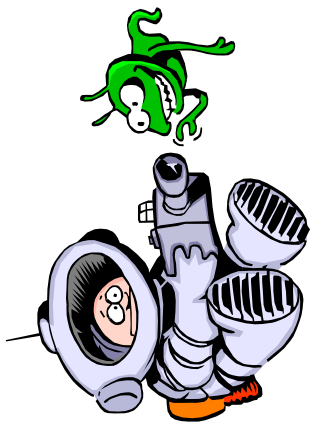




35mm? Is that a  
really short race?



# Bits & Bytes

Bits & Bytes is a monthly newsletter for small business/home users who want to stay up to date on the newest technology, tips, tricks and trends.

## Digital Camera

In this issue of *Bits & Bytes*, we take a look at the growing trend of using everything digital.

Nowadays, it is difficult to find a camera that is not digital. It also seems as if a majority of people have made the jump to using a digital camera.

Digital cameras are not just for computer geeks anymore. They have become a household item of sorts. You can find them in phones and PDAs. They can be as small as a deck of cards and as thin as 3/8".

Storage cards for cameras have gotten so big that you can fit more than 1,000 pictures onto one.

Be sure to read on, as Realm 249 takes a look at a program that manages digital pictures. It should be noted that, although this article focuses solely on the picture-managing and manipulating abilities of Picasa, the program also manages, sorts, and indexes all movies on your hard drive.

## Are you still using film?

Are you still using an old 35mm camera? Do you need to drop your film off somewhere and have it developed before you can see it? If so maybe it's time for you to come to the digital side.

With prices as low as \$40 for a digital camera, there are no longer any excuses. The control that you have with a digital picture is

worthwhile. Once you get used to it you will wonder how you ever got along without a digital camera. There is no winding, no rewinding, no feeding the film into the camera to start a roll, and no ruined pictures due to exposure. You can remove red-eye, crop, zoom, rotate, shrink, add text, change from black and white to color, e-mail, copy, delete, and

even eat digital pictures. Ok, maybe you can't eat them, but you get the point. Can you do all of those things with picture from a conventional camera?

Sure, there are a few things that you can do with a 35mm camera, but you cannot do them at the click of a button like you can with a digital picture.

## More flexibility = more moments captured

One of the disadvantages of a conventional camera is that you are dealing with film. You purchase each picture you take, whether you like the picture or not. You pay for the film to take the pictures, and then you end up paying to develop the pictures. Plus, you are able to take

only 2 or 3 pictures of baby Susie when she is playing with her new toy because all you have is 24 exposures on your roll of film.

When you have a digital camera you can take a multitude of pictures and not have to worry about using up film. When little

Susie plays with a toy for the first time, instead of taking 2 or 3 pictures (like you used to), you now can take 10-15 pictures and decide which photo you want to keep later (or keep them all; it's not like it costs you anything).

## Organizing

When you are taking hundreds and hundreds of pictures, it is hard to keep track of all of them. The average digital camera user's hard drive has thousands of pictures accumulated on it. So what do we do to keep the pictures

organized? Realm 249 is a big supporter of all things Google; there is not much that Google can't help you do better. And in keeping with that theme, we are happy to recommend a helpful and free program from Picasa (a

Google-owned company). The program is named Picasa 2 (the "2" is for the second version). On the other side of this page we will take a closer look at this program.

## Picasa (www.picasa.com)

Straight from Picasa's website "Picasa is software that helps you instantly find, edit and share all the pictures on your PC. Every time you open Picasa, it

automatically locates all your pictures (even ones you forgot you had) and sorts them into visual albums organized by date with folder names you will recognize."

There are way too many features to name off. The website lists 22 different features. We will review a few of them below:

## Picasa Features

### Importing

Clicking on "Import" sends Picasa on a search through any camera, scanner or other media.

### Indexing of Pictures

Picasa indexes all of your pictures for easy searching. When you want to find pictures of your dog Skippy, you can just type the word "Skippy". With each letter that you type in, it eliminates all pictures that do not fit your search term, so there is no waiting.

### Rename and Move

Does your digital camera name your pictures something silly like "600007363.jpg"? Let's say you transfer 60 pictures of your new house to your computer so that you can send a picture to a friend. But how do you know which picture is the one of the family room that you want to share with your friend? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to easily rename one or multiple files with just a click of a button? You can with Picasa. Moving pictures is also a snap: Picasa supports drag and drop. If you don't want the picture in one folder, just drag it right into another folder within Picasa.

### Editing, Picasa Style

If you want to cut out part of a picture or focus in on something in the picture, it takes one click to access the "crop" feature. If the camera was not straight when you took the picture, there is a "straighten" button. Getting rid of red-eye is as easy as clicking on the "red-eye" button. There are "auto contrast" and an "auto color" buttons for those quick fixes or you can manually adjust the fill light, highlights, shadows and color temperature with slide-bars. There is also an "I'm feeling lucky" button to automatically adjust lighting and color. There are an additional 12 other options to fine-tune your pictures to look the way you want them.

### Captions

Write captions that stay with the picture. You can choose to display or hide the caption.

### Share and Backup Your Pictures

Picasa makes creating a gift CD or backing up pictures onto a CD or other device a cinch.

### Get to Enjoy Your Pictures More

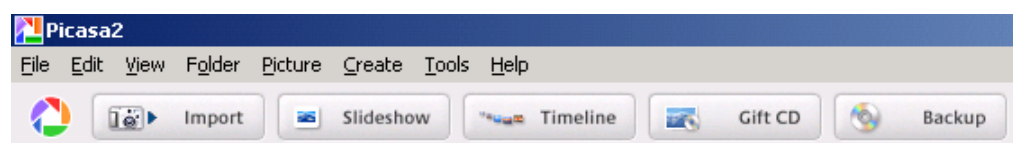
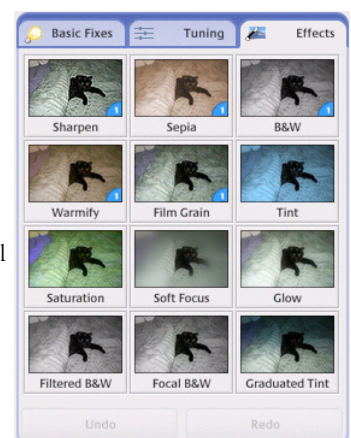
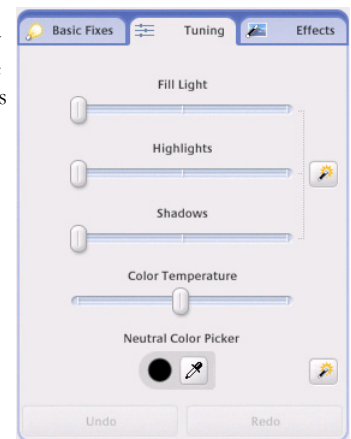
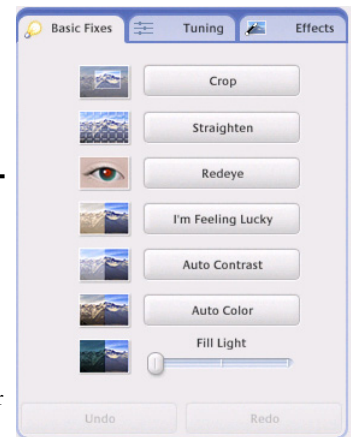
Make a screensaver out of selected pictures or place a picture on your desktop in windows. Picasa can do it.

### Order Pictures

Want one/several picture(s) to be printed and sent to you? Clicking on the "Order" button in Picasa brings you to links of the top five websites that will print your pictures out for you along with descriptions. Picasa will even automatically send your picture(s) to the website to be printed if you want.

### Printing

If you want to print your own pictures, Picasa's "Print" button makes it a snap. It will automatically detect your printer and ask if you want one picture on a page or maybe 2 - 4"X6" on a page, 4 - 3.5" x 5", or 9 wallet-size pictures on a page. You can adjust the quality and the copies too.



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