

Non-Photoshop Editing Software

Presented by Jean Davids – 10/19/11

The following software programs were demonstrated by Jean Davids: Google Picassa (including Picnik), Gimp and Seashore. Arene Myrabo briefly demonstrated Raw Therapee (www.rawtherapee.com) which is used for working with raw photos exclusively. He also gave a more in depth demonstration of ACDSee Pro 5.0 (www.acdsee.com) which he highly recommends. Both applications run on both windows and mac platforms.

The following information is provided by Jean Davids for a more in depth look at the software she reviewed.

According to consumersearch.com, the best reviewed photo-editing software fall into the following categories:

- **Best photo-editing software for most: Adobe Photoshop Elements** *Est. \$80
Expert reviews say Adobe Photoshop Elements is the best photo-editing software for enthusiasts. There's plenty of power to handle all but the most sophisticated image-editing tasks, and Elements earns kudos for being easier to use than most of its competitors. The software's versatile bag of tricks includes features such a tool for resizing parts of images, as well as photomerge, which blends overexposed and underexposed photos to create a more natural final version. Some user reviews take issue with other parts of Elements -- such as its photo organizer -- but most agree that the editor itself is excellent. Photoshop Elements is compatible with Macs and computers running Windows.
- **Free photo organizer: Google Picasa** *Est. \$0
Though Google Picasa includes some fairly powerful editing tools, the program continues to shine most brightly as a photo organizer. Features include face-recognition technology, which coupled with name tags gives Picasa the ability to automatically organize photos by the people that are in the picture. You'll also find geotagging, which automatically sorts photos by where they were taken. The web integration is a perennial plus, making it easy to synchronize edited photos with social networking sites, blogs and personal websites. Google Picasa is available for Mac and Linux computers as well as Windows.
- **Free photo-editing software: GIMP** *Est. \$0
Though it is available as a free download, GIMP provides such advanced editing tools that it's often recommended as a free alternative to costly Photoshop software. Reviews praise it as easier to use than ever, though like any advanced software, GIMP has a steep learning curve. Since it's open-source software, it's compatible with Linux as well as Windows and Mac operating systems. Multi-page review of GIMP is available at <http://arstechnica.com/open-source/reviews/2009/01/gimp-2-6-review.ars>.
- **Pro-level photo editor and image manager: Adobe Photoshop Lightroom** *Est. \$275
Reviews say that Adobe Photoshop Lightroom is fast and easy to use, and that it offers so much editing capability that many professional photographers now turn to it for most of their needs. The program combines image management with advanced and swift editing tools, automatically keeping the original image intact. Though it's especially useful for editing RAW photo files, it's equally adept

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- with JPEG images. You can use Photoshop Lightroom on both a Windows and Mac computer without buying separate versions, another plus.
- **Professional graphics software: Adobe Photoshop** *Est. \$665
Though many photographers will find other programs faster and easier for most photo editing, Adobe Photoshop is still the industry standard for graphic artists and others who need the most advanced image-manipulation tools. However, reviews say that it is overkill for most users -- not only expensive but with a steep learning curve even with the improved interface that was introduced for the current version. Still, Photoshop outclasses every other photo editor available in terms of the number of photo-editing tools available and their power. Just make sure you have a computer that's powerful as well -- including lots and lots of RAM -- so that you can take full advantage of everything Photoshop has to offer.

Picasa – by Google ** Recommended in conjunction with Picnik

<http://picasa.google.com/intl/en/mac/> (Note: do search on Google for Picasa to find for windows)

<http://picasa.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=93773>

Features

- Web albums - View full-screen slideshows, see your pictures arranged on a global map, enjoy video playback, and more.
- Focus on people – technology helps you automatically organize your photos based on the people in them, and works in Picasa and Picasa Web Albums.
- Get organized - Picasa automatically finds all the photos on your PC, wherever they are, and will organize them in seconds.
- Be Creative – Use Picasa to design and print beautiful photo collages, create fun video slideshows, add photo text or view your favorite photos on your desktop or screensaver.
- It's free to use – Picasa is free to download, and Picasa Web Albums provides 1 gigabyte of free storage -- that's enough space for 4,000 wallpaper-size photos.
- Sharing made simple – Publish your favorite photos online with one click. Create stunning online photo albums to share with friends and family, or public albums for the world to see. Get notified when your "Favorites" post new photos.
- Edit to perfection – Improve almost any picture with Picasa's one-click fixes for common problems like red-eye, color, and lighting. Or, use tuning and effects to make your best photos look even better.
- Add places – Easily add geo-tags to your photos so that you can remember exactly where they're from using Google Maps.
- Order photos & gifts or print at home - Picasa makes it easy for you to get the best out of your color printer. And Picasa Web Albums gives your friends the ability to download full-resolution pictures, so they can do the same. When ordering online, choose freely between major retail services.

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Picnik – by Google ** Recommended in conjunction with Picasa

<http://www.picnik.com/app>

Picnik is an easy to use online photo editor found on Google's website and also accessible from inside of Google Picasa. With it you can upload your own photos or use one of theirs as a free demo. Available for free are basic effects such as crop, rotate, exposure, colors, sharpen, resize and seasonal. Some of their "featured" effects seem a bit lame and right now are more Halloween style effects. You can add text in a variety of fonts. Premium options that require monthly paid subscription are: Stickers, touch-up, frames and advanced. Some of the Touch-up options are available for free such as blemish fix, red-eye removal, teeth whitening and insta-thin. Using the clone function will cost you though as will many of the others. In the advanced category are common things you might want to do such as cloning, curves, levels, dodging and burning. On high speed internet, this app seems to work fairly well but does require an internet connection.

Gimp – *(Note: Jean basically says this is a powerful app but very confusing to learn. Doesn't recommend it unless you want power but are broke.)*

<http://www.gimp.org/>

GIMP is the GNU Image Manipulation Program. It is a freely distributed piece of software for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring. It works on many operating systems, in many languages.

<http://www.gimp.org/features/>

Features of GIMP are:

- Customizable Interface - Each task requires a different environment and GIMP allows you to customize the view and behavior the way you like it. Starting from the widget theme, allowing you to change colors, widget spacings and icon sizes to custom tool sets in the toolbox. The interface is modulized into so called docks, allowing you to stack them into tabs or keep them open in their own window. Pressing the tab key will toggle them hidden. GIMP features a great fullscreen mode allowing you to not only preview your artwork but also do editing work while using the most of your screen estate.
- Photo Enhancement - Numerous digital photo imperfections can be easily compensated for using GIMP. Fix perspective distortion caused by lens tilt simply choosing the corrective mode in the transform tools. Eliminate lens' barrel distortion and vignetting with a powerful filter but a simple interface.
- Digital Retouching - GIMP is ideal for advanced photo retouching techniques. Get rid of unneeded details using the clone tool, or touch up minor details easily with the new healing tool. With the perspective clone tool, it's not difficult to clone objects with perspective in mind just as easily as with the orthogonal clone.
- Hardware Support - GIMP includes a very unique support for various input devices out of the box. Pressure and tilt sensitive tablets, but also a wide range of USB or MIDI controllers. You can bind often-used actions to device events such as rotating a USB wheel or moving a MIDI controller's slider. Change the size, angle or opacity of

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a brush while you paint, bind your favorite scripts to buttons. Speed up your workflow!

- File Formats - The file format support ranges from the common likes of JPEG (JFIF), GIF, PNG, TIFF to special use formats such as the multi-resolution and multi-color-depth Windows icon files. The architecture allows to extend GIMP's format capabilities with a plug-in. You can find some rare format support in the GIMP plugin registry. Thanks to the transparent virtual file system, it is possible to load and save files to from remote locations using protocols such as FTP, HTTP or even SMB (MS Windows shares) and SFTP/SSH. To save disk space, any format can be saved with an archive extension such as ZIP, GZ or BZ2 and GIMP will transparently compress the file without you needing to do any extra steps.
- Supported Platforms
 - GNU/Linux (i386, PPC)
 - Microsoft Windows (XP, Vista)
 - Mac OS X
 - Sun OpenSolaris
 - FreeBSD

GIMP has an online user manual, tutorials, and there are books available about GIMP as well as other featured information that can be found on <http://www.gimp.org/docs/>.

There are a number of tutorials which include the following:

- Beginner
 - GIMPLite Quickies Use GIMP for your graphics needs without learning advanced computer graphics methods.
 - Simple Floating Logo The famous "GIMP Floating Logos" rescued from the original GIMP web site and slightly modified to fit here. Even if you hate images of text on the web, this tutorial gives you some of the basic layer manipulation techniques. The knowledge can be applied to many many imaging projects and the logo *is* pretty cool ...
 - Draw On Selections Borders Use the selection tools to draw simple or complex shapes.
 - Paths (Bezier Selections) Use paths (bezier curves) like the GIMP Masters do.
 - Quickmask Use Quickmask to make a vignette of your photos.
 - Red Eye Removal Use the Channel Dialog in one method of removing red eye from photos.
 - Straight Line Tutorial 'Tis somewhat rude. Perhaps the exact right frame of mind which to approach GIMP with though, at least the first few times
- Intermediate
 - Drawing Shapes With Paths Make a dimensional box with paths (bezier curves) and gradients.
 - Anti-Aliased Threshold Use curves and modes to transform your photo into a pen and ink watercolor like image.
 - Film Grain Give your photos the appearance of film grain and learn about a new mode.

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- Changing Background Color 1 Change the background color of your image and learn the magical properties of color2alpha.
- Changing Background Color 2 Change the background color of your image and learn the magical properties of Select By Color.
- Coloring A BW Sketch Color sketches anime style.
- 3D Floating Logo Another GIMP Floating Logo method, this one uses modes along with layers and select tools.
- Tileable Textures Learn about gradients, animated brushes and how to make tileable images as well.
- Simple Animations Learn how to work with GIMP's layers as animation frames.
- Custom Brushes Make custom brushes for your GIMP.
- Expert
 - Make GIMP Image Pipes Rank and Dimension. GIMP's Image Pipes can do alot.
 - Make GIMP Image Pipes 2 Even more options for pipe creation.
 - Golden Text Make beautiful golden text and learn about the curves dialog and other color options.
 - Sketch Effect Change your photo into a normal sketch.
 - Photo To Sketch Change your photo into a nice painting or sketch.
 - Draw A Paint Brush Put it all together and work your GIMP like the masters do.
 - Creating Icons Use GIMP to create nice icons.
 - Using GAP Learn the basics about using GAP, GIMP Animation Package.
 - Advanced Animations Learn how to make an animation with GAP.
- Photo Editing
 - Color2BW Converting Color Images to B&W.
 - Selective Colorization Convert images to black and white and restore color selectively.
 - Reducing CCD Noise Learn how to reduce the CCD Noise in photos.
 - CCD Noise removal Use selective Gaussian blur to remove CCD Noise in photos.
 - Contrast Mask Decrease problem contrast in photos.
 - Sepia Toning Create a nice sepia photo from color images.
 - Gaussian Blur Overlays Increase saturation and add a "dreamy" feel to your photos.
 - GIMP Surgery "patch" blown out highlights in your photos.
 - Blending Exposures Increase dynamic range by combining different exposures of the same scene.
 - "Smart" Sharpening Sharpen images without making noise more noticeable.
- Web
 - Perlotine Get your image in place with the help of perlotine and tables.
 - Image Map Use GIMP to create a nice Image Map.
- Script Authoring
 - Working With The Image Before you script, know what an image is and isn't and what a drawable is. Or at least be able to take a good guess about it ...
 - Basic GIMP Perl Learn how to write simple perl scripts using the gimp-perl module (GNU/Linux users only).
 - GIMP-Perl Debugged Ways to debug your gimp-perl scripts.

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- GIMP Batch Mode A basic instruction about batch mode and GIMP.
- GIMP Script-Fu Write Scheme for GIMP.
- GIMP Script-Fu 2 Write More Scheme for GIMP.

A review of GIMP (<http://arstechnica.com/open-source/reviews/2009/01/gimp-2-6-review.ars>) concluded the following:

The Good

- Multi-threaded
- Pen Tablet support
- Handles large images well
- Decent RAW image conversion via UFRaw
- Multiple undos with visual history
- Accurate Heal tool
- Near-flawless PDF and vector rasterizing
- Color profile rendering and tagging
- Top-notch noise reduction filter
- Fade option for filters
- A very robust toolset overall
- Free (as in Willy)

The Bad

- Slow large brush feedback
- Lacks 16- and 32-bit per channel RGB, CMYK color support
- Web slicing needs work
- Pixel-based brushes are a pain to deal with
- Getting a plug-in installed is still a Unix-admin thing
- Masked layers don't update while being transformed
- X11 on Mac OS X
- Filter preview windows are too small
- Miscellaneous bugs and missing documentation

The Ugly

- Lack of consumer hardware calibrator drivers for Linux is standing in the way of accurate color in GIMP for Linux users.

Seashore – Mac only ** recommended

http://seashore.sourceforge.net/The_Seashore_Project/About.html

According to their website, this program is based on the technology of GIMP but aims to serve the basic imaging needs of most computer users and not to provide a replacement for professional image editing programs. It features gradients, textures, text and brush strokes. It supports multiple layers and alpha channel editing. In Jean's review she also found it had an excellent manual which would better enable learning of the program.

Photoscape

<http://www.photoscape.org/ps/main/index.php>

Photoscape is a fun and easy photo editing software that enables you to fix and enhance

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photos. It runs on Microsoft Windows only. Key Features are:

- Viewer: View photos in your folder, create a slideshow
- Editor: resizing, brightness and color adjustment, white balance, backlight correction, frames, balloons, mosaic mode, adding text, drawing pictures, cropping, filters, red eye removal, blooming, clone stamp
- Batch editor: Batch edit multiple photos
- Page: Merge multiple photos on the page frame to create one final photo
- Combine: Attach multiple photos vertically or horizontally to create one final photo
- Animated GIF: Use multiple photos to create a final animated photo
- Print: Print portrait shots, carte de visites(CDV), passport photos
- Splitter: Slice a photo into several pieces
- Screen Capture: Capture your screenshot and save it
- Color Picker: Zoom in on images, search and pick a color
- Rename: Change photo file names in batch mode
- Raw Converter: Convert RAW to JPG
- Paper Print: Print lined, graph, music and calendar paper
- Face Search: Find similar faces on the Internet

CNET (http://download.cnet.com/PhotoScape/3000-2192_4-10703122.html) reviews Photoscape as follows:

“Add another name to the roster of feature-rich freeware image editors: PhotoScape. Although it eats and leaks about as much memory as Firefox, this editor is perfect for those making the jump between JPEG and am-pro dSLR work.

It supports RAW, as well as all other major image formats from JPEG and PNG to animated GIFs. It comes with prebuilt templates for users to create photo collages, fumetti, and Web comics, and has a standard set of red-eye removal, light/shadow, and contrast-editing features. One warning about the RAW processing: although it looks like you can drag and drop, the converter doesn't change RAW to JPEG unless you load the RAW file from within the native file navigator. It's a minor bug, but one that can lead you to believe that there's no RAW support at all. You can also batch edit images, combine them, and print them out one at a time or several at once.

The program loads fast and possesses an interface completely different from those familiar with Adobe's industry-leading tools. Users are greeted by circular navigator complemented by a tabbed nav on the top of the main screen. Most but not all main features are accessible from either nav. It might take some people time to get used to the unusual layout, but it's only unusual for an image editor; otherwise it's intuitive, fast, and lacks only the most advanced of image editing features.”