

Photoshop Elements SIG - February 9, 2005

by Judy DiFrancesco - SIG Co-lead

Naming Camera Files in Groups

This technique is a Windows XP feature. It doesn't really have anything to do directly with PSE, but it will allow you to save pictures with a name other than its camera number, until you are ready to give it a more descriptive name if you choose to do so.

First create a folder in My Pictures, as you are probably already doing. Next, save the camera pictures to that folder by whatever method you usually use to move the photos to the computer. *(If you don't have a method that you typically use, you can actually just drag and drop them to your new folder in Windows Explorer.)*

Since your digital camera doesn't know what you are photographing, every photo gets a number. When you take them to the computer, you would like the photos to have a name, because to you the numbers are meaningless. Also, if you move photos to the computer, then erase the chip, it remembers the next set, and you don't want to risk copying over previous photographs - and, using more than one chip can complicate the issue. Also, it is difficult to locate pictures from a certain event merely from those numbers.

XP has provided a solution; at least a partial solution. It allows you to quickly name pictures in groups. Names can be refined later if you choose. There are a couple of simple keys to remember when using this technique.

After saving the photos from the camera to your hard drive, open Windows Explorer and locate the directory where the photos are stored.

Open the folder, click on View and select Thumbnails. Note the pictures with 'similar' subjects highlight all that go into the same category, *(Click on the FIRST photo in the group then, holding the shift key, click on the LAST photo in the group)*, then Right Click on the *photo* you want to be first in the list and choose Rename, and type a category name for those pictures, making sure to retain the file ending. (Generally .jpg). Press Enter, and all the pictures will be given the same name followed by a sequential number in parenthesis.

You can further sort the pictures by putting each group in its own folder.

Preparing Photos for E-Mail

PSE2 and PSE3 use the same technique to save a photo for the Web. When we say "Save for the Web", we mean in the right size and format for E-mail or a website.

Open the photo or photos you want to send. *(You can have as many photos open as your computer's memory will allow. But it makes sense to choose a manageable number.)*

Edit the photo to exactly the final product you want to send, and save it in the psd format we have discussed previously. Of course future sessions will have you being much more critical of our product as you learn more about using the enhancements available in PSE. In PSD format, your photos will be stored with all their layers, so you can go back and further edit should you desire. After saving the file in psd format, click File, Save for Web. When the picture opens, you will see the original file and its size on

the left. Then the jpg/gif equivalent on the right. You also see the size, quality, and how long it will take to load at the base modem speed. Here is where you make your selections. Check to see the original Image size, then in the new size box, you will change either the height or width of the file. (*I usually change the larger of the two numbers to 500.*) Keeping in mind that most people view their E-mail in 800x600, a 500 pixel wide photo or smaller, should show up fine on their screen. The other thing you can look at is the quality. Reducing the quality reduces the file size and the load time. The view won't change much if you reduce the quality by 10 or 20.

Be sure to click Apply so you can see the difference in the file. Then click Save. The file will be saved in the same folder the psd file is in, unless you direct it somewhere else. When you save a PSD file for E-mail, it becomes a JPG file, but it isn't displayed on the screen. That's OK if you plan to open and compose an E-mail and then attach the file. But, if you want to attach the file from the Elements window, the file you want to attach needs to be open and be the active window. When it is open and active, just click the "Attach to Email" icon in the menu bar.



Your E-mail window should open with the file already attached, and you just have to address it and write the message.

NOTE: Next meeting, be prepared to tell what kind of Internet connection you have, what E-mail program you use, and whether this worked as I described, or what you had to do to make it work. (*AOL and MSN may be different.*)

The Tools and Terms Used In Elements

A Palettes, Toolbars and Icons Graphic page has been provided to each person participating in the SIG group. This is with the idea of more quickly acquainting you with the various tools available in this very detailed program. Unless you are using PhotoShop, you will find that this program offers more flexibility and unique options than any other photo program you have ever used. In the months to come, John and Judy will attempt to share their knowledge of this software in the hopes of getting you more excited about what you can do with your photos and artwork in general.

The concept of working in "Layers" is the first tool you must master to appreciate the uniqueness Elements has to offer. Each addition or alteration you make to your project will be done on a new layer. This affords you the option of experimenting, editing, and testing your ideas without the risk of destroying something you know you want to keep (destructive editing). If you do something you decide you don't like, you can drag the entire layer to the trash can.

There are many important keystroke combinations. Some you will use often are, Ctrl+Z = move backward, Ctrl+Y = move forward, Ctrl+ + = enlarge image, Ctrl+ - = reduce image, Ctrl+S = Save. There are several additional shortcut keystrokes. We will introduce them as we go along.

It's a good idea to get in the habit of saving every project in it's PSD file format. PSD = PhotoShop Document. This preserves the layers for any future editing.

IMPORTANT RULE: NEVER edit your background (original) layer!