

NEWSLETTER

December 2008



Atmospheric Optics

Light from the sun and moon can play tricks on your eyes. This site has some cool photos, along with explanations. Go to: <http://www.atoptics.co.uk/>. These images may just encourage you to start photographing atmospheric phenomena!

The Big Picture

Boston.com features some of the most amazing photographs from the news. You simply won't find such breathtaking photos anywhere else on the Web. Each week, a new collection of photographs is featured. These are cherry-picked from the past week. Boston.com calls the site "The Big Picture". That's because you get an overview of what's going on in the world.

The images are large and high resolution and cover a broad spectrum of the week's news stories, well worth checking out. Go to: www.boston.com/bigpicture

Digital Camera Source

One of our members, Dave Sutton, has brought this to my attention:

Quote

Another good source for digital cameras, TV's, etc. is One Call in Spokane. No sales tax. I've gotten several things there over the years, and it's a good outfit with good prices.
<http://www.onecall.com/>

Unquote

If you are in the market check them out!

Microsoft Image Composite Editor

New panorama creating software has just been announced by Microsoft. Called “Image Composite Editor” or ICE for short. Note this does stand for image composite editor not “Immigration and Customs Enforcement” so people like me can breathe easier! It is an advanced panoramic image stitcher. The application takes a set of overlapping photographs of a scene shot from a single camera location and creates a high-resolution panorama incorporating all the source images at full resolution. The stitched panorama can be saved in a wide variety of formats including JPEG and TIFF. I tried it out on my benchmark panorama testing pictures of the theater complex in downtown Walnut Creek. It performed very well, producing an excellent blend without the sky “banding” a problem with many panorama projects. Based on this one sample I would rate this software as excellent and it comes with the magic price tag of **FREE!** I will try some other projects and report on them but in the meantime why don't some of you try this out and send the results to me for inclusion in future newsletters or showing at a meeting.

Pictures Used:



Result



For more details and to download go to: <http://research.microsoft.com/ivm/ice.html>

Use photos to explore in 3D

A new Microsoft technology has been released for photographers called Photosynth. It's a new way to think about and present photography. Making a synth starts by taking tons of photos, up to 300. They must be of a single area, from many angles and overlapping. Think of taking hundreds of photos of just your living room.

Then all the photos are uploaded to Photosynth. It will recreate an accurate 3D environment from those photos. Then it will weave all the photos together in the correct position. Through the photos, you can see the environment from any angle.

It's an amazing, immersive use of photography. You really have to see it to understand it. You can check out other people's synths on the Photosynth Web site. There are some very cool ones from National Geographic and NASA.

You will need to download a small plug in to view the galleries and if you are inclined you can upload your images and have them converted (for free) into a three dimensional montage.

Go to: <http://photosynth.net/default.aspx>

Free Fonts

If you are like me you are always on the lookout for new fonts. There is a site where they have numerous free (the magic word) fonts and a whimsical naming schedule. A lot of them are named after television shows (who wouldn't want the "Wheel of Fortune" font), musical groups and movie titles. There are over 300 and to download go to;

<http://www.typhenow.net/themed.htm>

Window Shopping

I know this doesn't have a lot to do with Elements but it is very interesting. I like Amazon for shopping, they seem to have got the art of internet shopping down to a fine art but amazingly they keep on improving. I personally am a very good customer and right now they are testing a new concept called "window shopping".

Give it a try it at <http://windowshop.com/>

It is still in beta but it is very cool.

Picture2Icon

Peggy Johnson found this useful little program for converting your images into Windows icons suitable for file folders etc. Go to <http://www.picture2icon.com/> for the free download.

Free Shipping on Amazon

This is another “what’s this got to do with Elements?” item but nevertheless very useful. If you are an Amazon shopper you probably know to obtain free shipping you need to spend a minimum of \$25. I frequently find a book or another small electronic item cheaper than local stores, especially when there is no sales tax but when you add \$5 or more S&H your savings can be negated. Some smart guy has come up with a web site that will find another item to add to your order to reach the magic \$25. You simply put in the dollar amount you need to spend, select the departments to search (electronics, books, sports etc) and the site will immediately bring up a list of products. It is pretty impressive and a great excuse to shop! Go to www.filleritem.com

Christmas 2008

Well Christmas will be upon us very shortly, 2008 has certainly flown by.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peggy Johnson for graciously allowing us to invade her house every month; I for one really appreciate her hospitality.

With no December meeting it will be 2009 before we meet again so for all our members (and anyone else reading this) I would like to wish all of you a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. May you all have a wonderful holiday season.

