

BITS AND BYTES

December 2012

Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

<http://mcc.apcug.org/>

GENERAL CLUB MEETING

7:00 P.M.

Midland Community Center
2001 George St., Midland, MI

This month's date:

December 19, 2012

Holiday Party - Bring dish to pass - club provides pizza and pop.

What you missed!

At November meeting, Joe Lykowski presented holiday gift ideas.

Upcoming Activities:

January meeting: Windows 8 presented by Howard Lewis

Program Coordinators

Howard Lewis lewis3ha@chartermi.net

Bill Tower tower.w@gmail.com

Please let Howard or Bill know of topics you would like covered at future meetings.

President Piper's Ponderings

As I read a couple of year-end, Top 100 stories for 2012, I could not help but be overwhelmed by both the type and speed of new technology. Let's start with [C/NET's](#) most influential stories of 2012. One is dazzled by the wide scope of new gadgets and companies. Their #3 choice, Smartphones, are currently growing at 10X the pace of PCs when they were in their heyday. No wonder I am having trouble keeping track of these wonder gadgets. (FYI: C/NET had the Apple/Samsung court battle as #1 and Windows 8 as #2.)



Let's zoom out in our focus of 2012 science stories. Discovery Magazine's [Top 100](#) list takes a more global view. Smartphones are not even on their list, but the Mars Rover is #2 whereas C/NET had it #21 on their list. (FYI: Discovery had the Higgs Boson as #1, followed by the Rover and a microbe census of our insides as #3.) Personally, I thought the Discovery articles were more interesting to read than the C/NET articles, and their topics are likely to be around far longer than the latest gadget.

Stepping back even further to examine 2012, Time Magazine offered 40 people/happenings for consideration as their [Man of the Year](#). An online poll was available to voice your opinion. When I submitted my answers, about 800K votes had been cast. Our two friends, the Higgs Boson and the Mars Rover were candidates. We will have to wait a couple more weeks to learn of Time's decision. (FYI: The #1 poll result had 5X the votes of the next 3-4 candidates, so I think the results had been "hacked." The culprit: North Korean president Kim Jong Un! I rechecked the list on the last day of voting. The entire ranking made little sense; the lesson here is: Don't put much faith in "public" polls.)

(Continued on Page 3)

2012 MCC OFFICERS

President Larry Piper larryp56@chartermi.net
 Vice Pres. Joe Lykowski joseph@lykowski.com
 Treasurer Laura Hammel Lhammel@gmail.com
 Membership Gary Ensing btiger6@gmail.com
 Editor
 Webmaster Carol Picard webbyte@yahoo.com

Special Interest Groups:

PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Howard Lewis lewis3ha@chartermi.net
 Bill Tower tower.w@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBER

Shirley Salas

PUBLICITY

Al Adams aladams12@yahoo.com

Useful, useless and strange (in no particular order) Web Sites:

(submitted by Howard Lewis)

<http://bookmooch.com/>

For new reading, go to this website where you can be matched up with someone who wants to trade books. Your only cost is the cost of postage to mail the book.

<http://alternativeto.net/>

If you have a piece of software that is driving you crazy with some of its idiosyncrasies, this site can offer some other suggestions.

<http://booklamp.org/>

If you are a bookworm, you might consider looking at this site. The site recommends books based on the "DNA" of your favorite books.

<http://www.liquipel.com/>

Over half of cell phones die a watery death. If you have a tendency to drop your phone, this site thinks it has a solution in case you drop it in a toilet or mud puddle..

<http://stackexchange.com>

Got a question, this site has answers. This is a central repository for 91 Q&A sites. The sites range from technical to photography to around the house to religion.

<http://www.manualslib.com>

Get access to thousands of free manuals.

Board Meeting

Thursday, January 3, 2013
 7:00 PM

Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church,
 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland MI

Membership Enrollment Form

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Membership dues FAMILY (\$20) STUDENT (\$15) New Member ____ Renewal ____

Please fill out the above form and mail it along with payment of check or money order to :

MIDLAND COMPUTER CLUB
 1816 Bauss Ct
 Midland, MI 48642-4023

Attn: Membership Chairman

You may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

President Piper's Ponderings *(continued)*

I feel the Club has had another good year. We have always had interesting topics presented at our meetings, and we have an active membership and Board. As with most things in life, you get back what you contribute, so step up with your ideas, your comments and your criticisms.

(The above comments are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midland Computer Club.)

Tips, Tricks & Techniques (submitted by Howard Lewis)

Convert Administrator Files To User Files In Windows 7

When many people get a new computer, they are setup as an account with administrator privileges. This is frequently not desirable as most malware assumes that you are logged on as the Administrator. The best way to throw a roadblock in front of the malware is to actually log on as a regular user. So what do you do when you have been using an account with administrator privileges for some time and have accumulated many files with that level of security? It turns out that the answer is fairly simple.

While logged on to your account, go to go to *Control Panel* and under **User Accounts and Family Safety** click on *Add or remove user accounts*.

Under **Manage Accounts** click on *Create a new account*.

Give the new account a name (make sure the account type is **Administrator**) and click *Create Account*.

Now under **Manage Accounts**, click on the *new account* and select *Create a password*.

Give the new account a password that you can remember.

Next restart your computer.

Once the computer restarts, sign in to the newly created administrator account.

Next go to *Control Panel* and select *Add or remove user accounts* again.

This time, select your *old account*, click on *Change the account type*, change the type to *Standard user* and click on *Change Account Type*.

Now log off and log back on under your old account.

This will change your old account and all of the associated data to a Standard User so anytime a program wants to make changes to your system, Windows will prompt you for the Administrator password to confirm you really want to make the change. During the second that it takes you to respond to the prompt is the time to ask yourself if you are requesting the change or is malware trying to invade your system. If it is something you requested, type in the Administrator password, if not, press Cancel.

How To Adjust Text Sizes In Web Browsers

If you have ever gone to a website and found that the text was too small to easily read, there are two simple ways to adjust the text size in **Internet Explorer** and **Firefox**: (1) hold down the control key [*Ctrl*] and *rotate the wheel on the mouse*; (2) hold down the *control key* and press [*+*] (to enlarge) or [*-*] (to reduce) to change the size of the text.

Internet Explorer 9 has a third way: press the *gear* in the upper-right corner of the window (or press *ALT-X*) and select the *Zoom* desired.

These tips may not work on all webpages, especially if the font is fixed in the site code.

(Continued on page 4)

(Tips, Tricks & Techniques - continued from page 3)

Some Mouse Tricks

There are a number of different things that you can do using your mouse that may make your life easier in using your computer.

If you wish to select a section of text, you can always click and drag to select the section desired. But you can also click in front of the first word desired and then, holding down the **SHIFT** key, click after the last word you wish to select.

But now if you want to select several selections of text at one time you don't need to do each individually. Instead, select the first section, then press the CTRL key and select the other sections that you wish to select. These selections can then be copied and pasted wherever you wish.

Most programs have a ZOOM feature built into their View menu item or tab to zoom in or out. But you don't have to go to the top of the screen to do a ZOOM. You can do one right where you are by holding down the CTRL key and turning the wheel on your mouse.

ARTICLE INDEX

Coffee Shop Computer Etiquette - Page 4

Mark Tiongco, www.geeks.com

Free Office Suites - Page 6

Carol Picard, Midland Computer Club, Midland MI, December 2012

How to find Twitter's hidden options - Page 7

Linda Gonse, Editor/Webmaster, ORCOPUG (Orange County PCUG), California

OpenClipArt - Page 8

Cal Esneault, President, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA

Perfect Photo Suite 6 - Page 10

Reviewed by Bryan Anslow, Member, Thousand Oaks PC Club, CA

Articles in this Newsletter have been obtained from APCUG with the authors' permission for publication by APCUG member groups. The Midland Computer Club has not verified the information contained in the articles nor tested procedures or hardware/software. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midland Computer Club.

Coffee Shop Computer Etiquette

By Mark Tiongco, www.geeks.com

This Tech Tip is a list of experiences that I have found to be a hindrance but can otherwise be remedied for all you mobile tech commuters. Have you ever found yourself trying to get work done at a Starbucks/Panera Bread (or name your favorite go-to spot) but can't because some inconsiderate customer is making it difficult/impossible to get work done? Let's dive right in to what this article is all about, coffee shop etiquette!

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

This Tech Tip will help outline a general etiquette list so mobile tech commuters can share a common courtesy in this world filled with laptops, e-book readers and coffee shops!

1) Keep a power strip handy

Leave a power strip in the car or backpack as a contingency plan in case you walk into a coffee shop and see one power outlet with both plugs occupied. Offer to plug your power strip in; usually everyone is okay with it as many times there are 3-4 laptop users nearby who would like to charge their rigs. If you want to go compact, you can also find a 2-3 plug power strip and just keep it in your backpack/notebook bag/manpurse.

2) Offer your power outlet to someone who needs it

And the majority of us hardly ever allow our notebooks/tablets to completely discharge, never mind that virtually all notebooks built today average at least 3-4 hours of battery life. (plenty of time to get important work done!) The interesting thing is that computer makers have listened to repeated consumer demand of more battery life (many average 7-10 hrs. run time) but unfortunately this still happens. So if you find yourself fully charged and not planning on camping out, offer it to that fellow laptop user who might be running on battery fumes.

3) Offer part of your medium (or large) table to someone else

Yes I know this is America and it's all about space but if you were the unlucky soul to walk into a completely full coffee house, wouldn't you feel good knowing someone is willing to share his/her table? We gotta help each other out!

4) Invest in a notebook cooler or lap desk

If you arrive at a busy coffee shop and find the only option is a love seat or couch, you'll feel better knowing you won't burn your naughty bits and thus protect future generations.

5) Understand Your Notebook's Power Capabilities and Settings

Assuming the coffee shop you walk into is full of selfish and unforgiving souls (yes, I have encountered them myself!), knowing your notebook's power capabilities enables you to adapt accordingly to still get work done... For example, I know my notebook has an approximate battery life of 5 hours but when I have had to work on battery mode due to lack of available outlets, I instinctively know to dim the LCD screen and throttle down the CPU to extend battery life since I know sometimes I might be there for at least 5 hours.

6) Pick up a tablet PC

If you find that your purposes for lugging around a traditional-sized notebook are for leisurely email checking, casual web browsing and music, a tablet PC might be appropriate for you. With the explosion of tablets such as the Samsung Galaxy Tab, Motorola Xoom and even the super-duper popular Apple iPad, these slim devices can do many simple everyday computing tasks but can fit in a carrying sleeve or small messenger bag. In addition to the weight reduction, a tablet PC's perks include not requiring you to wait during start up (instant on OS!), not having to find a table and pull out/lug around a power adapter, and can last virtually the entire day on a single charge. However as a disclaimer, I am not suggesting you ditch your notebook computer in favor of a tablet PC but simply that they complement each other depending on the task that needs to be done.

7) Don't be a Squatter!

I'm sure everyone has been hearing about Starbucks' recent issues with Squatters; these are Starbucks customers who buy a cup of coffee and then occupy a table/power outlet with their laptop and basically

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

camp out for countless hours. While I do agree this is technically legal since SBUX offers free Wi-Fi for customers, they have the right to limit use such as covering up power outlets and eventually offer your seat to other paying customers. Out of courtesy and basic respect to your fellow commuters, you should budget your time, get your work done, and then relinquish your seat for the person who needs a table to get work done (just as you probably did before him/her). However, if you insist on camping out for the entire day at Starbucks, the least you can do is buy more than a cup of coffee every 2-3 hours as a sign of good faith that you're not a moocher!

Free Office Suites

by Carol Picard, Midland Computer Club, Midland MI, December 2012 issue, Bits and Bytes

Recently a television shopping channel was presenting a name brand notebook computer. A list of included software was given and did not include office software, e.g., word processing, spreadsheet. The host asked about the lack of office software and the computer company representative commented that a major office software company no longer provides free versions on new PCs. A trial version may be installed but payment is required to continue using the software. I was surprised when the computer company representative suggested viewers go to openoffice.org to get free software as I don't recall ever hearing a computer company suggesting free software. That got me thinking about free office suites that I have used or am currently using (listed alphabetically):

- Apache Open Office, Apache Software Foundation
- IBM Lotus Symphony, based on Open Office.org technology
- Kingsoft Office, software development company headquartered in Hong Kong
- Libre Office, The Document Foundation

Apache OpenOffice (<http://www.openoffice.org/>) includes word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, draw, database, and math (mathematical equations) applications. Available for Windows, Linux, and Mac. Generally, files can be shared with Libre Office and Microsoft Office. Apache OpenOffice files can also be saved in a format that is compatible with earlier versions of Microsoft Office.

IBM Lotus Symphony (<http://www-03.ibm.com/software/lotus/symphony/home.nsf/products>) includes word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation applications. Available for Windows, Linux, and Mac. Generally files can be shared with Microsoft Office, OpenOffice, and Libre Office.

Kingsoft Office (<http://www.kingsoftstore.com/kingsoft-office-freeware.html>) includes word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation applications. Available for Windows and Android. There is a free version and two paid versions - Standard and Professional. Generally files can be shared with Microsoft Office but files created in OpenOffice or Libre Office cannot be opened in Kingsoft Office.

Libre Office (<http://www.libreoffice.org/>) includes word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, draw, database, and math (mathematical equations) applications. Available for Windows, Linux, and Mac. Generally files can be shared with Apache OpenOffice and Microsoft Office. Libre Office files can also be saved in a format that is compatible with earlier versions of Microsoft Office.

Apache OpenOffice and Libre Office should not be installed at the same time on the same computer because they use the same file extensions.

While all of the above applications have a level of compatibility with Microsoft Office files, there might be some conversion issues with formatting — especially some of the more advanced formatting features.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

A free Kingsoft Office reader is available for viewing Microsoft Office and Kingsoft Office files on Android devices. IBM Lotus Symphony mobile viewer app is available for both Android and Apple devices. There are other apps available in the app stores (free and paid) for viewing and/or editing various file formats.

I've not used all of the applications in Apache OpenOffice or Libre Office and don't use advanced features for word processing or spreadsheets, but have found all the above suites to be easy to use without the need for a lot of re-learning while generally providing acceptable compatibility when working with files on multiple devices or sending files to someone else, without knowing what applications they are using.

How to find Twitter's hidden options

By Linda Gonse, Editor/Webmaster, ORCOPUG (Orange County PCUG), California
April 2012 issue, Nibbles 'n Bits, www.orcopug.org, editor (at) orcopug.org

More people are using the Twitter social networking site and finding out that they like the mini-blog that allows them 140 characters to say whatever they want to say. But, there is more to Twitter than tweeting (posting a comment).

A new Twitter user might not realize there are options that are hidden, unless a user knows how to find them hiding in plain sight.

For instance, hovering over a tweet will reveal links that might not be found anywhere else.

What's more, depending on the type of tweet the hidden options will be different. For instance, if I am just looking at my tweet on the page and not hovering the cursor over it, I only see the time or date when it was written in the upper right-hand corner.



Linda Gonse @lgonse

28 Mar

So Dad, how do you like the new iPad I bought you? Don't let the foreign language throw you off. wimp.com/dadipad/

If I hover my cursor over the tweet, however, hyperlinked options — Reply, Delete, Favorite, Open — appear on the same line as my name at the top of the tweet, but in the right corner in green text.

 Reply  Delete  Favorite • Open

I can click on Reply to the person who posted the tweet. I can Delete the tweet. This option is only available to the person whose tweet is posted. In other words, only I will see the Delete link for my tweets. And, only I can delete my tweets. I can mark it as a Favorite—it won't be cycled out of my timeline, but parked in a permanent area on my Profile page for favorite tweets when I want to reference it again. Finally, I can Open the tweet to read replies that others have had to this specific tweet.

If I hover my cursor over someone else's tweet the options are Reply, Retweet, Favorite, and Open. There's no Delete.

 Reply  Retweet  Favorite • Open

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Clicking on the Open hyperlink allows the tweet to expand when other tweets are associated with it. The expanded tweet will also reveal if other people have favorited your tweet or retweeted it.



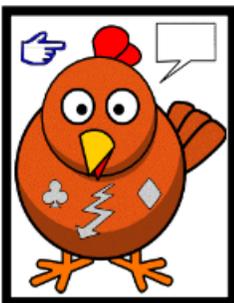
This is a recent innovation at Twitter. It is now possible to view your tweets in a thread, including replies to another person in their open threads. It is very convenient to view the conversations that are revealed, because there may be several hours, or sometimes days, between a tweet being posted and replies to it.

The Open link automatically changes to a Close link. You can collapse all the tweets again, except the original tweet, when you have finished reading them.

OpenClipArt

By Cal Esneault, President, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs, May 2012 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News
<http://cccclinixsig.pbwiki.com>, www.clickers.org, [ccnewsletter \(at\) cox.net](mailto:ccnewsletter@cox.net)

OpenClipArt is a large compilation of clip art in which images have been released to the public domain (unless specifically stated otherwise), and thus are free to use without any restrictions. Numerous collections are available for free download at OpenClipArt.org. The larger sets of images are in compressed file format (.zip, .gz, .bz2). You have to unpack the compressed files by double clicking on the downloaded package to extract images (note: Windows users may need to install the 7ZIP program to access .gz or .bz2 files).



Images are generally available in .svg vector format or common bitmap formats. *LibreOffice* programs load all file types, but MS Office programs will not load .svg files. Vector graphic files have the advantage of being editable (can add, delete, change, or move primitive components). The best way to edit them is to install the open source vector editor *Inkscape*. However, a limited web-based editor *Imagebot* is available at the [OpenClipArt](http://OpenClipArt.org) site. Here you can see a chicken cartoon to which I have added several objects using *Imagebot*. Modified images can be saved to vector or bitmap formats.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

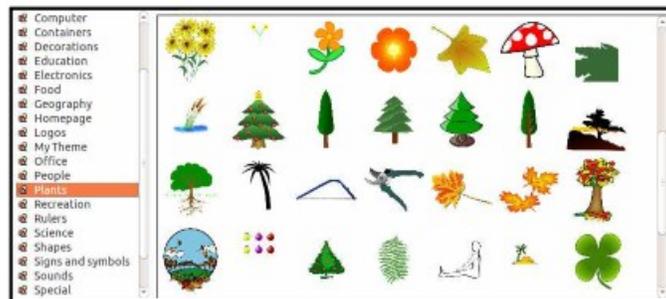
Once you have downloaded the images, you can “insert” them into the appropriate document just as you would for any picture. With *LibreOffice* (or *OpenOffice.org*), a better way is to link the images to the *Gallery*. For example, in *LibreOffice*, find the small bar directly under the main top panel that has 5 small dots.

Double-click on it to show the gallery (close *Gallery* with a subsequent double click). You can click and drag on this bar to increase the viewable area. The following illustration shows the word-processor *Writer* with the *Gallery* showing between the menus and the text editing area. *LibreOffice* comes with only a few basic images (background, bullets, ruler, etc.). To add more, click on the New Themes button, give it a new name under the General tab, and then go to the Files tab and link the folder with your images via Find Files.

In my example, “small set” is my new theme name. Once the folder is added, it appears in the drop-down list and small thumbnails appear for each image. To add an image to the document, click on it and simply drag it to the appropriate spot.



For *Linux* users, many package managers will load main *OpenClipArt* collections for you and put images into *OpenOffice.org* or *LibreOffice*. Below is a screenshot of the Gallery that was automatically prepared on my copy of *LibreOffice* on Ubuntu 11.10.



MS Office clipart is generally stated to be for personal or non-commercial use. For other purposes, you are directed to read the EULA or contact Microsoft. Since Microsoft artwork can be from third parties, permission to widely distribute may get complicated. *OpenClipArt* images have the advantage of being public domain with no restrictions (unless specifically stated). This opensource set is a valuable resource readily available for cross-platform use. Check it out at openclipart.org. New images are added weekly, and there are groups of special topic images (sports, people, seasons, etc.).

Perfect Photo Suite 6

Reviewed by Bryan Anslow, Member, Thousand Oaks PC Club, CA
www.topcc.org, spater (at) roadrunner.com

Perfect Photo Suite 6, produced by OnOne Software (www.onOneSoftware.com), is a collection of seven image enhancement utilities. Perfect Photo Suite 6 can be used as a stand-alone set of utilities, or the utilities can be invoked from within Adobe CS4 or CS5, Photoshop Elements 9 or 10, Lightroom 2 or 3 and Aperture 2.1 or 3.

Here is a quick overview of the seven utilities included;

Perfect Portrait 1 - Smart Retouching for Portraits, automates many of the retouching tasks.

Perfect Layers 2 - Layers for Photographers, fast and easy creation of layers outside of Photoshop, to blend and combine multiple images.

Perfect Effects 3 - Create Images with Impact, using a library of over 300 photographic and creative effects.

Perfect Mask 5 - Replace Backgrounds with Ease, automates many common masking tasks with incredible accuracy.

Perfect Resize 7 - Enlarge Images to Any Size using Genuine Fractals – the industry standard for image resizing.

FocalPoint 2 - Instant Bokeh for your Images, selective focus, blur, depth of field, vignette, tilt shift, etc.

PhotoFrame - 4.6 - ProLayouts, Edges & Adornments, adds perfect finishing touches to your images, also textures, backgrounds, and even complete layouts.

Requirements for installation are Windows XP, Vista or 7, or MAC OS/x 10.6 or 10.7. RAM – 4GB, 8GB recommended. Display resolution should be OPEN GL 2.0 compatible with at least 256MB dedicated RAM, resolution at least 1280x800.

My copy came as a 2.2GB download from the manufacturer's website, together with a license key. There were no surprises in the installation. It just asks for an install directory and installs itself.

I have Photoshop Elements 9 already installed. The Photo Suite installation process integrated Perfect Photo Suite 6 utilities into it automatically.

HTML Help files are available from the website. There are also PDF Files available, but these are just PDF prints of the HTML Help files and are not well formatted.

There are many "How To" videos on the Website in case you may be unsure of how to accomplish some task.

The Photo Suite utilities automatically create layers for the changes made to the image. The changes are fully compatible with CS4/5, Photoshop Elements, Lightroom and Aperture.

If the utilities are used in stand-alone mode, the resulting file is saved as a PSD or PSB file, which is also compatible with CS4/5, Elements 9/10, Lightroom and Aperture. The image can be exported as a jpg or tiff file.

There are just so many possibilities using this software that it would take several pages to review them all, so here is a small selection of their capabilities.

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Perfect Portrait 1 – When a portrait is loaded, color casts can be removed giving more natural skin tones. The skin-tune parameters can be fine-tuned manually to get just the right skin tones. When loading a portrait image into Perfect Portrait, it will automatically find skin, hair, eyes, and mouth as well as lips and teeth, allowing each to be changed independently. The masks that define these features can be refined as necessary for full flexibility. Multiple faces within an image can be enhanced independently and each is on its own layer.

Most of the changes are done using simple sliders. Blemishes can be easily removed, teeth and eyes brightened, and fine lines in the skin removed. The retouch brush can be used to remove blemishes, acne, scratches and any other marks you just want to hide. It is also good for hiding wrinkles and dark areas under the eyes, while maintaining a natural look. A set of thumbnail views appears along the bottom of the screen to show how each possible preset will look if applied. A particular set of adjustments can be saved as a preset and applied to similar portraits in the future.

Perfect Layers – When using Photo Suite in stand-alone mode, perfect layers acts as the hub for all of the utilities. Use the masking brush to paint-in or paint-out to achieve perfect masks. Use the masking “bug” tool to achieve perfect blending of multiple layers. Every time you make changes and save (click Apply), your changes appear on a separate layer. Using “view”, a set of thumbnails gives a preview of how the multiple layers will interact together. Perfect Layers also contains tools for masking, healing and blending of layers.

Perfect Effects – for your creativity - comes with a library of effects. Full or partial effects can be stored as presets to be used to make similar changes on other images. These presets are stored as layers which can be changed and saved. Multiple effects can be stacked and will be applied to the image in the order given, which can be re-ordered as required. The way the effects are blended can also be controlled.

The preview engine shows examples of the effects as thumbnails along the bottom of the screen. Any changes to the effects will re-render the thumbnails.

Perfect Mask has so many tools for masking/punching through to the layer below, that the lasso tool normally used in image masking may not be required. Perfect mask has a library of backgrounds which can be used, or you can add a layer with your own background. There are also tools to remove the halo from around an object to blend the edges between the image and the background.

Perfect Resize will use Document Size presets to crop and resize an image in one step from the camera size ratio to the paper size ratio. The tile option can be used to break up a very large print into several “tiles,” which can be printed on a smaller printer and then be assembled to form the large printed image. The Gallery Wrap option can increase the image size, with several options, to allow for the wrap-around required by Gallery Wrapped images. Using an industry-standard method, instead of Bi-Cubic, to resize the images, the image can be resized up to 1000% with no loss of clarity.

There is a built-in sharpening tool, a texture tool, and you can even add film grain to the image.

Focal Point is mostly used to apply selective focus, bokeh, and vignettes. The unique focus “bug” tool is used to control the effects. No complicated selections are required, nor having to learn to use settings and dials. Using the Focus Brush, areas of an image can be “painted” in and out of focus. You can control blur/focus to mimic that of popular lenses chosen from a library in Focal Point. A popular tilt/shift effect can also be created.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Perfect Frame has a large library of Frames and Borders which can be applied to your images. You can also create your own frames and save them for use on other images. Similarly, layouts which you create can be saved as presets. Perfect Frame also allows textures and shadows to be applied to the image. The Instant frame option allows you to quickly create your own frame with just a few clicks of the mouse.

The utilities in Perfect Photo Suite 6 are designed to make Photoshop quicker and easier to use. I think that they do. Even the simple tasks I tried seemed easier to do than navigating the vast and complex menus of options that Photoshop has available. The ability to save many layouts, etc., that you create as “presets,” is a great help too.

One of the real-world tasks I needed to do was create a frame, with a drop shadow, to apply to 20-30 images. Once I had created the frame, and added the shadow, I saved it as a preset. Then, using Perfect Frame from within Elements, I was able to use batch mode to select the images I wanted and apply the preset to them. Really slick and I still have the preset for next time.

As a Photoshop Elements user, I can certainly recommend Perfect Photo Suite 6 for either beginners in Photoshop, or more advanced users who will find it makes their lives easier.

It just makes many of the tasks not only easier to do, but also makes the final result much better. Photo Suite 6 also includes many libraries containing sample frames, backgrounds, effects, and presets which add a more creative and professional look to the images.

A major advantage of Photo Suite 6 is that changes to images are saved as Photoshop “Layers,” so that they may be reviewed, further edited or deleted in Photoshop.

The documentation downloaded from the OnOne Software website is basically the html help file printed as a PDF file. However, the vast number of how-to videos and Tutorials on the OnOneSoftware University website more than make up for this.

Users of CS4, CS5, Lightroom or Aperture will similarly find that Photo Suite 6 adds great value.

Perfect Photo Suite 6 is a product of OnOne Software Inc., 15333 SW Sequoia Parkway, Suite 150, Portland, Oregon 97224, phone (503)968-1468. Fax: (503)968-1469.

Price: the software can be found at about \$250 Street. There is also a 30-day free trial version available.

Technical support is reachable via a problem report form on the website at;

<http://www.onOneSoftware.com/support/>

Support is free to registered users and is available Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm Pacific time.

The OnOne Software “University,” containing over 100 free how-to videos, can be found at;

<http://www.onOneSoftware.com/university#!/video/welcome-to-the-onone-university>

Webinars are run several times a week; a timetable is available on the website.

Here is another review of Perfect Photo Suite from an HDR point of view: (HDR, or High Dynamic Range is an image processing technique that attempts to make pictures look more natural by taking multiple pictures at different exposure levels and intelligently stitching them together so that we get a picture that is clear in both, dark and bright areas.)

<http://thehdrimage.com/?p=1569>
