

Digikam 4.5.0

Once a rival developer [of Kalbum, if you're interested], Graham Morrison imports the LV photo collection into the latest release.

Photos are becoming like dust. They gather and accumulate without anyone noticing. Over the course of a year, a collection can become unmanageable and often best left forgotten. Unless, that is, you lose some. Which is why applications that make your collection easy to store, easy to process and easy to share are more important now than ever before. And as social networks continue to dominate, the austerity of a desktop application makes a refreshing change, even when the export options let you share your creations as instantly as a Polaroid.

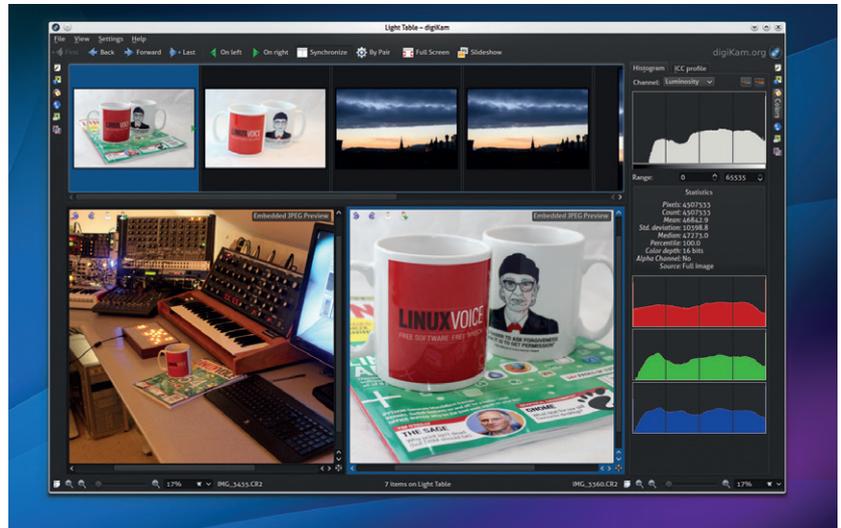
Digikam has been around for a long time. It predates iPhoto and Flickr. But it has also moved with the times and it's currently moving very quickly. Version 4 was released last May, and this major update follows exactly six months later. For the first time with *Digikam*, we had enough confidence to attempt importing RAW files directly from the Linux Voice Canon 600D. This worked excellently. The preview window appeared quickly and drew thumbnails within a few moments. It's a pity these aren't pre-cached for the files out of view, but we like the way you can click on a single image and skip through larger previews. The use of a Marble map view before importing images is also novel, but we'd like the ability to add keywords to images before import.

Lazer Tag

Tags, colours, ratings and captions can be added when you get to the main application window, and it's these facilities that make management so straightforward. The main view is centred around another thumbnail view and two strips of panels that can be opened and closed to its left and right. These panels hide *Digikam's* powerhouse of features, from



If you include the plugins, there are probably more filters, effects and editing options in *Digikam* than *Gimp*.



duplicate image recognition using fingerprints, face detection, location mapping, over- and under-exposure marking and a great side-by-side light table view. Unlike many photo management apps, there's also a brilliant image editor that lets you do far more than tinker with colour balance and contrast, although we do miss the exposure, noise reduction, white/black adjustments and lens profiles of *AfterShot Pro* (a commercial alternative). The user is expected to out-source these functions to an image developer applications, but *Digikam* already does so much, we'd love to see them integrated into *Digikam*. There are 39 plugins, for example – we used Exoblend to create pseudo HDR images – so *Digikam* is already way more than a management tool.

There's been lots of bug fixing since the 4.0.0 release, and we didn't experience any stability problems with 4.5.0. The user interface suffers from over functionality, in the KDE sense, because there are too many windows, panels and options. And despite our having used *Digikam* on and off for almost 10 years, we still couldn't find a good way of seeing what each release brings. The link to bugs.kde.org doesn't help. But this is still a wonderful application. Remarkably powerful, flexible and capable of managing very complex collection. It could just do with a little pruning and rationalisation in its imminent transition to KDE 5. 🐧

We prefer a darker theme when working with photos, and like *Krita*, *Digikam* lets you change colours on the fly.

DATA

Web
www.digikam.org
Developer
KDE
Licence
GPLv2

LINUX VOICE VERDICT

One of the best photo management applications for Linux, and even (shhh)... Windows.

