

ACD Systems

Thumbnail magic in three flavors

by Jack and Sue Drafafl

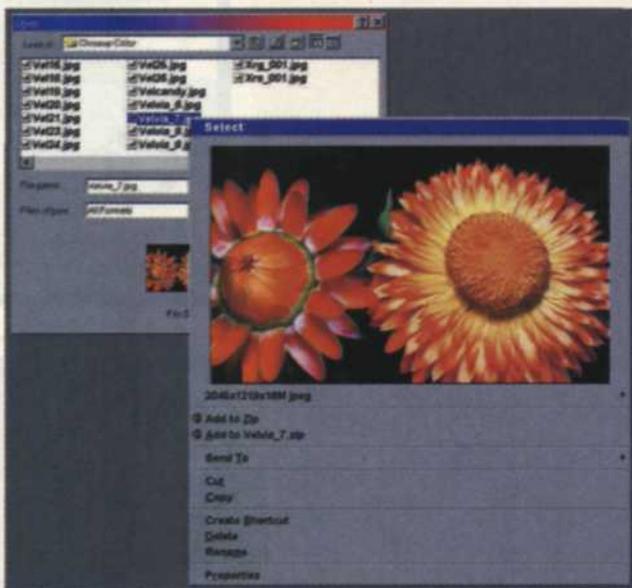
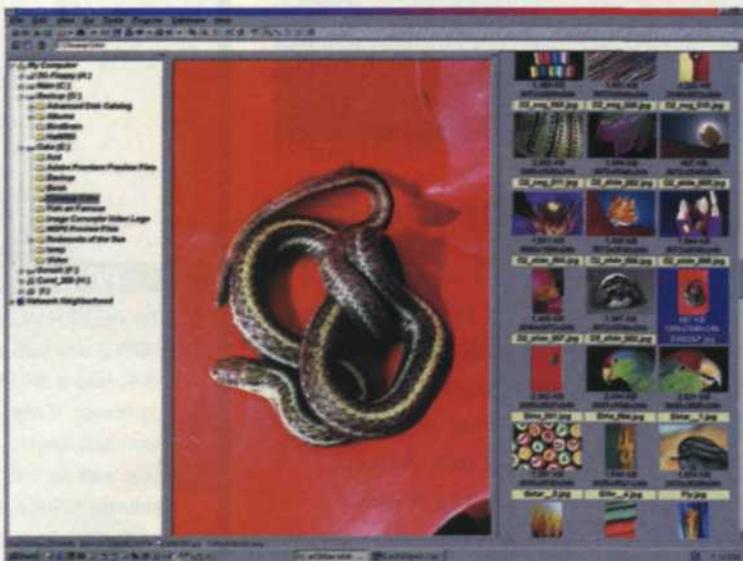
Thumbnail images make digital life easier. If you have ever had to look through dozens of hard-disk files and try and figure just what each looks like, you'll quickly understand the need for thumbnails. Some editing programs embed a thumbnail in the file when you edit it, but most scanners, digital cameras, and basic software programs don't. So, what you have is a bunch of files names that have no visual representation of their content unless you individually open each file.

Thankfully ACD Systems International has come to our rescue with the perfect solution. They make a variety of image-viewing software programs that operate as a stand alone or easily interface with your existing photo-editing software or Windows Explorer. We specifically looked at three of their programs that address the problem of thumbnailing image files.

ACDSee is a stand-alone program that doubles as a Windows Explorer, image database, thumbnail utility, digital camera control, and TWAIN interface for scanners. This program looks like Windows Explorer, except that the image files are now displayed with thumbnails magically appearing to the right side. If you don't like the thumbnail size, just use the options panel to enlarge or reduce the size.

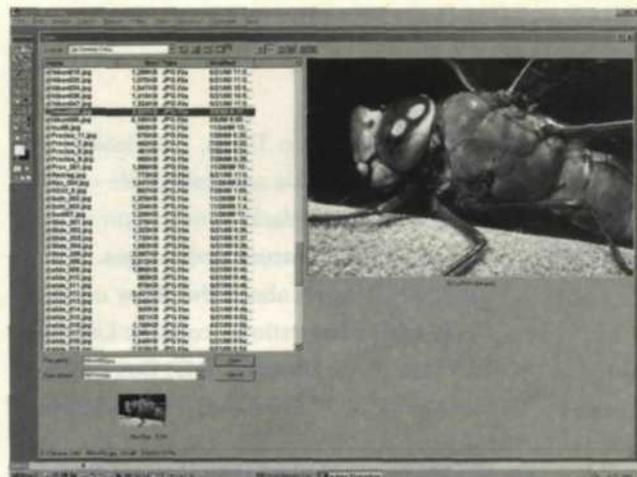
When you select one of the thumbnail images, a very large, screen-resolution version of the file fills the center of the screen. This makes it easy to study the file closely before opening it into your favorite editing program. Just double-click on it and the editing program opens and you are ready to edit. More than 40 of the most popular image-file formats are supported.

ACDSee also includes a wide assortment of image-editing tools to assist you with the digital process. A small icon at the top takes you into an Enhancer program so you can change color balance, brightness, sharpness, or use a variety of other editing tools. You can also select images to run as a slide show, where the program works its way through the directory displaying each image in full screen resolution. You



Top: ACDSee shows file names on the left, thumbnails on the right, and the selected image in the center. **Bottom:** PicaView presents a thumbnail when you right-click on a file name.

can also use the special pulldown menu to create image files to send directly over the Internet.



Left: ImageFox displays large thumbnails when you go to the open/save function of a program, so you don't have to take the time to open large files to find a specific photograph.

ImageFox is a great program that works directly with any program that opens and saves image files. After you install ImageFox, just open your normal editing program. When you go to the file-open pulldown, each file selected will display a thumbnail image. It doesn't matter if the file was created in the program or a thumbnail was previously made. ImageFox quickly looks at the file and makes a new thumbnail so you can preview it before opening the file. No more guessing and blindly opening files. This is a great tool for digital-camera or scanner files whose images are saved without thumbnails. ImageFox saves the day by displaying new thumbnails for everyone.

We really found ImageFox useful when using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Premiere. Many file formats used by these two programs do not have thumbnails. We have been using a photo database in the background to find the files and then loading them into the programs. Thanks to ImageFox, now every file is thumbnailled.

PicaView offers another approach to the thumbnail concept. This Windows Explorer add-on enhances the way your Windows program previews files. With PicaView installed, you simply open Windows Explorer and go to the directory where the new image files are located. Right-click on one, and magically a thumbnail and a menu with file information appears. The thumbnail size is adjustable to accommodate your monitor size and screen resolution. Clicking on the thumbnail will bring the image up to full size image resolution. Once you

have selected the file you want, double click on it and the edit program opens with that file on the screen. No more guesswork.

PicaView can also set a selected image as a wallpaper for screen backgrounds, batch process conversions from one file format to another and even play wave files. Wow!

So, which ACD program is best for you? Although we only worked with these three files for a few weeks, we still think we can help you decide. Let's start with ACDSee. If you are just getting into digital imaging, and have a scanner or digital camera, you will need an image database and editing program. ACDSee is a great place to start. This program has everything you need to adjust the image for output to your favorite digital printer. PicaView is for those who really enjoy working with Windows Explorer, and have many image files scattered over your hard drive. This program removes all the suspense of not knowing which image is which. Just right click and it is there in full view. ImageFox is our favorite, because we do a lot of image editing with images coming from a variety of sources. The thrill of photographically seeing the files before we select them saves us a great time and effort. Better yet, just buy all of them since ACD Systems offers all three in a combo package too reasonable to pass up.

We have seen plenty of new photo-related programs in the last few months, and these ACD programs are some of the best to come upon the scene. They help us feel more organized in our editing and files don't fall between the cracks anymore. The time savings for your investment will be recouped in short order, so log onto www.acdsystems.com and download their thumbnail magic. ■

CHECK OUT OUR LINES!

Just mark the catalogs you'd like and send this ad in!*

- BENBO and DAVIS & SANFORD**
Tripods & Tripod Heads
- DOMKE & OUTPACK**
Shooter's Bags, Backpacks, Vests & Accessories
- MAGNABRITE**
Light-Gathering Magnifiers
- PATERSON**
Tanks, Trays & Accessories
- POLARIS/SHEPHERD**
Flash & Exposure Meters
- ROTATRIM**
Precision Rotary Paper Cutters
- SAUNDERS & SAUNDERS/LPL**
Enlargers, Easels & Accessories
- SILVER PIXEL PRESS/KODAK BOOKS**
Photo Books & Camera Manuals
- STROBOFRAME**
Flash Brackets & Accessories
- TIFFEN**
Photographic Filters & Optical Accessories
- VUE-ALL**
Archival Storage Pages
- WEIN**
Cordless Remote Flash Controls
- ZING DESIGNS**
Neoprene Camera Cases and Accessories

TIFFEN®

Helping Create the World's Greatest Images

The Tiffen Company

21 Jet View Drive, Rochester, NY 14624

FAX: (800) 394-3686

www.tiffen.com • www.saundersphoto.com

*Help us control costs and reduce waste - please request only those catalogs that really interest you.

Name _____

Address _____

By **SAUNDERS**