

## Adobe introduces its **FREE... Photoshop Express (ONLINE)**

# But is it for yearbooks?

With much fanfare in the last week of March, Adobe introduced Adobe Photoshop Express. A free (yes, that's right, we said FREE) online version of Photoshop. And within days of the beta website being posted, I had a big bunch of e-mails asking me if it was the answer to all the yearbook photography problems. Would this mean that schools will never have to buy Photoshop or Photoshop Elements? Is this the answer we have been waiting for?

Well, the answer to those questions is yes, no and sometimes. After playing with the beta version of Adobe Photoshop Express for two or three days, I have the following observations as they relate to yearbook.

First, let me say right up front that this is VERY cool! Being able to use Photoshop from any computer in the world that can get online is fantastic. (Kind of reminds me of YearTech Online.) But is this the answer for yearbooks? Let's talk.

### The up and down slowdown

The first thing you have to do to use Adobe Photoshop Express (PE) is to upload your photos. Depending on the speed of your Internet

connection, this can be a major time waster. I shot five photos with a digital SLR and saved them as JPEGs (PE won't let you upload anything else—no TIFFs or RAW files.) They were fairly big files (all were around three to four megabytes.) With a very quick connection, it took me about six minutes to upload five photographs. That doesn't sound too bad, but remember that you will also have to download them when you are done editing them. This does go a little faster, but then if you are using YTO, you will have to upload them again. Imagine adding 15 minutes to every five photos you want to use.

### What it can do

Photoshop Express can do a bunch of quick fixes on your photos. When you upload a

photo and open it for editing, you are presented with your photo on the right and a list of possible changes you can make on the left.

These editing modes include crop, rotate, auto correction, red-eye removal, saturation, minor touch-ups, white balancing and a few more slightly more advanced modes. When you click on one of the modes that changes the entire photo (like exposure), PE gives you a set of choices to pick from above the photo. You choose the (in this case) exposure you want and click it. If you decide later you don't like it, you can click Reset All to revert to your original photo or click an Undo button to fix the last thing you did. Note that there are no keyboard shortcuts. Even Control (Command on a Mac) Z did not work to undo.

There are also six effect modes that you can choose from—pop color, hue, black and white, tint, sketch and distort. All work great once you get the hang of them, but that is all you get. And I'm not sure how much use you will get out of distort. See what I did with it here.



### Will it work for you?

Is this the answer for yearbook? No. Photoshop Express in its present state is not Photoshop, Photoshop Elements or even Google's free application, Picassa. It is a great tool for fixing one or two photos. I can easily see you or a student working at home in YTO and uploading a photo to Photoshop Express to remove the red eye or to change the white balance of a one or two photos at the most. But I truly do not believe there is a way to make Photoshop Express a part of your everyday yearbook life. It will work great in a pinch, but you need the real thing.

