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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 workspaces and modes of Elements, shows how to access them, and details what can be done with each one.*

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Photoshop Elements can be bought online directly from Adobe, as well as from other computer and software sites, or at computer software stores. There are Windows and Mac versions of the program, and with Elements 15 these are virtually identical. If Elements 15 is bought from the Adobe website, at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com), it can be downloaded and installed directly from there. Otherwise it will be provided on a DVD, with a serial number that needs to be entered during installation.



The New icon pictured above indicates a new or enhanced feature introduced with the latest version of Photoshop Elements 15.

# 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 its cost and its complexity. This is where Elements comes into its own. Adobe (the maker of Photoshop and Elements) has 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, and for a reasonable price. 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 Photoshop Elements.

Elements contains most of 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 slideshows, cards, calendars and cover photos for Facebook. It also has valuable features, such as the Guided edit and Quick edit modes, where you can quickly apply editing techniques and follow step-by-step processes to achieve a range of creative and artistic effects.

## 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 step-by-step activities within Guided edit mode, which have been added to and enhanced in Elements 15.

## Advanced features

In addition to user-friendly features, Elements also has an Expert editing mode where you can use a range of advanced features, including a full set of tools for editing and color adjustments.

# Welcome Screen

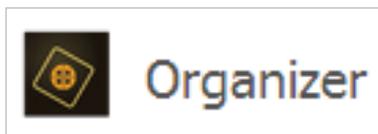
When you first open Elements, you will be presented with the Welcome Screen. This offers initial advice about working with Elements and also provides options for accessing the different workspaces. The Welcome Screen appears by default, but this can be altered once you become more familiar with Elements.

## Welcome Screen functions

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



- 2 Click on the **Organizer** button to go to that area



- 3 Click on the **Photo Editor** button to go to that area



The Welcome Screen can be accessed at any time by selecting

**Help > Welcome Screen** from the Photo Editor or Organizer Menu bar. Click on this button at the top of the Welcome Screen to select options for what happens when Elements is launched.



The **Video Editor** button on the Welcome Screen links to Adobe Premiere Elements (sold separately), which is the video editing companion app to Photoshop Elements.

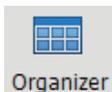




In Elements 15 there is also an **eLive** button on the top toolbar. This links to a range of help and news articles about Elements.



The Elements Organizer can be accessed from any of the Editor modes by clicking on the Organizer button on the Taskbar.

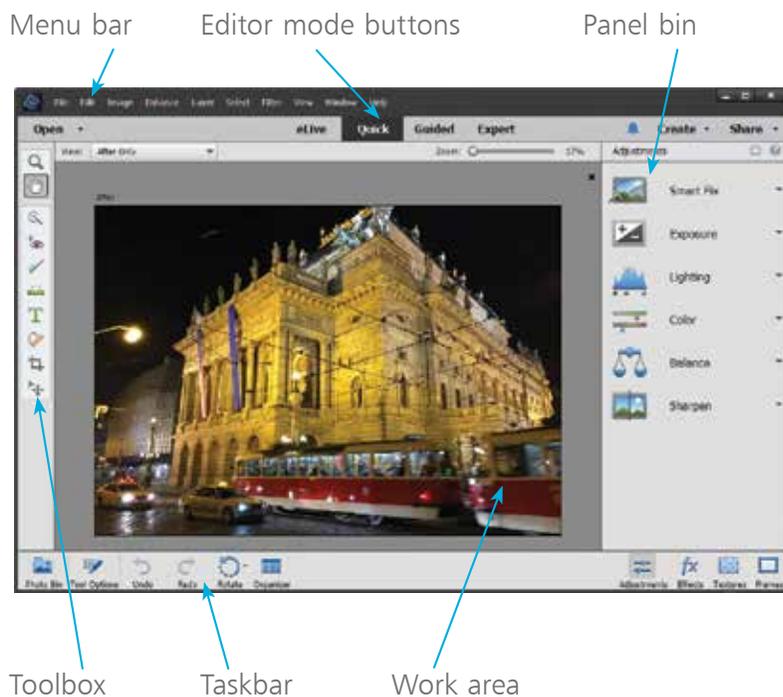


The keyboard shortcut for closing Elements is Ctrl + Q (Command key + Q on a Mac).

# Photo Editor Workspace

From the Welcome Screen, the Photo Editor workspace can be accessed. This is a combination of the work area (where images are opened and edited), menus, toolbars, toolboxes and panels. At first it can seem a little daunting, but Elements has been designed with three different editing modes to give you as many options as possible for editing your photos.

The components of the Photo Editor (Editor) are:



## Editor modes

The three different modes in the Photo Editor are accessed from the buttons at the top of the Elements window. They are:

- **Quick edit mode.** This can be used to perform quick editing options in one step.
- **Guided edit mode.** This can be used to perform a range of editing techniques, following a step-by-step process for each.
- **Expert edit mode.** This can be used for ultimate control over the editing process.

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## Taskbar and Tool Options

The Taskbar is the group of buttons that is available across all three Editor modes, at the bottom left of the Elements window:

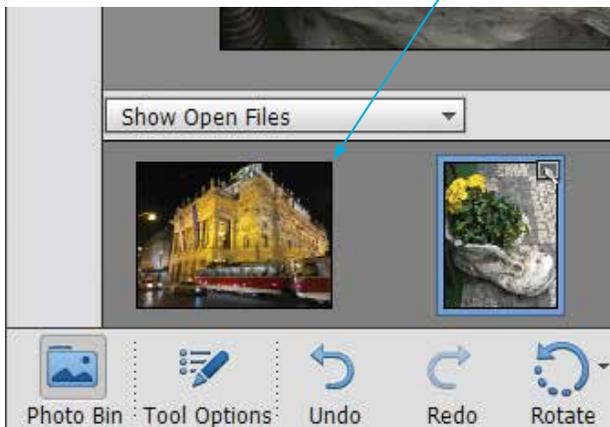


One of the options on the Taskbar is Tool Options. This displays the available options for any tool selected from the Toolbox (different tools are available in each of the different Editor modes). See pages 18-19 for details.

## Photo Bin

The Photo Bin is another feature that can be accessed from all three Editor modes. The Photo Bin enables you to quickly access all of the images that you have open within the Editor. To use the Photo Bin:

- 1 Open two or more images. The most recently-opened one will be the one that is active in the Editor window
- 2 All open images are shown here in the Photo Bin



- 3 Click on an image in the Photo Bin to make that the active one for editing



The items on the Taskbar are, from left to right: show or hide the Photo Bin, show or hide the Tool Options bar, Undo the previous actions, Redo any undone actions, Rotate the active photo, and access the Organizer. In Expert mode there is also an option to change the Layout.



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



When image editing has begun, this icon appears at its top right-hand corner in the Photo Bin.





Quick edit mode in Elements 15 can be used by pressing on the screen with touch-screen devices.



For a more detailed look at Quick edit mode, see pages 82-87.



Some of the options in the Adjustments panel in Quick edit mode (Step 3) have an **Auto** option for applying the effect in a single click.



Move the cursor over one of the thumbnails to view a real-time preview of the effect on the open image. Click on one of the thumbnails to apply the effect.

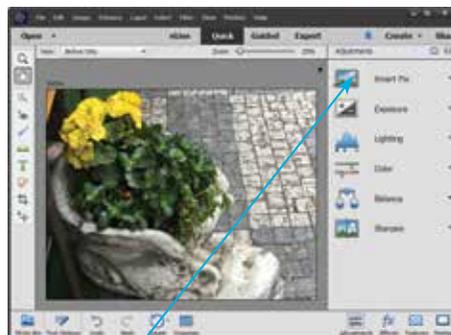
# Quick Edit Mode

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

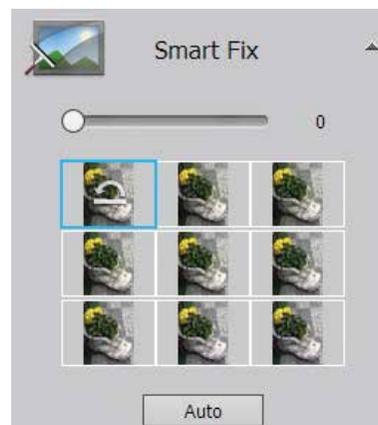
- 1 In the Editor, click on the **Quick** button



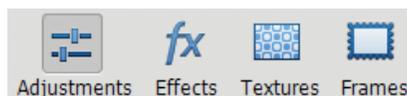
- 2 The currently-active image is displayed within the Quick edit window. This has the standard Taskbar and Photo Bin, and a reduced Toolbox. Click here to access the Quick edit panels



- 3 Select one of the commands to have it applied to the active image. This can be applied either by clicking on one of the thumbnail options or by dragging the appropriate slider at the top of the panel



- 4 Click on these buttons on the Taskbar at the bottom of the Quick edit panel to select **Adjustments**, **Effects**, **Textures** and **Frames** options for adding to photos



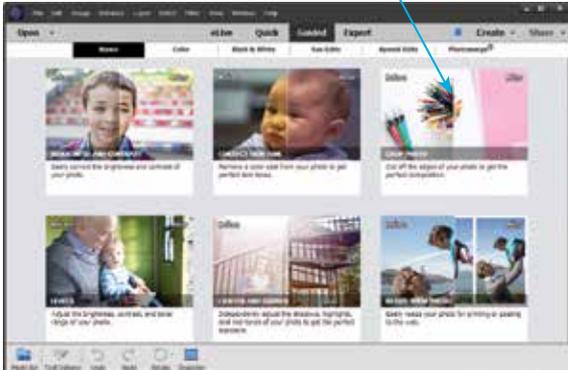
# Guided Edit Mode

Guided edit mode focuses on common tasks for editing digital images, and shows you how to perform them with a step-by-step process. To use Guided edit mode:

- 1 In the Editor, click on the **Guided** button



- 2 The Guided edit window contains a range of categories that can be accessed from buttons at the top of the window. Each category contains Guided edit options. Drag the mouse over each item to view the before and after effect



- 3 Each item has its own wizard to perform the required task. This will take you through a step-by-step process for undertaking the selected action. Move through the steps to complete the selected Guided edit option



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.



There are new effects added to the Guided edits in Elements 15.



Different Guided edits have varying numbers of steps in the required wizards, but the process is similar for all of them.

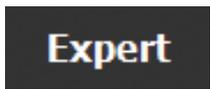
# Expert Edit Mode

Expert edit mode is where you can take full editing control over your photos. It has a range of powerful editing tools so that you can produce subtle and impressive effects. To use Expert mode:



Select **Window** > **Tools** from the Menu bar to show or hide the Toolbox.

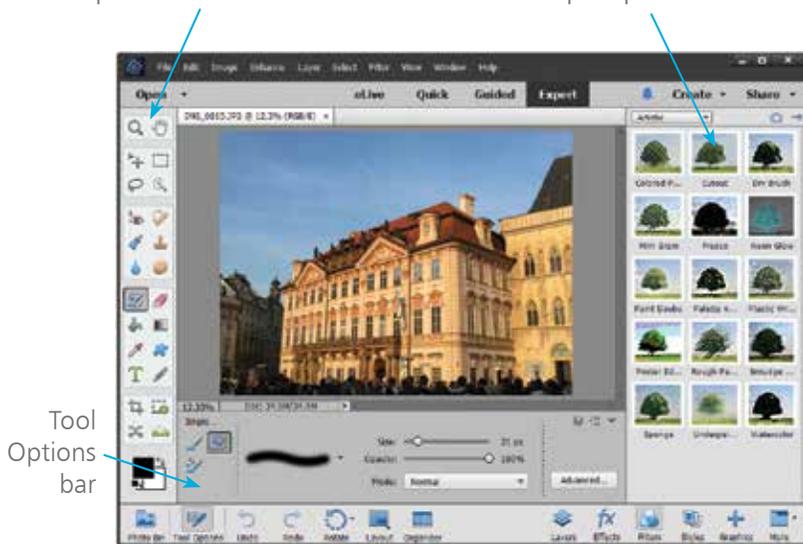
- 1 In the Editor, click on the **Expert** button



- 2 The full range of editing tools is available:

Expert mode Toolbox

Open panels



Taskbar Layout button

Expert mode Panel buttons



When a tool is selected in the Toolbox, the Tool Options bar (above the Taskbar) has various options for the selected tool, see pages 18-19.

The **Layout** button is the one addition on the Taskbar within Expert mode, as opposed to Quick and Guided edit modes. Click on the **Layout** button to access options for the display of your open photos within the Editor window.



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## The Expert Toolbox

The Toolbox in Expert mode contains tools for applying a wide range of editing techniques. Some of the tools have more than one option. To see if a tool has additional options:

- 1 Move the cursor over the **Toolbox**. Tools that have additional options appear with a small arrow in the top right-hand corner of their icons. Click on a tool to view the options within the Tool Options bar



The default Toolbox tools are (keyboard shortcut in brackets):

Zoom (Z)		Hand (H)
Move (V)		Rectangular Marquee (M)
Lasso (L)		Quick Selection (A)
Red Eye Removal (Y)		Spot Healing Brush (J)
Smart Brush (F)		Clone Stamp (S)
Blur (R)		Sponge (O)
Brush (B)		Eraser (E)
Paint Bucket (K)		Gradient (G)
Color Picker (I)		Custom Shape (U)
Type (T)		Pencil (N)
Crop (C)		Recompose (W)
Content-Aware (Q)		Straighten (K)
Foreground Color		Background Color



The tools that have additional options are: Crop, Marquee, Lasso, Quick Selection, Spot Healing Brush, Type, Smart Brush, Eraser, Brush, Clone Stamp, Custom Shape, Blur, and Sponge.



Keyboard shortcuts can be used by pressing the Shift key and the appropriate letter.



Hold down the Alt key and click on the tools in the Toolbox to scroll through the additional options, if available.



The panels are opened in the Panel Bin, which is at the right of the Editor window. In Expert edit mode this can be collapsed or expanded by selecting **Window > Panel Bin** from the Menu bar.



Some panels can be opened directly with keyboard shortcuts. These are: Effects F6, Graphics F7, Info F8, Histogram F9, History F10, Layers F11 and Navigator F12.



Select **Window > Reset Panels** from the Menu bar to revert the panels to their original format. This is useful if you have been working with several panels and want to revert to the default.

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## Panels

In Expert edit mode, Elements uses panels to group together similar editing functions and provide quick access to certain techniques. The panels can be accessed from the Window button on the Expert Menu bar and also from the respective buttons on the right-hand side of the Expert edit mode Taskbar. Click on the **More** button to access the full range of panels:



- **Actions.** This can be used to perform automated actions over a group of images at the same time.
- **Adjustments.** This can be used to add or make editing changes to adjustment layers in the Layers panel.
- **Color Swatches.** This is a panel for selecting colors that can then be applied to parts of an image, or elements that have been added to it.
- **Effects.** This contains special effects and styles that can be applied to an entire image or a selected part of an image. There are also filters which have their own dialog boxes, in which settings can be applied and adjusted. Layer Styles can also be applied to elements within an image.
- **Favorites.** This is where your favorite graphical elements from the Content panel can be stored and retrieved quickly.
- **Filters.** This can be used to add a range of filter effects to an image (see page 88 for details).
- **Graphics.** This contains graphical elements that can be added to images, including backgrounds, frame shapes and text.
- **Histogram.** This displays a graph of the tonal range of the colors in an image. It is useful for assessing the overall exposure of an image, and it changes as an image is edited.
- **History.** This can be used to undo any editing steps that have been performed. Every action is displayed and can be reversed by dragging the slider next to the most recent item.

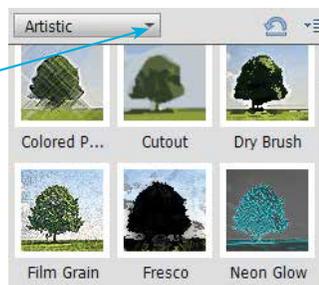
## ...cont'd

- **Info.** This displays information about an image, or a selected element within it, including details about the color in an image or the position of a certain item.
- **Layers.** This enables several layers to be included within an image. This can be useful if you want to add elements to an existing image, such as shapes or text.
- **Navigator.** This can be used to move around an image and magnify certain areas of it.
- **Styles.** This can be used to add styles to the edge of an image, such as a bevel effect.

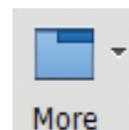
## Working with panels

To work with panels in Expert edit mode:

- 1 Click on one of the panel buttons on the Taskbar on the previous page to open the related panel
- 2 If there are additional sections for a panel, click here to view the other options



- 3 Click on the **More** button to view the rest of the available panels



- 4 The additional panels are grouped together. Click on a tab to access the required panel. Click and drag on a tab to move the panel away from the rest of the group



Styles can only be applied to images that have been converted to layers (this can be done when the **Styles** button is selected).



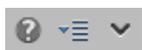
Click here to access the menu for an open panel.



Do not have too many panels open at one time. If you do, the screen will become cluttered and it will be difficult to edit images effectively.



Use these buttons in the top right-hand corner of the Tool Options bar to, from left to right: access the Help options for the selected tool; access the Tool Options menu; or hide the Tool Options bar (click on a tool to display the Tool Options bar again).



Brush **Mode** has several options for how the brush stroke interacts with the background behind it, e.g. Color Burn, Lighten or Soft Light. These can be used to create artistic effects with the Brush tool and the photo itself.



For a more detailed look at Brush style settings, see pages 160-161.

# Tool Options Bar

When a tool is selected from the Toolbox, in either Expert or Quick mode, the Tool Options bar is activated on the Taskbar. This provides options for selecting different tools from that category (if there are any), and also settings for the currently selected tool. To use the Tool Options bar:

1

Select a tool from the Toolbox



2

Click here on the Taskbar to hide or show the Tool Options bar



3

The Tool Options bar is positioned above the Taskbar at the bottom of the Elements window



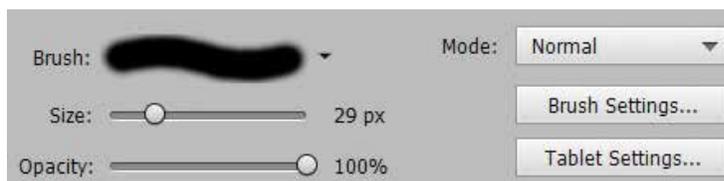
4

Click here to select different tools from the selected category (in this example it is the Brush tool, the Impressionist Brush tool or the Color Replacement tool)



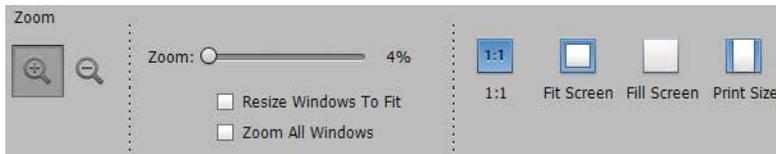
5

For each item there are different settings available, e.g. for the Brush tool there is **Brush** type, **Size** and **Opacity** (how much of the background is visible through the selected brush stroke). There are also options for a wider Brush range, including **Mode** and **Brush Settings...**

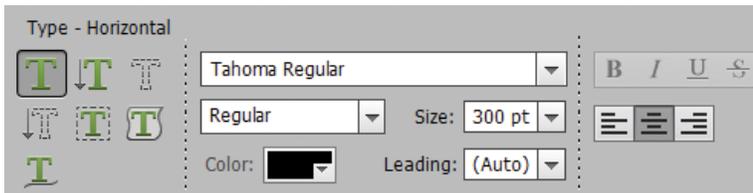


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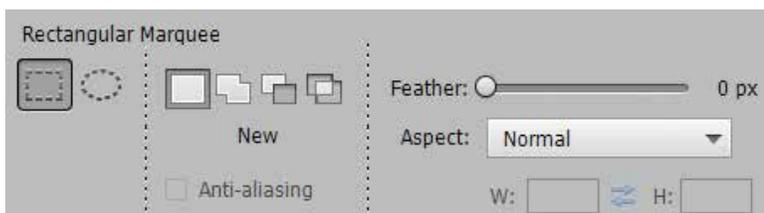
- 6 Other tools have different settings available from the Tool Options bar. For instance, the **Zoom** tool has options for zooming the currently active image to different magnifications, and also viewing it at specific sizes, e.g. **1:1**, **Fit Screen**, **Fill Screen** and **Print Size**



- 7 The **Text** tool has options for font type, font style, font color, font size, leading (the space between lines of text), bold, italics, underline, strikethrough and also text alignment (left, center or right)



- 8 For the **Marquee** tool and the **Lasso** tool there are options for editing a current selection (add to selection, subtract from selection and intersect with selection) and also for the amount of Feathering to be applied. This determines how much around the edge of the selection is slightly blurred, to give a soft-focus effect. The Marquee tool also has an option for setting a specific aspect for the selection, i.e. create it at a fixed ratio or size



The Text tool also has options for changing the orientation of text and also Text Warp for special effects, see page 148 for details.



The Marquee and Lasso tools are used to make selections by dragging the tool over the image. This can be symmetrical selections, e.g. Rectangular Marquee, or freehand, e.g. Lasso.



Although the Menu bar menus are all available in each of the Editor modes, some of the menu options are not available in Quick edit or Guided edit mode.



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



The Mac version of Elements also has a Photoshop Elements menu on the Menu bar. This contains the Preferences options (see next page).

# 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 Tool 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

- **File.** This has standard commands for opening, saving and printing images.
- **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 and commands for creating Photomerge effects such as panoramas and combining exposures.
- **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 the components of Elements.
- **Help.** This contains the various Help options.

# Preferences

A number of preferences can be set within Elements to determine the way the program operates. It is perfectly acceptable to leave all of the default settings as they are, but as you become more familiar with the program you may want to change some of the preference settings. Preferences can be accessed by selecting **Edit > Preferences** from the Menu bar (**Adobe Photoshop Elements Editor > Preferences** in the Mac version). The available ones are:

- **General.** This contains a variety of options for selecting items, such as shortcut keys.
- **Saving Files.** This determines the way Elements saves files.
- **Performance.** This determines how Elements allocates memory when processing editing tasks.
- **Scratch Disks.** This determines how Elements allocates disk space when processing editing tasks (referred to as “scratch disks”). If you require more memory for editing you can do this by allocating up to four scratch disks. These act as extra areas from which memory can be used during editing.
- **Display & Cursors.** This determines how cursors operate when certain tools are selected.
- **Transparency.** This determines the color or transparency of the background on which an open image resides.
- **Units & Rulers.** This determines the unit of measurement used by items such as rulers.
- **Guides & Grids.** This determines the color and format of any guides and grids that are used.
- **Plug-Ins.** This displays any plug-ins that have been downloaded to enhance image editing with Elements.
- **Adobe Partner Services and Update Options.** These can be used to check for related services and determine how updates to Elements are delivered.
- **Type.** This determines how text appears on images.
- **Country/Region Selection.** This is used to select the location from where you are using Elements.



Each preference has its own dialog box, in which the specific preference settings can be made.



A scratch disk is an area of temporary storage on the hard drive that can be utilized if the available memory (RAM) has been used up.



Guides and grids can be accessed from the View menu in Editor mode.



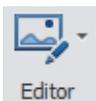
Organizer mode in Elements 15 can be used with touch-screen devices by pressing on the screen.



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



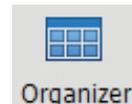
Photos can be selected within the Organizer, and then opened in an Editor mode by clicking on this button on the Organizer Taskbar.



# Organizer Workspace

The Organizer workspace contains functions for sorting, viewing and finding multiple images. To use the Organizer:

- 1 In any of the Editor modes, click on the **Organizer** button on the Taskbar



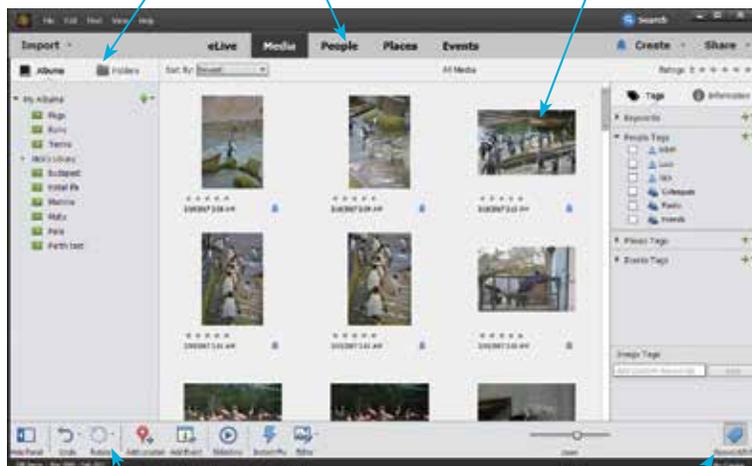
The Organizer has four views, in addition to eLive (see page 10), accessed from these buttons:

- Media View
- People View
- Places View
- Events View

## Media View

The Media View displays thumbnails of your photos, and also has functions for sorting and finding images:

Folders and Albums    View buttons    Thumbnails

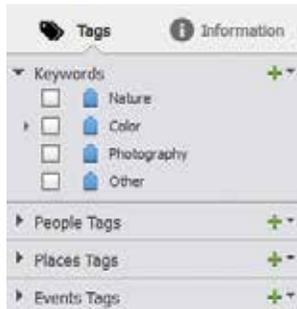


Organizer Taskbar

Tag/Info button

...cont'd

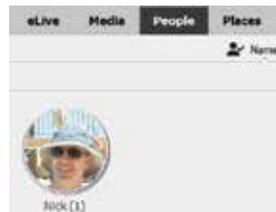
- 1 Click on these buttons to apply image-editing effects to a selected image in Media View, or view the Tags and Information panels



For information about using tags and keywords, see pages 46-47.

## People View

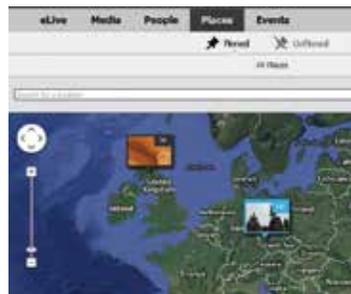
This view can be used to tag specific people and then view photos with those people in them.



For information about using the Organizer, and its different views, see Chapter Two.

## Places View

This view can be used to place photos on a map so that they can be searched for by location.



When you have a group of photos from the same location, add them to Places View so that this can be used to search over your photos.

## Events View

This view can be used to group photos according to specific events such as birthdays and vacations.



# Create Mode

Create mode is where you can release your artistic flair and start designing items such as photo books and photo collages. It can also be used to create slideshows, and to put your images onto discs. To use Create mode:



Use the Facebook Cover option to create a photo montage that is sized at the correct size to be used as your Facebook cover photo.

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

Create ▾

**2** Select one of the Create projects. Each project has a wizard that takes you through the Create process. The projects include Photo Books, Greeting Cards, Photo Calendars, Photo Collages, cover photos for Facebook and covers for CDs/DVDs



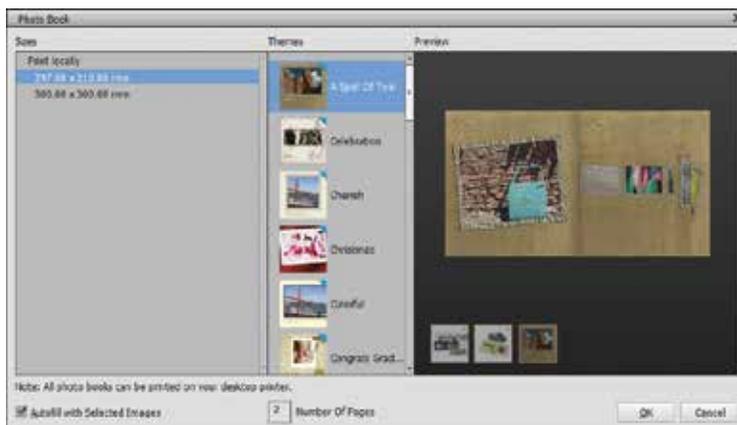
**3** The Create wizard takes you through the process so you can display your photos in a variety of creative ways



Use your 12 best photos when using the Photo Calendar option.



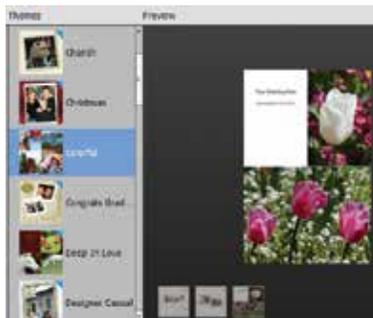
Create mode projects take longer than normal image editing functions.



...cont'd

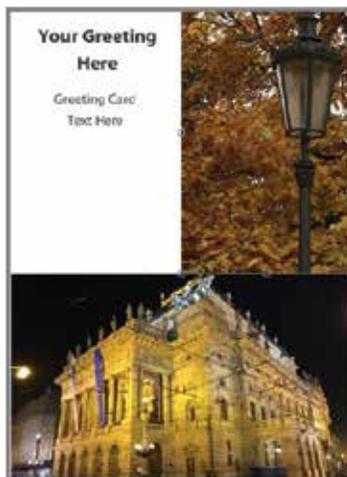
4

For most creations, there is a theme that can be applied, to which your own photos can then be added



5

Your photos can be added automatically from the Photo Bin, or you can drag them directly from there onto the creation



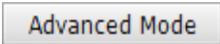
6

Once your photos have been added a new file is created, to which you can add text, layout designs and graphics. Click on any available text boxes to add text there, click on the **Layouts** button to change the layout of the creation, and click on the **Graphics** button to add a background

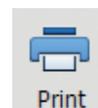


7

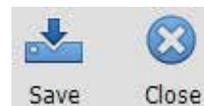
Click on the **Advanced Mode** button to access the Expert mode Toolbox, which can be used to edit the creation in the same way as for a standard photo



Click on the **Print** button once a creation has been made, to produce a hard copy.



Click on the **Save** button to save a completed creation in a specific file format, and the **Close** button to exit Create mode without saving the project.



# Share Mode

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

1 In the Organizer, click on the **Share** button

2 Select one of the Share options, such as sharing to social media sites, sharing via email or creating a DVD or PDF Slideshow

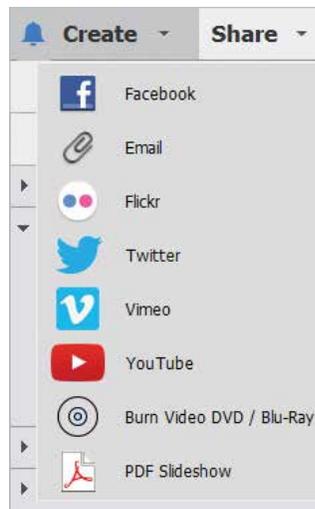
3 If you are sharing to email, the selected item is added to a wizard that can be used to determine the size and quality of the attachment that you want to send. Click on the **Next** button to move through the wizard



The Share function can also be accessed from within the Editor, but there are fewer share options available.



To share an image in an email you need to have an appropriate email app on your computer, and an internet connection.



4

For sharing to social media sites, such as Facebook, Flickr and Twitter, Elements

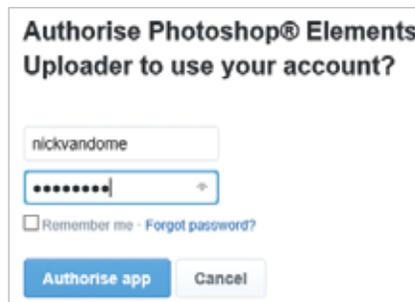
has to initially be authorized to share content to these sites. Click on the **Authorize** button to give Elements permission to share to the selected app



There is always some risk in giving websites authorization to access your computer.

5

Enter your login details for the selected site and click on the **Authorize app** button (note that the spellings are localized)



You must already have an account with a specific social media site in order to authorize Elements to use it; you cannot create an account during this process.

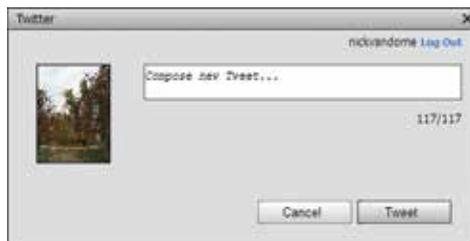
6

In the Elements window, click on the **Done** button to give Elements permission to share with the selected app



7

Once permission has been given for a social media site, you can share photos to the site by clicking on the **Share** button at the top of the Elements window, selecting the required app and entering the necessary information, i.e. a caption



You only have to authorize Elements to use a social media site once. After that, photos can be shared in two clicks from the **Share** menu.



**eLive** is a function in Elements 15 that provides a selection of tutorials and videos for getting the most out of Elements. To access these, click on the **eLive** button on the top toolbar in either Editor or Organizer mode.



The keyboard shortcut for Photoshop Elements Help is F1.

# Getting Help

One of the differences between Elements and the full version of Photoshop is the amount of assistance and guidance offered by each program. Since Photoshop is aimed more at the professional end of the market, the level of help is confined largely to the standard help directory, which serves as an online manual. Elements also contains this, but in addition it has the Getting Started option which is designed to take users through the digital image editing process as smoothly as possible. The Getting Started option offers general guidance about digital imaging techniques and there are also help items that can be accessed by selecting Help from the Menu bar. These include online help, information on available plug-ins for Elements, tutorials and support details.

## Using the help files

- 1 Select **Photoshop Elements Help** from the **Help** menu and click on an item to display it in the main window. Click on the links at the right-hand side to navigate through each section

