

Photoshop[®]
Elements 3
FOR
DUMMIES[®]

by Deke McClelland and Galen Fott



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About the Authors

Deke McClelland wrote the *Photoshop Bible* and *Photoshop Bible, Professional Edition* (both published by Wiley), bestselling guides on digital imaging. He has written 76 titles in 25 languages with 3 million copies in print, including *Photoshop For Dummies* (published by Wiley) and the tutorial-based *Adobe Photoshop One-on-One* (published by O'Reilly/Deke Press). In addition to his books, Deke hosts the video training series *Total Training for Adobe Photoshop* and *Total Training Presents: Adobe Photoshop Elements* (published by Total Training). One of the most award-winning writers in the business, Deke has received seven honors from the Computer Press Association. In 2002, he was inducted into the Photoshop Hall of Fame.

Galen Fott contributed to two editions of Deke's *Photoshop Bible* and to *Adobe InDesign CS One-on-One* (O'Reilly/Deke Press). He has also written for *Macworld* and *PC Magazine*. Galen created and hosted *Total Training for Mac OS X*, co-hosted *Total Training for Adobe Premiere 6*, and presented more than two hours of Photoshop training for the Apple Web site (all published by Total Training). In his theoretical spare time, Galen is involved in a number of other pursuits. As an animator, he has worked for AT&T and Paramount. As a performer, he has played leading roles in musicals across the country. As a puppeteer, he has performed with the Jim Henson Company. Those with piqued interest can visit his Web site at www.grundoon.com.

Dedication

To Max, Sam, and Burton: The future of digital imaging is in good (if grubby) hands.

And to Elle and Laura: Whose good hands we're glad to be in.

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Introduction

Well, Photoshop Elements 3.0 is here, and we have good news and — for some, at least — bad news to report. But gee, let's start with the good news. Adobe, once again, did an outstanding job updating Photoshop Elements, their popular image editor for Windows and Macintosh. They've packed in an amazingly generous assortment of new tools from the latest version of Photoshop, including the healing brush. (The healing brush! Infirm and sickly photos, rejoice!) Adobe has also thrown in a few new Elements-exclusive goodies for your delectation and delight.

And now for the bad news (Mac users, brace yourselves). The Windows version of Elements gets another big addition to the program's arsenal of tools — and that's good — but the Mac version doesn't get it, and that's too bad. Windows users get not only the updated image editor, but also Photoshop Album, Adobe's powerful image-organizing program. And Album isn't just tagging along for the ride; it's been integrated into Elements, so much so that it's not even referred to as "Album," but as the "Organizer" component of Elements. So what you used to think of as Photoshop Elements, the image editor, is now just one half of Photoshop Elements 3.0 — the "Editor" component. The other half is The Organizer Formerly Known As Photoshop Album.

Now, to be fair, Photoshop Album was always a Windows-only application, and Adobe would have had to do a huge amount of work to turn it into an Organizer component for the Mac. And truthfully, it would have been somewhat redundant because the Mac already has a powerful built-in image organizer in iPhoto. But as a consolation, Adobe stuck some great organizing and photo-searching features into Elements' File Browser — for the Mac only.

So we've added a lengthy new Chapter 6, giving Windows users the lowdown on how Organizer works. (In truth, organizing photos is nowhere near as complicated as editing them can be.) But by and large, 19 chapters in this 20-chapter book apply equally to all, regardless of what flavor of computer you use.

Windows or Mac, Photoshop Elements' main reason for being is still to make your photos look better; and it's a powerhouse at that task. But all this power comes at a price. Elements is a great image editor, but it's also complex. Adobe Photoshop Elements is an easier-to-use, scaled-down version of Adobe Photoshop, a program legendary for its power and complexity. Photoshop Elements is missing some of Photoshop's high-end features, and it has some exclusive tools of its own. However, we said it in the last edition of this book, and we'll say it again:

Photoshop Elements Is Photoshop

What exactly do we mean by that? Well, we don't mean that Elements isn't *any* easier to use than Photoshop; Elements has an extensive, genuinely helpful Help system. And we also don't mean that Elements doesn't need its own *Dummies* book. (Perish the thought!) Here's what we mean: To get the most out of Photoshop Elements, you still have to come to grips with the same complex concepts and tools that Photoshop uses. And if you've ever experimented with Photoshop, you know that isn't easy.

You want examples? We've got examples. First, take a gander at this exceedingly cute cat photo in Figure 1.



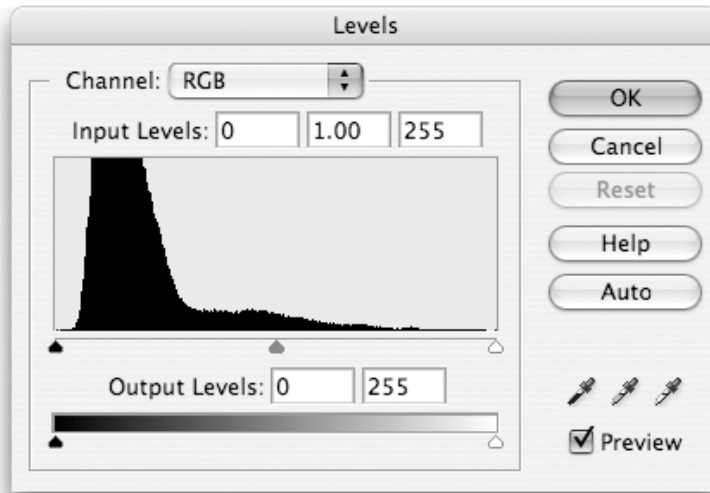
Figure 1:
An
exceedingly
cute cat.

Exceedingly cute, huh? Maybe the photo's a little dark, but that can be corrected. Now, if you wanted to correct this somewhat dark photo with an image-editing application, and you saw a command called Brightness/Contrast, you'd be tempted to use it, wouldn't you? Heck, your TV has brightness and contrast controls! Brightness/Contrast it is!

Terrible move. Brightness/Contrast is among the worst commands that Photoshop and Elements offer. Sure, it's easy to use, but correcting photos on the computer is like many things in life: You get out of it what you put into it. Instead of Brightness/Contrast, what you should use to correct brightness — in Photoshop or Elements — is the Levels command. And Figure 2 shows you the Levels dialog box when applied to the exceedingly cute cat photo.

Yikes! What the heck is that jagged black blob? What do all those sliders and buttons do? And what does this monstrosity have to do with that exceedingly cute cat?

Figure 2:
The exceedingly cute cat photo, as represented in the Levels dialog box.



Well, in truth, Levels isn't really that difficult after you understand the concept it's based on, but we show it to you here to prove a point: Levels is a splendid tool for brightening images, but it's hardly intuitive. And Levels is the same in Elements as it is in Photoshop. If you think you would need help mastering Photoshop (and you would), you'll need help using Elements, too.

And that's where this book comes in.

About This Book

Because Elements' roots are in Photoshop, we hope you'll forgive us for feeling that we're particularly well suited to guide you through Elements. Deke has been using Photoshop since version 1.0 was introduced and has gone on to become the best-selling author of *Photoshop For Dummies*, *Photoshop Bible*, and a bevy of other books on digital imaging. Galen, slacker that he is, didn't get with Photoshop until version 2.0 came out in 1991, but since then he's used it almost daily. It's the benchmark against which he's judged many other image-editing applications as a reviewer for *Macworld* and *PC Magazine*.

For that matter, Deke — in cahoots with the fine folks at Total Training (www.totaltraining.com) — is officially responsible for introducing the Windows version of Elements 3.0 to the world! Windows users, just click the Product Overview icon on the main installer screen of your Elements installer CD, prop your feet up, and let Deke be your personal tour guide for a 30-minute introduction to Elements 3.0.

In this book, we set out to explain Photoshop Elements 3.0 from the ground up, assuming that you know nothing about the program or even about image editing in general. (That, incidentally, is what's meant by the word *Dummies* in the title. We know you're not a dummy about every topic, but the title *Photoshop Elements 3 For Dummies About Photoshop Elements 3* was deemed to be lacking in elegance.) Step by step, concept by concept, we gradually work through a thorough examination of Photoshop Elements 3.0 and the incredible things it can do for your images.

Conventions Used in This Book

Many times in this book, you'll be asked to press some keys on your computer keyboard to make Elements do its stuff. We tell you which keys to press like so:

Ctrl+Shift+P (⌘+Shift+P on the Mac)

This means to press the Ctrl key, and then press the Shift key while still holding down Ctrl, and then press the P key while still holding down the other two keys. (Mac users, substitute the ⌘ key for Ctrl.) It doesn't matter whether you press Shift or Ctrl (⌘ on the Mac) first, but the letter key (P in this case) must always come last.

What You're Not to Read

Mac users, you can sit out Chapter 6; it deals exclusively with the Organizer component, available only in Windows. A few other short sections in the book are Mac-only or Windows-only, particularly in Chapter 18; look for the icons in the margins to alert you.

Foolish Assumptions

We assume only three things:

- ✓ You have a computer.
- ✓ It's turned on.
- ✓ It has Photoshop Elements 3 installed on it.

If you can meet these stringent requirements, we can take it from here.

How This Book Is Organized

To give you an overview of the kind of information you're likely to find in these pages, here's a quick rundown of the five parts.

Part I: Element-ary School

We begin at the beginning, by answering the question “What exactly *is* image editing, anyway?” From there we get face to interface with Elements, exploring the array of tools and palettes it places on your screen. We talk about opening images and then do a profile on the pixel, without which digital images wouldn't be. And although the last chapter is an examination of color, we hope it will be free of any purple prose.

Part II: Be Prepared

This is the part you'll skip because you're too eager to start cleaning up your photos, but you'll come back when you can't figure out what the heck is going on, or you can't find the photo you want to clean up. Chapter 6 introduces Windows users to the fabulous new Organizer component of Elements. Then Chapter 7 tells everyone about how to save their files in the proper format. Chapter 8 tells you how to correct your mistakes and also how to print your images when there are no more mistakes to correct. Chapter 9 focuses on isolating parts of your pictures with selections, and Chapter 10 introduces the multileveled concept of layers.

Part III: Realer Than Life

This part of the book details how to take a bad image and make it better, or how to take a good image and make it great. In Chapter 11, we get down and dirty with the topic of cleaning up your images. In Chapter 12, we check out the editing tools in Elements. Chapter 13 looks at the powerful tools for brightening up your images — including that eagerly anticipated Levels command.

Part IV: Unreality Programming

The preceding part was all about making images look better; this part begins with a chapter on how to make them look weirder, using the many distorting capabilities in Elements. From there we start with a clean canvas and explore

the subject of painting and coloring. From painting pictures, we move on to how to create a thousand words (or fewer) with the type tools. And we wrap up this part with a bang as we reveal some extraordinary tricks that Elements can do all on its own.

Part V: The Part of Tens

The Part of Tens is a *For Dummies* tradition. You don't want to follow traditions? Don't read this part. But then you'll miss a couple of really neat Top Ten lists: ten important techniques to remember that utilize the keyboard, and ten reasons you might possibly want to upgrade from Elements to Photoshop someday.

Icons Used in This Book

After the release of the very first *For Dummies* books, a scientific study revealed that although most people were indeed learning great amounts from the books, a few were distracted by a compulsive need to doodle in the margins. The publishers decided there was only one solution: Do the margin doodling themselves. And so the *For Dummies* icon system was born. Over the years, the icons have taken on specific meanings, alerting you to the type of information the text may contain. In this section, we describe the meaning of the icons in this book.



This icon lets you know that we're talking about a new feature in Photoshop Elements 3.0 or a change that the program has undergone since the last version. This means that experienced Elements 2.0 users can just rifle through the book in search of this icon, culling all the juicy new bits and ignoring the rest of our deathless prose. (Sniff.)



This icon lets you know we're talking about a Windows-only feature.



When Windows readers see this icon, take a snooze; this info works on the Mac only.



You can pretty much bet there will be some eight- and nine-letter words in these sections. Technical Stuff is information that maybe isn't vital but can help enrich your understanding if you take a few minutes to wrap your brain around it.



This is the really good stuff. Generally, a Tip is a less-than-obvious technique for accomplishing the task at hand. Here's where you get to reap the benefits of our years of image-editing experience. Don't bother to thank us. It's our job. Oh, okay, you can go ahead and thank us.



Not that you should forget everything else, but these Remember sections contain particularly important points.



Okay, the worst thing that can happen when using Elements is that you'll lose a few hours of work. You're not going to find any warnings in this book that say "Clicking this command will make your laptop suddenly snap shut and break your fingers." But hey, lost work is no fun, either.



Well, this is the stuff that's not really technical, or a tip, or particularly worth remembering, or a warning about anything. And yet it seemed somehow icon-worthy. So . . . it's gossip. So there.

Where to Go from Here

Want to send us congratulations, compliments, or complaints? If so, you can visit Deke's Web site at www.dekemc.com and drop him a line, or stop by Galen's Web site at www.grundoon.com and e-mail him as well. We get a ton of e-mail, but we definitely read it all and respond to a fair amount of it as well. We'd especially appreciate suggestions for improving this book in its next edition.

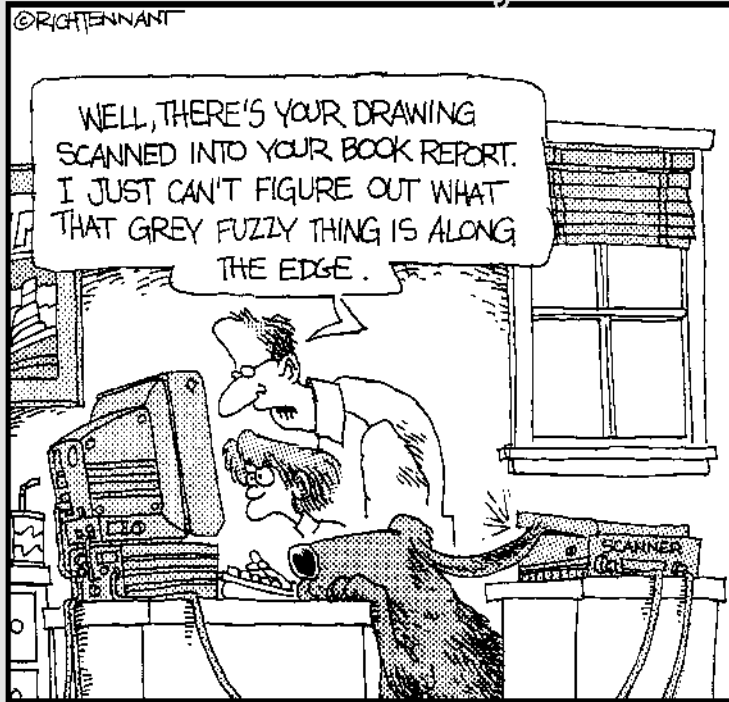
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Part I

Element-ary School

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



In this part . . .

If just thinking about the name *Photoshop Elements* makes you feel as though you're about to drown in a sea of confusing concepts and terminology, consider this part of the book a life preserver with your name on it. (Yeah, life preservers usually have the name of the ship on them, but whatever.) Taking in anything new can be intimidating, but we set out to make the process as painless as possible, starting with the very first chapter.

Speaking of that very first chapter, it seeks to answer the timeless question: "Just what exactly *is* Photoshop Elements, anyway?" We very slowly pick up steam in the next chapter; even if you're only vaguely acquainted with your own computer, you'll be fine. From there we look at the all-important topic of opening images and how to view them from different perspectives. Next, we take a penetrating look at that teeny tiny giant, the pixel. And finally, we teach you just enough about color theory to make you dangerous, yet keep your colors Web-safe.

By the end of Chapter 5, you won't know everything there is to know about Elements — otherwise, we could have dispensed with the chapters that follow it — but you'll know enough to phrase a few intelligent questions. And please remember that as you read these chapters, there's no shame in starting out uninformed. Millions of *For Dummies* readers would agree.

Chapter 1

Braving the Elements

In This Chapter

- ▶ Introducing Photoshop Elements
 - ▶ Working with the painting tools
 - ▶ Understanding the image-editing tools
 - ▶ Using Elements' helpful Help features
-

As you know if you read the Introduction to this book, the image-editing powers of Photoshop Elements are inherited from another Adobe application called simply “Photoshop.” But you still may not be aware that Photoshop is the most comprehensive and popular image editor around. In fact, there’s probably not a single computer artist who doesn’t use Photoshop almost daily. As an Elements user, you have most of that professional power coiled up inside your computer, waiting for you to discover how to harness it.

Even if you haven’t yet used Elements or Photoshop, you probably have at least a vague idea of what they’re all about. But just so we’re all clear on the subject, the primary purpose of these applications is to make changes to photographic images that you’ve managed to get on disk, whether from a digital camera, a scanner, or other means. Windows users also have the Organizer component of Elements, which lets you organize and arrange your digital image collection. We examine the Organizer half of Elements in Windows in Chapter 6; for now, when we refer to “Elements,” we’re referring to the Editor component of the Windows version, which is basically equivalent to the entire Mac version.

If you’ve used Elements for only a week or so, you may have mistaken it for a fairly straightforward package. Certainly, on the surface, Elements comes off as quite friendly. But lurking a few fathoms deep is another, darker program, one that is distinctly unfriendly for the uninitiated but wildly capable for the stout of heart. Sigmund Freud would no doubt declare Elements a classic case of a split personality. It’s half man, half monster; half mild-mannered shoeshine boy, half blonde-grabbing, airplane-swatting King Kong. In short, Elements has a Dr. Jekyll-and-Mr. Hyde thing going — only it’s way scarier.

As you may recall from the last time you saw *Abbott and Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* — indisputably the foremost resource of information on this famous tale — this Jekyll character (not to be confused with the similarly named cartoon magpie) is normally your everyday, average, nice-guy scientist. Then one day, he drinks some potion or gets cut off in traffic or something and changes into his ornery alter ego, known at every dive bar in town by the surname Hyde. Elements behaves the same way, except no magical transformation is required to shift from the easy-to-use part of the program to the scary, technical side. Both personalities — both “elements,” if you will — coexist simultaneously in symbiotic harmony.

This chapter explores both the cuddly and not-so-cuddly parts of Elements’ brain. (We’ll leave the exploration of Abbott’s and Costello’s brains for another book.) We’ll also take a look at the built-in Help features, which are the chief means of distinguishing Elements from its not-so-friendly big brother, Photoshop.

The Bland but Benevolent Dr. Jekyll

To discover the benevolent Dr. Jekyll side of Photoshop Elements, you need look no further than the standard painting and editing tools. Shown in Figure 1-1, these tools are so simple they’re practically pastoral, like the kind of household appliances your great-grandmother would have been comfortable with. The eraser tool erases, the pencil tool draws hard-edged lines, the brush tool paints, and so on. These incredibly straightforward tools attract new users just as surely as a light attracts miller moths.

Figure 1-1: Many tools in Elements have an old-world, rustic charm that’s sure to warm the cockles of the most timid technophobe.

