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1

Introducing Elements

Photoshop Elements is a digital image editing program that comprehensively spans the gap between very basic programs and professional-level ones. This chapter introduces the various sections and modes of Elements and shows how access them. It also shows how to quickly get up and running with this powerful, flexible and creative image editing program.

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About Elements

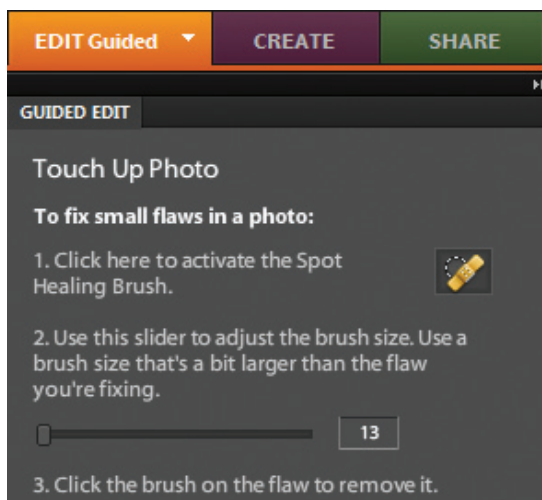
Photoshop Elements is the offspring of the professional-level image editing program, Photoshop. Photoshop is somewhat unusual in the world of computer software, in that it is widely accepted as being the best program of its type on the market. If professional designers or photographers are using an image editing program, it will almost certainly be Photoshop. However, two of the potential drawbacks to Photoshop are the cost (approximately \$600) and its complexity. This is where Elements comes into its own. Adobe (the makers of Photoshop and Elements) have recognized that the majority of digital imaging users (i.e. the consumer market) want something with the basic power of Photoshop, but with enough user-friendly features to make it easy to use. With the explosion in the digital camera market, a product was needed to meet the needs of a new generation of image editors – and that product is Elements.

Elements contains the same powerful editing/color management tools as the full version of Photoshop and it also includes a number of versatile features for sharing images and for creating artistic projects, such as slide shows, cards, calendars and online photo albums for the Web. It also has valuable help features, such as the Guided Edit mode, which explains what different items can be used for and gives a step-by-step guide to various digital editing techniques:

Don't forget



Photoshop Elements can be bought online from computer and software sites, or at computer software stores. There are Windows and Mac versions of the program.



...cont'd

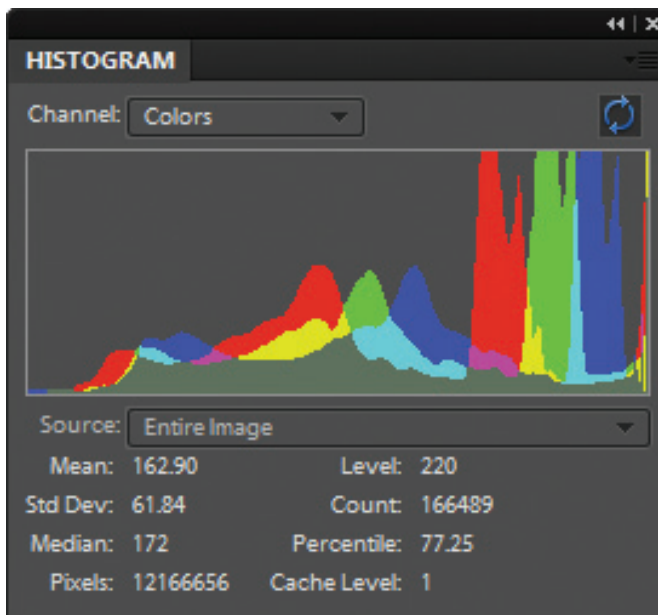
Special effects

One of the great things about using Elements with digital images is that it provides numerous fun and creative options for turning mediocre images into eye-catching works of art. This is achieved through a wide variety of artwork and effects:



Advanced features

In addition to user-friendly features, Elements also has more advanced functions, such as the histogram:



Don't forget



The histogram displays the tonal range of the colors in an image.

Welcome Screen

When you first open Elements, you will be presented with the Welcome Screen. This offers initial advice about working with Elements and also provides options for creating new files, or opening existing ones. The Welcome Screen appears by default but this can be altered once you become more familiar with Elements.

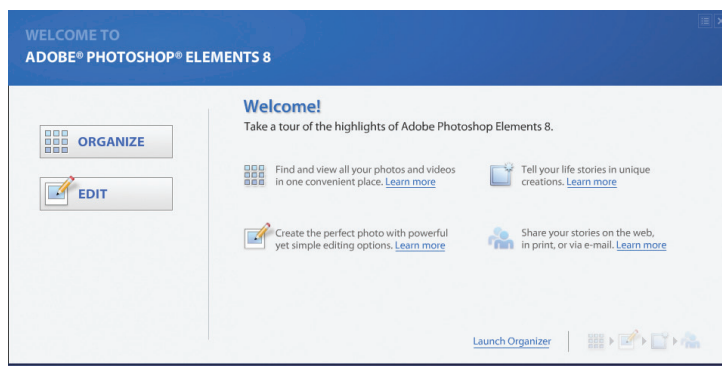
Welcome Screen functions

- 1 Options for organizing photos, editing them and using them in a variety of creative ways

Don't forget



The Mac version of Elements has a similar, but not identical, Welcome Screen.



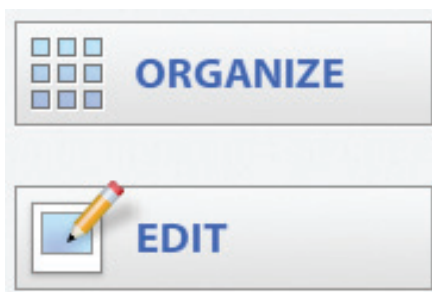
- 2 Click on the Learn More buttons to find out about certain functions in Elements

- 3 Click on the Organize button to go to that area

Hot tip



The Welcome Screen can be accessed at any time by selecting Window > Welcome from the Editor Menu bar.



- 4 Click on the Edit button to go to that area

Editor Mode

From the Welcome Screen the Elements Editor interface can be accessed. This is a combination of the work area (where images are opened and edited), menus, toolbars, a toolbox and panels. At first it can seem a little daunting, but Elements has been designed to offer as much help as possible as you proceed through the digital editing process.

The components of the Elements Editor are:



Don't forget



Editor mode has a Full Edit function, a Quick Edit option and a Guided Edit mode. Full Edit is used for general, and advanced, image editing. Quick Edit can be used for automated editing in one step, and Guided mode offers step-by-step guidance and advice.

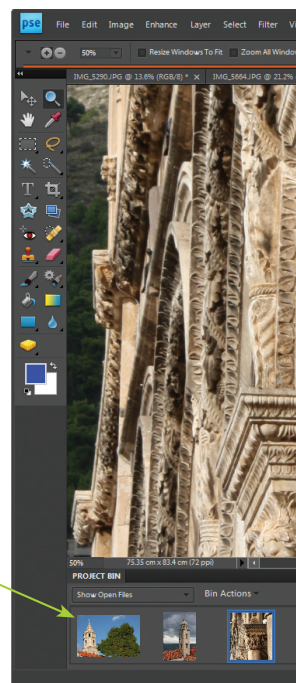
Hot tip

Images can also be made active for editing by dragging them directly from the Project Bin and dropping them within the Editor window.

Project Bin

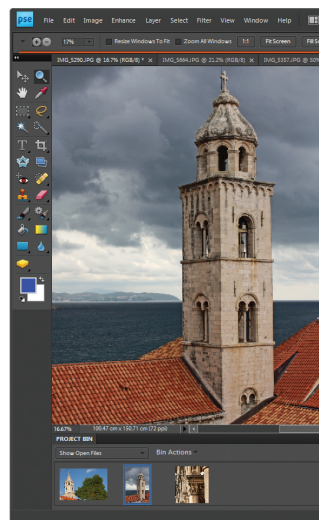
The Project Bin is a feature that can be accessed from the Editor in either Full Edit or Quick Edit mode. The Project Bin enables you to quickly access all of the images that you have open within the Editor. To use the Project Bin:

- 1 Open two or more images. The most recently opened one will be the one that is active in the Editor



- 2 All open images are shown here in the Project Bin

- 3 Double-click on an image in the Project Bin to make that the active one for editing



Quick Edit Mode

Quick Edit mode contains a number of functions that can be selected from a panel and applied to an image, without the need to manually apply all of the commands. To do this:

- 1 In the Editor, click on the Edit Quick button
- 2 The currently active image is displayed within the Quick Edit window

EDIT Quick ▼

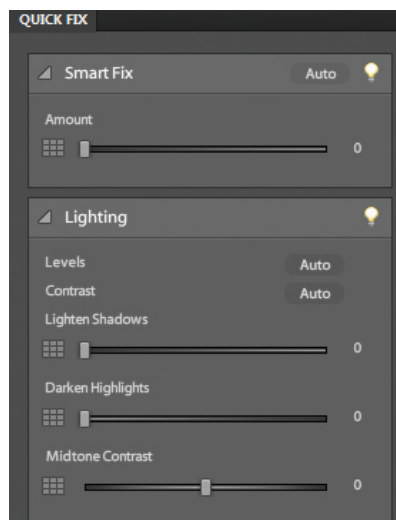


Don't forget



For an in-depth look at Quick Edit mode, have a look at Chapter Four.


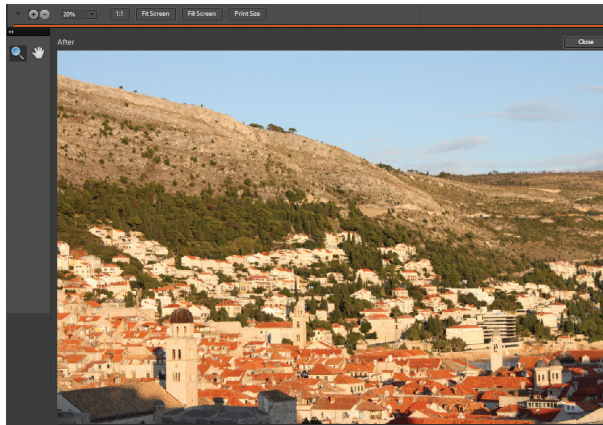
- 3 Select one of the commands to have it applied to the active image. This can either be applied by clicking on the Auto button or by dragging the appropriate slider to apply the command



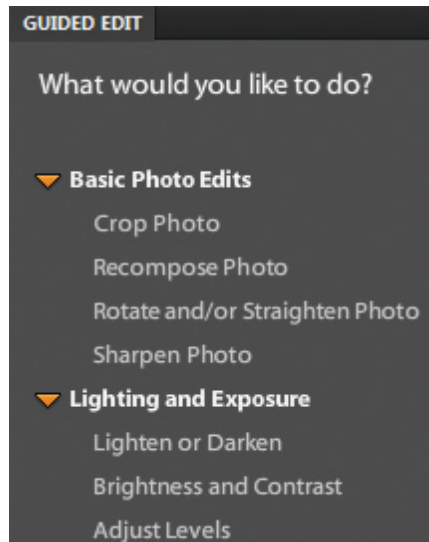
Guided Edit Mode

Guided Edit mode is similar to Quick Fix mode, except that it focuses on common tasks for editing digital images and shows you how to perform them. To use Guided Edit mode:

- 1 In Edit mode, click on the Edit Guided button
- 2 The currently active image is displayed within the Guided Edit window

- 3 Select one of the actions that you want to perform. This will take you to a step-by-step process for undertaking the required action



Don't forget

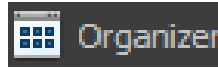


Guided Edit mode is a great place to start if you are new to image editing, or feel unsure about anything to do with it.

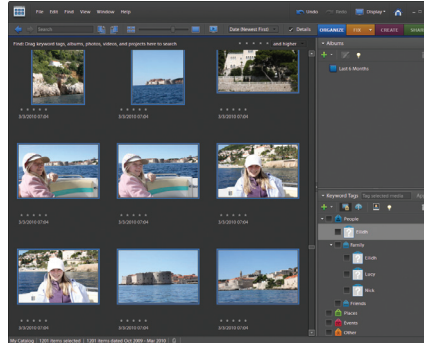
Organizer Mode

The Organizer mode contains a number of functions for sorting, viewing and finding multiple images. To use the Organizer:

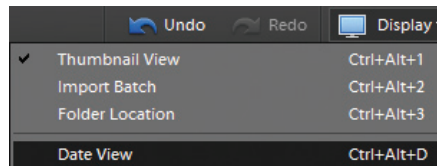
- 1 In Editor mode, click on the Organizer button



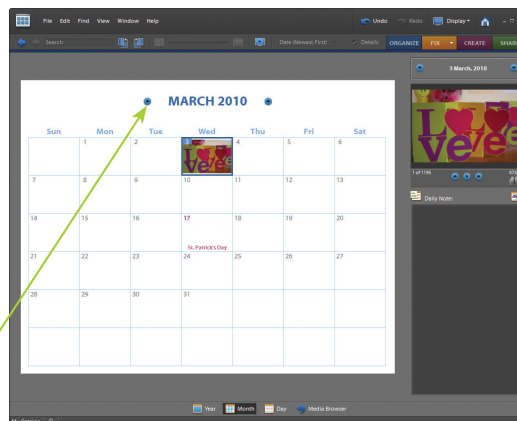
- 2 The Media Browser displays thumbnails of your photos, and also has functions for sorting and finding images



- 3 In the Media Browser, click on the Date View button



- 4 This displays a calendar interface that can be used to view images that were captured on a specific date. Click here to move through the calendar



Don't forget



Images displayed in the Media Browser can be located anywhere on your computer. The thumbnails in Media Browser are just references to the originals, wherever they are stored.

Don't forget



The Mac version of Elements does not have an Organizer mode. Instead, this function is undertaken by the Adobe Bridge program. For more information about this see pages 24–29.

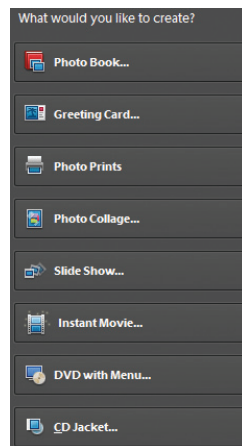
Create Mode

Create mode is where you can release your artistic flair and start designing photo books and photo collages. It can also be used to create slide shows and to put your images onto disc, using the VCD format. To use Create mode:

- 1 In either the Editor or the Organizer, click on the Create button



- 2 Select one of the Create projects. Each project has a wizard that takes you through the create process



- 3 Create mode can be used to create a variety of artistic projects, containing your own images



Don't forget



For an in-depth look at Create mode have a look at Chapter Ten.

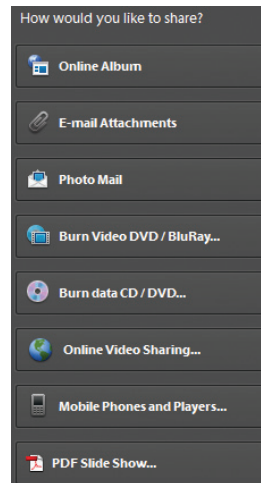
Share Mode

Share mode can be used to distribute your images to family and friends in a variety of creative ways. To use Share mode:

- 1 In either the Editor or the Organizer, click on the Share button



- 2 Select one of the Share options

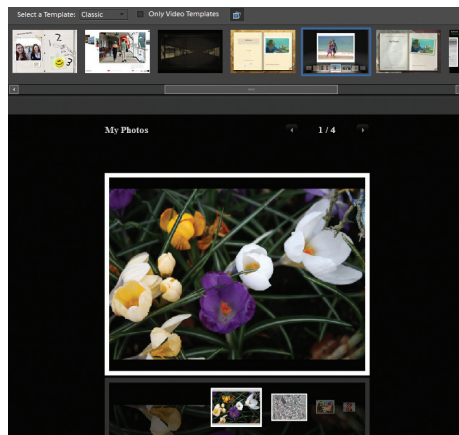


Don't forget



For an in-depth look at Share mode have a look at Chapter Ten.

- 3 The projects have templates and wizards that takes you through the process of creating the project for sharing



Menu Bar

In the Editor, the Menu bar contains menus that provide all of the functionality for the workings of Elements. Some of these functions can also be achieved through the use of the other components of Elements, such as the Toolbox, the Shortcuts bar, the Options bar and the panels. However, the Menu bar is where all of the commands needed for the digital editing process can be accessed in one place.

Menu bar menus

Don't forget



The Mac version of Elements also has a Photoshop Elements menu on the Menu bar. This contains the Preferences options.

Beware



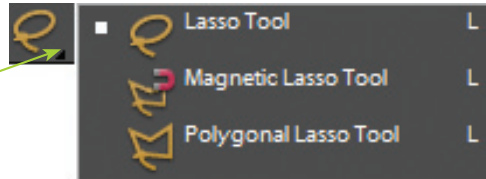
Elements does not support the CMYK color model for editing digital images. This could be an issue if you use a commercial printer.

- **File.** This has standard commands for opening, saving and printing images, and also commands for creating panoramas (Photomerge) and accessing online services from Adobe
- **Edit.** This contains commands for undoing previous operations, and standard copy and paste techniques
- **Image.** This contains commands for altering the size, shape and position of an image. It also contains more advanced functions, such as changing the color mode of an image
- **Enhance.** This contains commands for editing the color elements of an image. It also contains quick-fix options
- **Layer.** This contains commands for working with different layers within an image
- **Select.** This contains commands for working with areas that have been selected within an image, with one of the selection tools in the Toolbox
- **Filter.** This contains numerous filters that can be used to apply special effects to an image
- **View.** This contains commands for changing the size at which an image is displayed, and also options for showing or hiding rulers and grid lines
- **Window.** This contains commands for changing the way multiple images are displayed, and also options for displaying all of the components of Elements
- **Help.** This contains the various Help options

Toolbox

The Toolbox contains tools for adding items to an image (such as shapes and text), selecting areas of an image and also for applying editing techniques. Some of the tools have more than one option, in which case, they have a small black triangle at the bottom right of the default tool. To access additional tools in the Toolbox:

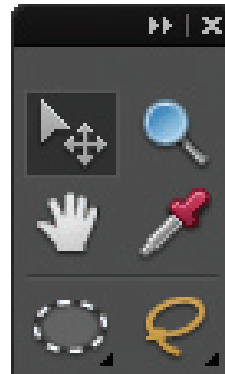
Click and hold here to access additional tools for a particular item



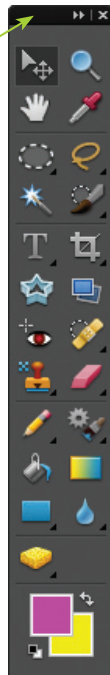
Working with the Toolbox

By default, the Toolbox is docked at the left of the main Editor window. However, it can be removed and dragged anywhere within the main window. To do this:

1 Click on the two arrows to view the Toolbox in one column. Click on the cross to close it



2 Click and drag here to move the Toolbox around the Editor window. Drag it back to its original location to redock it at the left of the window



Don't forget



The tools that have additional options are: the Marquee tools, the Lasso tools, the Magic Selection Brush tool, the Healing Brush tools, the Type tools, the Crop tools, the Eraser tools, the Brush tools, the Stamp tools, the Object tools (e.g. the Rectangle tool), the Blur tool and the Sponge tool.

Don't forget



For full details of the Toolbox functions, see the inside front cover of the book.

Hot tip



If the Toolbox is not visible, select Window > Tools from the Menu bar.

Options Bar

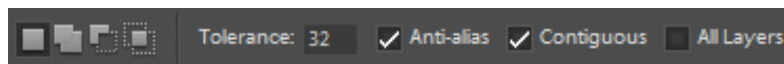
The Options bar provides attributes that can be set for a selected tool from the Toolbox. For instance, if the Eraser tool is selected, the Options bar offers choices for the type of eraser that can be used, its size, its mode and its opacity level. For each tool, a different set of options is available.

Using the Options bar

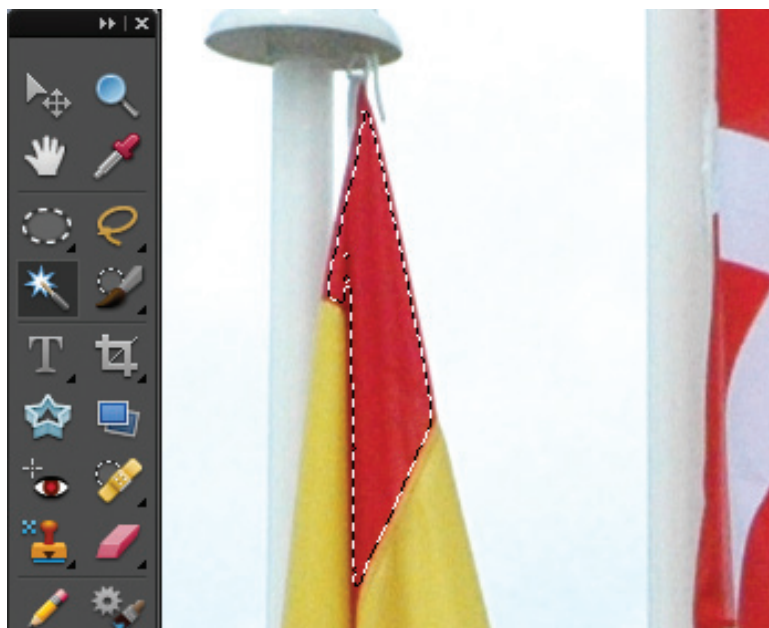
- 1 Click on a tool in the Toolbox (in this example it is the Magic Wand tool)



- 2 Select the options for the tool in the Options bar



- 3 Apply the tool to an image. The tool will maintain the settings in the Options bar until they are changed



Don't forget



If a tool has more than one option in the Toolbox, these are all displayed on the Options bar. Clicking on a different tool on the Options bar changes the currently selected tool in the Toolbox.