

Photoshop Elements 7

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Are you a Photoshop Elements user who is not sure about upgrading to version 7? Do you feel like you have just scratched the surface of its capabilities, even though you have used the software for years? I understand.

I hesitated to upgrade from Elements 6 to 7. Would it look different? Would the learning curve slow me down? I've finally taken the leap and have become excited about digital photography again.

But, before talking about some of the nifty new features, there's the install process. As a current Elements user, I opted to download a trial version and compare it to the familiar version 6. The download and install to my PC running XP was quick and error free. I found the new "pse" icon and fired it up.



My first look

As with prior versions of Elements, the Welcome window allows you to select Organize, Edit, Create or Share. Since I believe the organizer is the best invention since sliced bread, I always go there first.

I checked the trial version box rather than entering the software serial number and then had the option to convert "My Catalog" to version 7, and yet be able to access "My Catalog" in the old version 6.

(If you have more than one catalog, the Catalog Manager allows you to select additional catalogs to convert.) Gosh, that was easy!

The Organizer

The organizer is command central for me, so I was pleased to discover that it looked the same. But, for those of you who would like a change of pace, the brightness of the User Interface and Grid can be adjusted in the General Preferences.

Upon closer inspection, I discovered the Search box. This feature is awesome and FAST! I had great fun testing the power of the Search. For example, I entered "psd" and was shown only the .psd files. Enter a word or a date and watch the screen fill with matches from the album names, captions, folder names, file names and tags. It is amazing how quickly the search is done.

The glow of the new discoveries dimmed a bit when I tried to find the "What's New" chapter of the Help text. Unlike prior versions, where "What's New" was listed first in the Help, I found it in:

Getting Started >

What to do first >

New and enhanced features

Clicking on New and enhanced features gave the following:

"Visit http://www.adobe.com/go/learn_pse_features_en to learn about the new and enhanced features. Improving your photos and doing more with them is easier than ever."

I found it frustrating to then navigate through the sales pitch in this link to find new features. After a break to bring my blood pressure down, I resumed playing with version 7 and had fun again!

So what else IS new??

Quick Fix

The Touch Up section has a new toothbrush tool and blue skies tool. Both of these tools are fast and easy to use. Who doesn't have a scenic photograph that would be just perfect if only the sky was a bit bluer? Yes,

I know that whitening teeth or perking up a sky could be done in prior versions, but these new tools are easy and give great results.

Full Edit

The new Smart Brush tool includes not only the toothbrush (called “Pearly White” and “Very Pearly White”) and blue skies, but also an extensive selection of tools to adjust skin tones, lipstick, greenery, color, contrast, infrared, solarize, etc., etc. So many tools, so little time! The Smart Brush Automatically creates a new layer for every selection. Positioning the “Add to selection” and “Subtract from selection” controls right where you are working, make the selection process easier than ever.

Quickly produce a family portrait where everyone looks their best by using the Photomerge Group Shot tool. It is an easy process to combine faces from multiple shots into one perfect group photograph. The results are pretty amazing!

Armed with at least two shots of one subject, the Photomerge Scene Cleaner tool brush allows you to brush away portions that changed. For example, if a vehicle appears in the better of the shots, it can simply be brushed away.

Create

The Create tab still includes Photo Book, Photo Calendar, Photo Collage, and Slide Show. The Online Gallery option is gone, but Order Prints has been added. If you were a fan of the Online Gallery, click the Share tab to find the Online Album.

Share

Share includes: Online Album, E-mail Attachments, Photo Mail, Print, Order Prints, and CD/DVD. Although I do not print photographs on a daily basis, it is very convenient to have the Print option within the Share tab.

The Adobe literature indicates many templates, artwork, ideas, and tutorials have been added, but I’ll let you explore that on your own.

Photoshop.com

This new feature allows you to backup, share, organize, and even edit your photos online. The basic membership is FREE and allows the backup up

to 2GB of photos or videos automatically. Learn about the membership options at www.adobe.com/go/membership_elements.

Although I have not yet taken advantage of the backup, sharing family photos was easy. I could skip my usual step of the resizing each photo before emailing. I just uploaded the photograph and invited several family members to view it. My 85 year old mother loved seeing a large photograph with her dial-up internet service!

It is impossible to cover all the new features of Elements 7 in this review. The features I have tried make the upgrade well worthwhile. To learn more try www.adobe.com/go/learn/pse/en

About: *Photoshop Elements 7*

Vendor: Adobe
www.adobe.com

Price: \$99.99, \$79.95 @ Amazon and Costco

Requires: System Requirements can be reviewed [here](#).