# Viewing JPG Comments

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## Motivation

The now-common JPG or JPEG files that are often the file format for photographs from digital cameras and cell-phones can store large amounts of text in several fields. In particular the **Comment** field is relatively accessible. Furthermore, having the "caption" within the file avoids loss of this information when the name of the file is changed. Some photo-management software separates the caption and image, and thereby risks caption loss.

Unfortunately, the majority of image display programs do not, by default, display the Comment field. In the past, we have used the program **mapivi** which is nominally available for multiple platforms. However, while I have found it easy to install for Linux, particularly distributions in the Debian family, I have not found the Windows executable to install satistfactorily. The more recent Perl code (https://sourceforge.net/projects/mapivi/files/Mapivi_Perl/) suggests a cross-platform possibility, but my experience is not encouraging.

## Irfanview

The program Irfanview is a well-established and feature-rich image viewing and management program. (http://www.irfanview.com/) It is free for non-commercial use. Moreover, while it is primarily for the Windows platform, the 32 bit version can be installed on Linux using WINE (a WINdows Emulator). Irfanview allows the Comment field to be added or edited. Moreover, there are viewing options that allow one to cycle through images in a directory with the Comment displayed.

WARNING: I have found download sites for Irfanview are designed so that the most obvious "Download" button will try to install software that has nothing to do with Irfanview and which is – if not outright malware – generally deleterious to your system. Make sure you are actually downloading the Irfanview program and/or its plugins and nothing else. Note that for installation under Wine you need the 32-bit version.

## Editing Comments

To add/edit comments with Irfanview, one first opens an image using the file selector (either File/Open or click on the small folder icon), selects the desired file, and chooses Open.

The Comment can be viewed and edited by choosing (Image / Information / Comment), or using the keyboard shortcut I followed by Alt-C. If the Comment is changed, then one must Write it, and then File / Save (shortcut Ctrl-S) to ensure it is back on disk.

## Configuration of Irfanview for Comment viewing

The full-screen view of Irfanview can be made to display the Comment as well as other data. The options can be set by View / "Show fullscreen options" or use the keyboard shortcut P and select "Fullscreen / Slideshow". Note that finding the documentation of these possibilities may require some effort.

I have found that it is helpful to set the following options:

- Under "Set display multiplier" (upper right of option box) I like 80% for height and 90% for width.

- I like the text position "bottom" and I turn off transparent background. (On one machine we found it necessary to turn off transparent background to change text colour.)

- I like a black text background and screen color.

- I like to use Courier New 12 point and make the text yellow, noting that it may be necessary to play with other options before this is possible. I have also noted that some machines may not have Courier New available, in which case another font needs to be chosen.

- Put $C as the only entry in the "Full screen only" text box, and make sure "Show text" is selected.

These choices put the Comment at the bottom and leave enough room that it generally does not overlap the image. They also make it a readable size and colour. However, I encourage users to play with the full-screen display options to accommodate their own needs and preferences.

To choose full-screen display we simple hit the Enter key. (Esc will exit full-screen.) The space bar cycles through the files in the currently-selected directory.