

Photoshop Elements SIG - November 14, 2007

by John Durrett

Photoshop Elements 6

The latest version, Photoshop Elements 6, was released in October. It costs around \$99, but can be had at Costco or Sam's Club for the mid-\$80's. If you have never owned Photoshop Elements, this version would be a good one to buy. If you are thinking of upgrading, you can buy it direct from Adobe for \$79.99 at www.adobe.com. Just look for Photoshop Elements and find the upgrade package. There is a new website for Photoshop Elements at www.photoshopelementsuser.com. If you go to that page, look near the top and you can play a video from **PhotoshopUserTV** that gives a 30 minute overview of some of the highlights of Photoshop Elements 6. The video is very well done.

The biggest difference, in my opinion, between Photoshop Elements 6 and all the prior versions is that PE 6 uses a photo grey color as a background. That makes all your photos stand out really well, but it does make it tough to read some of the smaller black/grey print used with the smaller Tool Option icons. For example, reading the Size of the Brushes is a little hard for me. Nevertheless, the new capability and new tools embedded in Photoshop Elements 6 makes it a nice-to-have for me. After more use, it may even fall into the must-have category.

BUT, if you are an occasional user and are having good luck with your current version, then stick with what you have. All the basic tools were embedded within Photoshop Elements 3. You can still use that version to clean up and improve a lot of pictures.

Photoshop Elements Workflow

Workflow is all about the steps you take to deal with your photos. There are books written about Workflow, such as "**Photoshop CS3 Workflow**" by Tim Grey. Tim's book was almost 300 pages, so I can't go into too much depth in these notes. But I do think an outline of how to approach working with photos is important. This next list is the Workflow I normally follow when working on my pictures.

Input
Organize
Rotate/Crop
Edit (Tone/Contrast, Color, etc)
Clean Up (Blemishes, Scratches)
Special Effects (Filters, Frames, etc)
Output (Print, Email, Web, Albums)
Save, Save, Save ----- BACKUP

I will discuss these individually in the rest of the notes.

Input

You need to get your photos from your camera to your computer. Many cameras come with a cord (USB) that you can use to hook up your camera to the computer and download your photos using the camera manufacturer's software. I recommend, however, buying a Card Reader with a USB 2 cable. Take the camera card (my Canon uses a Compact Flash card) from your camera and plug it into the Reader. Then plug the Reader's USB cable into your computer. You will normally get two splash screens on your computer. One will offer to take your files onto the machine using Windows Explorer, and the other will offer to use Adobe Photo Downloader. **USE Adobe Photo Downloader.** This will import your pictures from the card into folders on your computer and the Adobe Organizer portion of Photoshop Elements will update its catalog to include all your new pictures.

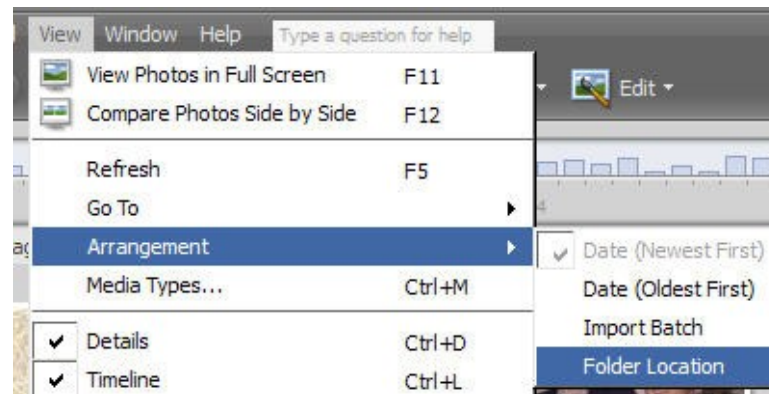
Important*** - Know where your pictures are located on your computer! On most Windows systems, the default location for importing pictures is into the MyPictures folder. MyPictures is one of the subfolders of MyDocuments.

Organize

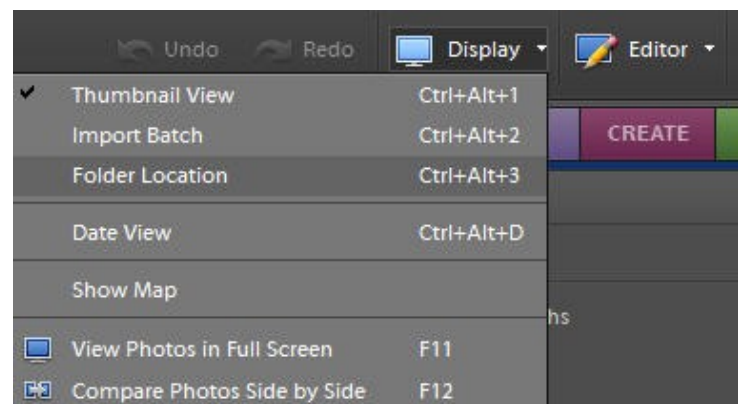
If you use Organizer's ability to add Tags and designate Albums, you can save yourself time later. This is something I SHOULD do, but somehow put off doing until much later. And by that time, it seems like an overwhelming task. I need to get better with this. LOL.....

I use the Organizer extensively while viewing the Folder Tree. If you are using Photoshop

Elements 5 or earlier version, select from the menu **View > Arrangement > Folder Location**.



In Photoshop Elements 6, you get the folders by clicking on the **Display icon** in the upper task bar on the right, and then selecting **Folder Location**.



Rotate/Crop

In Photoshop Elements 6, you can Rotate and Crop images from within the Organizer. If you want to Rotate a picture in PE 5, you select Edit > Rotate 90° Counterclockwise (or Clockwise). To do a Crop, open either Quick Edit or Full Edit, and use the Crop Tool. You can use the Crop Tool to focus on your

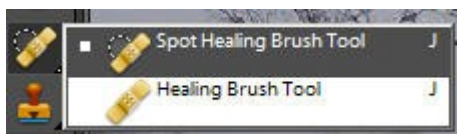
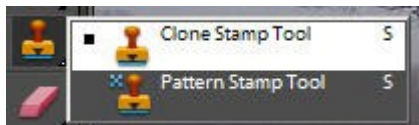
selected subject(s) in the picture, or to remove unwanted portions of the picture.

Edit (Tone/Contrast, Color, etc)

I usually edit the tone, contrast, and color of my pictures next. If you are just starting with Photoshop Elements, then pick the Quick Fix option. Then try the Auto Smart Fix first, and see if you like it. If not, then click the Reset icon above the picture. Try the Auto Levels and Auto Contrast. I usually have better luck with them. You can always back up one step using Ctrl+Z or use the Reset button to go back to the original picture. If you want more control over your process, then start by opening the Full Edit editor and using its capability.

Clean Up (Blemishes, Scratches)

If you need to clean up any part of your picture, then open the Full Edit editor, and select either the Clone Stamp tool or one of the Healing Brush Tools.



This is for more advanced editing, and I will cover this another time. But use additional layers when you do this and put your corrections on those new layers. Then if you want to change your mind, you can always trash a layer or two.

Special Effects (Filters, Frames, etc)

Use Full Edit to add any type of **Filter** or **Layer Effects**. Filters, together with the use of masks on layers can add to the beauty of a picture and put the emphasis where you want it. I will discuss more another time about Layer Effects and Filters.

Output (Print, Email, Web, Albums)

After all your work in improving the photos, you probably want to create an output. If you want to print, be sure to check **Image > Resize > Image Size** in the Editor to check the resolution of your image. You should have a resolution of around 240 dpi or greater to get a good glossy photo paper print. Photoshop Elements will also let you Create may optional formats, such as **Photo Books, or Photo Albums, or Email** your photos to your friends.

Save, Save, Save --- And Backup

Save your changes. Save your files. Save your creations. Save while you work, at any point in your Workflow. And **BACKUP** your photo files off your normal hard drive. I like to use an external USB hard drive for backing up all my data. It is not a matter of "if a hard drive will fail", but "when". And in the case of my pictures, I even backup my external hard drive to a second external hard drive. I don't want to take any chances.

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