

## From the TechnoManor

So, what are you going to do with all those photos you'll be taking over the Thanksgiving holiday? Are they going to sit in your camera, or stuffed into your computer?

How about posting them to the Web to share with your family and friends?

I've been experimenting with two free services that allow you to do just that. One is from Microsoft and the other from Google.

In fact, I'm using the Google service for the church's photos.

Interested? Read on.

Both Google and Microsoft have a designated Web site for photo albums. Because they are so similar, I've listed all the specifics in a table (below). Each service is free, but requires you to register for a free account. Then you log in to the photo Web site, create albums, and upload photos from your computer. You can upload the photos using a Web browser (i.e., Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Safari) or with companion software.

Both Google and Microsoft provide this companion photo software for free. The software allows you to manage your photos locally on your computer. Later, you can upload those photos into an album on the respective Web site.

	<b>Google</b>	<b>Microsoft</b>
<b>They call their service</b>	Picasa Web Albums	Windows Live Spaces
<b>Where do I start?</b>	<a href="http://www.google.com">http://www.google.com</a>	<a href="http://home.live.com">http://home.live.com</a>
<b>What does service cost?</b>	It's free (although you can buy more storage).	It's free.
<b>How do I get an account?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Click <b>Sign In</b> in the upper right.</li><li>• Click <b>Create an account now</b> link</li><li>• Follow the prompts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Click <b>Sign In</b> in the upper right.</li><li>• Click <b>Sign up</b> to create a Windows Live ID.</li><li>• Follow the prompts.</li></ul>
<b>How many photos can I store?</b>	1 Gigabyte of free space	Not sure. I think you get 5 Gigabyte of free space.
<b>Can I control who sees stuff?</b>	Yes. Choices are Public (everybody on the Internet) or Unlisted (where you choose viewers)	Yes. Choices: Just you, people you choose, or anyone on the Internet.
<b>Companion Software</b>	Picasa	Windows Live Photo Gallery
<b>What does it cost?</b>	Free	Free
<b>What computers can use</b>	Windows, MacOS, and	Windows

**the companion software?**  
**How do I get it?**

Linux

- Visit <http://picasa.google.com>
- Click **Download Picasa 3**
- Follow the prompts

- Visit <http://home.live.com>
- Click **Windows Live** in upper left.
- Select **Windows Live services**, then **All services**
- Scroll down and Click **Photo Gallery**
- Click **Get it free**
- Follow the prompts.

### Why do you want to do this?

- The companion software is a good way to manage and tidy up your photos.
- You can share photos with family and friends.
- This is a good way to back up your photos. If your computer's hard drive crashes, you still have a copy on the Web.

### Any drawbacks?

- If it's on the Web, and anybody can see it, anybody will see it. Be mindful of what you share.
- If it's something you are very proud of, try to add a watermark to the picture to assert your ownership. Expect the photo to be copied.
- Web-based services come and go, even from Google and Microsoft. While photo-sharing is popular now, no one knows if this will last forever. So, do not consider the Web albums the sole source of our photos! Keep the originals on your computer.
- Google and Microsoft are in the information business. Expect that your photos will be used as input to that vast "database in the sky."
- You will see ads when using the Web photo services. Windows Live Spaces are more obtrusive than Picasa Web Albums. They've gotta make money somehow.

### Some cool things you can do with the companion software

- Locate people within a photo and tag them with their name. The software then catalogs the name and photo. You can then view all the photos for a person. One quirk: Windows Live Photo Gallery is somewhat liberal about what it considers a face. It told me that a hubcap was a face, needing a name. I declined its suggestion.
- You can add tags to any photo to help you remember.
- Picasa allows you to add watermarks to photos you post to Picasa Web Albums.

- Both programs allow you to go in and touch up individual photos. Picasa has more features for fiddling with the photo than does Windows Live Photo Gallery.

### Personal Opinions

- I wish the web album service and companion software developers of both companies would get together and talk. I find the Windows Live Photo Gallery software to be easier to use than Picasa, but Picasa Web Albums to be easier to use than Windows Live Spaces. Go figure.
- Windows Live Photo Gallery is the simpler of the two companion programs. Picasa has lots of bells and whistles.
- Learning Curve Warning: No matter which photo service or companion software you choose, set aside an hour or so to play. And I do mean play. There is no real documentation to tell you how to use these things. However, the links and menus have reasonable names. When you slowly pass your cursor over things, it will usually give you helpful tips. Think of these things as free Christmas gifts that are begging for your attention.
- Hold your nose and read the licensing agreements (the EULAs). They reveal what Google and Microsoft are allowed to do.
- This is all unfinished work (sometimes called *beta software*). There are times when the services will be unavailable, a feature stops working, or something quirky happens. It can be frustrating. However, it's also the nature of the new wave of free stuff.

### If you want to see my albums:

I've prepared albums on each of the Web services. If you like dog pictures, check 'em out.

Windows Live Spaces: I'm [woodywifi@hotmail.com](mailto:woodywifi@hotmail.com). The albums are at:  
<http://cid-2098a68943d5d908.spaces.live.com>  
(Select, cut, and paste this. Don't try to type it! Thank You, Microsoft.)

Picasa Web Albums: I'm [frenchygrey@gmail.com](mailto:frenchygrey@gmail.com). The albums are at:  
<http://picasaweb.google.com/frenchygrey>  
(Select, cut, and paste this, too.)

If you think of a technical question while you're enjoying your Thanksgiving Holiday, drop me at:

[frenchygrey@gmail.com](mailto:frenchygrey@gmail.com)

I'll (urp) answer it in *The Link* after I finish that drumstick.

Dave Gillen