, (blue), Left alignment

Ex. Backgr. Transparent, Text solid,
Shadow, size 36, gray, Left alignment.

Ex. Backgr. Transparent, Text solid,
Shadow, size 36, white, Left alignment.

Ex. Backgr. Transparent, Text solid,
size 36, white, Left alignment.

Ex. Backgr. Transparent, Text Semi-
transparent, size 36, white, Left align.



Type in the word(s) to search for:

insert text

List Topics Display

Select topic: Found: 8

Title	Location	Rank
Paint dialog	IrfanVi...	1
Insert text	IrfanVi...	2
Search files	IrfanVi...	3
Text/Pattern O...	IrfanVi...	4
Insert overlay/w...	IrfanVi...	5
Hotkeys	IrfanVi...	6
Frequently Aske...	IrfanVi...	7
Create custom ...	IrfanVi...	8

You can start the dialog and place the text using mouse click into image or you can use the left mouse button to [outline](#) the area (selection) on the [image](#) where you want text to appear.

How to make a **selection**? Just press the left mouse button and move the mouse. You will see the selection rectangle. If you click on the image again outside the selection, the selection rectangle will be deleted and the selection is no more active.

Click the Edit Menu, then **Insert text**. A [dialog](#) box will open.

If this feature is used in the **Batch mode** (Batch dialog, Advanced options, Add overlay text), the fields for coordinates are enabled and you can set the start corner and size of the rectangle which will be used for text.

In the **Text box** on the left, type in the text you want to put on the image.

Use the **Choose Font** button to change the size, style, color, etc. of the text. The name of the selected font is shown below the text box.

If the displayed image is zoomed-in (zoom size < 100%) you can use the option **Adjust font size to current zoom size** to make the text "correct" for the current display/zoom. Example: the current image zoom size is 66%, the selected font size is 12 points. If the adjust option is used, the inserted font size will be 18 points (=font x 100/zoom), which look like 12 points in the current zoom.

Uncheck the **Background is transparent** box to choose a background color. The highlighted area will change to that color, with the text inside. The small box left the button shows the selected background color.

The dialog offers several combinations of colors and **effects**, feel free to play with the combinations.

You can save the current/visible dialog values as a **profile** and later use/load the saved values.

Click the **OK** button to add the text to your image. To close the dialog without adding any text, click the **Cancel** button.

Add text may be reversed with the Edit Menu's [Undo](#) command.