NEWSLETTER

March 2017

We haven't had much success setting up meetings this year so I haven't had any questions or suggestions come up!

I am not sure how many of you have upgraded to Elements 15. According to my sources the sales of this edition have been disappointing to say the least for Adobe. I know many people have said coming out with a new version every year (especially just before the Christmas gift giving season) is a little too obvious and besides the "upgrades" are not earthshaking to say the least!

There is some merit to these arguments, the "improvements" over the last few years have not been much for each year individually but version 15 is in itself much better and more versatile than version 10. I think the solution here is for every individual to gauge the changes each year and weigh whether they are worth the price of the software. Also bear in mind that in the last two or three years when the upgraded version came out within a month or so this was available at a big discount for a short period from some of the large retailers. Version 15 was being sold at B&H for around $35 for a short period and if I remember correctly this was matched by Amazon. Now at that price I think even Ebenezer Scrooge might be tempted!

Now if you don't want to spring for Adobe Photoshop Elements or for any photo editing software for that matter what is available for free? I have touched on this subject in the past but it has been quite a while so I think it is worth visiting again. Here are a couple of the programs available that won't cost you a dime and have got good reviews from users.

Adobe Photoshop Express

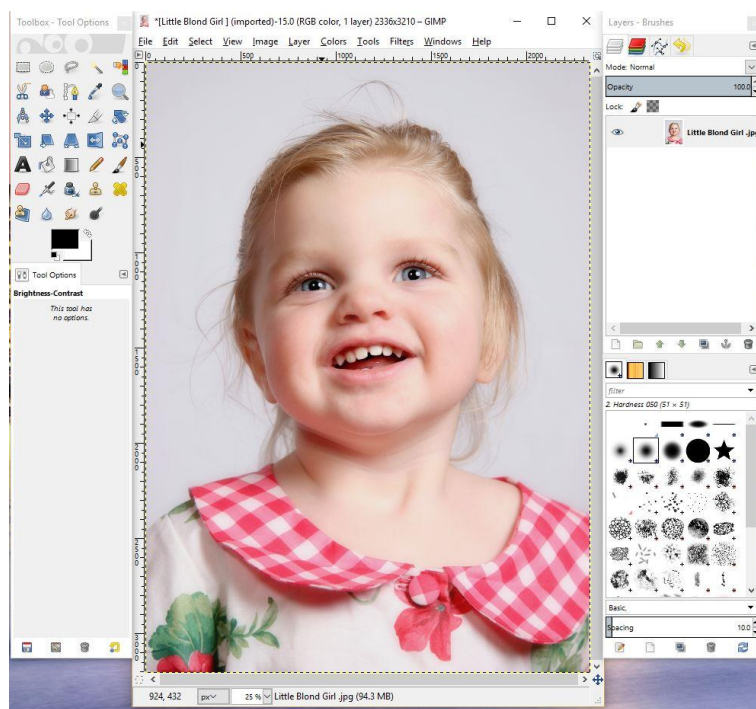A trimmed-down app that bundles Photoshop's best features in a mobile-friendly package

Adobe Photoshop Express is a lightweight version of the industry-standard photo editor available free for your browser, and as a downloadable app for Windows, iOS, and Android.

Photoshop Express is the simplest of the tools here, but Adobe's expertise in photo editing means it's far superior to many other quick-fix software programs. It packages Photoshop's most useful picture-enhancing sleek, minimalist interface that's particularly well suited to touchscreens. Sliders enable you to adjust contrast, exposure and white balance of your photo dynamically, and there are automatic options for one-click adjustments. Once you're satisfied with the results, you can either save the edited photo to your PC or share it via Facebook.

The main appeal of Photoshop Express is its simplicity, but this is also its biggest drawback. There are no layers, plugins, or brush tools, and you can't crop or resize your pictures. You can download it [here.](#)

GIMP

Often heralded as the best free alternative to Photoshop, GIMP (**G**NU **I**mage **M**anipulation **P**rogram) is an open-source application that relies on a community of volunteer developers who maintain and improve the product. Available for Mac and PC, you get a lot of professional-level editing and retouching tools – perfect for designers who can't or won't shell out hundreds of dollars to Adobe.

Once you launch the program, you'll find a dedicated window that displays the image, and separate windows to organize the toolbox and layers. When using a large display, or two displays, you have a nice, big workspace to play with your images. Icons in the toolbox represent actions such as the crop, lasso, paint and brush tools, and you can apply various effects to your photos. It may seem like Photoshop, but GIMP has its own look and feel. You can play with the image and add layers with the right-hand layers panel and augment this with the left hand tool box to add text, crop, frame and generally

do most of the tasks performed in Photoshop. There are numerous sites on the web with tutorials and a good place to start is the GIMP website here. You can also download the GIMP user manual which is a remarkably comprehensive work which can be freely accessed and downloaded if desired.

Photo Pos Pro

Another remarkable free Photoshop alternative. Well designed, with just a few restrictions

If you haven't heard of Photo Pos Pro, you're in for a treat. This free Photoshop alternative aims to give the best of both worlds, offering interfaces for both novice and advanced users. The novice option puts one-click filters and automatic adjustments at the fore, while the latter closely resembles Photoshop. Both are well designed, and more intuitive than GIMP's endless lists and menus.

Photo Pos Pro offers both layers and layer masks, as well as superb clone and healing brushes. All the expected color-refining tools are present and correct. There's support for batch-editing and scripts to save time on routine tasks, you can import images directly from a scanner or camera.

Photo Pos Pro offers plugins in the form of extra frames and templates, and you can create and save your own filters for future use.

Its main drawback is the limit on the size of saved files (1,024 x 2,014 pixels), but if you like the basic version and want to upgrade, Photo Pos Pro Premium is currently discounted to US$34, a very reasonable price for a top-rate Photoshop alternative.

There are many other programs and I will touch on some of these in future newsletters. In the meantime, have a good time playing with your images and hopefully we can meet again in the near future.