

Photoshop Elements SIG – September 12, 2007

by John Durrett

Starting Out in PE – A Refresher

This time of year, we get people who are new to Photoshop Elements (PE). The first question I am usually asked in the fall is "Should I buy the current version of PE, or wait and see if a new one comes out?" Well, Adobe has released new versions in October of each year for the past several years. So I would recommend waiting, and buying the next release in October. Sam's Club and Costco offer competitive pricing, for those who are members. If you need a photo manipulation program in the near term, take a look at Google's Picasa, which is free.

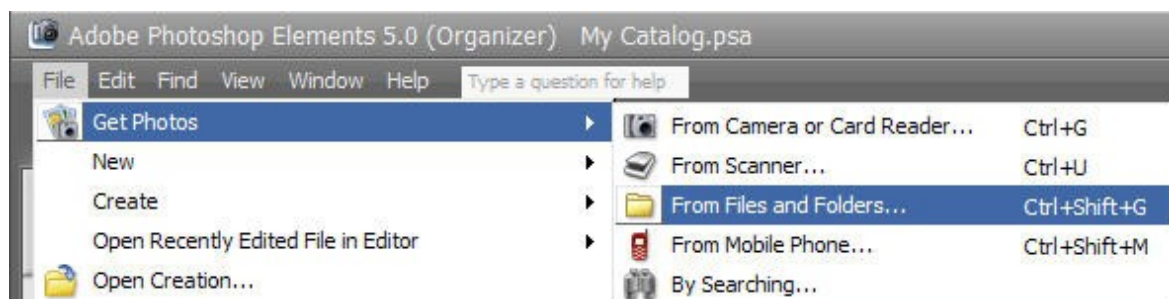
Photoshop Elements Basics

Photoshop Elements consists of essentially three programs: the **Organizer**, the **Quick Fix Editor**, and the **Full Editor**. These notes will cover the Organizer and the Quick Fix Editor. NOTE: these first sections on the Organizer, Quick Fix, and Processing Multiple Files are essentially what I showed in September and October 2006, with updates and expansions to make things clearer.

Photoshop Elements Organizer

Photoshop Elements Organizer is used to help us keep track of all the photo files on our computer. And when we give it the time to work, it will show us thumbnails of all the picture files we have. BUT --- sometimes, if you are like me, you just may not want to wait while Photoshop Elements scans in all those photo files from that Camera Card memory device that you just stuck into your computer. And you especially don't want to wait if you know that you did not erase (or reformat) all the previous photos from your Camera Card before you began taking all those new pictures. So when the **Photoshop Elements Organizer** starts to scan your card, you just stop the process. Then you use **Windows Explorer** to transfer all of your new digital photos to a new folder on your hard drive.

If you have never scanned your computer for photo files and you have all your photos on your hard drive, then from your menu, select **File > Get Photos > From Files and Folders**. Use the Browse button to **select your hard drive** (normally the C:/ drive), and click **OK** to start the process. Go get a cup of coffee, take a break, go for a drive. This is like backing up your hard drive. You only do it once in a while, so let the **Organizer** do the work.



If you had previously scanned your hard drive for **Photoshop Elements Organizer**, then you only need to find the folders with your latest images and have your Organizer identify those pictures for your Catalog. Select **File > Get Photos > From Files and Folders**. Then use the Browse button to **select your photo folder** for your latest pictures, and click **OK**.

Tip: For an alternate view of the **Organizer** that looks more like **Windows Explorer**, select **View > Arrangement > Folder Location**. This works great if you stored your photos in named folders. To **reset the Organizer**, select **View > Arrangement > Date (Newest First)**.

Quick Fix Editor

The **Quick Fix Editor** is helpful in making simple corrections to your photos to clean up things like the color, or the contrast. It is a good place to start, with your photos. If the **Quick Fix** works, then there is no need to open up the full **Editor**. To apply the **Quick Fix Editor** to photos you see in the **Organizer**, hold down the **Ctrl** key and **highlight all the thumbnails** of the photos you want to clean up (you can select pictures from different folders). Then select the icon right above the thumbnails that says **Edit** and select **Go to Quick Fix** from the drop down menu. All your selected photos are now open in **Photoshop Elements - Quick Fix Editor**.

Displaying the Before and After

The default window in **Quick Fix Editor** will show one image at a time. To see a comparison of the before and after photos before you accept a **Quick Fix** change, look under the upper, larger picture and from the **View:** drop down menu, select **Before and After (Landscape)**.



Of course, if you also choose **Before and After (Portrait)** if that fits the pictures better. Looking at the **Before and After** images at the same time makes it easier to see what you are changing, and if it is for the better.

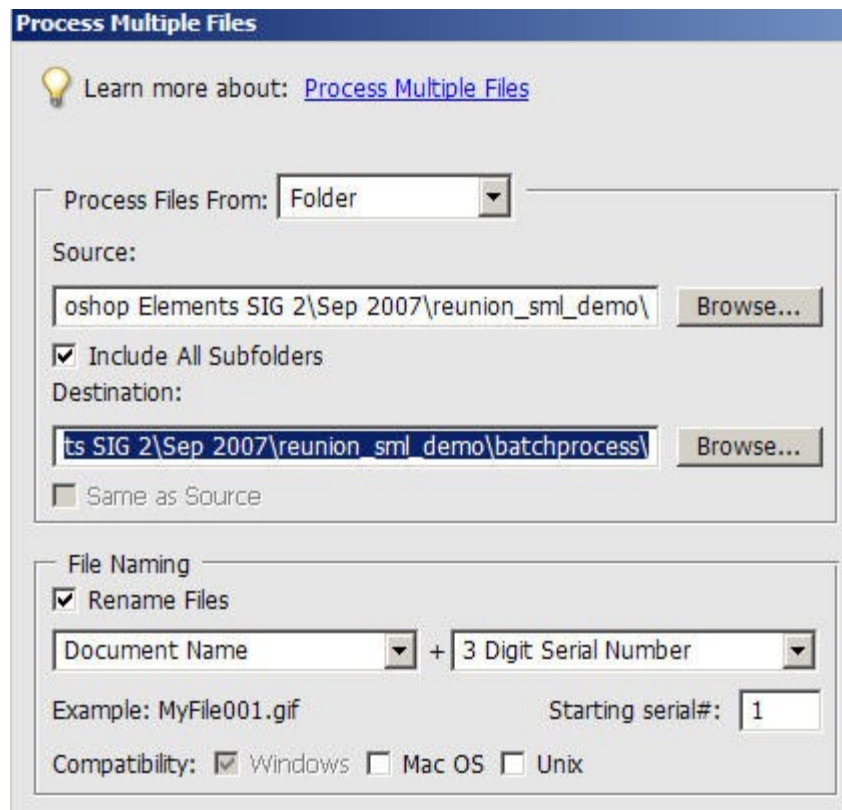
Applying Quick Fix

Look for the simplest solution first. Try **Smart Fix** on your photos. If that doesn't give you what you want, then **Undo** it and try **Auto Levels, Auto Contrast, and Auto Color** in that order. You can even add **Auto Sharpen**. If you don't like any of those adjustments, just **Undo** or **Reset**. This approach works well when you have a smaller number of photos to process.

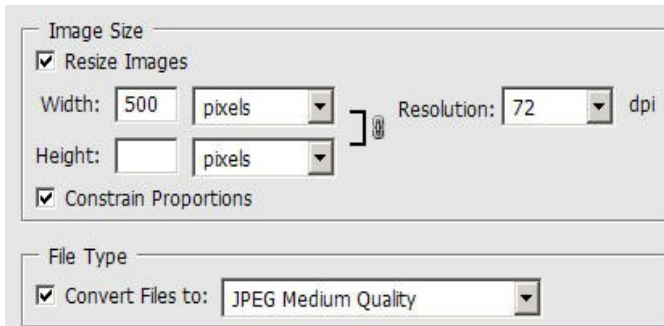
Processing Multiple Files

Photoshop Elements can do batch processing of files. This is very helpful if you need to clean up a number of photos at one time, such as after a vacation when you want to get the corrected versions and using Quick Fix one at a time would be too slow. If this is your goal, then first place all of these photos into one folder. If you have to, start a new folder and copy selected photos from other folders into the one you will use for the multiple processing. In addition, I recommend adding a new folder within the source folder called **batchprocess**. That's where you will store the finished products.

Open either the **Quick Fix Editor** or the **Full Editor** (either one works for this). Then select **File > Process Multiple Files** from the menu. You will get a screen that looks like this.



First, **set your source folder** and use any folder you want as the destination folder. We will use the one we made, **batchprocess**. I recommend renaming the files by appending the 3 Digit Serial Number. Now we set the image sizes and quality of the output files.

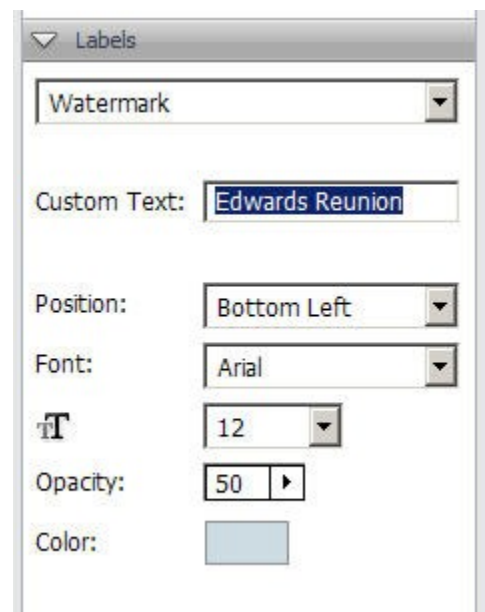


Try a width of either **600 or 500 pixels** for photos to friends, and set the **Resolution to 72 dpi**. This is excellent for viewing on a computer or the internet. The height is linked and you should leave it empty to allow the processor to resize the images with the right size ratios. Also, accept a setting on **JPEG Medium Quality**. That gives a nice, clean picture while limiting the file size.

The process multiple files feature also lets you select the type of **Quick Fixes** you want to apply to **ALL** of the photos you are processing. Just add checkmarks on the right. I would probably use **Auto Levels** and **Auto Contrast** and go with those to see what you get. This normally works for a large, diverse set of photos. Trying to do more, such as Sharpen, tends to get you in trouble on some of your photos.



A new addition with **Photoshop Elements 5**, is the ability to add **Watermarks** or **Captions** to your process multiple files. This is a selection I made for the pictures I took at a reunion.



After everything is set up, click **OK** to start the processing of the multiple files. Your photos will show up inside your destination folder. All done.....

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