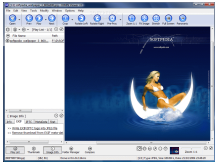


5 November 2007

By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews



DIMIN Viewer

## Potent Image Viewer

*Handy tools for modifying your pictures*

I do not know about you, but it's been a long time since I gave up installing an image viewer that only displays the various pictures on the disk. True that I do not have the time to look at the pictures save when I am performing retouches but I really hate to clog the system with an application that does only one thing. Not only is it a waste of space and computer resources, but it is also a useless effort as I have to learn how to work with more than one software. It's true that there aren't many of those on the market today, and even Windows Photo Gallery comes with options for color adjustment, cropping and red eye fixing (though it does not allow too much). However, every once in a while, I bump into such programs that do nothing more than XP's Windows Picture and Fax Viewer, mainly show you the image. But it is not the case right now as DIMIN Viewer is more than a simple image viewer. Also, it is not a state of the art image editor, so do not expect it to do miracles. The application is free for non-commercial use and comes in three versions: Normal, Light and Full. There's no need to say that we jumped directly to the full edition. Immediately after installation, DIMIN Viewer will start a configuration wizard to help you with the minimum set up of the program. The four-step wizard lets you choose from the start which file formats you want to associate with the program, select the language (this can also be detected automatically), opt for one of the three types of views available (simple, normal or advanced) and check for updates. I have to admit that the wizard seems to be completed in a hurry by the developer as there is still polishing to be made (the cursor appears in the information lines). With all visual elements active, the interface seems a bit daunting if not in maximized mode. But as soon as you get past this, you can proceed to discovering the features under the hood. First of all, DIMIN Viewer can play multiple pictures in a slideshow so this makes for a great viewer of heavy picture directories. Activating the different interface elements is done from the lower left hand corner of the application window. You can turn on the view of the Playlist, enable the image browser, picture information window, folder manager and compare window. For a better experience, I suggest you enable them according to the nature of the work with the program. Main buttons for working with DIMIN are available in the top side of the screen and range from slideshow play control, crop options and image rotation by 90 degrees to the left or to the right to zoom options and different types of views for the picture (fit to screen, stretch, fullscreen or panoramic). When adding files to view a slideshow there are multiple ways to it. You can do it by opening entire folders (recursive opening is supported) or by dragging them to playlist window. Either way, you will be able to benefit from this feature which can be adjusted in terms of speed of image change and transition from Options menu. There are no transition effects right now, but maybe a later version will implement the feature. Users do not have too many image editing options, but considering that it is an image viewer we are talking about I would say there are quite a few of them. You can change the brightness and contrast of loaded pictures, saturation, adjust RGB, extract color channels or convert it to a negative, apply a few filters and configure them to suit your needs (blur, sharpen, find edges, smooth or deinterlace). Arithmetic modifications of the image will hide pixels according to their properties, darker or lighter ones, but the application can also make an average between them and show you an average color or just display the difference. The list of effects is extremely brief and contains only shadow dropping on the margins of the picture, just like a border. Of course, you get to define the size of the shadow as well as the shadow and background colors. In almost all cases a preview window will assist by making either on the spot transformations with auto preview function enabled or at the wish of the user (by manually pressing Preview button).

Configuring the application is not a difficult task either, as DIMIN Viewer provides all the settings in one accessible place. All the tabs sheltering the options may seem daunting at the beginning but once you get your eyes on the actual buttons and boxes you will realize that there is nothing to be afraid of. Generally, all the settings are intended to smoothen the collaboration between the user and the software and in this case, there is no exception. You can ask for confirmations when deleting, overwriting or closing unsaved images enable screen saver blocking and power management for fullscreen modes, define hotkeys for going to the next image, previous one or start playing the slideshow, choose the file types to be associated with DIMIN Viewer, set up the way the playlist reacts and how it plays the files. Additional options permit establishing a standard thumbnail size for the images in the browser in the lower part of the application window and the maximum size of thumbnail cache as well as make the necessary slideshow settings for the best experience (image preview, type of the slideshow, define a song to be played while it lasts, set the transition step and speed). Image format supported by DIMINI Viewer are quite something. Besides the fact that the program supports over 40 formats, you can also configure them in terms of compression and decoding of the image. Among the most popular of them we counted ICO, WMF, TIFF, PNG, several types of RAW specific to a number of popular digital cameras, PSD, JPEG, BMP, DNG and GIF. Filter section in Options menu contains almost 100 elements and some of them are configurable. Most of them can be found in the interface (like color channel extractors and color adjusting ones) and you get to configure them in advance for a quicker job. I have to say that the multitude of elements populating Filter window is indeed impressive and few are the image viewers that can compete with DIMIN at this category. Also, to make your work easier, the application features a script editor where you can create your own actions. You can count on filters to be executed during the pre-processing stage of the image. Creating a script to be run on certain pictures is definitely a fast way to complete the job. Simply load it up with the necessary filters and execute it when necessary. Although the application is rough on the edges, it comes with plenty of useful tools and advanced users will appreciate it. It is not easy to digest at the beginning but it'll grow on you. Hopefully, the developer will take care of minor aspects that need retouching and turn it into a real "menace". **The Good** DIMIN Viewer has slideshow capabilities ready to be put to work in both fullscreen mode as well as panoramic. The myriad of options available is overwhelming at the beginning but if you take the time to peruse its settings and features, you will see that this is no ordinary image viewer. The list of filters available is impressive and the fact that it can run scripts is a good point. **The Bad** it needs polishing here and there and enlarging the list of effects would come in great. Beginners will definitely reject it from the start or use it for the more obvious functions like slideshow as help menu is not explaining all the options of the application and you will have to discover its true powers by yourself. **The Truth** Definitely a useful tool for more advanced users. It comes with an impressive list of filters and support for lots of image types. If you've got a digital camera then DIMIN will most likely support the images that come right out of it. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*