

Picasa – Still the Best & Most Versatile Photo Manager Available

By Aaron Couch

How many photos would you say you have? More than a hundred? Six hundred? A thousand? Pictures are a big part of all of our lives, but there is else something which is equally important and that is where those precious pictures are stored. You likely keep the majority of them on your computer (although more and more, we are relying on smartphones). Either way, it's nice to have them on the computer eventually.

But what happens when you add them to your computer? Do you organise them? You should (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/creating-order-chaos-9-great-ideas-managing-computer-files/>). But even if you do, it can be a hassle to view and manage all your photos. Thankfully there's Picasa (<http://picasa.google.com/>), which you've likely heard of, but do you use it? And if you do, are you aware of all that it can do?



Key Features of Picasa

- Photo management
- Importing
- Auto detection
- Easy photo editing
- Cloud sync & sharing with Google Photos
- Facial recognition



Picasa³_{TM}

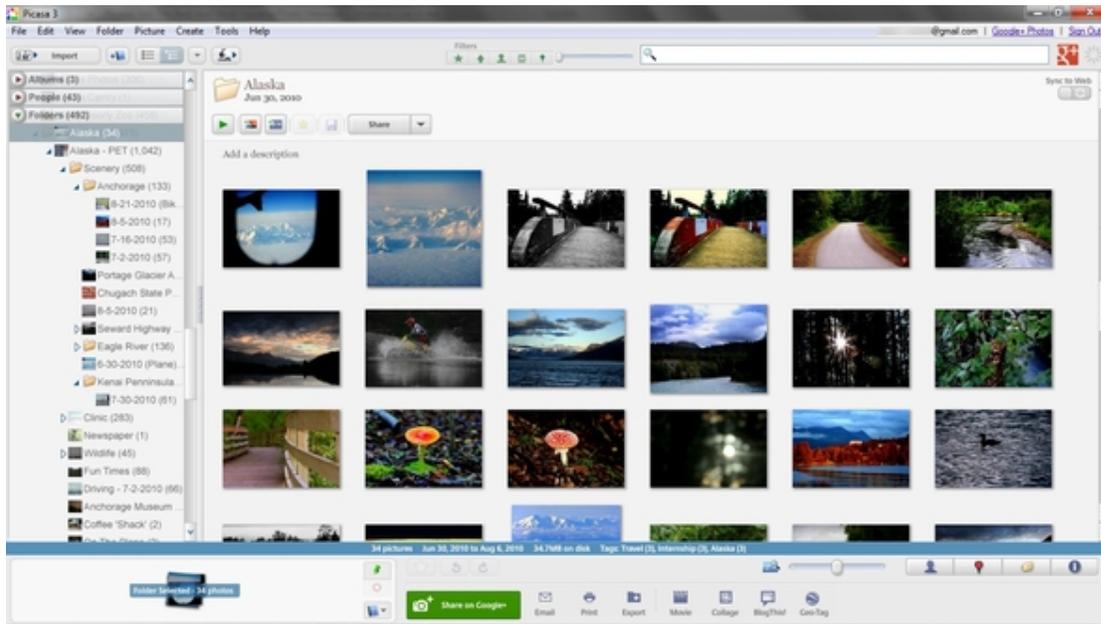
Google

Photo Management

This is, first and foremost, Picasa's number one focus and strength. Along with managing photos, Picasa can manage videos too, but the majority of the features are tailored to images.

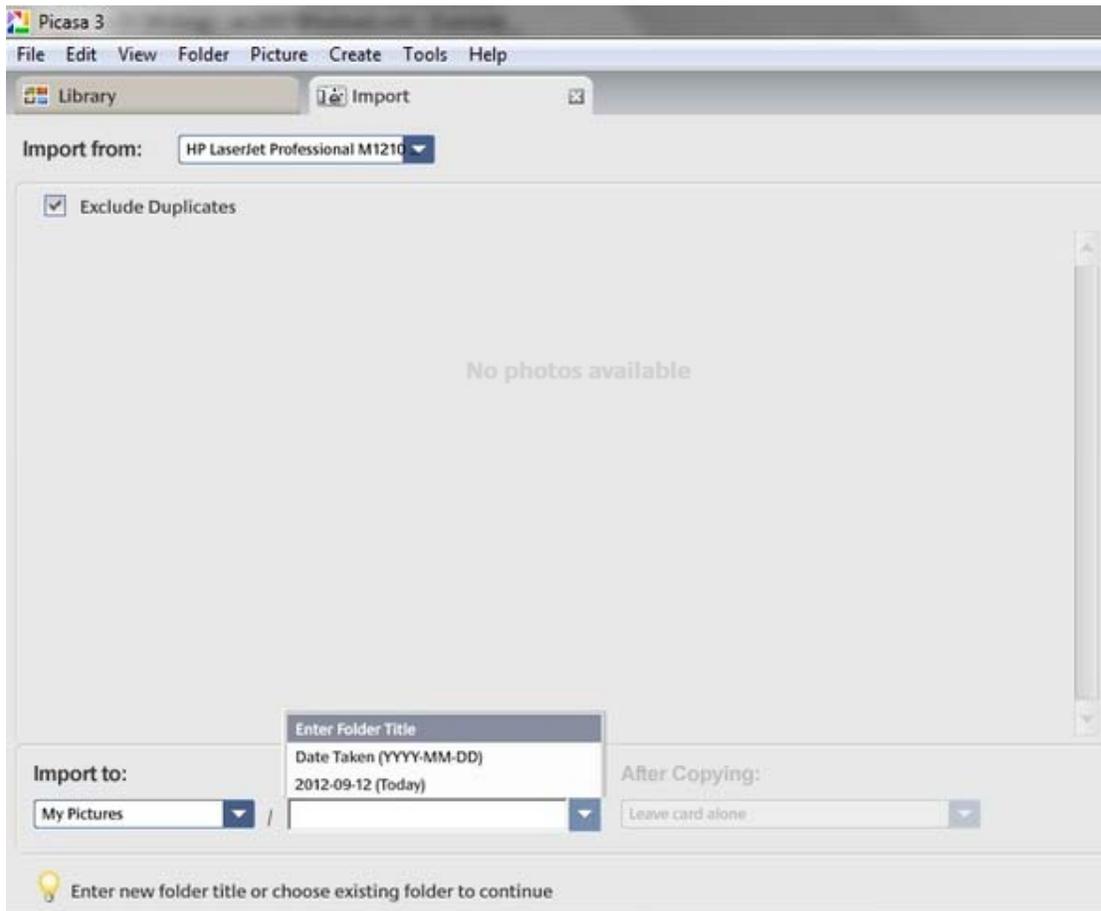
The folder structure on the side is adjustable between a tree style and flat structure. In the centre, you can easily scroll up and down scanning through the images. Of course there are several features that you can use too, such as playing a slideshow, creating a photo collage or making a movie presentation.

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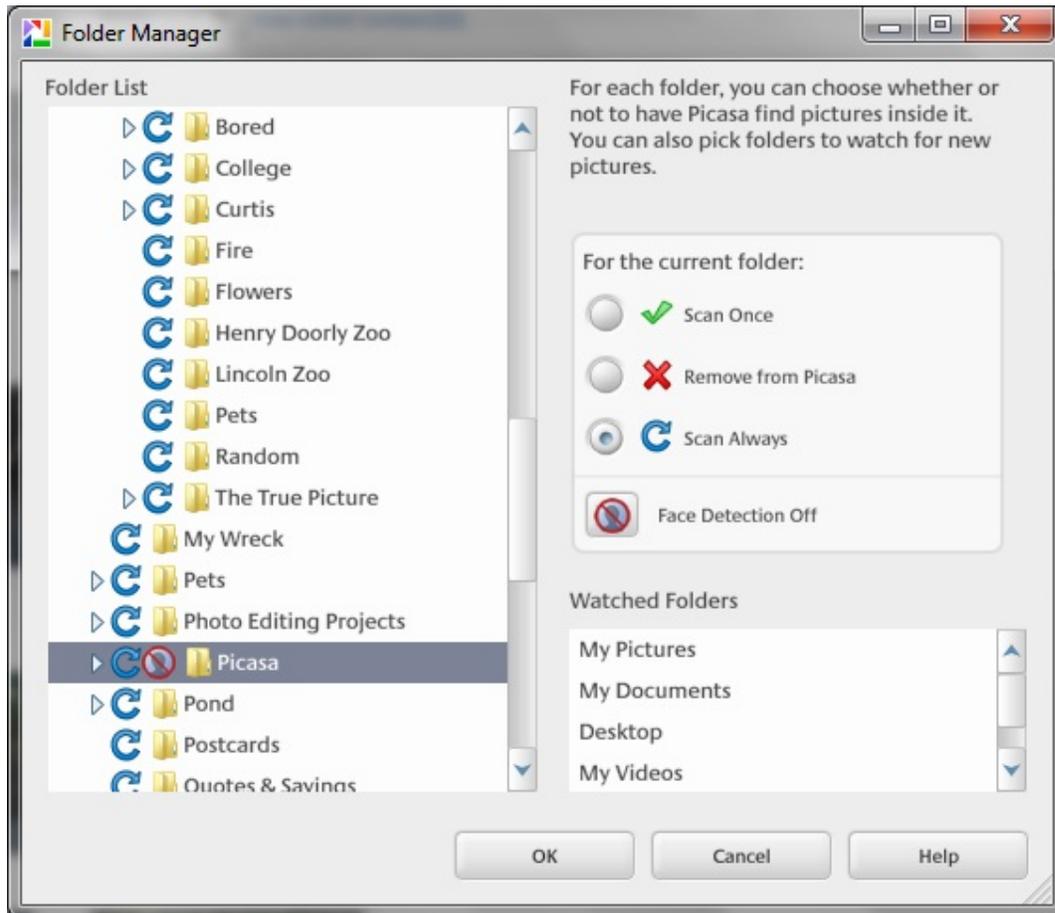
Importing

Picasa can import for any device connected to the computer, whether it's a camera, webcam (taking a photo), a scanner or an external hard drive. The nice thing is there are fields in the bottom left corner which allow you to quickly add where you want to save the files instead of just dumping them in the same folder which you did last time and telling yourself that you need to sort through it all some time.



Auto Detection

One of the greatest things about Picasa is its ability to monitor and automatically add any new files in folders which it searches. Any time there is a change to a file or a file is added, it immediately adds the photo or video to the library. To set this up, go to *Tools > Folder Manager*.



On the left column you will see the folders and their status. The blue circle arrow means it is always scanning the folder and importing the designated file types that you have given Picasa permission to associate with (to change what file formats Picasa is associated with, go to *Tools > Options > Files Types*).

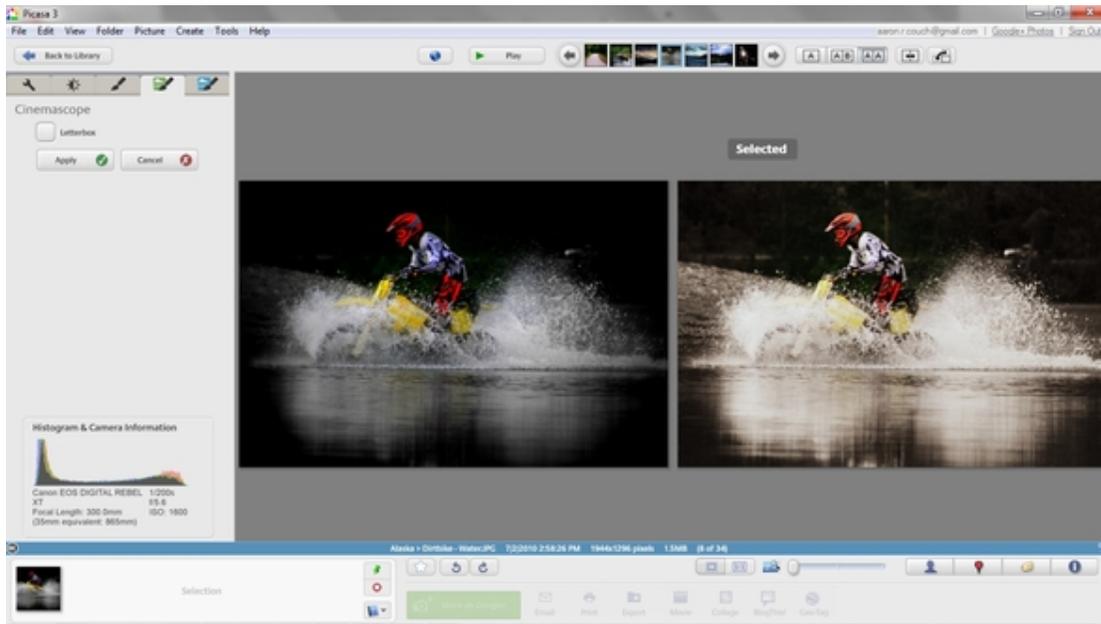
Back to the Folder Manager, the green checkmark means it was scanned once and a red “X” means it isn’t being monitored or that it will be removed from Picasa. You can see in the *Watched Folders* box which folders you are having Picasa monitor.

Easy Photo Editing

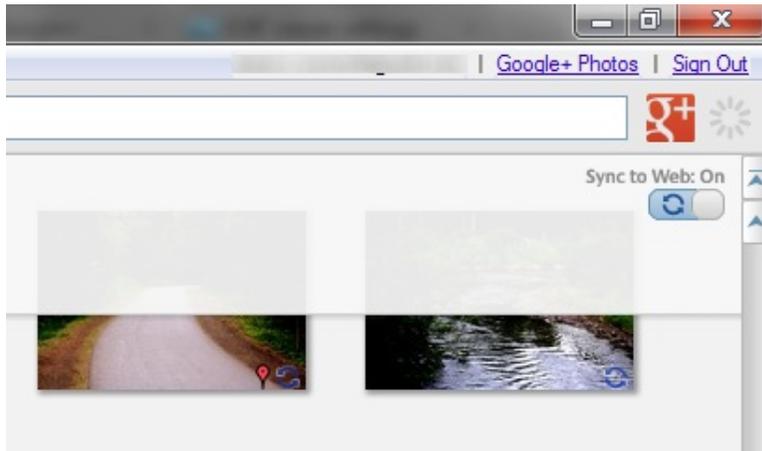
For a photo manager, Picasa has *killer* photo editing tools. There are many features, so it would be impractical to touch upon them all. Also, they are quite straightforward so all you would have to do is experiment with the different tools – there’s always the “undo” button if you mess up.

Below is an example of what a photo editing job in process might look like. There are two of the same photos side by side, allowing you to compare the different effects and decide which one fits best. The left bottom corner shows the photo information and what the exact camera settings were for that image (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/heck-photo-checking-picasa-camera-settings/>).

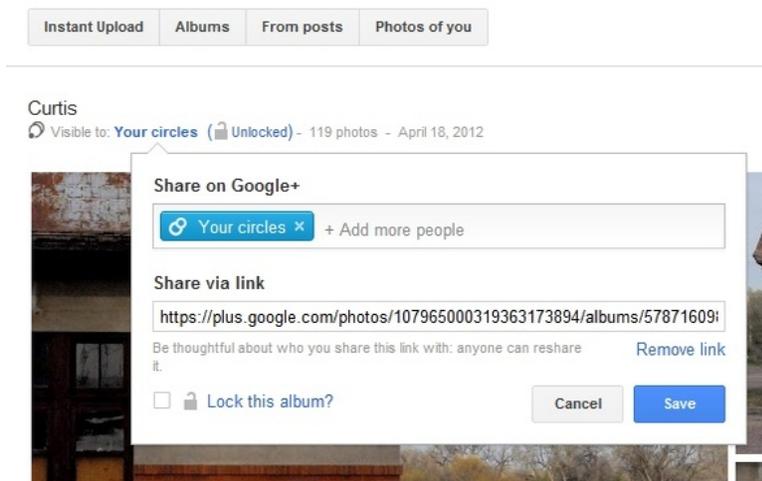
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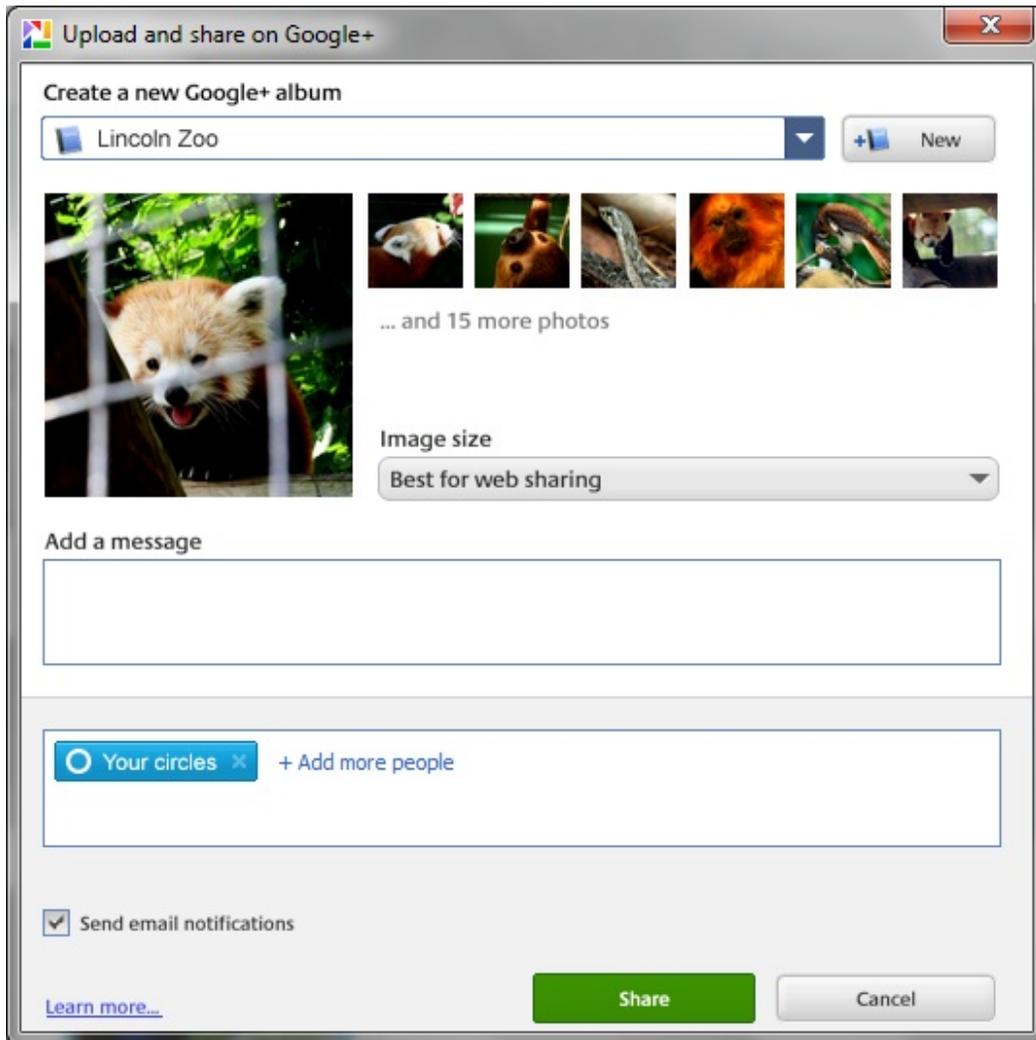
Cloud Sync & Sharing With Google Photos



Not only does Picasa manage all your photos, but it also connects to the cloud – your Google account – so you can backup and sync your photos right to your Google Photos account online. Since everything is so integrated, it is also quite easy to post photos in Google+. In fact, Google Photos is *in* Google+, but your privacy settings determine who sees what.



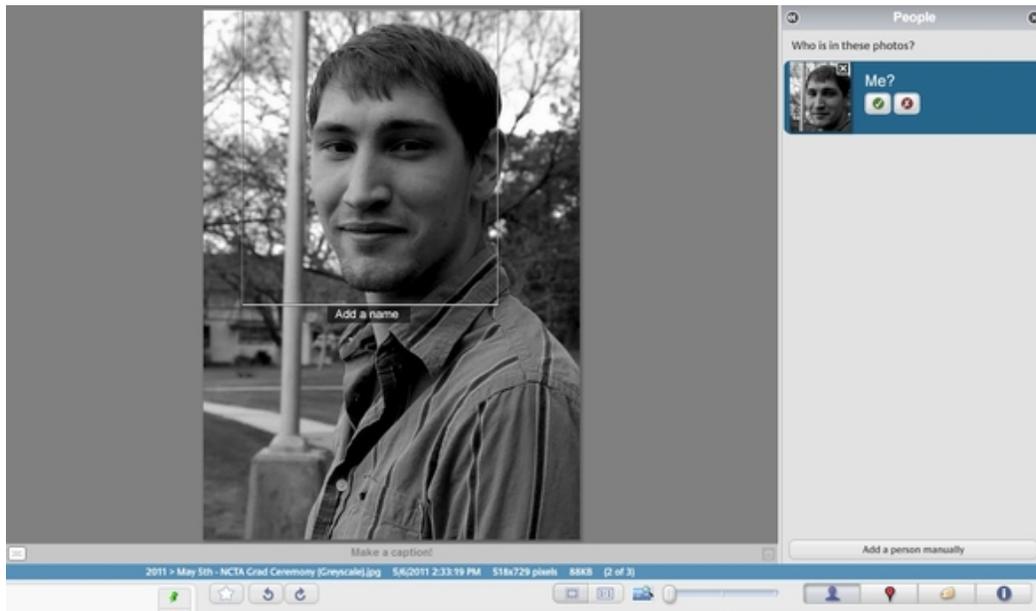
After you adjust the settings on the album in Google Photos, you will also be prompted to post the photos and add something about them. Of course you don't have to do this, but it's a nice way of letting your followers know about the new pictures.



Facial Recognition

Speaking of followers, if you have images of friends who you have as Google contacts and/or Google+ followers, the facial recognition feature will detect their face and clarify if it is them. Pretty neat actually!

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Conclusion

The features above are just the tip of the iceberg. There are even more like Geotagging and Batch Edit, but what really impresses me besides the big features, are the little things throughout it that are just done right. Google is consistently improving Picasa, so you know it's going to be around for a while. In my opinion, there really isn't anything that lines up with Picasa in terms of quality, features and price.

Do you use Picasa? If so, how has it helped you? What do you think about the Google+ integration? Please share any other thoughts you might have on it as well!

Source: http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/picasa-versatile-photo-manager/?utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_source=2012-09-20