

Chapter 2

A Tour of Photoshop Elements 8

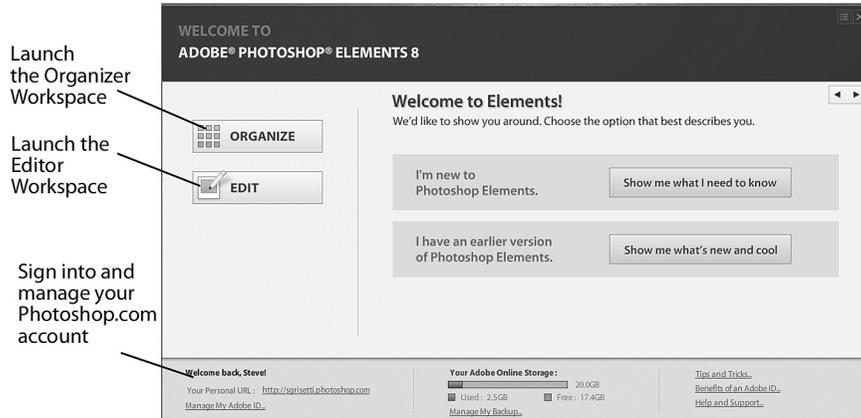
What's what and what it does

Welcome to Photoshop Elements – a terrific, affordable photo retouching application and graphics editor that just seems to get better and more feature-packed with every generation!

This is a program that seems to offer more wonderful surprises the deeper you dig into it. It provides not only the obvious tools for cleaning, stylizing and creating images, but also lots of not-so-obvious tools for managing your image files, outputting a variety of print projects and even sharing your work online.

In this chapter, we'll look at the various workspaces in Photoshop Elements 8 – and then we'll dig deeper, looking at the dozens of cool tools Adobe has added to make the program even more fun to use.

The Photoshop Elements 8 Welcome Screen



Launch the Organizer Workspace

Launch the Editor Workspace

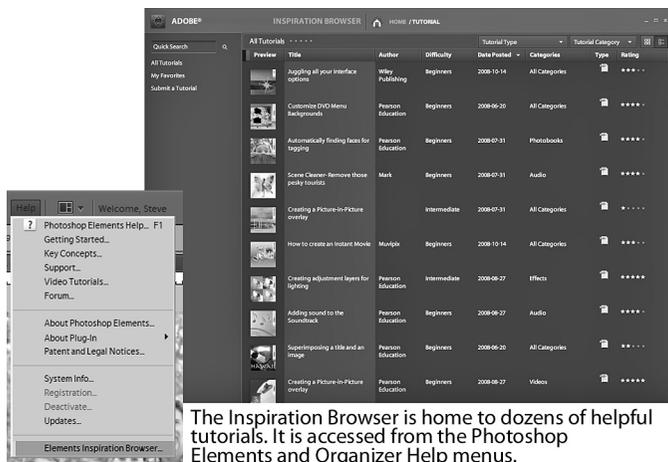
Sign into and manage your Photoshop.com account

The Welcome Screen

The **Welcome Screen** is the option panel that greets you whenever you launch the program.

From this screen, you have access to the Organizer or Edit workspace as well as a link-up to **Photoshop.com**, Adobe's new online support service for Photoshop and Premiere Elements.

If you haven't got an account with **Photoshop.com**, it's well worth signing up. It costs nothing, and creating an account gets you access to a gallery where you can share your photos and enjoy the pictures posted by others, as well as free online storage space.



The Inspiration Browser is home to dozens of helpful tutorials. It is accessed from the Photoshop Elements and Organizer Help menus.

The site also includes the **Inspiration Browser**, a library of tutorials and tips created by Adobe and a number of other content providers (including Muvipix.com).

You can access the **Inspiration Browser** from the link under the **Help** buttons on both the Photoshop Elements Editor and Organizer workspaces. If you're relatively new to Photoshop Elements or Premiere Elements or if you just want to improve your skills, these tutorials are well worth checking out.

Additionally, your basic **Photoshop.com** membership includes 2 gigabytes of online storage space, which you can use to automatically back up your computer's media files.

With a Plus membership, you have the option of purchasing 20, 40 or 100 gigabytes of backup space. A Plus membership also gets you access to additional content for both Photoshop Elements and Premiere Elements as well as even more tutorials.

Once you've created an account with **Photoshop.com**, you can log into your account by clicking on the link along the bottom of the **Welcome Screen** (or on the similar **Welcome Screen** in Premiere Elements). And, once you've done this, you will automatically be linked to Photoshop.com whenever you launch either program or the Organizer, allowing Photoshop Elements, Premiere Elements and the Organizer to interact seamlessly with the site as you work.

We discuss **Photoshop.com** in more detail in **Chapter 32**.



By the way, you can re-launch this **Welcome Screen** from any of the Photoshop Elements workspaces at any point by clicking on the little house icon in the upper right of the **Editor** and **Organizer** interfaces.

Launch a Photoshop Elements workspace

There are two major workspaces in Photoshop Elements 8, and you can get to either one from the **Welcome Screen**.

- **The Editor workspace** is where you'll likely do most of your photo and image file editing.
- **The Organizer** is a media file management program, although it also includes tools for cleaning up photos, creating photo projects and sharing your photo and video projects.

Unlike previous versions of the program, the Organizer is no longer a sub-program of Photoshop Elements but its own separate file management program, with tools and functions shared by both Photoshop Elements and Premiere Elements 8.

We discuss the Organizer workspace in depth in **Chapter 31, The Organizer**.



The Editor workspace

The Editor workspace in Photoshop Elements 8 is actually several photo editing workspaces, each with its own set of tools and features.

- The main workspace, which dominates the screen, is the **Full Edit** workspace, which includes a comprehensive photo editing and graphics creation **Toolbox**. This is likely where you'll do most of your editing.
- If you click on the down arrow to the right of the orange **Full Edit** tab at the top of the **Palette Bin**, you'll see that the program also offers tools for **Quick** and **Guided Edits**. We discuss these workspaces in more details in **Chapter 3, Quick Fixes and Guided Edits**.
- Additionally, the Editor workspace includes a great number of tools under the **Create** and **Share** tabs for doing quick fixes and automatic adjustments as well as options for creating photo pieces and outputting to a variety of media and devices. We discuss the tools in these workspaces and how to use them in **Chapter 14, Create Fun Photo Pieces** and **Chapter 15, Share Your Photos in Cool Ways**.

The Full Edit Workspace

The **Full Edit** workspace is modeled after the interface in the professional version of Photoshop CS4. Like the current version of Photoshop, Photoshop Elements 8 has a cleaner, more modern look without any drastic changes to the basic interface. The biggest change to the interface is how it displays your open photo and image files in the **Full Edit** workspace.

In earlier versions of the software, any image files you opened would appear as "floating" windows, not filling the entire workspace panel. If you had several image files open at once, these windows would appear piled on top of each other, with the photo you were currently editing on the top of the pile.

In Photoshop Elements 8, you can have the option of displaying all of your open photo and image files as a single tabbed set, each photo filling the Editor workspace panel, as illustrated below. To switch between photo files, you click on the tabs along the top of the panel.

The option to display your files like this, as well as a number of other arrangements, is found under the new **Arrange** menu.



When Arrange is set to Consolidate All, all of your open photo files fill the Editor workspace panel in a stack. To switch between open photo files, click on tabs along the top of the panel.

In more traditional Float All Windows mode, your open photo files are displayed all at once as floating panels.



Arrange

The **Arrange** menu button appears either to the right of the menu bar or directly to the right of the blue “pse” logo (depending on whether or not you have the program window maximized).

As many veteran Photoshop users know, there is an advantage to displaying your photos as floating windows rather than a tabbed set. When your files are displayed as floating windows, you can copy images, portions of images and even entire layers from one image file to another simply by dragging these elements from one open file to another. (This function comes in handy when you’re creating or modifying Premiere Elements DVD and BluRay menu templates, as we discuss in **Chapter 33, Use Photoshop Elements and Premiere Elements Together.**)

There are two ways to switch between displaying your photos as a docked, tabbed set and displaying them as floating windows:

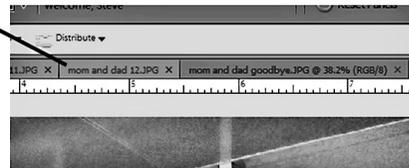
- **Set the Arrange menu to Float All Windows.** When you set the **Arrange** drop-down menu to **Float All Windows**, all of your photo files will display as more traditional floating windows.



By dragging the tab, you can undock the photo from the set and make it a floating window.



By default, in Consolidate All mode, all open photos display maximized in the work panel. You can switch between your photos by clicking on the tabs along the top of the panel.

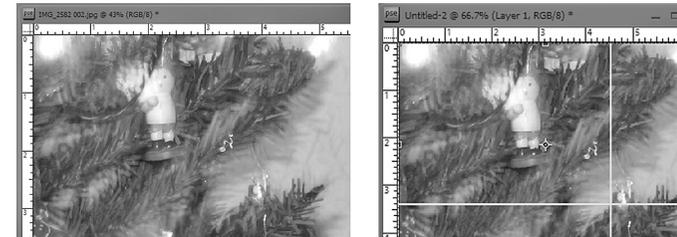


To re-dock a floating window back into a tab set, drag it over the tab set by its docking header (the top of the frame) until it becomes semi-transparent over the other photos. When you release your mouse button, the photo will redock with the set.

- **Undock a photo from the tabbed set by dragging on its tab.** When you pull the photo file by its tab from the others in a tabbed set, it becomes a floating window.

The one disadvantage to creating a floating window this way is that floating windows *always float over your tabbed photo files*. This means that, in order to get to the other photos in your docked set, you will have to either minimize your floating window or move it out of the way!

To dock or re-dock a photo into a tabbed set, simply drag the floating window by its docking header (the top of the window) onto another open photo or tabbed set. When the photo file becomes semi-transparent (as illustrated on the previous page) release your mouse button and the photo will dock to the set.



A great, new feature (and one borrowed from the full version of Photoshop) is the ability to create guides for placing text and other elements. To create a guide line, drag from one of the rulers onto the photo file.

Guides

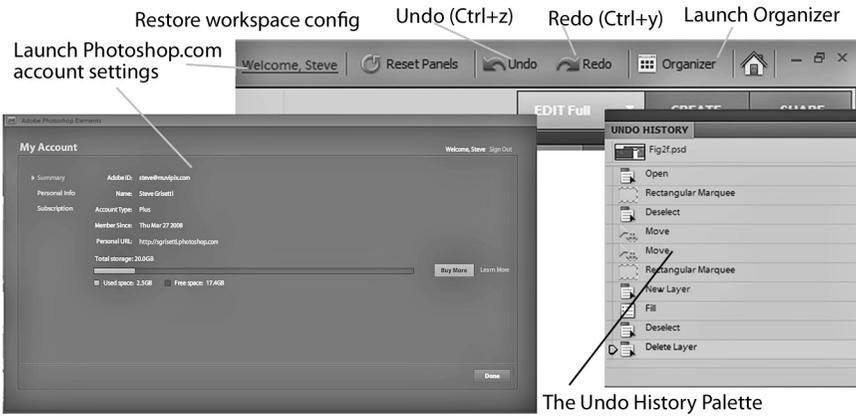
A welcome, new feature that version 8 borrows from its big brother, Photoshop CS4, is the ability to display **Guides** over your image files. These horizontal and vertical lines don’t show up on your final piece, of course. But they can be a great help for placing elements and text and ensuring that they are properly lined up.

To create a **Guide**, click and drag across the Rulers running along the tops and sides of your image files. (If you don’t see your Rulers, you can select the option to display them from **View** drop-down on the Menu Bar.)

To toggle between displaying and hiding these guides on your image files press **Ctrl+;** on your keyboard.

The Menu Bar

Along the top of the interface is the **Menu Bar**, which gives you access to both basic program functions (**Save**, **Edit**, **Paste**, etc.) and advanced image manipulation and selection functions – all of which we discuss in greater detail in subsequent chapters.



The Undo History Palette

To the top right of this Menu Bar you'll find a number of other buttons, as illustrated above:

- **The Photoshop.com link.** If you've signed up for and logged in to **Photoshop.com**, you'll find a quick link here to your online account. (This will be displayed as the words "Welcome" and your name.) Clicking this button (you'll be prompted for your password) brings up your account profile and information on your online storage space. In **Chapter 32, Photoshop.com**, we'll show you how to set up your account to automatically back up your media files online.
- **Undo/Redo and Undo History.** To the right of this quick link, you'll find the **Undo** and **Redo** buttons. Photoshop Elements, like Premiere Elements, includes a virtually unlimited number of **Undos**. (By default, the program will save 50 undos, although you can optionally set your **Preferences** to save as many as 1,000.) By clicking this button (or pressing **Ctrl+z** on your keyboard) you can undo anything you've done, one step at a time, all the way back to the point at which you opened your image file. To step forward again and redo your undo, click the **Redo** button (or press **Ctrl+y** on your keyboard). (You can change it to the more traditional **Ctrl+Shift+z** in the program's **Preferences**, by the way.)

For quick access to any **Undo** point in your work, go to the **Window** drop-down on the Menu Bar and open the **Undo History** palette. This palette lists every action you've taken on your image file since opening it, and when you click to select any point listed, your image file will instantly revert to that point in your work.

- **The Organizer launch button.** Finally, in the upper right of the Editor workspace is a quick-launch button that opens the Photoshop Elements **Organizer**.

The Toolbox

Along the left side of this workspace is the program's **Toolbox**. The tools in this panel serve a number of functions, from selecting areas in your image file to creating graphics and text to patching and cloning areas of your images. As each tool is selected, that tool's individual settings are displayed in the **Options Bar** that runs along the top of the editing workspace.

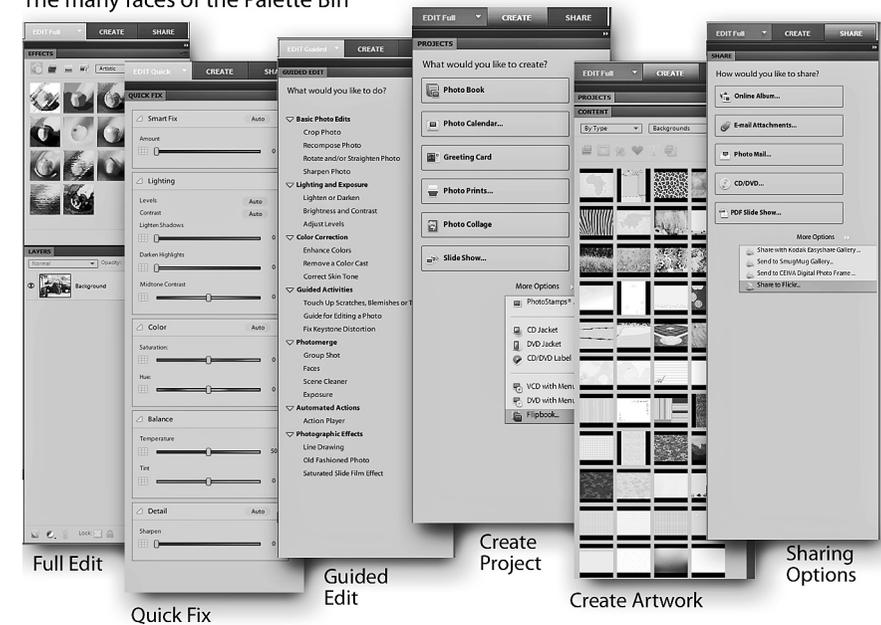
We'll spend considerable time getting to know these powerful tools and how to use their settings and options in **Chapter 4, The Photoshop Elements Toolbox**.

The Palette Bin

To the right of the editing workspace is the **Palette Bin**, which includes a number of tools and palettes which vary, depending on whether you've selected the **Full Edit**, **Quick Fix**, **Guided Edit**, **Create** or **Share** tab, as illustrated below. (You'll see similar tabs both in the Organizer and in Premiere Elements.)



The many faces of the Palette Bin



Full Edit

Quick Fix

Guided Edit

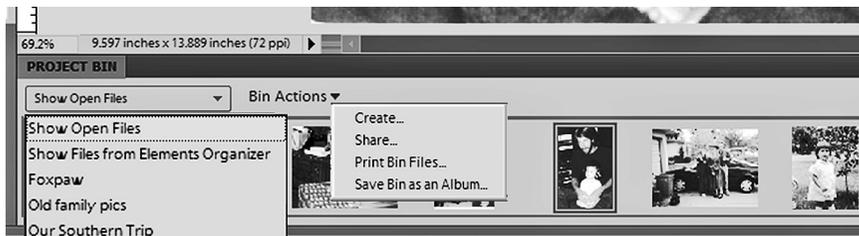
Create Project

Create Artwork

Sharing Options

In **Full Edit** mode, this bin includes, by default, the **Layers** and the **Effects** palettes. However, if you click on the **Window** drop-down in the menu bar at the top of the interface, you'll find options to open (or close) nearly a dozen palettes, all of which can either “float” over the interface or can be dragged into and “docked” in the **Palette Bin**.

We discuss in detail how to use the various tools under each of these tabs in **Chapter 3, Quick Fixes and Guided Edits**, **Chapter 14, Create Fun Photo Pieces** and **Chapter 15, Share Your Photos in Cool Ways**.



Show and Actions options in the Project Bin

The Project Bin

Running along the bottom of the Editor workspace is a small but powerful panel known as the **Project Bin**.

By default, all photos and image files you have open in your Editor workspace will appear as thumbnails in this bin.

To bring an open file to the front in your **Full Edit** workspace, double-click on its thumbnail in the **Project Bin**.

However, although this is the default and most common way to use the **Project Bin**, it is certainly not its only function. The **Project Bin** also interfaces with a number of other workspaces.

To access and change the **Project Bin**'s display options, click on the bin's drop-down menu, which reads **Show Open Files** by default, as in the illustration above.

Show Open Files. Displays, as thumbnails, all of the image files you currently have open in your **Editor** workspace.

Show Files from Organizer. If you've got the Organizer open and you have files selected in its **Photo Browser** area, selecting this option displays those files in the **Project Bin**. These photos or image files can then be launched in the Editor workspace by double-clicking on them.

Albums. If you have **Albums** created for your image files in the Organizer, these **Albums** will also be listed on this drop-down menu, and their images can be accessed as a group. To learn more about creating **Albums**, see **Chapter 31, The Organizer**.

A second drop-down menu in the **Project Bin** accesses a number of **Bin Actions**, which can be applied to the image files appearing in the bin.

Create. Launches the tools listed under the **Create** tab. We discuss how these tools work in **Chapter 14, Create Fun Photo Pieces**.

Share. Launches the tools and options listed under the **Share** tab. We discuss how these tools work in **Chapter 15, Share Your Photos in Cool Ways**.

Print Bin Files. Sends all of the images in your **Project Bin** to your printer.

Save Bin as Album. Creates an album of whatever files you currently have in your **Project Bin**. This new album will then appear in the file management system in the Organizer.

The **Project Bin** also serves as an asset pool for many **Create** and **Share** tools. When, for instance, you create a **Photo Book** or an **Online Album**, the photos that are currently open in the **Project Bin** will automatically be added to this new photo piece.

We discuss how the files in the **Project Bin** function with these tools in **Chapter 14, Create Fun Photo Pieces**, and in **Chapter 15, Share Your Photos in Cool Ways**.

The Organizer

Modeled after Adobe's Bridge program, the Organizer is a powerful file management program for cataloging, searching and organizing your media files. In addition to its file management tools, the Organizer offers a number of **Quick Fix** editing tools as well as tools for creating, sharing and editing your media in both Photoshop Elements and Premiere Elements.

Many of these same tools are also available under the **Edit**, **Create** and **Share** tabs in the **Editor** workspace.

The Organizer just gets more powerful with each generation of the software and it has become, in many ways, a great little program on its own. We spend considerable time getting to know this workspace and how to use it to tag, organize and retrieve your media files in **Chapter 31, The Organizer**.



The Organizer offers a wealth of ways to manage, catalog, search and tag your photo, video and audio files, in addition to a number of tools for correcting photos, creating projects and sharing your images with friends and family.

The Organizer is also the key workspace for setting up and managing your online **File Backup/Synchronization**, as we discuss **Chapter 32, Photoshop.com**.

What's new in version 8?

Photoshop Elements remains one of Adobe's best-designed programs. Offering, from its earliest version, a great feature set, the program is loaded with exciting tools that are useful for the veteran as well as the novice.

There are few ground-breaking new features this time around, but Adobe has added a couple of new tools that add nicely to the program's tool set.

Revised Full Edit workspace

Photoshop Elements has been given a bit of a face-lift in version 8, with a cleaner, more modern design. But the biggest change to the interface is the way your photo and image files are displayed in the Editor workspace.

In the past, when you had several photos open at once in the Editor they appeared, by default, as floating panels, stacked slightly offset on top of one another so that you could see several open photo files (or at least portions of them) at once.

The new interface includes an **Arrange** menu that offers you a number of ways to display several open photos in the Editor at once, from basic grids to over-and-under and side-by-side displays.

Your photo files can also be displayed in a "**Consolidate All**" arrangement— with one photo occupying the entire editing space and all other open files accessible by way of a set of tabs along the top of the workspace.

For a detailed discussion on how to use these new functions, see **The Full Edit Workspace**, earlier in this chapter.

The Organizer

In a major change in the program design – and one that signals Adobe's move to truly evolving Photoshop Elements and Premiere Elements as an integrated "suite" of programs – the Organizer is no longer a sub-program of Premiere Elements and Photoshop Elements. It now lives as its own, separate, pretty much independent program – behaving more than ever like its professional big brother, Adobe Bridge. This now gives both Premiere Elements and Photoshop Elements full access to the full-featured Organizer and its tools.

We discuss how it works in detail in **Chapter 31, The Organizer**.

The Auto Analyzer

The Organizer's **Auto Analyzer** is much more dynamic than the old **Smart Tag Analyzer**. Rather than simply examining your photos and image files and tagging them for basic characteristics and quality, the **Auto Analyzer** also judges the quality of your video and photos, offering to classify your images according to technical quality.

The **Auto Analyzer** (which is part of the Organizer's tool set) also plays a key role in some of Premiere Element's new functions. We discuss what it does, as well as some of its potential liabilities, in **Chapter 31, The Organizer**.

People Recognition

The Organizer also includes a **People Recognition Tool**, which allows you to identify individuals in your photos and save their names as metadata so that you can easily locate their photos.

Additionally, based on information provided by the **Auto Analyzer**, the tool will automatically identify (or attempt to identify) these same people in your other photos for easy recall.

We discuss how it works in **Chapter 31, The Organizer**.

Photomerge Exposure

The excellent **Photomerge** tool has been expanded to include a **Photomerge Exposure** feature. Like other **Photomerge** tools, it takes the best elements from two or more photos and seamlessly incorporates them into one great photo.

With **Photomerge Exposure**, photos of similar composition and differing exposures (say one photo with a dark foreground and a well-lit background and another with a well-lit foreground and a dark background) are merged to create a photo in which both the foreground and background are perfectly lit.

You'll find a discussion of this new tool as well as some of the other **Photomerge** functions in **Chapter 12, Advanced Photo Editing Tools**.

Recompose Tool

Have you ever shot a photo and, looking at it later, wished the people in it were standing closer together or that the objects in the shot were much more tightly composed? The **Recompose Tool** is designed to give you a second chance to position the elements in your pictures.

Using some automatic functions and some that you set manually, this cool, new tool allows you to take a wide shot of objects or people too far from each other and squeeze them into a narrower, tighter shot – all without distorting any key elements in the photo!

We discuss this feature in greater detail and show you how to use it in **Chapter 4, The Photoshop Elements Toolbox**.

And don't forget Premiere Elements 8!

Premiere Elements 8 has its own set of newly added features, and you'll find a discussion of each of them in **Chapter 16, Take a Tour of Premiere Elements 8**.

I hope you have fun getting to know these exciting new – as well as the great old – features in this terrific set of programs!