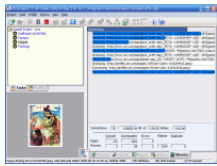


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By: Codrut Nistor, Editor, Software Reviews



Save Your Time, Get Your Pictures!

Retrieve entire photo galleries with PicaLoader

The Internet today is huge, and downloading a large amount of photos related to a certain topic can be a difficult and time consuming task. As usual, I hate manual search, and I have found a tool that helps automating this task. Of course that this is my next target and its name is PicaLoader. PicaLoader recently reached the version numbered 1.49 and I got its 30 days trial version right here, right now. The installation kit is 1.6MB in size and the setup process should be easy to follow for everyone. These being said, it's time to discover the program's interface and features. Unfortunately, here's another interface that looks old. Well, you can't have an eye candy interface and excellent features with each program that you encounter, that's the truth...and if I skip this detail, I must say that we get a well organized and easy to use interface with PicaLoader, despite its "end of 90s" design. The elements present here are the menu bar, the toolbar and three panels that handle the tasks, previews and current task details. When you run the program for the first time, you can create a new project or open one of the existing samples. A project is organized as a tree having more branches, where each branch represents a download task. Creating and setting up tasks is very easy, and once you're done with that part, all you have to do is press the Start button from the toolbar. The image support of this program is not as wide as I was expecting, but you can use it to grab and display thumbnails for JPG, PCX, PNG, TIFF, BMP, GIF and WMF files. Since most images available on the Internet are still using the JPEG format, I can say that the file support offered by PicaLoader is adequate to its purpose. The features regarding the program's connection to the Internet include multithreaded downloads, up to 50 threads, HTTP proxy server support and resuming of broken downloads. The most features worth mentioned here are related to: pictures download and management, PicaLoader having an advanced HTML analyst engine that can follow almost every existing link; advanced picture filtering that allows you to use a Perl 5 compatible regular expression editor; pagination; picture notes; ratings, and many more, with a maximum of 700,000 pictures per project. I don't know about you, but I would surely use this program to grab some pictures with my favorite topics...and there's an entire month available to do that! **The Good** PicaLoader can save you a lot of time, is easy to use and has a lot of features. **The Bad** The documentation of this program seems to be done in a hurry ("Welcome to PicaLoader 1.30", then "Congratulations on choosing PicaLoader 1.25", all in the Help file of the current version? COME ON!!) and the price is way too high, in my opinion. While using it, the program crashed on two occasions, a fact that doesn't sound good at all! **The Truth** PicaLoader seems to me another one of those programs worthy to try, unworthy to buy, and with a future full of promises...or not, everything depends on the path that the producer will choose. All I can do now is to wish them "good luck" and to let you enjoy this nice product. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*