

Software Review: Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0

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Where Does An Element Come From?

Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0 is image-editing software with the primary emphasis on manipulating photos for print, email, and the web. Its target audience includes novices, computer enthusiasts, and businesses alike. To give you a little history of the Elements 2.0 heritage, we need to look back about four or five years ago. Adobe's high end and professional imaging software has always been the perennial award winning "Photoshop" franchise (now up to version 7). Adobe needed to fill the gap with a photo imaging program targeted toward consumers at a much lower price point. Enter Adobe's first consumer level image program, Adobe PhotoDeluxe. PhotoDeluxe was very successful. However, with the onslaught of digital cameras and increasing competition from other consumer level imaging programs, Adobe needed to re-brand this product line and phase out PhotoDeluxe. What emerged from this retooling is Photoshop Elements, building on the well established Photoshop name. The new Photoshop Elements 2.0 is all grown up and refined. It now stands as the robust category leader in the swarming field of digital imaging programs.

It's All in the Elements!

Photoshop Elements 2.0 is in fact very classy software with almost all but the most powerful features of its legendary sibling, Adobe Photoshop 7. How many companies take the time to shrink-wrap their 256 page User Guide these days? Adobe does and even includes a coupon in the box for a Photoshop Elements 2.0 Training CD (a 60-minute video workshop) which you can have mailed to you at no cost (a \$25.00 value). Also included in the box is the very useful Elements 2.0 four page "Quick Reference Card", a placard detailing and identifying icons, toolbars, shortcuts, and much more.

Photoshop This!

My eyes opened wider than Al Roker's at a barbecue when I sampled the awesome "Quick Fix" dialog box. Here you can find the most commonly used image correction tools in one convenient place. You access the "Quick Fix" dialog box from the Enhance menu. The "Quick Fix" is so simple to use—it explains exactly what it does and how to use it. The best part is your picture is shown in the dialog box with the before and after results so you can see your changes instantly without committing to them. I only wish it could make the dialog box bigger, but this is a very minor complaint (I like everything big)! Another great thing about the "Quick Fix" feature is that you can redo, undo, and cancel, so there's no worry about messing up your photos. There is also a thumbnail picture browser giving you on-the-fly data about the images stored on your hard drive, and an always available "Palette Well" for accessing frequently used palettes. Remember, the whole idea behind Photoshop Elements 2.0 is ease of use for non-professionals. Keeping in this vein you will notice the plethora of help resources. Not only is the help search field now located directly in the main toolbar, but you have incredible "how to"

features such as Recipes and Hints palettes that are visible at all times in your work area. These additional help resources combine tutorials and a variety of assistance in learning and getting to know Elements 2.0.

There's More—Much More...

From robust special effects to fun projects, Photoshop Elements 2.0 is a well thought out program with deep, feature rich enhancements and a user interface that can't be beat. I read that Elements 2.0 uses the same core imaging engine as Photoshop. When you consider this program is selling for well under \$99 (with rebates), it makes it a no brainer must buy for any computer owner. Minimum Requirements are as follows:

- Intel Pentium processor
- Win98, Win 98 SE, Win ME, Win 2000, or Win XP Home/Professional
- 128MB of RAM
- 150MB of available hard-disk space
- Color monitor capable of thousands of colors at a resolution of 800x600 or greater
- Internet Explorer 5.0, 5.5, or 6.0 (updated with applicable Service Packs)
- CD-ROM drive