

Insider Extra 5

ASP.NET Picture Library

This Insider Extra operates somewhat like the slide-show mode of the Microsoft FrontPage Photo Gallery component. Like a Photo Gallery slide show, the Picture Library Insider Extra displays a scrollable list of thumbnail pictures. Clicking any thumbnail displays the full-sized picture. Figure IE5-1 shows an ASP.NET Picture Library in use.

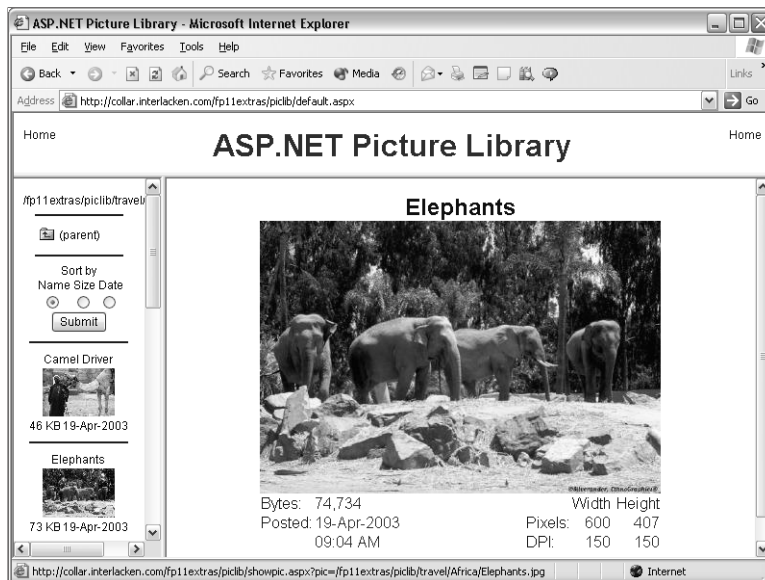


Figure IE5-1. The ASP.NET Picture Library displays a selection list of picture files in a folder. Clicking any thumbnail on the left displays the corresponding full-sized picture on the right.

Despite being two solutions to essentially the same problem, the Photo Gallery component and Picture Library Insider Extra are quite different in nature. Here are the primary distinctions:

- The Picture Library Insider Extra uses a frameset to organize its screen areas and to scroll the list of thumbnails. This makes the Insider Extra more compatible with older browsers than a Photo Gallery slide show, but incurs the possible wrath of people who hate frames.
- A Photo Gallery component can organize only one list of pictures. A single ASP.NET Picture Library can organize any number of lists.
- A Photo Gallery component always displays the same picture at the same size. The ASP.NET Picture Library resizes full-sized pictures to fit the current window size.

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- To add, remove, or reposition files in a Photo Gallery slide show, you must open its Web page in Design view, display the Photo Gallery Properties dialog box, and then make the change you want.

To add or remove pictures that the ASP.NET Picture Library displays, you add or remove them from folders that the library controls. To reposition files in the list of thumbnails, you change the picture file names.

- The result of configuring a Photo Gallery component is an ordinary Web page that you can deliver from any Web server.

The ASP.NET Picture Library is a series of Microsoft ASP.NET pages that run only on Microsoft Windows 2000 or later Web servers that have the Microsoft .NET Framework installed.

- You can customize a Photo Gallery component only to the degree that the Photo Gallery Properties dialog box allows.

Because you have the source code, you can customize an ASP.NET Picture Library to your heart's content. However, to do so, you must be somewhat proficient in ASP.NET programming.

Installing the Picture Library Insider Extra

If you'd like to try using the ASP.NET Picture Library in your own Web site, proceed as follows:

- 1 Make sure that the Web site that will contain the ASP.NET Picture Library is marked as an application in IIS. If you aren't sure about this, you can find out by:
 - Using the ASP.NET Self-Diagnosis Web Page Insider Extra

For more information about the ASP.NET Self-Diagnosis Web page, see Insider Extra 2, "ASP.NET Self-Diagnosis Web Page."

- Viewing the Web server's configuration in Internet Information Services Manager
- Contacting your system administrator or service provider

For more information about marking folders on a Web server as applications, refer to "Configuring Home Directory Settings," in Appendix O.

- 2 Open the Web site that you want to contain the Picture Library Insider Extra.
- 3 Create a folder where the ASP.NET Picture Library will reside. If you don't have any other name in mind, name the folder piclib.
- 4 Open the Insider Extra Web site that you installed from the companion CD. The Sample Files setup program installs this site at [My Documents]\Microsoft Press\FrontPage 2003 Inside Out\fp1\extras. Then, open the piclib folder.

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- 5 Drag all the files in the piclib folder of the Insider Extra Web site to the folder you created in step 3. However, unless you have no test pictures, don't drag any subfolders.
- 6 Drag the folder-open.gif and folder-up.gif files from the images folder of the Insider Extra Web site to an images subfolder located in your Web site's root.

Creating Picture Libraries

At this point, you can run the Picture Library Insider Extra by requesting the *folder/default.aspx* page, where *folder* is the folder you created in step 3 of the previous procedure. However, because you haven't added any pictures yet, this isn't likely to be very satisfying. Here's how to add pictures:

- 1 Open the folder you created in step 3 of the previous procedure, and then create a subfolder with the name of the first picture library you want to create.
- 2 Copy all the pictures you want into the subfolder you just created.
- 3 In your browser, request the *folder/default.aspx* page. For example, select that page in the Folder List, and then click the Preview In Browser button on the Standard toolbar.
- 4 The subfolder you created in step 1 should now appear in the left frame of the Picture Library window. Click the folder name or icon.

If the folder name appears without an icon, either IIS fails to recognize your Web site as an application or you didn't put the folder-open.gif and folder-up.gif files in an images folder just inside the application root.

- 5 A list of thumbnails should now appear in a tall, narrow frame along the left edge of the browser window. Clicking any thumbnail should display a larger version of the same picture in the frame to the right.

You can create as many pictures libraries as you want; just keep creating folders or subfolders. The only restriction is that all these folders must be within the folder tree that contains the ASP.NET Picture Library itself. For security reasons, the Insider Extra won't let the Web visitor access other parts of your Web site.

Titling Picture Library Files

The titles that appear above each thumbnail and above the current full-sized picture come from the file name of each picture. If you don't like the titles you're getting, rename the pictures! Here's how the ASP.NET picture library translates file names into titles:

- 1 Extract the file name base (in other words, discard the path and the file extension).
- 2 Replace all periods, slashes, underscores, hyphens, and plus signs with spaces.
- 3 Remove all leading, trailing, and multiple spaces.
- 4 Split the remaining text into words.
- 5 If the first word is actually a number, discard it.
- 6 Capitalize the first letter of each word, and change the rest of each word to lowercase.

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7 Reassemble the array of words into a single string, and use this as the title.

In practice, this is simpler than it might seem. If you want to title a picture My Disastrous Taxi Ride, any of the following file names will do:

```
My_Disastrous_Taxi_Ride.gif
my-disastrous-taxi-ride.gif
my+DISASTROUS-taxi_Ride.gif
5000_my_disastrous_taxi_ride.gif
```

The reason for adding a numeric prefix is to control sorting. When the ASP.NET Picture Library sorts by file name, it sorts by original file name and not by title. This frees you from presenting your pictures in alphabetic order. Instead, you can display them in numeric order, like this:

```
4000_tripping_out_the_hotel_door.jpg
5000_my_disastrous_taxi_ride.gif
5100_detouring_through_ixtapa.jpg
5400_crazy_eddie_our_pilot.jpg
```

Just remember that the ASP.NET Picture Library sorts the file names alphabetically. Therefore, if you choose to assign numeric prefixes, they should all be the same length.

Linking to a Picture Library

You can build links to the picture library frameset just as you would to any other Web page; just specify the picture library default.aspx file as the hyperlink location.

To make the picture library open a specific folder the first time it runs, add a *path=* query string parameter that specifies the folder you want as an argument. Here's an example:

```
http://www.interlacken.com/fp11extras/piclib/default.aspx?path=travel
```

Of course, you would replace *www.interlacken.com* with the name of your Web server, *fp11extras* with the name of your Web site, and *piclib* with the name of the folder where the picture library Web pages reside.

The actual path you specify as the *path=* argument can be absolute or relative. An absolute path begins with a slash (/) and must specify every intermediate folder, starting from the Web server's root. A relative folder doesn't begin with a slash and specifies a location relative to the folder where you installed the picture library Web pages.

Modifying the Picture Library Pages

To change the title that appears in the top frame of the Picture Library Insider Extra:

- 1 Open the default.aspx page in FrontPage.
- 2 Choose Properties from the File menu.
- 3 When the Page Properties dialog box appears, enter the title text you want in the Title box.
- 4 Click OK, and then save the page.

To change the extra's overall appearance, change its styles.css file. A sample file named styles2.css, for example, specifies a black background and light text. To activate this style:

- 1 Rename styles.css to styles0.css, taking care not to repair hyperlinks.
- 2 Rename styles2.css to styles.css.

Tip Browsers cache CSS files just as they do Web pages and pictures. To refresh any Web page, including all its pictures and CSS files, Ctrl+click the Refresh button in Internet Explorer.

The showpic2.aspx file contains a simpler version of the page that displays the full-sized picture. This version doesn't resize the picture to fit the browser window, and it doesn't display the file size, file date, picture size, and resolution of each picture. To use this simpler version:

- 1 Rename showpic.aspx to showpic0.aspx, taking care not to repair hyperlinks.
- 2 Rename showpic2.aspx to showpic.aspx.

The ASP.NET pages in the Picture Library Insider Extra use the inline code model. This means that the server-side program code resides within each .aspx file, and not within a separate code-behind file. This simplifies the task of adding the Insider Extra to any Web site and of changing the code using only FrontPage. For help in understanding the code, refer to the comments in each file.

If you want to edit the code in Microsoft Visual Studio .NET, you'll probably want to cut the code out of each .aspx page, display the corresponding code-behind file, and then paste the code into the bottom of that file (just above the closing *Class* statement). You'll also need to convert any `<%@ Import %>` tags in the .aspx file to *Imports* statements in the corresponding code-behind files.

Here's a list of the files that come with the Picture Library Insider Extra, with a description of each one:

- **banner.aspx** The page that appears in the top frame of the picture library window. This page displays the title of the default.aspx page and two Home links. The Home links point to the current application root folder.
- **default.aspx** The frameset that organizes the picture library window.

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- **piclist.aspx** Scans a picture library folder for picture files, sorts the results, and then displays a clickable thumbnail version of each picture.
- **PicNameSplitter.vb** Contains the class that translates picture file names into titles.
- **picture.aspx** The same file you saw in Insider Extra 3, “Picture Sizer.”
- **showpic.aspx** Displays a full-sized picture and its attributes in the main frame of the photo library frameset.
- **showpic.htm** An ordinary Web page that appears in the main frame of the photo library frameset when the frameset first appears (that is, before the Web visitor clicks a thumbnail).
- **showpic2.aspx** An alternative version of the showpic.aspx page with fewer features, for those occasional situations where less is more.
- **small.css** Specifies reduced-sized fonts in the piclist.aspx page.
- **styles.css** Specifies fonts and colors for all the picture library pages.
- **styles2.css** An alternative version of the styles.css file that uses a black page background.