NEWSLETTER

September 2009

Elements Manuals

It is rare to find a printed manual included with any software today and Adobe does not buck that tend! However they do have a 400+ page manual in PDF format available for download (or to print out if you have the urge) for Elements 7 and also for Elements 6. You can find them as follows:

Elements 7: www.adobe.com/support/photoshopelements/. Note the manual is accessed by clicking on the description shown in the upper right hand corner.

Elements 6: www.adobe.com/support/documentation/en/photoshop_elements/.

Also note there are many video tutorials on both these sites which are worth watching.

Animal Red Eye

There are large differences between the eyes of some animals, and those of humans. This has a large effect on the presence of red eye in animal photographs.
Also, when it comes to animals, not all 'red eye' is red! You may see green eye, white eye, yellow eye, or many other variations.

The Difference

The difference is rooted in the fact that some animals are naturally nocturnal. Their eyes are specially made so that seeing in the dark is not a problem. Most nocturnal animals have a layer at the back of their retinas called the 'tapetum lucidum'. It is an even better reflector of light than a human retina, and acts like a mirror on the back of the animal's eye ball.

The result of this is that if you shine bright white light into an animal's eye, they reflect that bright light back very well. Again though, in most animals we do not observe 'white eye'. In the case of humans the blood vessels color this light red. In animals, the color of the reflected light depends on the pigments in that individual animal's eyes. The bright green color we are used to seeing from animals caught in headlights on the road is common to cats, dogs and deer. Crocodile's eyes glow luminous red when caught in the light. Below is a picture of two cats exhibiting this problem.

Some animals do not have this layer, and most animals which are not naturally nocturnal will exhibit red eye in the same fashion as humans. Birds for example, do not have a tapetum lucidum, and nor do squirrels.

Photography Tips

Many of the same tips apply with animals as with humans when dealing with 'animal red eye'. Because the light is reflected much better in an animal's eye, lower light levels might still cause the effect, so in some ways it is even more important to be conscious of the problem.
 Removing the flash light source from the camera lens is still a very important technique. The same rules apply when it comes to the direction of reflected light. This is probably your safest bet, as red eye reduction features will obey very different rules when it comes to some animals.

Simple Line Border

When printing out photographs sometimes it is nice to have a border around the edge as an alternative to borderless or a white space.

Pull up a photo that you want to give a line border.

Now, it would be easy enough to just draw a black line round the edge with the pencil tool, but there are several disadvantages to this!

Firstly, once it's done, it's done. You can't come back later and change it so that it's thicker, or a different color or anything like that.

The other potential hazard is if you later decide you want to crop or resize your image. It would be nice if the border could remain independent from that process.

The other thing of course is that the pencil tool is a little bit fiddly. If you're working with very large images, it can take ages!

So here's how I suggest you add a simple line border:

1. Create a new layer - Always add borders on a new layer so they can be easily changed or removed later on.

2. Select all - Pressing **Ctrl + A** will do it, or otherwise you can pick *'Select - All'* from the menu.

3. Open the stroke dialog box - Select *'Edit - Stroke (Outline) Selection'* from the menu.
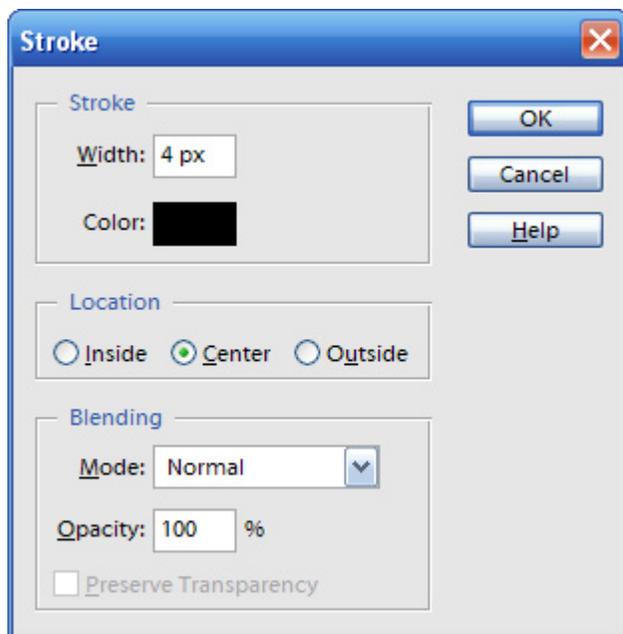
4. Pick a thickness - The thickness you choose depends on the look you desire. Here I am picking 4 pixels to give a medium weight border, but if you want a thinner or thicker border then you can change this value.

5. Pick a color - Black always works well for the color, though more colorful lines may be appropriate for some images.

6. Leave the rest - Forget the rest of the options, we don't need them for this. (They should be

set to 'Center', 'Normal' and '100%').

7. Click 'Ok', and you should have your nice black border, like this:

Well that is all for this edition of the newsletter, I apologize for missing the June edition and for the brevity of this one but I have not been up to par recently. Hopefully I can catch up in time for the December edition but remember articles, suggestions and interesting images are always welcome!