

Photoshop Elements 7

One of the biggest challenges a do-it-yourself website owner will face is dealing with images for the web. I don't suggest running out and buying Photoshop CS3 if you are a novice computer user. I love Photoshop, but it is overkill for the average user. It is also quite expensive.

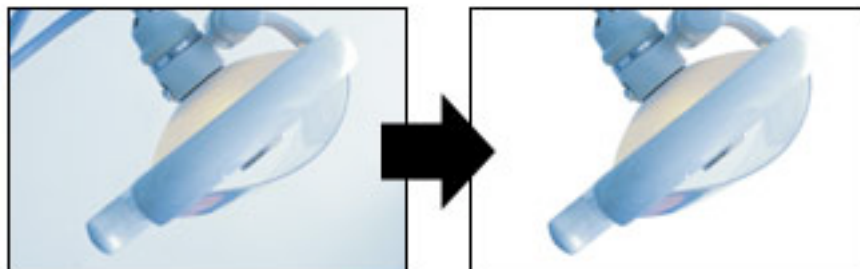


A couple of months ago I mentioned GIMP because it was free. Well free does have a hidden fee and that is called frustration. I tried assembling a tutorial for a client wanting do something himself on the cheap and well ...I got frustrated.

Software needs to be intuitive for the average person to use. So I looked for some more solutions one of which is [Paint.Net](#). It is free and very intuitive. For someone who only needs to crop, scale and save, it is perfect! It has layers and effects which is surprising for being a free program. Try it out. You might like it.

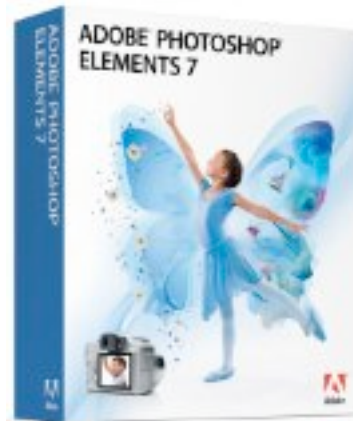
I was looking for an important function that I use a lot with Photoshop and that is the tool that makes it possible to cut out an object from a photo. There are many tools that can help with this process, but my favorite is the **Polygonal Lasso** tool. I like it because it makes it easy to follow the edges of an object even while using a mouse. Freehand painting is difficult with a mouse and cutting accurately is no exception either.

This is handy for making your product photos for your online store look more professional. Cut out the object so that it is surrounded by a white background like a catalog.



Photoshop Elements 6 & 7

As I am writing this article, Photoshop Elements version 7 is scheduled for release in September this year (any day now). You can pre-purchase a copy and be the first one on the block to get [Photoshop Elements 7](#) through Amazon for \$94.99. Or if you are in a real hurry you can purchase [Photoshop Elements 6](#) for \$79.99. Both are very powerful programs and I am happy to say EASY to use! Available for both PC and Mac users.



Photoshop elements was designed for the novice user in mind, but it really has some powerful tools some of which rival Photoshop CS3. I may have to get my own copy!

Why Do You Need This?

You need an image editing software because you take digital pictures. Photoshop Elements 7 represents a very mature software that not only helps you edit your photos for the web, but can also help you organize and share your photos.

Most of the digital cameras available today save very large JPG images. That is great for print, but too large to be put on the web. They need to be scaled down and saved with compression so that they load fast on your website.

A Common Mistake

You have probably at one time or another come to a website and witnessed a small photo on a web page loading very slowly. Why does it take so long to load when it is so small?

The answer lies between the difference in the display perimeters of a web image and the actual physical size of the image. We measure digital images in [pixels](#). A 2000 px by 1000 px image can actually be displayed at 200 px by 100px. The image will look like a postage stamp and will probably not look very clear. That is because you are cramming the display of a large image into a small window.



It would be better to first scale down and optimize the image to the target size to be displayed on your web page first. Save the image with a file name indicative of its use and then upload it to your website editor. Since you have already scaled the image down you can just insert it as is. If you still need to adjust its size a little smaller then it is appropriate to use the size handles.

Many people using WYSIWYG (What you see is what you get) editors in their blogs or site builders experience this problem because they don't understand

what is happening when they grab the scale handles of the photo to make it appear smaller.

The same is true with Microsoft Word documents. The photo you inserted was big and you made it display smaller. The problem is you didn't make the physical size of the photo smaller and your document may be too large in megabytes to email. Had you used a photo editing software to make a new smaller version and inserted it in the Word document, it would make for a smaller document to email.

Conclusion

If you are on the road to self-empowerment with your website you need a good image editing software. I am impressed with what I see with Adobe's Photoshop Elements 7 and it won't take long for you to master. They have even included what is called "Guided Edit Mode" which will help you do anything you want with guidance. EasyElements.com is a great resource if you would like to learn more about Photoshop Elements. They have a great [overview video](#) that you can view.

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