



*Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the **North Orange County Computer Club**, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at [noccc.org](http://noccc.org).*

**QUESTION:** I used Picasa to place captions on my pictures but when I E-mailed them to someone the captions were gone. What happened?

**PC CLUB:** Picasa is a great program for working with pictures and is available for free at <http://picasa.google.com> and it can be used to place captions on your photos. However, there's a lot of confusion regarding these captions since they're often referred to inappropriately. To set the record straight, captions usually appear below the photo and don't appear directly on the photo. You can however, place text directly onto a photo using image editing software or even Picasa. And lastly, you can actually embed comments into a photo.

When you place a caption on a photo with Picasa for example, it shows up when you view it with Picasa but if you E-mail it, the user won't necessarily see it. What's happening is this. When you put a caption on a photo with Picasa or with another program, it writes the caption text into the IPTC data block in the photo itself. In other words, it's in the file somewhere and needs to be rooted out by one of several software programs. You can find out more about IPTC data at <http://bit.ly/iptcdata>.

Obviously, if the recipient opens the photo in Picasa they will see the caption. Also, programs such as Adobe Photoshop or Photoshop Elements will display captions.

If you want your recipients to see text right on the photo itself when you E-mail it to them, you can also use Picasa to do this. Just double-click a photo to open it and under the Basic tab you'll find an icon labeled Text. You have many choices for the text including font, color and placement. The text can be manipulated until you save the photo. This text then becomes permanent or emblazoned onto the photo and might block an important element of the photo so be careful where you place it.

Always make a backup of your photo before placing text on it in case you change your mind later. With Picasa you can get back to the original by clicking File, Revert.

In Photoshop Elements you add text using, of all things, the Text tool. This creates an additional layer so you need to learn a little bit about layers to take advantage of its many capabilities.

There are several other programs available for viewing captions including IrfanView which is available for free at [www.irfanview.com](http://www.irfanview.com) . Once you have a folder of photos open, click the blue i on the toolbar or click Image, Information and select IPTC info. IrfanView can also display comments and even write comments into a photo. After clicking the blue i, click the Comments button on the right. View the comments here if there are any or add your own and click the Write button to place the comment into the file.

Now why would you want to place a comment in a photo? You might want to include your name, shot location or any other information you're likely to forget. Another way to add comments to any photo is to grab a copy of a free program called Scott's JPEG Commenter which is available at <http://www.sb-software.com/jpegcommenter/>. To place a comment into any photo just install the program, run it and browse to any folder containing photos. Select any photo and click the New button to add a comment. It's a little strange but there is no Save button; the comment is saved automatically. Once you have a comment in a photo you can select the photo and edit or delete the comment.

Who knew that all of this data could be stored in our photos? Now you can arm yourself with the above tools and start snooping around.

Be sure to go to my Web site and click the Contac Me menu to send me a question you'd like answered. You'll also find the archives of my articles there as well - **Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View my Web site at [www.edwardns.com](http://www.edwardns.com).**