

FasView Documentation

Technical Manual · FAQ · Archiving Methodology

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FasView Technical Manual

A native Windows image viewer and file browser built to last.

Version 1.4, October 2026

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1. Introduction

FasView is a native Windows image viewer and file browser: a single portable executable that views images at full quality and organizes them with one-click filing tools. No installer. No account. No subscription. No Internet connection. No AI.

It was built because the good image tools disappeared. The fast, obvious viewers of the early 2000s, the ones people used for 25 years, didn't get upgraded. They morphed into subscription platforms, cloud services, and AI-driven catalogs that demand logins, upload your photos, and keep getting harder to use for the basic things they used to do well.

FasView is the answer to a simple question: what if someone just built the good tool again, modernized it, and shared it freely?

This manual describes what FasView does, how it works under the hood, what problems it solves, and why it is designed to still work ten years from now.

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2. The Problem

2.1 The market left users behind

Modern photo software has converged on a model that serves companies, not people:

- **Subscriptions**: you rent access to your own photos, forever.
- **Cloud accounts**: your pictures upload to someone else's servers by default.
- **AI cataloging**: algorithms decide what your photos mean, tag faces, and build profiles.
- **Bloat**: simple tasks (view, sort, rename, file) buried under features nobody asked for.

Each of these is a compromise the user never chose. Nobody woke up wanting their image viewer to require a login.

2.2 The disorganized user

A huge number of people have the same problem: folders and files everywhere, and somewhere along the way, maybe ten years ago while backing something up, they lost track of where anything is. Pictures scattered across drives, old backup folders, desktops, downloads, nested folders inside folders.

This is not an edge case. It is one of the most common states a personal photo collection can be in. And the existing tools are terrible at fixing it, because they want to import everything into a proprietary catalog rather than help you organize the files you already have.

2.3 What photographs are worth

Pictures are among the highest-value things people own. The house-fire anecdote is real: people rush back in for the family photos. A tool that organizes and protects them has value that is hard to estimate. It should be trustworthy, simple, and permanent, not a service that can change its terms, raise its price, or shut down.

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3. Design Philosophy

3.1 The person decides, the tool obeys

Every consequential action in FasView is initiated by the user. Nothing auto-organizes. Nothing auto-tags. Nothing uploads. The tool never force-checks a preference, never overrides a choice, and never surprises the user with a renamed file or a moved photo. Filing is always one click or one keypress. Never a menu dive, never a confirmation gauntlet.

3.2 Robustness over speed

Large file operations take time and resources. That is expected behavior, not a bug. FasView is designed to handle large operations solidly:

- **Honesty upfront**: if an operation will take hours, it says so before starting, with real numbers.
- **Progress along the way**: continuous, cancellable, never silent.
- **Crash vs. slow**: the user can always tell whether the tool is working, stuck, or dead.

Speed is a design principle, not a benchmark: small moves should feel instant, and long operations must say so plainly instead of looking frozen. Tested with large real collections, including 1.2M images loaded in user testing (October 2026). As the author puts it: *"We'd rather be in a car that gets us there than one that tries to get us there fast and breaks down."*

3.3 The promise

- Not a hard learning curve.
- Portable: copy it, run it, no installer.
- Doesn't cost money. Get it once; no buying it again next year.
- Doesn't connect to things you don't understand that collect data on you.
- Doesn't spy on you.
- No AI deciding things for you: you choose what stays, what goes, and where it belongs.
- Doesn't nag you. Doesn't throttle you.

3.4 Built for ten years

FasView v1 must be solid and usable for the next decade. That means: no server dependencies that can shut down, no file formats that require a cloud service to decode, no features that stop working when a subscription lapses. A portable EXE on a USB stick, in 2036, should still view and organize photos exactly as it does today.

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4. Technical Architecture

4.1 Stack

Layer	Technology
Language / runtime	C# / .NET 10 (LTS)
UI framework	Avalonia (cross-platform XAML)
Image rendering	SkiaSharp (GPU-accelerated 2D)
Extended formats	Magick.NET (PSD layers, TIFF, WebP)
Packaging	Single self-contained executable, ~174 MB

The application is split into two assemblies: **FastImageViewer.Core** (platform-independent logic: file enumeration, duplicate analysis, policies) and **FastImageViewer.App** (Avalonia UI). Windows-specific operations (Recycle Bin, file associations) live behind small interfaces in a Windows adapter assembly. This separation is what makes a future Linux port feasible without rewriting the application.

4.2 Viewing pipeline

Images load on background threads with stale-request protection, so scrolling fast through thousands of thumbnails never shows the wrong image. The requested image displays before folder enumeration completes; thumbnails generate progressively with bounded caches and queues. Image streams are never held locked after loading. Viewing never modifies files.

Display rotation (including EXIF auto-orientation) is applied at render time and never touches the file. File rotation (JPEG lossless EXIF flip, PNG pixel rewrite) is a separate explicit action with confirmation.

4.3 Filing engine

All file operations (Copy, Move, Archive, Rename, Recycle, Delete, Destroy) run through a single filing pipeline:

1. **Destination resolution**: remembered last destination, recent-folder list, or explicit picker.
2. **Conflict detection**: per-file comparison (name, size, content hash) with visual side-by-side review.
3. **Execution**: cancellable, with throttled progress reporting (UI updates ~7×/second, not per-file, so 7,000-file operations don't stutter).
4. **Completion reporting**: status bar summary that survives the post-operation auto-refresh; optional results dialog.

No operation silently overwrites. "Keep both" generates unused names. "Skip when identical" compares contents, not just names.

4.4 Combined folders

Multiple folders (optionally with subfolders) merge into a single virtual view. The implementation:

- Each folder is enumerated independently on background threads; results stream into a unified sorted list.
- Well-known Windows system locations (Windows, Program Files, ProgramData) are skipped automatically during recursive scans; explicitly added folders are always honored.
- A combined view of large collections (tested to 1.2M images, October 2026) loads, sorts, and scrolls without degradation.
- The Details view gains a sortable **Folder** column showing each file's source; the file tree stays navigable.
- Auto-refresh is always on: filesystem watcher events reconcile the view rather than letting it go stale.

4.5 Duplicate detection

Two-phase, designed for collections up to hundreds of thousands of files:

1. **Size grouping** (instant): files are grouped by byte size; files with unique sizes are eliminated without reading a single byte.
2. **Quick scan**: candidates are fingerprinted by hashing the first and last 64 KB. Four files hash concurrently.
3. **Full verify**: candidate groups are confirmed by full-content SHA-256, four concurrent.

Before the heavy phase on large collections (10,000+ candidates), FasView shows the real numbers (candidate count, data volume, and a time estimate) with a Cancel option. Every phase is cancellable, reports live progress with ETA, and skips unreadable files (bad sectors, stalled drives) instead of hanging. Verification never deletes anything; it selects likely redundant copies and leaves at least one file unselected per group for human review.

4.6 Batch rename

The Rename series engine applies templates with a small placeholder language:

- `#`: sequence number, zero-padded to the number of `#` characters (`####` → `0001`)
- `*`: original filename without extension
- `{date}` / `{time}`: file date/time in ISO 8601 basic format (`20241007`, `143022`)
- `{event}` / `{location}` / `{desc}`: batch metadata, auto-sanitized for filenames

Metadata fields follow IPTC photo-metadata naming (Headline, Location, Description), so generated filenames like `20241007_sarahs_birthday_yosemite_001.jpg` parse cleanly into database columns later. Optional archival sanitizing (spaces→underscores, lowercase) produces fully archival-safe names. A live preview shows every old→new mapping with collision warnings before anything is renamed. The Template dropdown keeps your five most recent templates plus suggested schemes, including `{location}-{date}-####` for archive batches.

4.7 Secure deletion

Destroy goes beyond OS deletion: it overwrites the file in place with one pass of random data, in 1 MiB chunks, flushes, then deletes it. The status bar shows progress while it works, and the toolbar Cancel button stops it; a cancelled or failed wipe leaves the file under its own name, partly overwritten if overwriting began. There is no rename-first step, so a cancelled wipe never leaves a mystery randomly-named file, and no read-back verification pass. Destroy still refuses files that would risk other data: reparse points and links (including redirected and cloud-synced parent folders) and hard-linked files. Read-only files are handled (cleared before, restored on failure). Destroy does not guarantee erasure

from SSDs, backups, cloud history, or other copies: on solid-state drives, wear leveling can write the new data to different physical cells, so the original data may survive. For sensitive files on an SSD, full-disk encryption (BitLocker) is the reliable protection.

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5. Features

5.1 Viewing

Thumbnails, Details, fullscreen, and slideshow modes. Shrink-to-fit and enlarge-to-fit as independent toggles. Display rotation including auto-portrait. Zoom with lock. Sideways-monitor support. HEIC/HEIF decode with one-click high-quality JPEG conversion. A Preferences setting, Convert to JPEG without asking (Filing, off by default), makes Save As JPEG skip its dialog and convert with the saved quality and background, beside each original as name-converted.jpg; collisions keep both, and originals are never recycled or overwritten. Multi-layer PSD viewing. Every supported format renders through the same pipeline.

5.2 One-click filing

While viewing, file the current photo without breaking flow:

- **Archive slots (A–E)**: five configurable destinations (up to 26), each Copy or Move. The A key files to the first slot; Alt plus a single-letter slot's label files straight to that slot (multi-letter slots are click-only). Slots are lettered A, B, C by default, and you can relabel them with one letter or several.
- **Ratings**: number keys file into auto-created numbered subfolders. Triage thousands of images at keyboard speed. Configurable from 1 to 10 ratings, Move or Copy.
- **Copy To / Move To**: remembered destinations, recent list, typed paths.

After a clean removal (Recycle, Delete, or Destroy), the viewer advances to the next file instead of showing the removed file as unloadable.

5.3 Visual triage: human judgment at speed

Ratings solve a class of problems that expensive AI-driven tools don't: decisions only a human can make, at volume.

- **Yay or nay**: casting headshots for a role, models for an ad campaign. Set 2 ratings. First pass: tap 1 for yes, 2 for no. Hundreds of candidates sorted in minutes.
- **Graded quality**: 5 or 10 levels for nuanced judgment, such as portfolio curation, contest entries, and product shots. The folder structure becomes the score.

- **Database feed**: the numbered folders are machine-readable. Downstream, a database or spreadsheet can rank candidates by folder, combining human judgment with other data. The tool collects the decisions; the human makes them.

No AI can look at a headshot and know if the person is right for the part. That is the point. FasView makes the human fast instead of replacing them.

5.4 Organizing scattered collections

The rescue workflow for disorganized archives:

1. **Combine**: point combined folders at the mess; every image appears in one view.
2. **Group**: sort by the Folder column to see which files came from where.
3. **Select**: right-click → "Select all from this folder" grabs every file from one location in one step.
4. **File**: archive slots, ratings, or Copy/Move into the organized destination.
5. **Dedupe**: Find dupes catches the copies accumulated across years of haphazard backups.
6. **Name**: Rename series with batch metadata produces consistent, database-ready filenames.

5.5 Web copies for web production

Select one or more images and choose File > Save Web Copy (WebP), right-click > Save Web Copy (WebP), or Ctrl+Shift+W. Each selected image gets a WebP copy saved beside its original, resized to the width in Preferences > Filing > Web copies (WebP) (default 1600 px; never upscaled) with quality stepping down automatically until the file fits under the maximum size there (default 400 KB). If a name already exists, both files are kept with a numbered name. Originals are never changed, moved, or recycled. Only the first frame of an animated image is copied, and metadata, layers, and extra pages are not copied.

5.6 Keyboard shortcuts

The full shortcut list, grouped. Press Shift+F1 inside FasView for the same reference at any time. Shortcuts do not act while you are typing in a text field. Commands marked viewer-only do not apply in the browser, and Select All Images is browser-only.

File

Action	Shortcut
Open image	Ctrl+O (also Insert)
Open folder	Ctrl+Shift+O
Save as JPEG	Ctrl+Shift+S

Action	Shortcut
Save Web Copy (WebP)	Ctrl+Shift+W
Print	Ctrl+P
Preferences	Ctrl+, (also Alt+O)
Exit	Alt+F4 (also Alt+X)

Open in Photoshop has no shortcut; it lives on the File menu.

Filing

Action	Shortcut
Copy To	Alt+C (C in the viewer)
Move To	Alt+M, Ctrl+M (M in the viewer)
Archive (first slot)	Alt+A (A in the viewer)
Archive slot by label	Alt+letter
Rate 1–9, rate 10	1–9, 0
Rename	F2

Removal

Action	Shortcut
Recycle	Delete
Delete (bypasses the Recycle Bin)	Shift+Delete
Destroy	Ctrl+Delete

Note the deliberate split: the Delete key recycles, while the toolbar Delete button bypasses the Recycle Bin.

View

Action	Shortcut
Thumbnails	F8
Details	F12
Full screen	Alt+Enter
Refresh / Reload	F5
Image info	I (also Ctrl+Shift+B)
Toolbar on/off	Ctrl+Shift+T

Action	Shortcut
Menu bar on/off	Ctrl+Shift+M

Moving around

Action	Shortcut
Previous image	Left, PageUp
Next image	Right, PageDown, Space
First image	Home
Last image	End
Back to previous folder	Alt+Left
Forward to next folder	Alt+Right
Parent folder	Alt+Up
Location (path box)	Ctrl+L
Select all images	Ctrl+A (browser only)

Zoom (viewer only)

Action	Shortcut
Zoom in	Num + (also +)
Zoom out	Num − (also −)
Zoom 3X	Ctrl+3
Autofit	Ctrl+0 (also Num *)
Actual size	Ctrl+1 (also Num /)
Zoom lock	Z
Shrink to fit	Ctrl+Num −
Enlarge to fit	Ctrl+Num +

Rotate (file rotation, JPEG and PNG only)

Action	Shortcut
Rotate left	Ctrl+Left
Rotate right	Ctrl+Right
Flip 180°	Ctrl+Down

Help

Action	Shortcut
Help	F1
Keyboard shortcuts	Shift+F1

Mouse

Middle-click toggles fullscreen, and a second middle-click returns to browsing. Double-click a thumbnail (or the preview) to open it; double-click the large image to return to browsing. Ctrl+mouse wheel zooms around the pointer. Dragging from a gap between thumbnail tiles draws a selection rectangle; dragging the picture itself drags the file.

5.7 Strategies: Archive slots and combined folders

File management is usually tedious because every photo demands the same small decisions — keep it or not, where it belongs — and most tools make you re-make each decision through menus. FasView is built the other way round: you customize it once, and then each decision costs one keypress. That is why the preferences exist. The slots, the ratings, the combined view, and the auto-advance are not options for their own sake. They are the whole method: decide fast, file fast, keep moving.

Set up once

- **Archive slots** (Preferences > Filing > Archive folders). Add one slot per destination: a label, a folder, and Move or Copy. Labels run up to 16 characters with no spaces and must be unique; a single-letter label gets an Alt+ shortcut, while multi-letter labels are click-only. The A key always files to the first slot. A confirmation showing the file count, destination, and Move or Copy appears before filing unless you turn off Confirm Archive moves — leave it on while you are learning the setup, turn it off once you trust it.
- **Ratings** (Preferences > Filing > Ratings). Pick a Ratings folder and a count from 1 to 10 (default 5), and Move or Copy. FasView creates numbered subfolders inside the Ratings folder. Turn on Show ratings in toolbar for clickable number buttons on both toolbars.
- **Auto-advance** (Preferences > Filing). Turn on "Move to the next file after filing, copy, or move" so filing steps to the next photo by itself. Removals always advance after a clean Recycle, Delete, or Destroy, whether or not this is on.
- **Combined folders** (View > Combined Folders, or Preferences > Combined Folders). Add the folders you want to browse together, tick Include subfolders when the mess runs deep, then Save and browse. The Combo button reopens the saved set later. Picking a folder in the tree returns to single-folder browsing.

The pass, in order

1. **Combine.** Put every source into one view: backup drives, Desktop, Downloads, the old camera-card dumps. Nothing moves yet. In Details view (F12), the Folder column groups files by where they came from, so you can see which pile is which.
2. **Triage with Ratings.** Go through the combined view tapping number keys. This is the keepers pass: fast, generous, no agonizing. A rating files the photo instantly into its numbered subfolder.
3. **File with Archive slots.** For photos that already have a home, press the slot key instead: one key per destination, no dialog, no destination to pick again. Files already sitting in a slot's folder are skipped quietly and noted in the status bar.
4. **Resolve duplicates.** Run Find dupes, then Verify Dupes, on the combined set. FasView selects the likely extra copies and leaves at least one file unselected per group; you confirm. Keep the best quality, keep the copy already in the right folder, and archive the rest rather than deleting when unsure.
5. **Final homes, not triage piles.** The organized tree is the destination. A review folder holds the maybes, revisited later — it is not where filing stops.

Example: merging three backup drives, Desktop, and Downloads

Add all five locations to one combined set with Include subfolders on, then sort by the Folder column. Work through one source at a time: right-click any file and choose "Select all from this folder" to grab a whole drive's files at once. First pass, rate everything: 1 for keepers, 2 for maybes. Second pass, open the keepers and file them with Archive slots — A for the archive, P for portraits, F for family, each a single keypress. Then run Find dupes across the combined set: the same birthday photo that lived on two drives and in Downloads now sits in one verified group, and you keep one record copy. What started as five scattered piles ends as one organized tree, and no file was ever imported into a catalog to get there.

Example: backup triage

The same photo turns up in three backups. Do not delete two copies on sight. Ask which copy is the record: the best quality wins; if one copy already lives in the right folder, that one is the record even if another copy is technically identical. File the extras to an archive folder with a Copy slot instead of deleting them — storage is cheap, and the decision is reversible. Clear only the obvious junk as you go: black frames, pocket shots, accidental bursts. When unsure, archive. Deletion is the last resort, never the first.

The preferences that tune speed

Every preference below exists to remove a repeated action. Set them once, in Preferences > Filing unless noted:

- Slot labels and folders, and Move or Copy per slot — the one-key destinations.
- Ratings count (1–10) and Move or Copy — how many buckets triage needs.
- Show ratings in toolbar — clickable number buttons when keys are not handy.
- Move to the next file after filing, copy, or move — no manual stepping.
- Confirm Archive moves — on while learning, off once trusted.
- Recent destinations in the Copy/Move dialog (up to 20, with Remove and Remove all) — the last destination is remembered, so repeat filing never retypes a path.
- Select all from this folder (right-click, combined views) — a whole source in one step.
- The Search box name filter (`*` and `?` wildcards, Esc clears) — find a name without scrolling.
- Conflict choices (Ask, Skip, Keep both, Replace, plus Skip when identical) — filename collisions open the visual comparison; nothing is ever overwritten silently.

5.8 Main window layout

FasView has four main screens. Learn them once and you can orient anywhere in the app.

- **Thumbnail browser** (F8): the three-panel view in the picture below — folder tree and preview on the left, thumbnail grid on the right.
- **Details browser** (F12): the same three panels, but the right side is a sortable file list instead of a grid. In a combined view it gains a Folder column showing each file's source.
- **Single-image viewer**: the large image on its own. Double-click a thumbnail or the preview to open it; double-click the large image to return to browsing.
- **Fullscreen**: the image alone, edge to edge, entered with Alt+Enter or middle-click. A mini toolbar sits at the top-right with Copy, Move, the Archive slot buttons, zoom, rotation (if enabled), and Delete at the far right. Middle-click or Esc returns to browsing.

Slide shows play fullscreen from the current view (View > Start Slide Show, or the Slide Show toolbar button).

The window, top to bottom

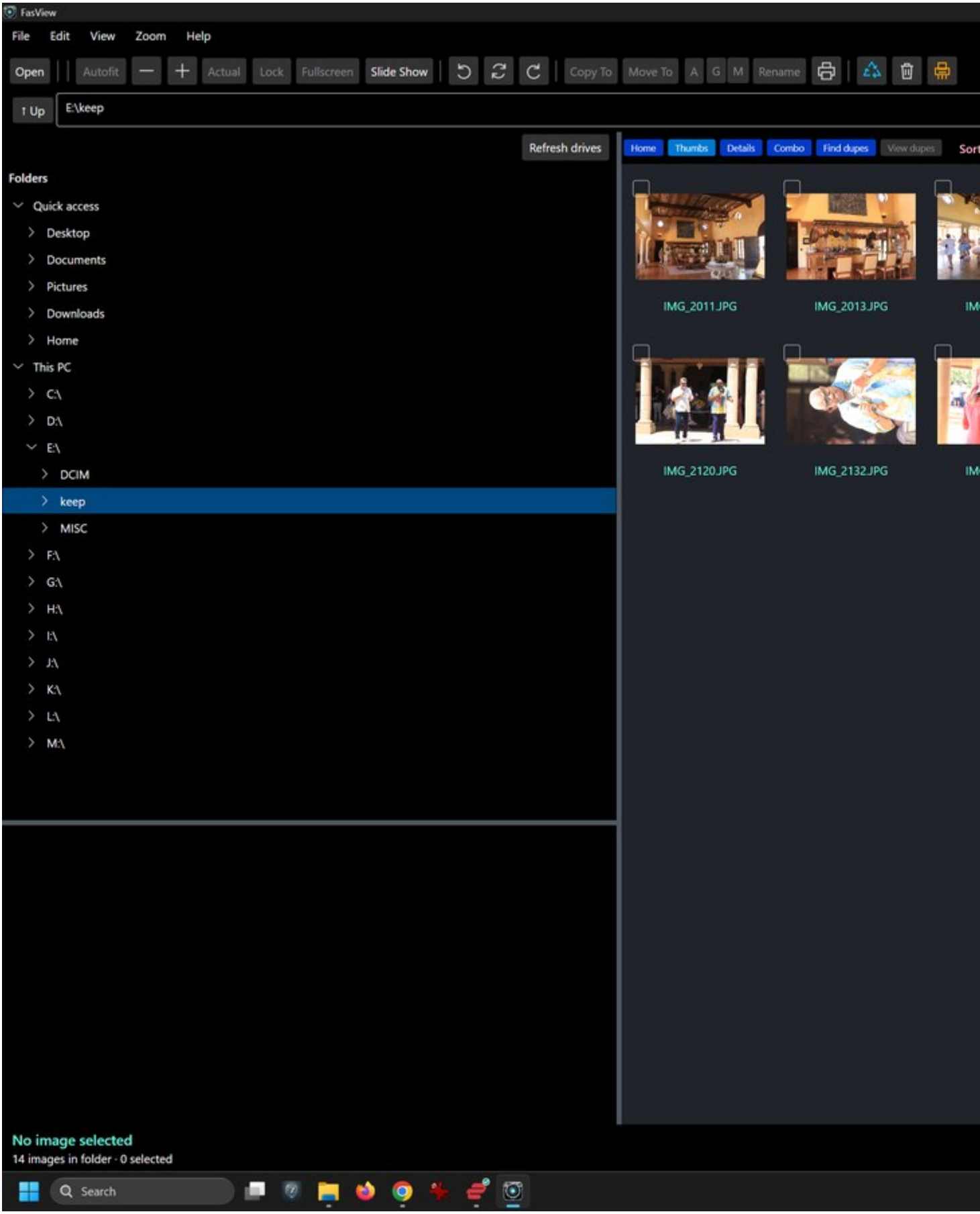
The **menu bar** (File, Edit, View, Zoom, Help) sits at the top. Below it, the **main toolbar** holds, left to right: Open; Previous and Next; Autofit, Zoom Out, Zoom In, Actual, Zoom Lock, Fullscreen, Slide Show; Rotate Left, Flip, Rotate Right; Copy To, Move To, the Archive button and the Archive slot

buttons, the Ratings buttons (when enabled), Rename, Print; then Recycle, Delete, Destroy, and Cancel, with Close at the far right. The **path bar** follows: Back, Forward, and Up on the left, the folder picker on the right, and the path box between them.

The middle of the window is the **surface**: either the large image (viewer) or the **browser pane**. The browser pane has three columns: the **left pane** (folder tree on top, preview below, split by a draggable divider), a thin splitter, and the **right pane** (a modes row — Home, Thumbs, Details, Combo, Find dupes, View dupes, Sort, Search — above the thumbnail grid or details list). The left pane's width and the tree/preview split are both draggable and remembered.

At the bottom, the **info panel** shows the image name, date, and details (dimensions, size, zoom, position), and beneath it the **status bar** carries status messages and the operation progress bar.

Three-panel browser view with thumbnails


FasView
File
Edit
View
Zoom
Help
Open
Autofit
Actual
Lock
Fullscreen
Slide Show
Copy To
Move To
A
G
M
Rename
↑ Up
E:\keep
Refresh drives
Home
Thumbs
Details
Combo
Find dupes
View dupes
Folders
Quick access
Desktop
Documents
Pictures
Downloads
Home
This PC
C:\
D:\
E:\
DCIM
keep
MISC
F:\
G:\
H:\
I:\
J:\
K:\
L:\
M:\
IMG_2011.JPG
IMG_2013.JPG
IMG_2120.JPG
IMG_2132.JPG
No image selected
14 images in folder · 0 selected
Search

Three-panel browser view with thumbnails: folder tree and preview on the left, thumbnail grid on the right. The toolbar in this shot shows Archive slot buttons A, G, and M. The strip at the very bottom is the Windows taskbar, not part of FasView.

5.9 What it doesn't do

No catalog database. No import step. No face recognition. No cloud sync. No AI tagging. No account. Files stay where the user puts them, named what the user names them.

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6. Standing Apart

FasView is the antithesis of the subscription-based, web-connected, AI-driven, expensive image tool. It does the job the 2000s classics did (viewing, sorting, organizing), modernized, and without everything that got bolted on since.

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7. Built to Survive

A tool for irreplaceable possessions must outlive business models. FasView's survival design:

- **No servers**: nothing to shut down, no API to deprecate.
- **No activation**: no license server to go dark.
- **Standard formats**: reads and writes files any tool can open; no proprietary catalog to become unreadable.
- **Portable**: a single EXE. Copy it to a USB stick, an archive drive, a new PC in 2036. It runs.
- **Offline-first**: every feature works with no network. Airplane mode is a feature, not a limitation.
- **Human-readable output**: archival filenames (ISO 8601 dates, IPTC-aligned metadata) remain meaningful without any software at all.

The goal: in ten years, this exact binary still views and organizes photos exactly as it does today.

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8. Distribution

FasView is shared freely. No login, no license key, no registration. That is the whole idea. The portable executable is the distribution: download it, run it, copy it for a friend.

The author is not in it to make a lot of money. The tool exists because the good ones disappeared into subscriptions and bloat, and somebody should just make the good one and share it.

FasView: the car that gets you there.

FasView FAQ

Every answer: the problem as a human feels it, then the clicks, then one plain sentence on why it stays a person's call.

Finding and taming a messy collection

I have tens of thousands of photos scattered across folders. Where do I start?

Don't reorganize anything yet. Click **Combined** (next to Sort), point it at your top-level folder, and turn on **Include subfolders**. Every picture underneath appears in one view. Nothing is moved, copied, or renamed. Now you can actually see what you have, which is the step everyone skips.

Only you know which of these photos counts. No software can tell a blurry accident from the one photo of your father laughing.

My camera names everything DSC_0001 and my folders are chaos. How do I get oriented?

Filenames lie; dates and folders don't. In a combined view, open **Details** (F12). The **Folder** column shows where each file really lives, and clicking its header groups everything by source folder. Sort by **Modified, newest first** to find recent work. To grab everything from one day, right-click any photo and choose **Select all from YYYY-MM-DD**. It selects every file with the same modified date. Note: that is the file's modified date, which copies and edits can reset. For the date the photo was actually taken, check the EXIF data.

I want to see everything from one trip or event in one place without moving files.

That is exactly what **Combined folders** is for: a temporary view, not a reorganization. Add the folders, browse them as one, file or cull from the combined view, then press Combined again (or pick a folder in the tree) to leave. The files never moved; only your view of them changed.

Culling and deciding (the human work)

I just shot 2,000 photos and need the 200 keepers. What's the fastest honest way?

Set up **Ratings** (Preferences, then Filing, then Ratings): FasView creates numbered folders, and then you just tap number keys while viewing. Each photo files instantly to that folder, no confirmation dialogs. Five ratings is the default; use up to ten. For a simpler pass or fail, set up **Archive slots** instead: each slot gets its own letter button (A, B, C, and so on). Press Alt plus the letter to file straight there, or the A key for the first slot.

You move fast, but the decision is still yours on every frame. Fast hands, human eyes.

How do I decide what to delete without regretting it later?

You have three options, in order of caution. The **Delete key** recycles (recoverable). The **toolbar Delete button** bypasses the Recycle Bin (permanent). Or skip deleting entirely: make an **archive folder** and dump everything you don't want in your working set there. Storage is cheap these days, and some people prefer to keep everything while separating the keepers into other folders. FasView's Archive slots do exactly this with one keypress. "Not now" is a perfectly good decision.

Why not just let software pick my keepers for me?

Because "keeper" is not a measurable property. It is sharpness plus memory plus love plus the thing you cannot name. FasView has no AI features and makes no network connections, deliberately. Culling is a human decision: you look at your pictures and decide where they belong.

Duplicates

I have duplicates everywhere and I'm afraid to delete the wrong copy.

Click **Find dupes** (beside Combined). It scans by file size and sampled content. Pink diamonds mark possible groups. Click **Verify Dupes** to compare full contents. FasView selects the likely extra copies but always leaves at least one file unselected in each group. Review them yourself before any removal command. Verification never deletes anything.

What does "disambiguation" actually do for me?

When a move or copy would overwrite a file with the same name, FasView stops and shows you both: the existing file on the left, the incoming file on the right, as thumbnails or full images, scrolling in unison. You choose per file (Replace, Skip, Keep both) or apply it to all. Nothing is ever overwritten silently.

Moving and organizing

How do I move thousands of files without losing anything?

Use **Copy/Move** from the browser or the **C** / **M** keys in image view. FasView validates the destination before starting, asks about every conflict instead of overwriting, and reports per-file results (successes, skips, errors) when done. Cancel stops the remaining work and keeps what is already completed. The status bar always says what happened.

A move is taking forever. How do I know it's still working?

Long operations show a bold amber status message plus a progress bar, and they are cancellable. They report their progress instead of looking frozen. One caveat: the progress display sits in the status area at the lower left, and in testing it proved easy to miss. If you cannot find it, that is a real problem worth reporting, not something you should have to hunt for.

I want my filing to be one click, not a project.

That is the design rule: filing is always one click or one keypress. No dropdowns, no dialogs to configure a dialog. **Archive slots** (letter buttons A, B, C, and so on; Alt plus the letter files straight there, A key for the first slot) and **Ratings** (number keys) both file the current photo instantly. Set up the destinations once in Preferences under Filing; after that, it is muscle memory.

My filenames are a mess. Can I rename a whole batch at once?

Select two or more images, right-click, **Rename series**. Build the new names from a template: #### becomes a sequence number (0001, 0002, and so on), * keeps the original filename, {date} and {time} pull from the file's modified date and time, and {event}, {location}, {desc} let you tag the whole batch at once (20241007_sarahs_birthday_001.jpg). A live preview shows every old name beside its new name before anything changes. Collisions are flagged and skipped, and the file extension is always preserved. Note: {date} uses the file's modified date, which copies can reset. A photo-taken-date token is planned so names can carry the EXIF capture date instead.

Formats and conversion

My iPhone shoots HEIC and nothing else opens them. What do I do?

Browse the folder in FasView. It reads HEIC natively, no Windows extension needed. It will offer to convert them all to high-quality JPEG in one step, or select any images and use **File, Save As JPEG** (Ctrl+Shift+S) anytime. The originals stay untouched unless you explicitly choose otherwise. If you turn on Convert to JPEG without asking (Preferences, then Filing), Save As JPEG skips its dialog and converts with your saved quality and background.

Will converting lose quality?

JPEG is lossy even at quality 100, so strictly speaking, yes. In practice, at quality 100 the difference is invisible for viewing and printing. FasView never overwrites your sources. It creates new files, so the originals are always there if it ever counts.

Fixing orientation and basic fixes

Half my photos are sideways. How do I fix them without degrading them?

For JPEGs, **Edit, Rotate** (Ctrl+Left / Ctrl+Right) changes the orientation flag, not the pixels, so there is no recompression. One caveat: a few older programs ignore the orientation flag and will still show the photo sideways. PNGs get their pixels rewritten, which every program reads correctly. Note the difference from **Display rotation** (View menu), which only changes how you see the image right now and never touches the file. Also note: rotating updates the file's modified date.

Why won't it rotate my PSDs?

PSDs are layered working documents, not finished photos. Rotating the composite would corrupt the layer data's relationship to the canvas. FasView keeps PSDs view-only by design. Export to JPEG first (File, Save As JPEG), then rotate freely.

Working in the field / offline

I'm on location with no internet and a slow laptop. Will this work?

Yes. That is a core scenario, not an edge case. FasView is a single portable executable: no installer, no account, no subscription, no network connections, no telemetry. Put it on the laptop or a USB stick and it runs.

Trust

How do I know it won't eat my photos?

Three rules the program follows without exception: viewing never changes a file. Nothing is ever overwritten silently; conflicts always ask. And deletion defaults to the Recycle Bin, not destruction. Test it on disposable copies first if you want; that is what the beta guidance recommends.

What's the difference between delete and recycle here, and which should I use?

Recycle (Delete key) sends files to the Windows Recycle Bin. Recoverable, and the one you should reach for first. **Delete** (toolbar button) bypasses the Bin. Permanent, no undo. **Destroy** overwrites the file's data before deleting. Experimental, for when you need a file truly gone. Confirmations are on for the dangerous two and off for recycle, which tells you how the designers rank them. And there is a fourth option before any of them: don't delete at all. File the rejects into an archive folder with one keypress. Storage is cheap; keeping everything while separating the keepers is a legitimate strategy.

The tool makes the dangerous action look dangerous and the safe action easy. When you're tired at midnight culling a shoot, that distinction is everything.

Taming a Wild Photo Collection: A Methodology

The premise

A 25-year photo collection scattered across hard drives, phones, scans, and downloads, named every which way, in every format, is not an edge case. It is the normal case. Cameras since 2000, phones since 2007, scans of older prints, downloads from every era: they pile up faster than anyone organizes them. This method is for that collection. It assumes no AI, no cloud, no catalog software. Just you, your files, and a tool that obeys.

The principles

1. **See everything before touching anything.** No moving, renaming, or deleting until you know what you have.
2. **Humans decide; the tool executes.** Every judgment call (keeper or not, what belongs together, what it is called) is yours. The tool makes each decision cheap to carry out.
3. **Archive, don't delete.** Storage is cheap. The default is to separate, not destroy. Deletion is the last resort, never the first.
4. **Name for the future.** A filename should still make sense in 20 years, to you and to a database. Dates first, then meaning.
5. **Work in passes.** You will not finish in a weekend. Each pass leaves the collection strictly better than it found it.

The journey

Phase 1: Survey (see what you have)

Point **Combined folders** at each drive in turn, with **Include subfolders** on. Don't organize; just look. Use **Details** view (F12) with the **Folder** column to see where things actually live, and sort by date to find the eras. Write down (on paper, in a text file, anywhere) what you find: roughly how many, what years, what formats, what naming schemes.

No AI can do this step, because "what you have" is not a file count. It is your memory of your life, meeting the evidence.

Phase 2: Gather (one view of everything)

Add all the source folders to a single **Combined folders** set. Now the 2003 scans, the 2012 phone dumps, and last week's camera cards sit side by side. Sort by **date** to watch your life scroll past chronologically. This is the moment the scale of it becomes real, and manageable, because it is one view instead of forty folders.

Phase 3: Deduplicate (one copy of record)

Do this before culling, so each unique photo gets judged exactly once. Run **Find dupes** on the combined set, then **Verify Dupes** for the full comparison. FasView selects the likely extra copies but leaves one of each group untouched. You confirm. For each group, decide: which copy is the record? Keep the best quality, keep the one already in the right folder, archive the rest rather than deleting when unsure. Clear the obvious junk (black frames, pocket shots) as you go.

Two identical files in different folders got there for different reasons. The reason is yours; the bytes are the same.

Phase 4: Cull (the keepers pass)

This is the human work and there is no shortcut. Go through the deduplicated set with **Ratings** (number keys file instantly) or **Archive slots** (one key per destination). File into final homes, not triage piles: the organized tree, a review folder for maybes, an archive folder for everything you are not ready to judge. Be generous on the first pass. You are separating, not judging.

Only you know that the blurry photo is the last one of your mother laughing. No model will ever know that. This is the most human step in the whole method.

Phase 5: Name (make it durable)

Now **Rename series**, in place. Template: `{date}_{event}_####`. ISO date first so everything sorts chronologically forever, then what it is, then a sequence number. Fill in Event, Location, Description once per batch. Turn on lowercase and underscores for database-safe names. Preview every rename before it runs; collisions are skipped, never overwritten. Note: {date} currently uses the file's modified date. A photo-taken-date token is planned so names can carry the EXIF capture date instead, which is the correct source for a 25-year collection.

A filename is a promise to your future self. "IMG_0042" promises nothing.

Phase 6: Maintain (the ongoing practice)

New photos enter through the same door: browse, rate, file. Minutes, not hours, because the system exists now. Revisit the review folder twice a year. The collection stays tame because the method is habit, not project.

Collections don't stay organized by themselves. But a tame collection takes minutes a week, where a wild one takes a lost weekend.

What "done" looks like

Not perfection. Durability. Every photo findable by date, event, or person. One copy of record for each image, with the extras archived rather than scattered. Filenames a database can parse in 2046. And the knowledge, held by you, that nothing was decided by a machine on your behalf.

Why this beats any AI at it

AI can tag, sort, and dedupe by pixels. It cannot know which blurry photo counts, what belongs together, or what a filename should promise. Every phase above contains a judgment call that requires a life, not a model. FasView's job is to make each of those calls cheap, fast, and reversible, so the human does the thinking and the tool does the labor. That division is the entire product.