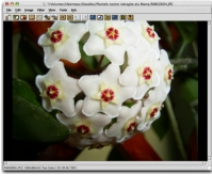


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## [XnView, Ultimate Graphic Conversion Tool](#)

*Not recommended for heavy use...*

I have been a fan of Graphic Converter since forever. It is a great all around application for both opening and editing images, it has nice batch options and, above all, a very impressive list of supported formats. Whether you only use it on specific occasions or every day, it has a great mix of features that cover just about everything. Sure it might not excel at anything in particular, being outclassed by pure viewer or editing applications, but the main strength of the program is the sheer amount of formats it supports. Once you leave the image formats out of the equation, Graphic Converter starts looking rather bad, and that was the feeling I got when I read about a little program called XnView, that supports a whole lot more formats. Knowing that you can open just about anything with one single program is great, so I took this newcomer out for a spin, to see how it stands up against the tried and true. **What it does** XnView is an imaging application that lets you open, view, edit and save images. It has a little bit of everything and is not particularly astounding except in one aspect. XnView supports over 400 (no, that is not a typo) graphic file formats, letting you open just about anything from this side of the sun. If you have some images that you can't open with your average application, this little program can be a godsend. **Working with it** The very first thing that you will notice when running XnView is that it is a X11 application. Most such applications are uncomfortable to work with, to say the least, but I've had many months of experience with programs under X11 so I pushed forward undeterred. When you first launch it, the program starts out in the shape of a menu bar. From here, you can see the documentation, change settings and open some images. You need to either open an image or go into browse mode before you can actually see the interface of the program, and I was quite sure that it has suffered from some peculiar crash for a few moments. Once you open an image, the interface will magically appear, bringing with it buttons, scroll bars, new menus and everything else that was missing in the beginning. Opening an image will actually open the folder that contains it, and you will be able to move forward and back through any other images in that same folder. In this viewer mode, you can both edit the image and save it. There is a lot you can do to the image, from color changes, effects and filters that you can apply to rotations, flips and crops. There are no novel options and everything should be familiar from other editing applications. Beside the View mode, there is also a Browse mode, that lets you move through folders easier, without having to make use of the Open command every time. While navigation might be easier here, you will not be able to modify images in any way until you open them. This sends them into a new View mode window where you can have your fun, make changes and save the results. The program also has batch options to make working with a large number of images easier as well as some other stuff like the ability to generate thumbnails and contact sheets. **Better?** In terms of supported formats, XnView beats Graphic converter hands down. This program offers a very impressive list of supported formats, from the most obscure to the everyday ones. XnView fails to impress in terms of actual functionality. The fact that this is an X11 application is part of the problem. Everything is alien, from the shortcuts to the keyboard combinations that use the wrong modifier key, to the dialogue options. Even Windows applications have more coherence. Some options such as the FullScreen mode will break the interface when you exit it, causing the menu bar to be placed partly underneath the title bar of the window. Once this happens there is nothing you can do except open another image, which will spawn a new interface so you can close the old one. There are also many non-X11 related issues, from menu bar options in the form of images to invisible items clogging up the browse mode folder list. In terms of features, XnView does have a few up on

Graphic Converter, but there are not major in any way. At the end of the day, both programs do the same thing, and what few options XnView has that the other one does not are simply not enough to balance out the difficulties that having to work with it imply. For anything except the most rare of occurrences, Graphic Converter will let you get more done in the same time. XnView is good to have around for those rare instances when you run into some bizarre file that nothing else will open, but for the rest of the time, Graphic Converter is the better choice. **The Good** Supports an incredible amount of graphic file formats, with even the most obscure ones being on the list. It also has a decent selection of image editing options, effects and filters. **The Bad** An X11 application with everything that it implies. A pain for anything but the most simple 'open and save in a common format' procedure. **The Truth** XnView is a good program to have around when you run into strange files, but for actually getting work done, anything else is better. Here are some screenshots, click to enlarge: