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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 to 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

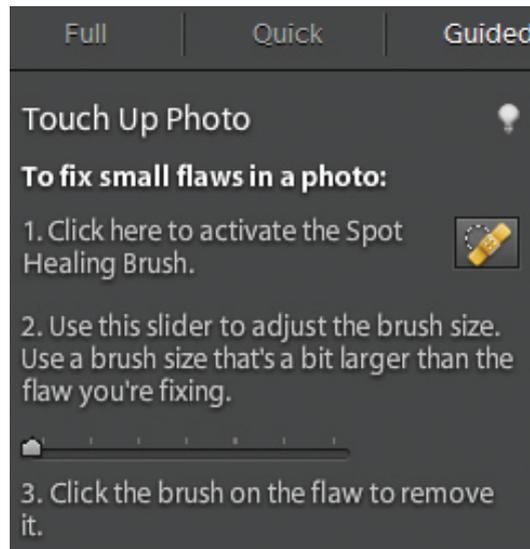
Photoshop Elements is the offspring of the professional-level image editing program, Photoshop. Photoshop is somewhat unusual in the world of computer software, in that it is widely accepted as being the best program of its type on the market. If professional designers or photographers are using an image editing program, it will almost certainly be Photoshop. However, two of the potential drawbacks to Photoshop are the cost (approximately \$700) 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.

Don't forget



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

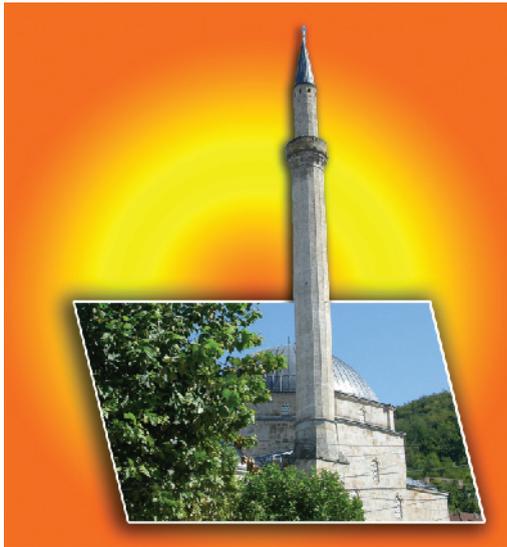
Elements contains the same powerful editing/color management tools as the full version of Photoshop and it also includes a number of versatile features for sharing images and for creating artistic projects, such as slide shows, cards, calendars and online photo albums. It also has valuable help features, 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:



...cont'd

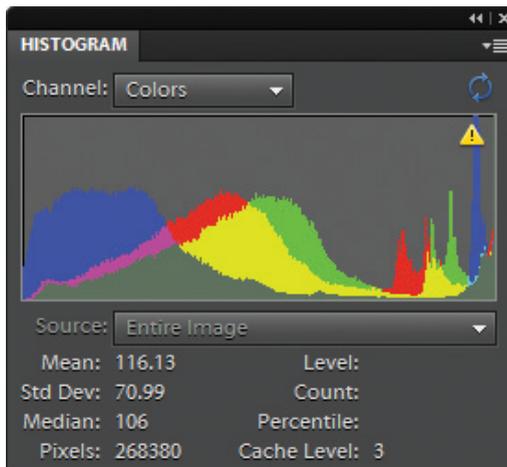
Special effects

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 guided activities within Guided Edit:



Advanced features

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



Don't forget



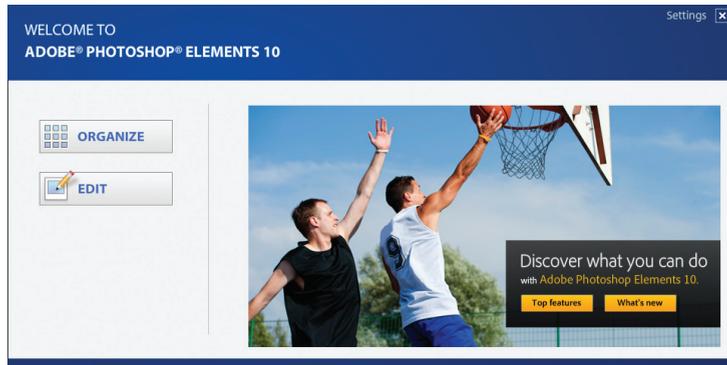
The histogram displays the tonal range of the colors in an image.

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

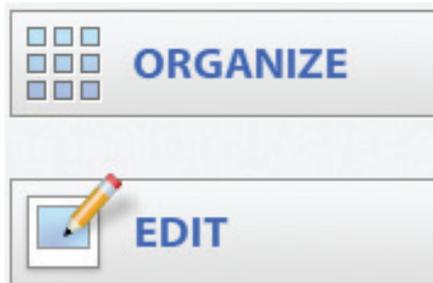


Hot tip



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

- 2 Click on the Top Features and What's New buttons to find out about certain functions in Elements
- 3 Click on the Organize button to go to that area



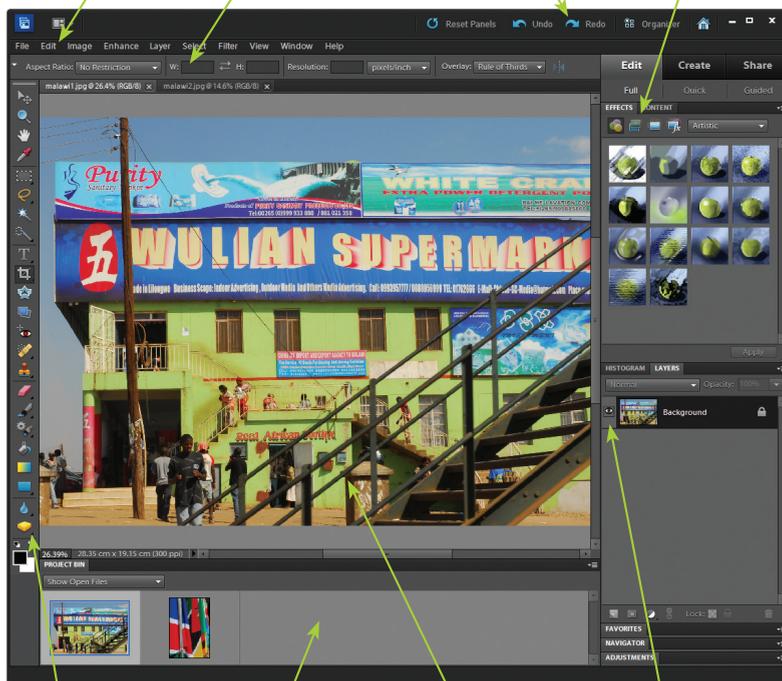
- 4 Click on the Edit button to go to that area

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:

Menu bar Options bar Shortcuts bar Panels bin



Toolbox Project Bin Work area Open panels

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.



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:

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.

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

Hot tip



When an image has started to be edited, this icon appears on its top right-hand corner in the Project Bin.



3

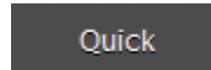
Double-click on an image in the Project Bin to make that the active one for editing



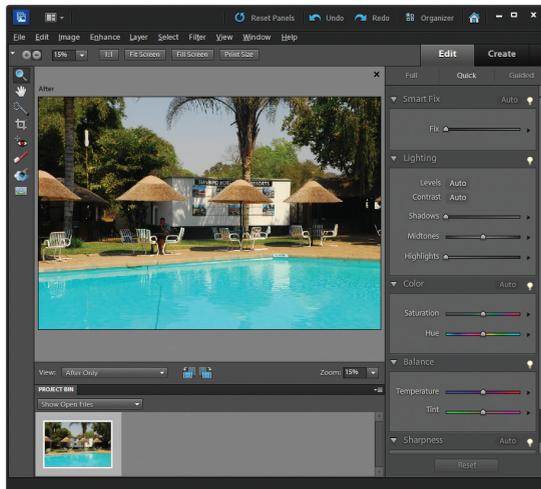
Quick Edit Mode

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



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



The Project Bin is also available in Quick Edit and Guided Edit modes.

- 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



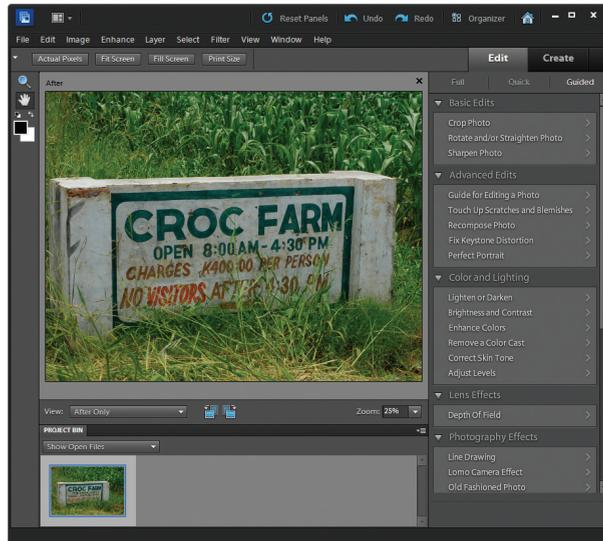
Guided Edit Mode

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

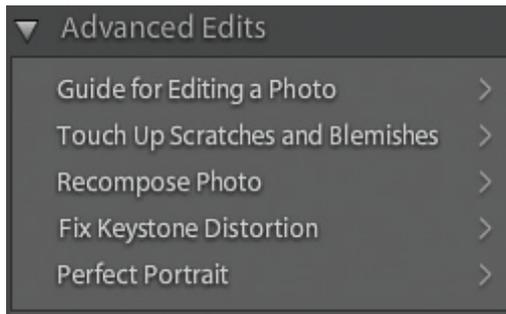


Don't forget



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.

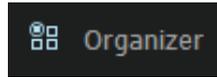
3 Select one of the actions that you want to perform. This will take you to a step-by-step process for undertaking the required action



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

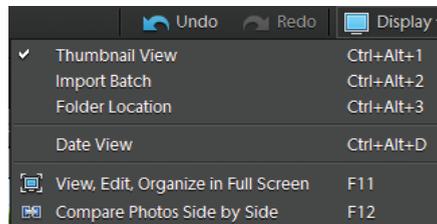


Don't forget



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.

- 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

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

Don't forget

Create mode and Share mode can both be accessed from either the Editor or the Organizer in Elements. However, there are a few more options in both if they are accessed from the Organizer.

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 slide shows, create PhotoStamps and to put your images onto disc. To use Create mode:

1

In either the Editor

Organize

Fix

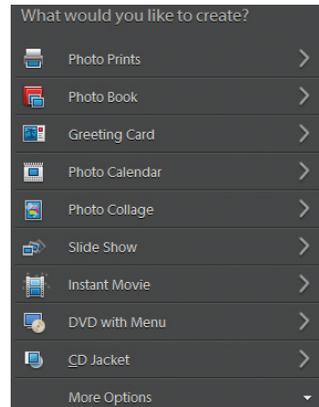
Create

Share

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



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:

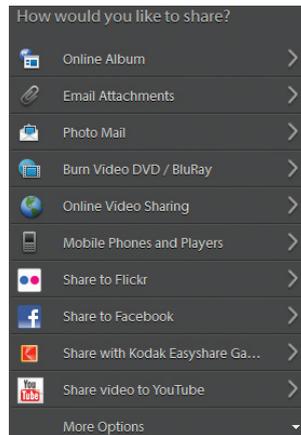
1

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



2

Select one of the Share options



Don't forget



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

3

The projects have templates and wizards that take 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 Photomerge effects such as panoramas and combining exposures
- **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 icon. 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

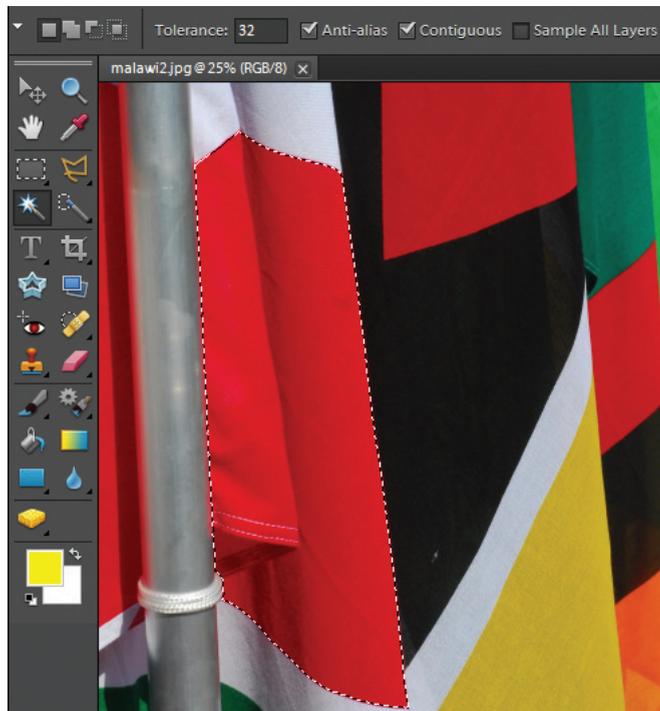
The Options bar provides attributes that can be set for a selected tool from the Toolbox. For instance, if the Eraser tool is selected, the Options bar offers choices for the type of eraser that can be used, its size, its mode and its opacity level. For each tool, a different set of options is available.

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.

Panels

Elements uses panels to group together similar editing functions and provide quick access to certain techniques. The available panels are:

- **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
- **Content.** This contains graphical elements that can be added to images. This includes backgrounds, frame shapes and artistic text
- **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 favorite graphical elements from the Content panel can be stored and retrieved quickly
- **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
- **Info.** This displays information about an image, or a selected element within it. This includes 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. Layers can also be used to merge two separate images together
- **Navigator.** This can be used to move around an image and magnify certain areas of it
- **Undo History.** This can be used to undo all, or some, of the editing steps that have been performed. Every action is displayed in the Undo History panel and these actions can be reversed by dragging the slider at the side of the panel upwards

Hot tip



The panels are located in the Panel Bin, which is at the right of the Editor window. This can be collapsed or expanded by selecting Window>Panel Bin from the Menu bar.

Beware

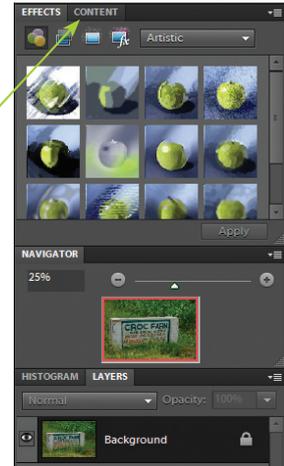
Don't have too many panels open at one time. If you do, the screen will become cluttered and it will be difficult to edit images effectively.

...cont'd

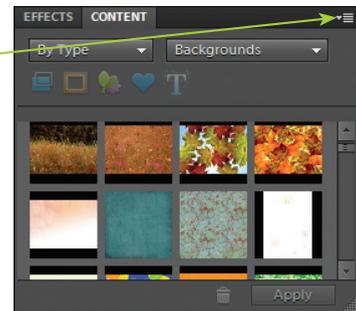
Working with panels

By default, all panels are minimized and grouped in the Panel Bin. However, it is possible to open one or more panels so that they are displayed independently from the Panel Bin. To work with panels:

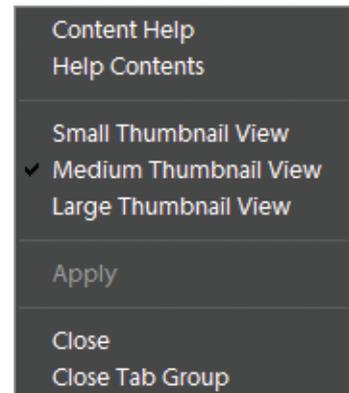
- 1 Panels are grouped together in the Panel Bin at the right of the work area
- 2 Click and drag here to move a panel away from the bin (or move a detached panel back into the bin)



- 3 Click here on the top bar to expand or contract a panel



- 4 Every panel has its own menu; its options depend on the functions within the panel



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, and 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. It also determines how Elements allocates disk space when processing editing tasks (scratch disks). If you require more memory for editing images (image editing can be a very memory-intensive process) you can do this by allocating up to four scratch disks on your hard drive. These act as extra areas from which memory can be used during the editing process
- **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
- **Type.** This determines the way text appears when it is added to images
- **Organize & Share.** These preferences open in the Organizer mode and offer a collection of preferences that are applicable to these functions. These are General, Files, Editing, Camera or Card Reader, Scanner, Date View, Keyword Tags and Albums, Sharing, Adobe Partner Services and Media-Analysis

Don't forget



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

Don't forget



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

Hot tip



The Organize & Share preferences can be accessed by selecting Edit>Preferences from the Menu bar in either the Editor or the Organizer.

Elements for the Mac

For some previous versions of Elements, there has not been complete synchronization between the Mac and Windows versions. With some releases the Mac version came out slightly later than the Windows ones and none of the Mac versions have had the Organizer integrated into them. However, with Elements 10 the Mac version has the same Organizer as the Windows version and the two are now virtually identical.

The Mac version has the same editing functions:

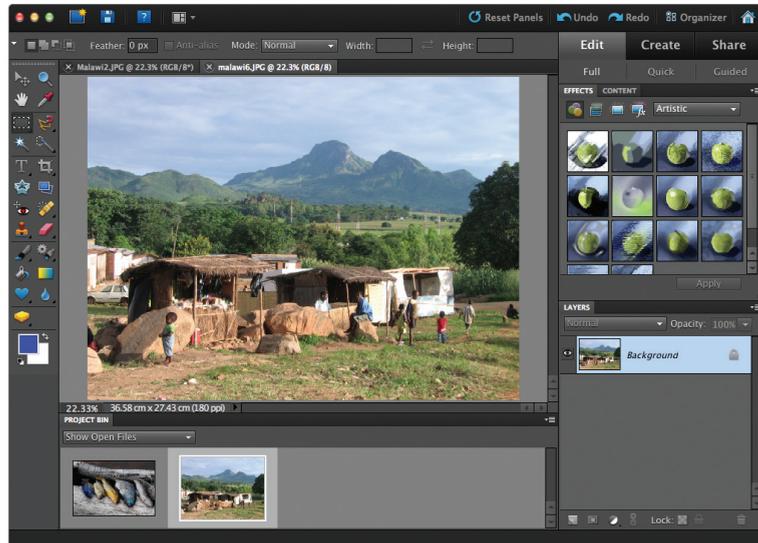
- Full Edit
- Quick Edit
- Guided Edit

The interface is also almost identical to the Windows version:

Don't forget



Since some previous versions of Elements for the Mac did not contain the Organizer, this function was sometimes performed by the Mac program iPhoto. However, Elements can now provide all of your image editing and organizing functions.



The two differences are the standard Mac buttons for (from left to right) close, minimize and expand an open window.



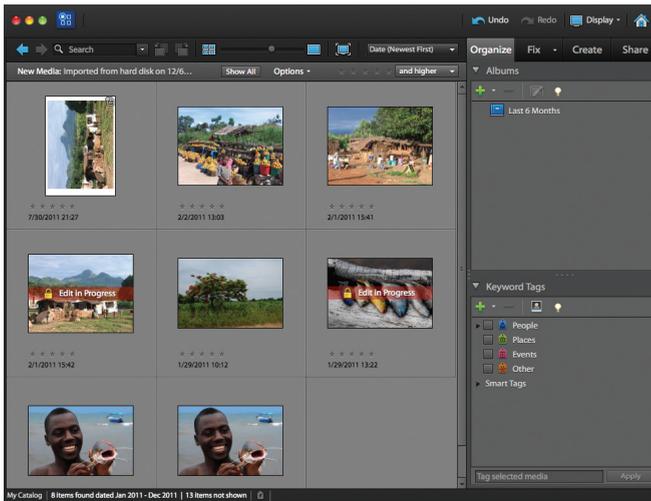
The other difference is the four icons at the top left of the Editor window. These are to (from left to right) open a new blank file, save, help and arrange open files.



...cont'd

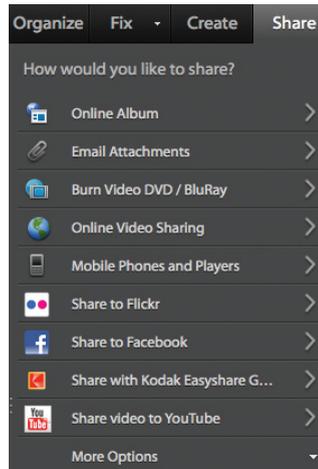
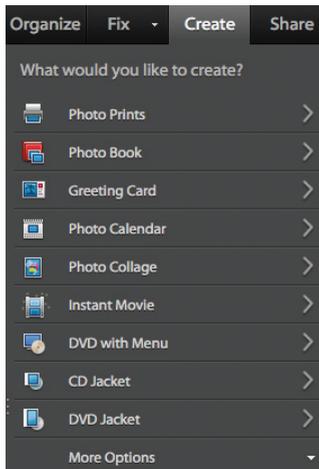
Organizer

With Elements 10 the Organizer has been included with the Mac version. This has the same interface and functionality as the Windows version:



Create and Share

The Mac version also has the same options for the Create and Share sections as the Windows version:



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 that 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

Don't forget



For the Mac version of Elements the Help function can also be accessed from the Help button at the top of the Editor window.

1

Select Photoshop Elements Help from the Help menu and click Contents or Index. Then click once on an item to display it in the main window

