NEWSLETTER

June 2013

AutoHDR

Despite great advances in technology, even the best camera often can't come close to capturing in a single shot the full range of light and shade visible to the human eye.

BEFORE

AFTER

Also, unlike your eye which can adjust as it looks at each area of a scene, your camera is forced to make a single choice at the moment you press the button. It will do its best to select the most appropriate range but will often be forced to throw away (clip) either the darkest or brightest bits of the picture. The result of this is that your final photos can be a poor representation of reality. HDR (High Dynamic Range) photography has become very popular with enthusiasts taking several images of the same subject each with aperture and speed setting and then combining these together. For more information on the subject read the article on Wikipedia [here.](#)

A sample of an image "interfered" with using "AutoHDR" is shown on the previous page.

While the limited range of the camera is a problem, it is its inability to adjust across the scene that is more often the cause of disappointing images. There are a number of software solutions available which try to correct this (Photomatix, Dynamic Photo HDR and easyHDR to name a few) but AutoHDRTM is different.

It's free - Download the latest free version from the website and start creating your own HDR* images. AutoHDRTM doesn't ruin your images with watermarks but acknowledgement would be appreciated if results are posted online.

It's simple - Just drop any single picture into AutoHDRTM and process with one click - no need to create multiple exposures, use RAW files or manually mask areas or brush on effects. AutoHDRTM works it all out for you!

It's clean - The default settings produce natural, clean results free from halos, garish colors and other artifacts often associated with other HDR software. It's also flexible enough to create more artistic results if you wish.

It's really small - No installation or registration hassle makes the AutoHDRTM file smaller than just one of your pictures. Just save it to your computer and run it from there. Full details [here.](#)

I hope to show the software at the June Elements SIG meeting so make sure you attend if you are interested!

CrystalDiskInfo & Speccy

I have mentioned before the importance of keeping an eye on the health of your HDD and "Speccy" the free software monitor I have recommended at the clubs monthly meeting at DVC is a good example. Another free application which just monitors the drive(s) itself (vs. the computer systems entirely in Speccy) is "CrystalDiskInfo.

CrystalDiskInfo is one of the tools we turn to when we want as much useful data as possible about our system's hard disk drives (HDDs) and solid-state drives (SSDs) as well as many external drives. This free system utility monitors the health and status of your drives and displays the information in a compact, easy-to-read interface. CrystalDiskInfo monitors and displays your drives' temperature and SMART data, and it can even alert you when things start to go wrong.

Read more and download at Cnet: [Click Here](#)

Keyboard Shortcuts

We are all aware of the keyboard shortcuts available in Elements but many times we forget them. I found a useful website that has a good keyboard shortcut list which I have "borrowed" (it was free so I'm not really cheating) and put together as a 2 page PDF suitable for keeping by your computer. If you would like a copy just send an e-mail and I'll send one to you. By the way the website, http://www.mcpactions.com/ has a lot of tutorials, actions and on line classes which are comprehensive but can be expensive (up to $200) but they have some free online videos which are very good.

Extended Clipboard

I am sure you all use the highlight, copy and then paste function to keep interesting information you see but the problem with Windows clipboard which stores these snippets of information is that it only holds one "copy", if you try to capture a second item the first disappears. Well a piece of freeware is available that allows you to store up to 500 "copies" onto a clipboard. M8 Free Clipboard is the simplest of all multi-clipboard and screen capture programs. Just have it running minimized and it captures everything you cut or copy from other programs. It keeps up to 500 clips. When you want to paste one back, all you have to do is restore M8 and click on the clip you want. When you move the mouse over the clips, you can see them in the viewer. If the clip is text, you see several lines and if it is a graphic, you see a thumbnail. There are also several instructional videos on the website although I should warn you the narrator has a strong Scottish accent! Well worth taking a look at [the website](#).

Audiodocs

Have a bunch of documents you need to sit down and read? What if you could listen to them on a media player instead? Or what if you could burn audio recordings of your files to CDs to listen to them in your car? Many people enjoy the freedom that audio books afford because they allow easy multitasking. Others simply absorb information better by

hearing. These are just a few reasons you might want a program that converts documents into audio files.

AudioDocs is just such a program. It has one function: It takes any Microsoft Word DOC file and converts it into a WAV file that you can listen to on iPods, CDs and digital music players. The most attractive feature of AudioDocs is its simplicity. The design is clean and the functionality is straightforward. There are only a few buttons to click in the very linear conversion process. AudioDocs requires Microsoft's .NET Framework 4.5 to run, and it will install it for you if you don't have it already. This process will require a restart of your computer.

You'll be able to select which digital voice you'd like to listen to your DOC in, as well as reading pace and volume. If you have an eBook, text file or other type of document, you'll need to save it in the DOC format before you can convert it. Once you've converted the document to a WAV audio file, use a program like [free audio converter](#) convert it to an MP3 file for playback on media players. Or use [Image Burn](#) to burn the file to a CD.

Get all the details of the program [here.](#)

Prezi

We are all familiar with PowerPoint for creating presentations (and we have all sat through very boring examples!) but a free application "Prezi" is now available for creating shows that look more sophisticated, some people say, than anything created with PowerPoint. The free version has all the features of the paid version but your creation is available on line for anyone to see. For more details and a host of examples and tutorials go to [prezi.com](#).

Finally the University of Wisconsin did a study and found that by using Century Schoolbook font for its publications they saved just over 14% in toner costs compared with using Arial. They also found Century Gothic saved toner over Arial but with the font being slightly larger some documents that would fit on one page with Arial might run over into another page costing more in paper. If neither of these fonts is appealing Calibri and Cambria are both economic substitutes for Arial and Times New Roman. I use Arial for this newsletter but in future I am going to use Calibri which has been my font of choice for e-mails and letters (yes I do write letters!) for some time.

Remember contributions are always welcome! Next newsletter in September 2013.