



PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS

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What is Photoshop Elements?

Photoshop Elements is the consumer version of the professional version of Photoshop. It is often bundled with hardware such as cameras or scanners. Photoshop CS3 is the current industry standard software for perfecting images. Whereas Photoshop CS3 costs over \$1000 to buy, Photoshop Elements is generally not much over \$150.

Photoshop Elements is not a drawing tool, it requires your photographs to work with. With your photos you can apply filters and effects to make it look like a drawing or a painting, or apply more subtle changes to improve your photos. Photoshop Elements is made for digital image manipulation

If a photo is blurred or over exposed Photoshop is not able to change that, but if the photo was very important to you it could make the difference between no photo and something. If your photo was pretty good to start with then Photoshop is an ideal tool to make the photo even better.

Digital image manipulation has contributed greatly to the world of photography by enabling manipulations that were previously difficult or impossible, and by allowing non-destructive and easily reversible changes to images. Photoshop was responsible for many of the innovations that are now commonplace. We even refer to 'Photoshopping' an image as meaning the 'editing' an image.

Some of the operations we will learn about are as follows:

- Cropping photos
- Red eye removal
- Exposure/contrast adjustments
- Applying effects to enhance your photos
- Removing unwanted elements of a photo – such as a pole behind someone.

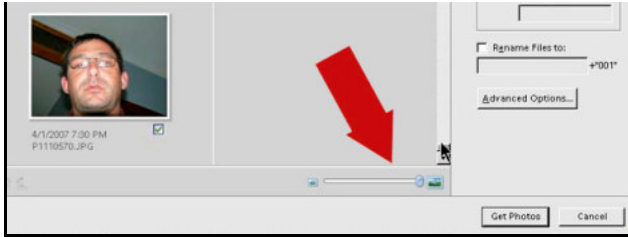
But first we need to have a look at how Photoshop gets your photos from your camera.

Importing Photos

After installing Photoshop your computer will be configured to open the Import function of Photoshop as soon as you connect your camera to the computer or slide your memory chip into the reader. Note that Windows itself may also ask you what you like to do with the newly discovered media. If you intend to use Photoshop you can safely cancel that prompt.

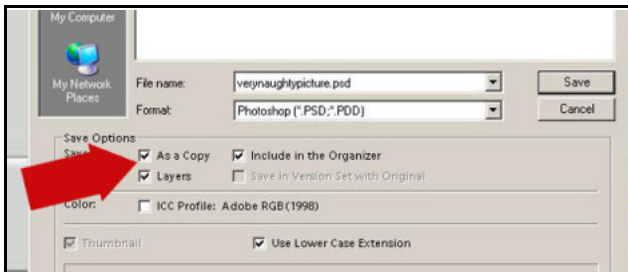
You can tick or un-tick unwanted photos. If you have trouble seeing the photos you can use the bottom slider (see diagram below) to enlarge the previews.

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Make sure your destination details are good for your computer, and click 'Get Photos'. Once the photos are transferred to your computer Photoshop will ask you if it should delete the photos from the chip. Generally this is desirable. Instances where you may like to keep them a little longer is if you wanted to keep them on there for printing at Harvey Norman or Kmart, or wanted to put them on another computer as well.

Note you can always copy photos back to your chip at any time. Your chip is just like a memory stick, a floppy disk or a CD. If you like to bring a manipulated photo to the store for printing you can take the modified image and save it on the chip to carry it to the shop. Generally you would use Windows file-manager for this but alternatively from Photoshop you can use Save As and save a copy. Make sure you use good photo format, for printing in a shop a high quality JPG is generally best, but if you want to take it to a friend for further manipulation you may keep the PSD format which is Photoshop's own and retains all the layers and other information relating to your work on the photo.



A better VIEW?

Finding your photos is not always simple, but Elements gives you a few options here in the Photo Browser. There it allows you to tag photos or to collect them in 'albums'. All photos you import into your computer using Photoshop will generally be in the Organizer. If they are not, for instance photos that you may have had on your computer from before, you can add them easily: Click on *File, Get Photos*, from *Files and Folders*. Of course you do need to know where on the hard drive you have them!

Have a play with the tags and the collections. For instance click on the Collection tab on the right side of the Organizer. Click on *New*. Give your new collection a name and then just click and drag your photos into it. Note you can have one photo appear in multiple albums, just like you can have multiple tags on your photos. Similarly you can have collections within collections or tags within tags.

Click the Tag tab and see the tags they gave you to begin with. You can click on *New* and add a tag under people. Call it Family. When you click on the tag or collection boxes the photos will be

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displayed that belong to it. If you are religious about your collections and tags these features can be extremely handy for keeping tab of your photos.

If you are like me you take too many photos and don't have the patience to tag them all or place them in collections. Call me lazy... Instead I am careful filing my photos in consistent directories. I use folders for years, folders for months within each year, and within each month I might have a folder that says "East Coast" or "Bike Trip". For me to find my photos I always need to remember when I took the photos. You try and remember when you took that photo of the kangaroos on the back porch... Not easy. If you can discipline yourself to use tags and collections you will be much better off! Trust me on that one! All photos that come from your camera have information within the image that records things such as date of picture taken, and camera details. Elements will also sort your photos by date it was taken in a calendar style view: Click on *Date View* in the organizer window.

If you cannot locate a photo click on the Back to All Photos button and use the timeline bar or the directory structure on the left.

Why Photoshop Elements?

What we will learn in this class is photo manipulation, but Photoshop Elements will do more than that. In the Organizer view you can click File/New and have a look. You can make slideshows, calendars, Album Pages, web photo galleries and more. These are all nice to play with, so we will move on to the important stuff: Preparing your photos for emailing and printing and showing to others. The more interesting tasks we can use Photoshop for is perhaps Panoramas and artistic touches. But why should we use Photoshop and not one of the cheaper image editors?

The biggest advantage of using Photoshop is the image format it uses: PSD. The PSD (Photoshop Document) format stores an image as a set of layers, including text, masks, opacity, and more. Photoshop's popularity means that the PSD format is widely used, and it is often supported by other software too.

Having layers means you can make changes to your image and not destroy your original photo. More about this in the next chapter:

Editing Photos

When editing photos Elements gives you three convenient options. Let's double click on an image in the organizer. It should enlarge on the screen. Right click on the image and you will see a menu of likely actions you can do with it.

The Autofix window is really a cheap option to let the computer fix up your photos. It is nice and convenient, but it is a cheap way out! Then there is a Quick Fix option. This time you can adjust basic things like brightness and contrast with an easy slider. Note the 'Smart Fix' Slider!

Standard Edit is really the option we are interested in. You can find a *Standard Edit* button in the *Quick Fix* window on the right top.

In Standard Edit we have a view that is familiar to Photoshop users. It has buttons, toolbars, little windows... And might look confusing to you. Move your mouse over anything you don't understand and a small explanation pops up. If that doesn't help press F! (the almost universal help button) and type in the word you need help on.

Photoshop has lots more information to show you, if it were to show you all its windows and options there would be no room to see your photo. So you can click or unclick the bits you want to see in the Windows Menu on top. Each window that pops up you can close or move as per usual windows procedure: click and drag.

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The most important bits to see are UNDO HISTORY and LAYERS. Undo history keeps a tab on everything you do. The list is clearly visible and you can click on any history level and go straight back to it. If you regretted having done something you can click on the level you were still happy with and continue from there. All actions done after that point have now been un-done. This is convenient, but maybe there were some actions you wanted to keep... This is where layers come into the picture.

Layers

If you've never used an application that allowed you to create layers, you probably don't know what the advantages are in having them. Aside from the minor attraction of being able to keep your image organised by putting each element on its own separate labeled layer, the overwhelming advantage of layers is that they allow you to segregate your edits.

Every time you add something to your image, for instance text, it creates it on a new layer. You can create layers, or you can have 'adjustment layers'. They work like overlays. Think of a photograph and holding a blue piece of glass over it. It now looks blue. Take a second glass sheet in the colour yellow. Hold it over the image as well and you see a greenish image! At any time you can remove one of the glass pieces. Take a piece of a church window and hold it over the picture as well. You will now see a greenish photo with the pattern of the church window superimposed over it. That piece might have dark bits on it or leaded divisions between the glass pieces and you can imagine moving it around till your photograph looks best. These are layers!

The nice thing about layers is that you can always take any of the layers away, you can move the layers, or adjust them. For instance a brightness and contrast adjustment layer can be put over your image by clicking on Layers/AdjustmentLayers/Brightness&Contrast. Notice the brightness controls appear? If at any time you need to change any of the layers just click on the layer you want in the layers window and your mouse and tools will work on that layer. For instance resizing a layer.

Instead of going through all the options here of what you can do I will just ask you to play with them. Pay attention in class and spend the following days experimenting at home! It is a fun way to learn! I will now run through some examples with you:

Selecting Objects in a photo

If you like to take an object out of a photo and paste it into another photo you will generally need to resize and change brightness to make it fit into another photo. This is done with layers.

Typically you would open the photo with the object you want. This could be a car. Look for the Magnetic Lasso tool and draw around the car. When you have approximately traced around it (press Ctrl+ or Ctrl- to enlarge or reduce the image size) click your mouse button and press Enter. Clicking the mouse button will help your lasso tool go around certain difficult areas, the click kind of works like an anchor. Pressing Enter completes the circle and the object is now highlighted.

Highlighted objects have moving dots around them. Any action you may want to perform will happen within that selection only! Click on Edit/Copy (which copies the selected region) and move to the photo where you like the image to go. That photo also needs to be in a standard edit window! When the destination image is show press Edit/Paste. The object should now appear as a new layer on top of the image.

If you don't like the selected area and like to start again press Ctrl D for 'Deselect', and try again. Working with the lasso can be a little tricky. Play with the options on the top of your screen if you have trouble.

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To make the layer more identifiable you can rename the layer in the layer window. Right click the generic name (eg. Layer 1) and call it something sensible like 'Joan'. This way it is easy to click on the right layer once you have a few layers happening!

Using the move tool you can position the object and resize or rotate it till it looks like part of the picture. You can also drag layers to different positions. Use the layer window to do that; click and drag! Notice that like holding two photos in your hand, put one on top of the other dictates which one you will see! Same with Photoshop! You will only see the top one. That is unless you cut holes into the photo or make them see-through (use the opacity slider in the layer window).

If the object you pasted into the photo is too dark or too bright just click on the layer and use the enhance menu to modify that layer till it fits in better!

The photo you now have, a composite photo, is in PSD format. This is not good for emailing or printing. So in order to use it you would typically need to save it as a JPG. JPG is pretty much an industry standard for any photo! Click File/Save-As and pay attention to the file name and the file format (change it to JPG here). When you click the Save button it will prompt for the JPG Options. The bottom shows you the size. For emailing I suggest you keep it under 200kb, for printing use Maximum Quality and ignore the size.

Slightly better choice for saving into a suitable size is Alt-Shft-Ctrl-S (press them one at a time till all are held down, just like you would Alt-Ctrl-Del, Ctrl-S etc.). The equivalent menu option for this is File/Save for Web. Here you will see how it will be saved. You can easily change the pixels numbers too. For emailing you might like to stick to 800 or less pixels wide.