

## Organize Your Pictures – Don't just save them

By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, Florida

Technical Thoughts, Sarasota Technology Users Group, Florida

<http://sccccomputerclub.org> / [www.thestug.org](http://www.thestug.org)

philsorr (at) yahoo.com

How to organize your pictures has been a question since we have had pictures to organize. Before computers, the choices were: put them in an album, or leave them in the packet they came in, or maybe just put them into an old shoe box with all the other pictures. I'm sure many of you have looked through a shoe box of old photos; you might even have inherited a box or two. Many of the pictures in albums or shoe boxes were very precious because there were very few of them. Film was not cheap, and every roll of film had to be sent away for costly processing. With the advent of digital cameras, our picture taking habits have been greatly changed. The job of organizing our pictures has been turned over to the computer, well... sort of. About a year ago I wrote an article discussing Picture Management. In it I mentioned that picture management software does not move your pictures; it only lets you view your pictures in a particular way by acting as a lens into your picture collection. The files stay in their place, but the User Interface accesses them in the way that was asked for, like by date, or activity or even by person, and then presents them to you.

As you may know, Google Photos is a picture management App and a cloud picture storage service. If you upload all your pictures to Google Photos, you can get some very interesting organizations of pictures in what they call "albums." Google stores the pictures in whatever way they want and returns them to you in any fashion that you select. Google Photos uses some sophisticated software and facial recognition software to put together albums of a person that you select. It is amazing that they can even pick out side views of a person.

But back to Organizing Your Pictures. One way, that fits into the way that many software Apps work, is to keep "event" folders in chronological order. (Many Apps import your pictures into folders that you can name.) You might then put all the "event" folders for a particular year into a "Year" folder. And to continue that idea, you would put the "Year" folders into the appropriate decade folder. So, in a hierarchical scheme you would have in your "Pictures" folder, a folder for each decade, and in the decade folder you would have a folder for each year, and in the year folder you would have event folders for the pictures taken at that event. An organization might look like:

### PicturesPS

1980s	would contain 1980 thru 1989
1990s	would contain 1990 thru 1999
2000s	would contain 2000 thru 2009
2010s	would contain 2010 thru 2019
2010	
2011	
2012	

... And so on to 2018.

I called the Pictures folder "PicturesPS" just to separate it from "Pictures," the folder that comes with the Operating System. "PicturesPS" could be in "Pictures" or in another folder of your choice.

So, once you have the basic chronological folder structure set up, all you must do is create the "event" folders. If you are getting pictures from a camera, there are software Apps that help in organizing the pictures into "event" folders. Microsoft Photo Gallery lets you import pictures from your camera into a folder that you can name. You can set it up to use the current date, like yyyy-mm, and you can add a description, so you have something like "2018-02-Billy's Birthday" as the event folder and then each of the pictures imported will be named 2018-02Billy's Birthday-nnnn" where "nnnn" will start with 0001 for the first picture and increment for each following picture. Photo Gallery is very helpful in organizing your imported pictures and provides a lot of picture editing tools. (After importing a set of pictures, I always seem to need the "red-eye reduction" tool for a few pictures.) Unfortunately, Microsoft does not support Picture Gallery any longer, but if you can get it, it would be a good tool to use to help keep your pictures organized as the size of your picture collection increases.

There are other picture Apps that help in importing your pictures. Faststone Image Viewer provides the ability to import your pictures from a camera but is not as flexible in naming the folder. Faststone also provides basic picture editing tools. XnView, Irfanview, and GIMP are software Apps that provide picture editing tools and may provide some of the tools you need for keeping your pictures organized. (XnView also allows for importing pictures.)

Importing your pictures from your smartphone may not be as easy as importing them from your camera. But, by one means or another you can probably get the pictures into event folders on the computer. If the method you use allows you to name the picture files, you're ahead of the game, but my experience has been that the pictures remain named something like "IMGxxxxxx," where the xx's may or may not represent the date the picture was taken. If you do end up with these cryptic names, once you get the pictures into the appropriate event folders you can use an old File Explorer trick to change the picture name of all the pictures in the folder in one operation. Many of you probably remember this from the File Explorer class. With all the pictures in a folder, select the first picture and then Shift-click the last picture. Then, on the first picture do a right-click and select "Rename" in the menu. Next, name the first picture such as "2018-02-15Billy's Birthday." All the pictures will be renamed with this name and a number indicating the number of the picture in the selection. Pretty cool.

Now that you have all the pictures in event folders named and the event folders with appropriate names in the year folder, and the year folder in the decade folder, in your Pictures folder, you're all ready to go out and collect a lot more pictures.