

The *ICON* Graphic Newsletter



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FREE
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Meetings

Last meeting Andy Gilbert, from PC Richard demonstrated the newest version of MS Office. He showed us how the new menu system, called a ribbon, works. This months meeting we will be treated to a live demonstration of Smart Computing magazine and there re Web site. Each attendee will receive a packet of Smart Computing goodies.



Announcements

April 20th, 2007 will be a continuing class on digital photography, given by Laura Leita. This time Laura will compare Photoshop, and the Gimp. She will also begin teaching photo restoration. Please bring digital copies of photos you would like to see fixed or email them to laura@iconpcug.org

Seeing What's Beneath Your Photos

by Laura Leita

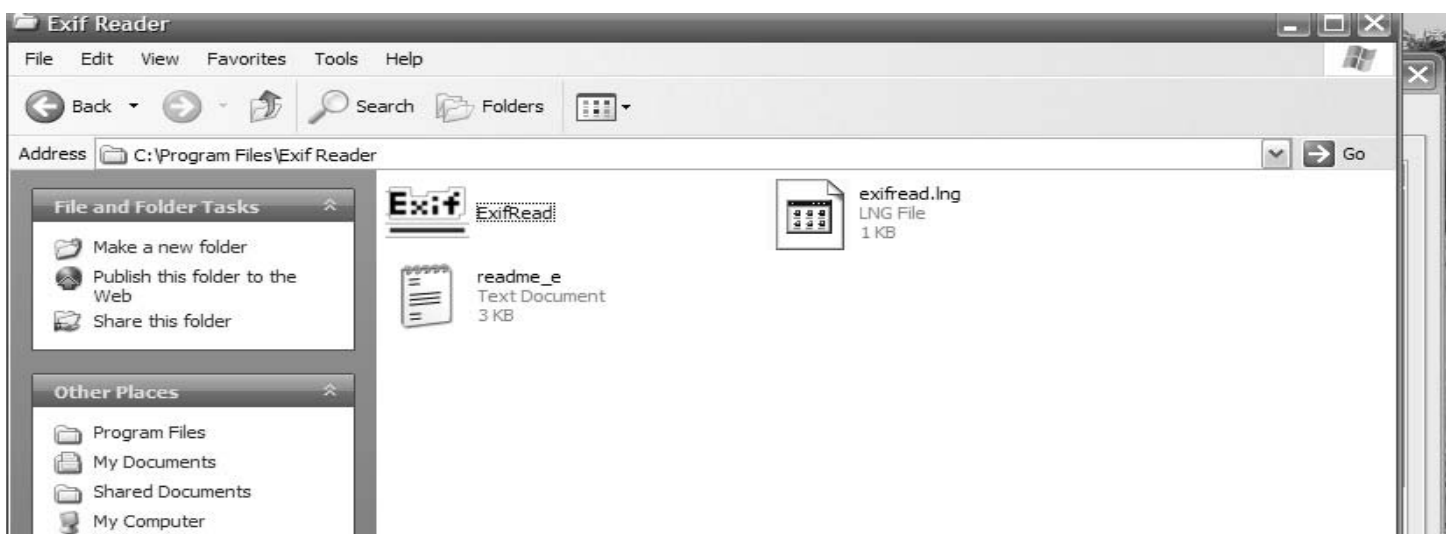
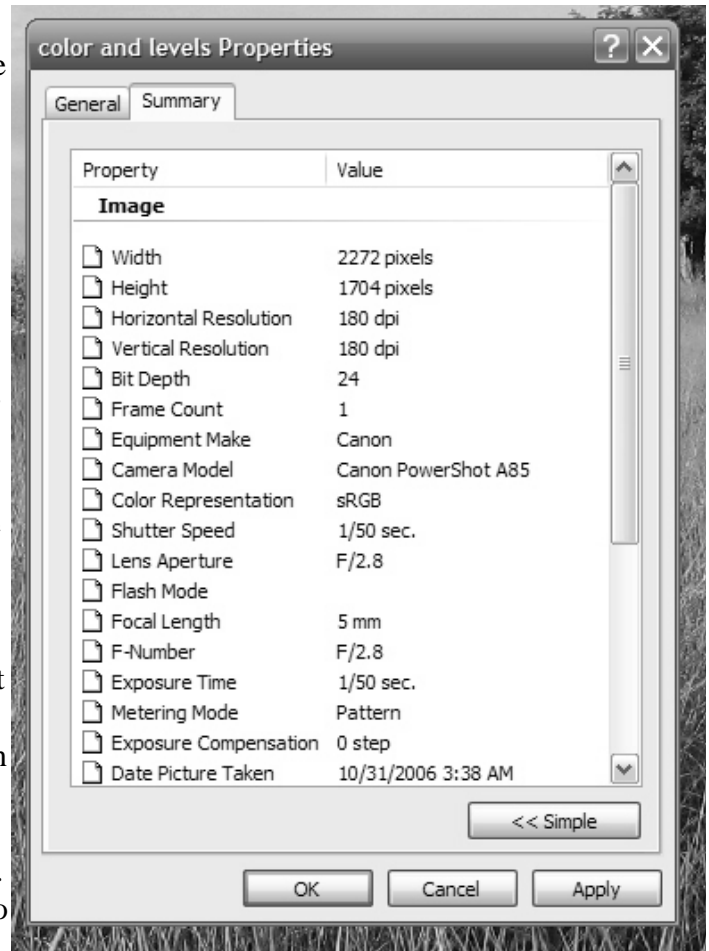
Did you know that whenever you take a photo, an extensive list of data is also preserved with each photo? Embedded in each of your picture files is all sorts of information including the date, the type of camera, and what settings your camera used when taking the photo.

When you take your photo and edit it with another program, that program also records information within the file thus leaving a trail of information. This takes place not only in photos but also in Word documents and many other types of files. This is often referred to as Meta-Data

There are two ways you can access this data. One of them is already embedded into Microsoft's Windows XP. Right click on any photo and go to Properties. You will see at least two tabs under Properties: General and Summary. Click on Summary. Most likely if you have never done this before, Summary will be in "simple" mode. You will see "Title", "Subject" and "Author". There will be a button to go to advanced mode. This is where you can see all of the data. If you are already in advanced mode, the button will then say "simple mode" to allow you to switch back and forth.

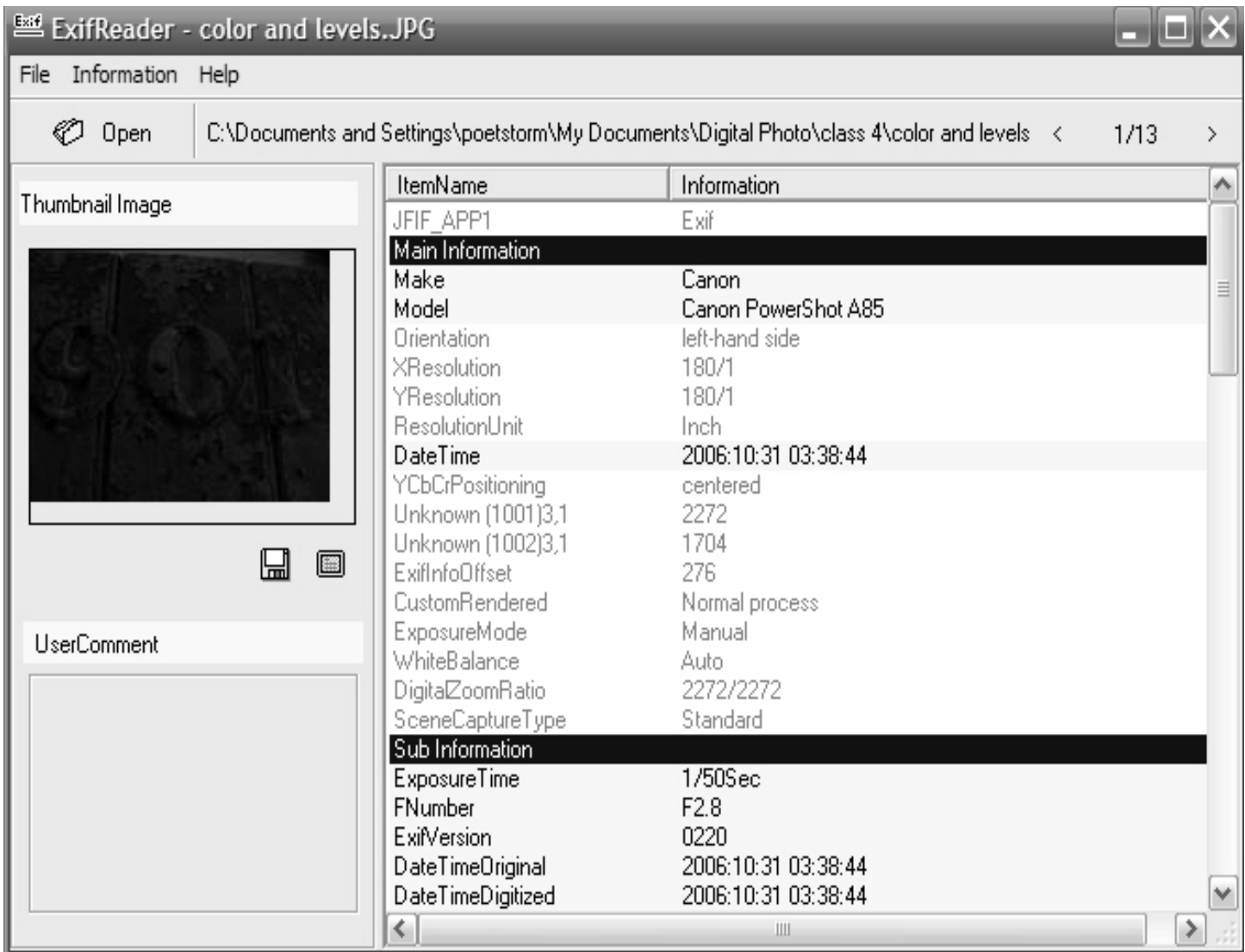
Once you are in advanced mode you will see all sorts of data. You can see what camera took the shot, the size, resolution, and other camera settings. It will tell you if the flash was fired and how long the shutter was held open to take the shot. The ISO setting will tell you the light sensitivity settings you were on. Look around at the information. Not all of it will really be relevant to you but it is interesting to see what information is hidden there.

If you want any more information there is a free program that I find very useful. It is called EXIF Reader. It is a very small self-contained program. All you need to do is unzip the folder and copy the folder wherever you like it. You can run the program from within the folder. There is no installation process needed and it does not put anything in the registry. There are a few places to find this program but one of them is at www.snapfiles.com.



The link I used is <http://www.snapfiles.com/get/exifreader.html>.

Once you have the folder unzipped double click on the folder. You will see a program called "ExifRead". Double click on the program. You now have a choice. You can click on File and open an image,



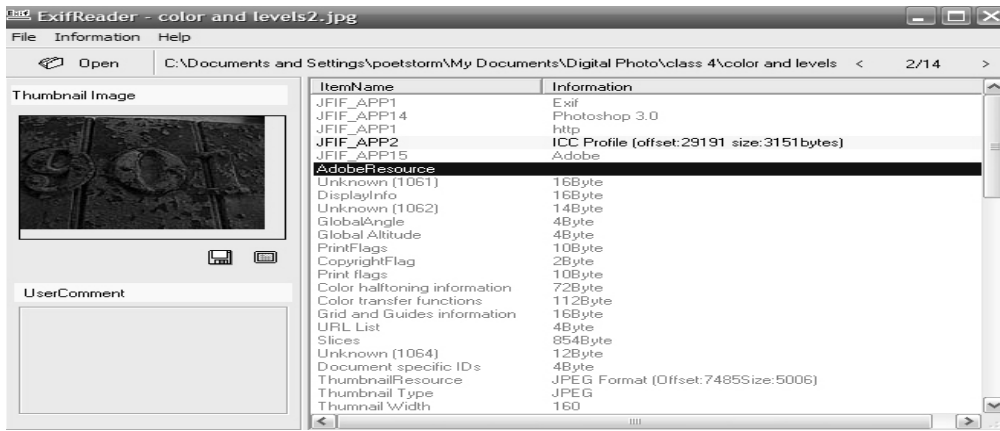
or you can just drag the image file into the program directly.

Scroll down through all of the information. This provides more detail than Windows. You do not need to be familiar with every piece of information. Some of the most useful are: Shutter, F-Stop, ISO, Flash etc...

The photo I used was taken with a Canon camera and the EXIF data does list the camera I used. Now I took the photo into Adobe Photoshop, made some small changes, and re-saved it under another name. I then dragged the new file into EXIFReader. At the top of the data it now says Adobe Photoshop. I can still find my camera information if I scroll down but Adobe Photoshop did add it's own traces to my photo. Some program will erase all the digital photo information when you edit the photo. I have found it very difficult to pull photo information from photos uploaded to the Internet through some of the photo server sites.

You may be asking what you can use this information for. For photographers, it is helpful to trouble shoot photos. Also if you like how a photo came out compared to others you took, you can compare the settings used and alter your photography strategies for that location. You can see what works in certain settings, and what does not work. Because of my involvement in paranormal research I have found this program absolutely necessary. I can see how photos were taken when submitted to me and can often use this program to explain why a photo came out the way it did.

The data can also have a downside as well. There are times where you may not want the date and time



the photo was taken to be known. There are a lot of theories out there as to how to rid yourself of this EXIF data. There is a program called EXIFER that claims to do it but once you erase it, programs like Thumbs Plus may have a problem with the photos. You can download the program here though the site requests that you send them a postcard of you like the program.

<http://www.friedemann-schmidt.com/software/exifer/>. I have not experimented with this program myself because I prefer to preserve my EXIF data for future reference.

It is interesting in any case to see what information you really have stored in your photos. Should you have any questions about camera settings or the EXIF reader programs I can try to assist you. You can email me at laura@iconpcug.org.

Last Meeting Drawing WINNERS



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"The Appliance • Electronics • Computer Giant!"