



How to Store and Share Your Digital Photos... Free of Charge

by Ross Hendry



The recent weather has signalled that our Summer is over and our friends and families have returned home. Most of us will have recorded some of our visitors and events using our digital cameras. Once you have transferred your photos onto your PC, you will probably want to share some or all of these with other family members and friends. Those of you who have tried this by email will realise that this can be a very long process, many service providers restrict the size of emails, making it difficult to send more than a few photos at one time.

This is further compounded by the fact that digital cameras are recording more and more megapixels (MP) making each photo file size much bigger. For example, my digital camera is a 4MP one and the best quality photo is around 1megabyte (MB) in size on my hard disk drive. Sandy's new digital camera has 14MP, thus each photo is around 3.2MB. Those of you with really high-end cameras may find their pictures can be as large as 25MB each - making sending them by email slow, considerably reducing the number I can send in each email.

The solution is to use one of the online photo sharing services, of which there are many. Some come with free software to organise your photos on your computer, as well as making it easy to create your own online photo album/s to share with your family and friends. This means selecting the photos you want to share and uploading them to your online service - then letting the people you want to share the photos with, know where to go and see them with a simple email.

There are many benefits to this; you only have to send them once to your online service, you can add tags describing the photo or

event and the online service acts as a backup storing copies of your photos incase you need to download them in the future. You may also permit the viewers to take copies for themselves, and print from your albums.

I recently researched who is offering the free photo sharing services and found several sites that provide sharing for free. I personally use Google's Picasa picasa.google.com finding this easy to use and taking advantage of the 15GB of online storage space. This is more than enough for my needs. However, if I want more online space I can pay for it and it is not expensive. After all, 1GB represents around 1,000 photos of my old 4MP camera, and 300 on Sandy's 14MP model. Two relatively new services are www.shutterfly.com with unlimited free photo storage and believe it or not, Microsoft's **Windows OneDrive** service allows you to store 15GB of photos and documents totally free. You can find more info at www.onedrive.live.com/about/en-us/plans/ although this seemed less user-friendly than Shutterfly or Picasa.



All of the services I have mentioned accommodate all devices: PCs, Smart mobile telephones and Tablets. This means that your photos are stored on/in the internet 'Cloud' and are therefore available for you, your friends and family (if you permit them to) to view and

print photos and even add their own to your online album/s. Other services worth a mention are **Amazon Cloud Drive** (5GB) and **Apple iCloud** (5GB). For personal use I will stick to Google's Picasa as it suits my needs at present however, as my photo library grows the Microsoft OneDrive service is looking more and more attractive.

Next month I will explain how to create an online album using Picasa and share it with your friends and relatives.

Ross Hendry is the proprietor of Interface Consulting and Engineering, who has over 42 years experience in Communications, Computer Technology and Direct Marketing. (See advert below).

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