TechTip: Viewing Pictures in Windows XP

THE SITUATION: Between e-mail, web pages, and digital cameras, it seems like everyone has some experience with viewing pictures from their computer - and not all of it is good. Often pictures taken with digital cameras, or those downloaded from the web, have such strange names that it takes time just to find the one you're looking for. Then when you do find that one you're looking for, with Uncle Fred and Aunt Ethel looking over your shoulder, it's either sideways or too big to view properly. Well, with Windows XP, it's much easier to view pictures from your computer. Here's how...

WHAT TO DO:

Windows XP not only lets you view pictures easily, but it allows you do other things, such as zoom or rotate.

The best place to start is by storing any saved pictures in the MY PICTURES folder located under MY DOCUMENTS. To open MY PICTURES, click on the Start button on the bottom left side of the screen and click on My Pictures in the column on the right. If you haven't saved any pictures to this folder yet, there is a SAMPLE PICTURES folder you can open to explore the tips below.

- The first thing you will notice is a list of "Picture Tasks" on the left-hand side of your screen. To show off your pictures, especially with others looking on, click on the option "View as a slide show". Each picture in this folder will be displayed fullscreen (as large as the entire computer screen) one at a time. Click the mouse to advance quickly from picture to picture, or just stand by and the pictures will advance themselves after a few seconds. Hit the ESC-key on your keyboard to exit back to the normal view.

- You can also go to the View menu and choose Filmstrip. Small versions of every picture will appear at the bottom of your screen. Select a single picture to see a larger preview. A small toolbar is also visible below the preview that lets you scroll
through your pictures or rotate them if needed. (Don't be alarmed if you hit a Rotate button and are told it will overwrite your picture. If the picture really needs to be rotated, this likely won't cause any harm, but you can also maintain your original by double-clicking on the picture and choosing the "Copy picture as" button after it's rotated.)

• Would you rather skip the preview and see more on the screen at a time? Go to the View menu and choose Thumbnails.

• Finally, you can double-click on a picture to see more options such as zoom in and out, view the picture’s actual size, or copy the picture with a new name.

**Hot Tip!**
The MY PICTURES folder is not the only folder with these options. Usually, if the first files you add are picture files, then the folder will have all the picture options listed above. If not, you can convert any folder to a "Pictures" folder by opening it using MY COMPUTER, choosing Customize This Folder from the View menu, and selecting "Pictures" from the first drop-down list.

Enjoy!