

NEWSLETTER

December 2014



Photoshop Elements 13

I briefly mentioned the new version of Elements, version 13, at the last SIG meeting. Of course one of the first questions is always, "is it worth the upgrade?"

I have to answer with a question: "What version are you using presently?"

Prime members can buy the latest version on Amazon for less than \$50 right now (Black Friday) but I think a realistic price for the PC version will come out to be around \$70 in the run up to Christmas buying.

So what are the benefits?

First, Adobe have actually brought out a 64-bit version for the Windows version (the Mac version had 64 bit since version 11), but do remember whether you use the 64 or 32 bit version (both are provided on the installation disc or download) you do need Windows 7 or 8 for version 13. Additionally Adobe are touting the following:

1. Photomerge Compose. Used alongside the Refine Selection Brush, Adobe says this new tool - based on customer requests - makes copying people or objects as easy as copy and paste.
2. New Effects Variations. These offer four additional options per look for a total of 50 ways to tailor photos in one click.
3. Intelligent Crop Suggestions is a new cropping tool that analyses faces, horizons and other photographic elements to then recommend four different crops based on the rules of composition.
4. A new tool to create matching Facebook cover and profile photos, customizable with text and graphics.
5. Three new Guided Edits offer a new way to add hits of color to black and white photos. (See next page).



I know these might not sound wonderful and to be honest if you presently are using versions 10,11 and 12 it would be hard for me to recommend you go for the upgrade (unless you can snag the \$50 price!) but some of the features are interesting. I have a copy and will show it at the next SIG meeting and if any of you get version 13 for Christmas please play with it and bring your suggestions to the next meeting.

Free photo organizer

As mentioned in the September newsletter here is another photo organizer program.

OK, show of hands: How many of you have pictures on your computer that still need to be edited, organized or shared?

You don't really have to raise your hands, but if you take as many photographs as I do it's inevitable that you have some pictures on your computer that need attention.

While it's worth it to go the extra mile when working with your photos, some of the digital photo formats aren't always compatible with every program you have.

You can use an expensive program like Photoshop to handle all of your file formats, but frankly there's an easier - and cheaper - way.

FastStone Image Viewer is a great solution for browsing your photo library. It supports every major photo format and quite a few obscure ones as well, so you don't have to worry about how to view your photos.

This program has editing tools for you to adjust the images before you share them online with friends and family members. FastStone can also convert your photo file formats to make them more compatible other programs.

[Download Instructions](#)

To download the program, navigate to [the FastStone Image Viewer homepage](#) and click on the white and blue "Download" button beneath the Fast Stone Image Viewer 5.3.

You will be redirected to the download page. Click on the second button labeled "exe (site 2) download." Your download should begin immediately.

When the download is complete, open and run the installation file. Be sure to read the License Agreement before continuing. Remember, always read the fine print!

I recommend using the default installation settings, and there are no bloatware programs or add-ons to avoid. When the installation is complete, you can open FastStone Image Viewer to start your photo-editing fun.

Another Image Optimizer

If you've ever used any kind of photo editor before, then you know how simple it can be to tidy up your photos. A bit of color correction here, red-eye removal there, and your photos are good to go.

But for those of you that are looking for a more in-depth way to edit your photos and add your own flair, you need something a little more comprehensive than Windows Media Gallery.

For you photo editors that have a good grasp of the basics, you might appreciate Paint.net. It's like a cross between Photoshop and Windows' built-in MS Paint. In fact, it was originally created as a free replacement for MS Paint.

Paint.net lets you add text, paint, patterns, shapes and gradients to any photo using layers. It also includes tons of helpful special effects that let you sharpen, blur or remove grain and noise.

You can make photos look like old paintings, add motion blur for excitement, or just remove red eye. But perhaps the best part is that Paint.net keeps an unlimited history, so you'll always be able to undo every change.

Note: Paint.NET requires the .NET framework and the Windows 7 Support Package 1 as minimum requirements. Paint.NET is not compatible with Windows Vista.

Download Instructions

To download the program, navigate to the [Paint.NET download page](#) using the button below. Locate and click on the large download button labeled "download now."

Now click on the blue text link on the right side of the page labeled "paint.net 4.0.3" to begin your download. Your download should begin immediately.

When the download is complete, open the Zip file and extract the application. After it's been extracted, run the application to begin the installation.

You will have the option to run the Express or Custom installation. I recommend using the Custom installation to make sure that everything is the way you want it.

Be sure to read the License Agreement before continuing. Remember, you should always read the fine print on everything you download.

During the custom installation, you will see options for opening different kinds of image files automatically in Paint.NET. If you want to make Paint.NET your default image editor, leave everything the way it is and click next. Otherwise, you can customize the installation settings to your preferences.

Continue with the installation. When the installation is complete, click "Finish" and Paint.NET will run automatically. You can click and drag images into the open program to get started.

Internet Archive Book

The [Internet Archive](#) is a great non-profit organization that collects and preserves digital copies of all sorts of media like photos, movies, music and even classic games. This huge collection is searchable and downloads are available to you free of charge.

The Archive has over 2 million classic photos and images that you can download for your use. The catalog is full of vintage advertisements, old photographs and works of art. Most of the images have been scanned to make them digitally accessible.

Not only did the Internet Archive make these photos available to you, but it made them easy to get, too. It uploaded all of the images to photo-sharing site Flickr. To download the photos, just visit [the Flickr page](#) and click on an image you want. You can then click the download button in the bottom right corner of the picture. There's also a share button that lets you pass it along to friends using social media or email.

So next time you need some photos, don't break the bank. These are the perfect images to add some vintage flair to your next project or make any child's history assignment interesting.

Things we should not be without!



I admit it I tend to look at websites that sell unusual objects, you know what I mean things that you buy and then they collect dust in a cupboard afterwards. Well I just found one that possibly is different and you might actually use! Behold the one handed bottle opener!

Well that is all for the December 2014 edition of our newsletter, please send contributions to future editions, it's getting harder to generate content after eight years!

In the meantime, here's wishing you and all your families all the best for the holidays and let us all pray for peace on earth!

