

PHOTO EDITING SOFTWARE some are free and some are not

Corel PaintShop Pro x8

At one time this was the only photo editing program I used, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with it. Now, in early 2016, it is priced at under \$100 and offers a free trial. You can find lots of documentation online, as well as books, including the book for Dummies! I don't use it for the simple reason that I had to learn Photoshop Elements for my Digital Photography class, as that was what was installed on the Center's computers, and I decided to keep my photo editing to one program rather than several. So *PaintShop Pro* was phased out of my computer life. It will keep you happy in most everything you need to do with photo editing, while enjoying a reasonable price. And before *PaintShop Pro* I used Corel *PhotoPaint* which was part of a huge suite of programs included with Corel Draw, which someone gave me. Now, it is sold as a bundle and costs over \$500! You definitely won't want to fool with this program unless it is on your computer or someone gives it to you. It is a competitor to the Adobe suite of graphics programs.

Adobe "PhotoShop"

For years now, Adobe has not marketed "PhotoShop" as we used to know it, but called it CS1 through CS6. The CS stands for "Creative Suite" and bundled lots of tools for designers and graphic artists who needed to use a very sophisticated program that has been the main tool of the printing and advertising industries. You probably don't need this program! But if it is already on your computer, it will tweak your photos just as well as any of them. It was pricey, and now for the past few years, Adobe is marketing its software as Photoshop CC, standing for "Creative Cloud". This is similar to other companies that have dropped the old box version and disk installation for a download and monthly subscription price. If all you want is their version of Photoshop and Lightroom you can get them for \$9.99 per month. More software is available with other monthly plans and rates.

Adobe Photoshop Elements

Photoshop Elements is a great program! I bought Photoshop Elements when it was the hottest thing on the market, version 2, I think. I have upgraded it over the years, and I have version 11 on my computers and Adobe's website features version 14 today (in early 2016). It is priced well, and they are offering a huge discount from the usual \$99.99 price. So, it is worth getting, since you can do anything you can imagine with it. They offer a bundled version of Elements and Elements Premiere which is their movie editing program for \$149. There is a learning curve with Elements but it is quite user friendly and the results are great. You can get a trial version and the Internet abounds with tutorials and there are numerous books for sale on Amazon.

Serif PhotoPlus

Serif is a British company that has a few software applications, all of which are marvelous! For the price of the Serif applications you can't go wrong. PhotoPlus is comparable to both Photoshop Elements and Paint Shop Pro and comes in at \$99.99. They are always updating their software and offering the old versions to their customers for quite nice discounts. I don't use PhotoPlus very much, but I can recommend it highly. (If you want to make your own website try the Serif WebPlus, which is styled like Microsoft Publisher...amazing for the price and really easy to use as you do not need to know anything about HTML coding.) The Serif organization has a nice collection of software that competes with Adobe and Microsoft (check out their page layout program called PagePlus).

Gimp

This is a free photo editing program available as a download online from www.gimp.org. This is a very sophisticated program for a freebie and well worth the time it may take to get used to its features, although it is not easy to learn, it may be exactly what you are looking for, and it is Open Source which means it costs nothing, but you are asked to make a donation. This software is supposed to rival the big version of PhotoShop. Years ago, when I first downloaded GIMP it was awful! Now, after many revisions and upgrades the program is really nice, and a great answer to someone who wants to have more flexibility in photo editing for the price of nothing! Since those early days you can find tutorials on YouTube and books on Amazon to help you learn GIMP. The acronym

means “GNU Image Manipulation Program” and the GNU acronym is about the free part of the software development and distribution. Even the name of the program is complicated! But it is worth taking the time to learn it, and that will involve tedious time spent cruising around the program and finding out what those symbols mean, and how they are used. It is helpful to have lessons, and one place I highly recommend is www.lynda.com which has a lesson on GIMP which looks like it might be very helpful for starters. Lynda.com also is a place where you can find lessons in other photo editing software as well.

Irfanview

This program is freeware. It is quickly downloaded to your computer and will do a variety of photo editing jobs that are hard to find in other free programs. Get it at www.irfanview.com. It is very easy to learn and best of all you can resize your photos and send them by email from the program! You need to install the plug-ins to get all the features, but this is not a difficult chore. This program is very worthwhile for photo editing novices to learn the basics before spending money for a more sophisticated program. I used it briefly but found others more convenient, and the next one is a winner in my book!

Faststone Image Viewer

I thought I would get this software from the website www.faststone.org, just to be able to put another free photo editing program in this article. Well, I am a devoted fan of this software and find myself using it all the time, as well as its companion called Faststone Image Resizer. It won't do some sophisticated things to your photographs, but if you want simple this is it, and best of all it has a clone brush and a healing brush as well. You will pay dearly for those tools in most other programs. As I said I use it all the time, and hardly ever need to consult the help menu or go online to find out how to work something, but the icons are very small and you will probably need to download the tutorial from the website which will explain everything. It is quite user friendly after you get used to it, and for many it is all you will need...ever. I liked it so much I sent the developer money, twice!

Picasa

This is also a free program offered by Google. It is not terribly difficult to manage and will do minor edits to your pictures, brightness, red eye, resize, crop, and so on which for many of us is all we need. It will also organize your photos and offers other bells and whistles like movies and slideshows and you can post your photos online for all to see.

ACDsee

This program is new to me, and I admit that I have only looked at it briefly. It was recommended by one of my Digital Photography students, You might like to go to their website to view the different options offered and prices which seem to be in the same price range as Photoshop Elements and Serif's PhotoPlus. As with so many others, it will probably do more than you will ever need to know about or ever use.

Windows Photo Programs

You get minor photo editing with Windows photo programs. They keep changing the name of this software, as it sometimes is Windows Photo Gallery, Windows Live Essentials, or just Windows Live, and several other names and quite messed up in Windows 8. You can get photo editing software by poking around the Microsoft website and download versions for your operating system for free. Most Windows computers will default to open photos in the Windows based programs, but you can easily change this to have photos open in Faststone, or the photo editor of your choice, by going to your Control Panel and looking for “file associations”. Like many others it will organize your photos into neat piles, all based on how you have saved them in your “Pictures” folder. Windows also has a free Movie Maker that will actually do a pretty good slideshow, among other things. I confess that I have not taken the time to investigate the “apps” that come with Windows 10. I am sure there are many Windows based programs that you can get for Windows 10.

Software that came with your printer

Most printers come with software that will allow you to make minor edits. My old Hewlett Packard software (Photosmart Essential) can do small edits to photos and in some cases this is all you need. It also comes with an organizer which I find very annoying*. (See note on next page). My newer printers don't have much in the way of photo editing, so I suspect that you are better off with a free download or some other paid for program.

Software that came with your camera

It is worth the time and effort to install that disc that came with the camera. Nikon and Canon, and I am sure other companies, have a photo editing program that could be all you need for your photographs. You need to be aware that some photo editing programs will not process RAW files, but you don't need to deal in RAW if you are

a beginner and when you are ready you will know what that means. However, I suspect, although I have not checked it out, that the major photo companies who offer RAW camera shooting will also process RAW files on their free software. But I can't swear to that. It is, after all, free, and worth investigating. My Canon camera software takes up a surprising amount of space on my computer, and I never use it!

Your Phone

I admit it...I am a snob when it comes to photography and phones just don't make the grade in my opinion. However, as recently as this rewrite (early 2016), I am somewhat less snobby, and know that phone cameras have come such a long way from the early days. Nowadays, companies are adding more bells and whistles to their phones to entice people to buy them, and one place to add features is in the camera. The physical size of the phone is the limiter of the technical features of the sensor and lens, but today phones are really quite a nice alternative to the point-and-shoot cameras, and even offer some amazing editing within the camera itself. Samsung phones seem to top the list of phone manufacturers that have the best ratings, followed closely by iPhones. I have clung to my old point-and-shoot (which does not do onboard editing) in the belief that it is better than my phone, and I still believe that, but in truth I have the lowest end Galaxy that Samsung makes and the camera has not been the reason I bought it! And even so I am surprised, and fairly impressed with a quickie snapshot and computer blowup that I took as a test of my phone camera.

* **The "Organizers"** Many photo editing programs seem to be competing with which one can give you more unnecessary bells and whistles. Personally I do not need an organizer because I like to keep all my photographs in named folders in "My Pictures" and my system allows me to find what I want fairly quickly. If I know the name of a photo I can use the Windows search feature to find it. What I find annoying is that whenever you plug in your camera or memory card the organizer starts to run and it wants to upload all your photos into the program's Organizer. This may be fine, but I like to go directly to the camera or card and delete all the photos that are out of focus and under or over exposed before they ever get onto the computer. The Organizers do provide some handy ideas, especially if you have thousands of photos; you can tag your photos so they can be searched by date, subject, title, and so on. Although this is a feature I don't need, but it could become a very handy feature for some photographers but at this point in my life this looks like make-work! These programs do provide a way to turn off the automatic upload of the Organizer but it is not easy to find. In most of them you will find the selection to be in the "options" or "preferences" menu item.