

Evaluation Report by C.O.M.P.

System used during evaluation:

Motherboard: Gigabyte GA-K8NSC-939

CPU: AMD 64, 1800 MHz 3000+

Ram: 3 GB's DDR SDRam PC3200

HARD DRIVE: 80 GB Raptor Drive

VIDEO CARD: Nvidia GeForce 6800 XT

POWER SUPPLY: 500 Watt ATX

OPERATING SYSTEM: Windows XP Home Addition

Background

A test run of Adobe's latest version of their flagship program Photoshop CS3 Extended proved to be a bit more challenging than I had anticipated. Our club decided to take on the challenge by holding a raffle to see what club member would be given the opportunity to climb in to the cockpit and take the test drive. From the five volunteers in the draw, my name was selected. The last time I ever won anything was way back in high school so you can imagine just how excited I was to win. Eagerly I accepted the gauntlet and was given a downloaded 30 day trial version of the program. Little did I know just what I got myself into! My background with computers goes back to 1996 when I purchased my first windows based system from Gateway. Gateway at that time probably had 1700 Tec support staff to assist their customers. In the first 2-1/2 years I think I talked to most of them! As time went by I realized relying on free Tec support wasn't the solution, I rolled up my sleeves and went to work learning just how computers work, how software functioned and how to build, repair and run multiple systems. In 1996 I barely knew how to turn on a computer, today I teach a computer assembly class at the local college, build new systems, troubleshoot and repair existing towers, take in older systems, refurbish them, and donate them to people who can't afford to buy a computer. It's been quite a learning experience so I felt up to the challenge of mastering CS3. Was I in for a surprise? My area of interest is in web page development, creating videos, experimenting with open source software and troubleshooting operating system problems. Due to the complexity of Photoshop CS3 Extended I decided to focus on those aspects of the program related to my interests.

1. Animated Gif Creation

2. Slide Shows

3. Zoomify

4. Creating Slices

Project Location

All files created with CS3 Extended can be accessed with the link below.

Subject: Review of Photoshop CS3 Extended

By: Norbert Demmel

<http://www.bluewatercreations.net/cs3005.htm>

Animated Gif files

This project required the creation of six separate images 250 x 250 pixel setting the background to white at 72 dpi. Then after several referrals from the help files I was able to create a circle using the Ellipse Tool. Once created, it was saved as a "layer" to a work folder on the hard drive. Next I re-opened the file and unlocked the layer and positioned it to one corner of the window. The next step was to fill in the layer using the "Color Picker". This file was then saved to the hard drive with a file name sequenced xxx001.psd. After re-opening the file five more times and advancing the layer to a new position each time the results were a total of six files created with each file moving the layer to a slightly new position until I had a sequence of files saved with file names xxx02, xxx03 etc. Having six files in the same folder sequentially numbered completes the first task.

At this point I would like to pause for a moment and suggest a change in the program that when multiple files are being created a switch could be activated within CS3 so the files being saved would automatically assign the next file name in the sequence. This would reduce the amount of time

currently required to create a file sequence and also reduce the potential for making errors when assigning a new file name to the sequence. This is where it gets a little tricky. I wanted my animation to travel around the inside of the square but I wanted to pause each time it hit the corner. To do this I rotated each of the original files 90 Degrees and saved them with a new file name except when the image of the ball was in the corner I saved it twice. Now there are a total of 13 images, next I rotated those images another 90 Degrees assigning new file names. This process was repeated two more times until I had a total of 27 images, yes, 27 not 28. You would have to do a layout to see why you only need 27 files. The last step was creating the animation. In this case the help files were of some value. The “Scripts” – “Load Files into Stack” command sets up the files for animation. Select the folder where your saved work is located and open the folder. The result is the sequence of files is loaded into a layered Photoshop document. Now you are ready to setup the duration of the animation using the “Animation Tabbed Palette”. The settings I used were Duration: 24 sec, Frame Rate: Custom, F.P.S.: 12. Next, select make frames from layers and then save an animated gif file. In addition to the on board help files the tutorials also contain links to Adobe’s on line help files, many of which are short videos showing the set by step process. These online video tutorials were invaluable in learning various features of the program.

Slide Shows

A medium learning curve but once mastered the process for creating slide show presentations was one of the easier projects selected. At this point I must say CS3 is in bad need of a simple interface for auto re-naming and re-sizing imported images such as JPG files. If the program has a streamlined interface it certainly is buried deep within the help file menus. 36 files were saved to the work folder. The files were then resized to a resolution of 640 x 480. First, create two folders on the hard drive. Then, transfer the re-sized pictures to the first folder. Open CS3, go to File> Automate> Web Photo Gallery”. I created several styles of slide shows but found the “Simple” setting to be my design style of choice. After accessing the folder containing the original 36 files I set in motion the rendering. Select the second folder created as the destination folder and click “Okay”. The destination folder now contains the complete file set ready to upload to your web site. A big “CAUTION” here. Be sure you evaluate the file names for the various “htm” files created. If you look in the destination folder you will notice a file labeled “index.htm”. An experienced web page designer would pick up on this flaw immediately but a person without experience could wind up wiping out their home page. I suppose Adobe’s view on this is anyone using the program would already know these files need to be re-named. Still, I feel compelled to suggest some kind of caution tag be included in the output reminding the user of this potential risk.

Zoomify

Probably one of the more fun features in CS3, this new feature under Productivity Enhancements allows you to put a high resolution image on your web site to be viewed using the flash player plug-in. Zoomify creates a multitude of smaller JPG tiles and reassembles them similar to Google Maps for viewing in your browser. This feature is especially suited for web site visitors who can view the basic image in a short period of time and have the option of zoom in and take a closer look at the file. The Zoomify help file has a link to Adobe’s video web site where a short video illustrates the setup of this program. Another suggestion here would be to offer more on line videos for individuals who are learning from scratch like me. The process to create a Zoomify project is pretty much strait forward. Load a large image file into your work folder, open up CS3 and load the image, go to File> export> Zoomify. The settings folder opens up and this is where you can set the actions of your presentation. Again, you have to play around with the settings to achieve the desired effect. The help files are very vague on how the program works. I created two files using various settings and got different results.

Slices

Want to create an image header for your web site with buttons built into the image to link up with other web pages? The Slice tool will do this for you. Open an image file in CS3, select the Slice tool from the Tools palette, and place a horizontal line at the desired height from the bottom of the image. This will determine the height of the link button. Select the vertical option to determine how many buttons you want to create on the horizontal axes. You now have a basic template created to form the

header for your web page with the number of buttons you require. The next step is to articulate what you want the button to do when placing the cursor over the button on the web page. Select the Slice Select Tool from the Tools palette. Double click on the button created; this brings up the Slice Options box. Type in the desired "URL" you want the button to be associated with. At this point you can add extra features to the button using the Layer Palette. After the file has been edited to your satisfaction, you are now ready to save your work. Go to File> Save for Web and Devices", be sure "GIF" is selected, then click on "Save". The files are now ready to be published to your web site.

Summary

Adobe Photoshop CS3 Extended is a fantastic program, it is full featured, and very powerful but has a very long learning curve. I was left with the impression Adobe has not taken into consideration the potential new user market. If I may suggest, create more of the on line video tutorials. Tutorials designed to take a new user through a particular project start to finish. Next create a user interface that will allow the renaming of multiple image files with an included re-size application.

Notes

Special thanks to club member and Treasurer Pam Raisanen for her invaluable assistance. Without her help and input, this project would still be in the planning stage.