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# Meet Photoshop Express

When my wife and I took a vacation to the UK several years ago, we brought a compact Canon Elph camera along with more than a dozen rolls of film. We enjoyed ourselves immensely and couldn't wait to share our photos with friends and family after we returned. A week later and a couple hundred dollars poorer, we finally had the photos in hand—the good and the (sometimes really) bad all bunched together.

Digital photography has changed all that, but the same desire to show off your photos is more powerful than ever. Photoshop Express provides a destination on the Web to not only share your photos almost instantly but to improve the ones that need help using the power of Adobe Photoshop.

## What Is It?

The boring answer to that question is: Photoshop Express is a Web site where you can upload photos, edit them, and share them with other people. But the exciting answer is: It's *Photoshop for the Web*, and it's free. Photoshop, if you're not familiar with it, is a powerful image editing program that costs \$650 and is used for everything from changing a photo's exposure to swapping people's heads in family pictures.

Photoshop Express isn't the first online photo-sharing site—not by a long shot. Services such as Flickr let you upload pictures for sharing with others, but only recently have they gained editing capabilities.

Instead, Photoshop Express offers a high degree of near-immediate gratification. If you want to quickly upload something and make a few corrections, the hassle factor is incredibly low. It's also an easy way for nontechnical friends and relatives to make their photos available.

**note**

**Photoshop Express is built in Flash, an interactive Web technology owned by Adobe that's known more for serving up animated advertisements and online games. You need Flash 9 or later, which you can download from [www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer/](http://www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer/).**

Photoshop Express is *not* a program you install on your computer. If you can operate a modern Web browser on your computer (Windows PC, Mac, or Linux), you can use Photoshop Express.

## Getting Started

Here are the steps for accessing the Photoshop Express service and creating a new account:

1. In your Web browser, type **www.photoshop.com/express/** into the Address field and press Enter.

**tip**

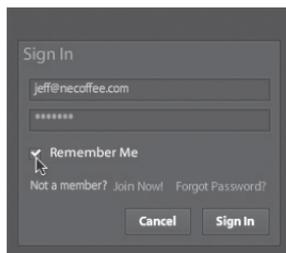
If your Web browser includes a Flash blocking utility (or you added one separately), you'll need to add the Photoshop Express Web address to the list of allowed sites to be able to use the service.

**Figure 1.1**  
Join now.



2. On the opening screen, click the Join Now button (**FIGURE 1.1**). (Or, click the Test Drive button to use the features without the capability to upload your photos or save any changes.)
3. Enter your personal information, including the name you want to appear before “photo-shop.com” in the URL of your shared site. Click Continue when you’re done.
4. Adobe sends a verification message to your email account. Go to the URL in that message to activate your account, then sign in to the service (**FIGURE 1.2**).

**Figure 1.2**  
The next time you visit, all you will have to do is sign in.

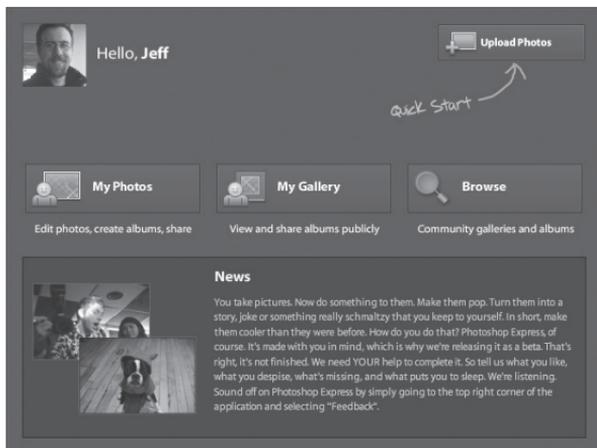


**tip**

To avoid having to sign in every time, enable the Remember Me checkbox in the Sign In dialog.

5. Once you're in, choose an action: Upload photos, go to your photo library (My Photos), view your shared galleries (My Gallery), or see what other people have made available (Browse) (**FIGURE 1.3**).

**Figure 1.3**  
The Photoshop Express gateway.



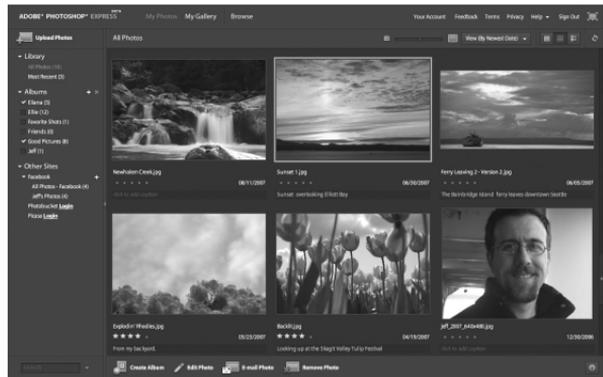
## What to Expect in the Future

Keep in mind that Photoshop Express is in a public beta stage, which means Adobe is still working on it. The version that launched is geared toward the consumer market, but the features are not carved in stone. For example, the service initially supports linking to photos you may have published in Facebook, Photobucket, and Picasa, but the gorilla of online photo-sharing—Flickr—will be added in a few weeks. Adobe also said in a briefing it plans to offer more storage above the allotted 2 GB for an extra fee and it would roll out more advanced features that would appeal to professionals over time.

## Your Photo Library

Photoshop Express is designed to be intuitive and easy to use—you'll no doubt pick it up in no time. Still, I want to run through the interface to make sure we cover all the details. If you haven't already, click the My Photos button on the opening screen to view your photo library (**FIGURE 1.4**).

**Figure 1.4**  
The My Photos view showing your library.



**Figure 1.5**  
Click an option to choose which photos appear.



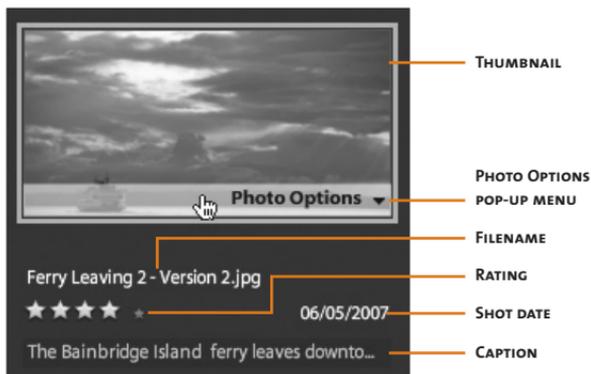
### Choose Which Photos to View

After you upload photos to your library (which I cover in Chapter 2), they appear as thumbnails in the main portion of the screen. The pane to the left provides two options for displaying photos (**FIGURE 1.5**): All Photos, which shows your entire library, and Most Recent, which displays only those images added the last time you uploaded files. The selected option is highlighted in blue.

## View a Photo's Information

In the default library view, each photo appears as a thumbnail with additional information (**FIGURE 1.6**):

**Figure 1.6**  
Anatomy of  
a photo.



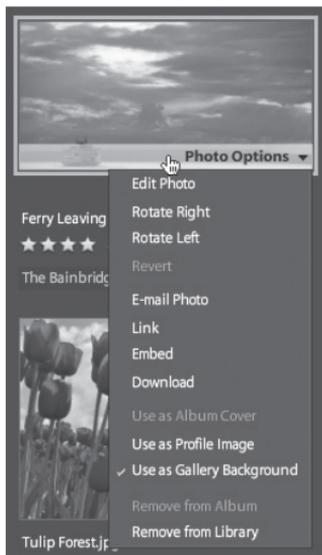
- **THUMBNAIL.** A preview of the photo.
- **FILENAME.** The name of the file you uploaded. This can't be edited, unfortunately.
- **RATING.** Click one of the stars to rate the image, making it easy to differentiate your best shots.
- **SHOT DATE.** Digital cameras include the date and time the photo was captured when writing the image information to the memory card. Photoshop Express displays that shot date.
- **CAPTION.** Click this field and type any comments you wish to appear as a caption.
- **PHOTO OPTIONS POP-UP MENU.** Hover your mouse pointer over the photo's thumbnail to reveal this bar. Clicking brings up a menu of actions to

perform on the image (**FIGURE 1.7**), which I cover throughout the book.

**tip**

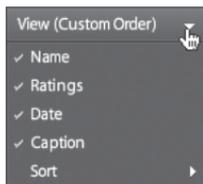
The Photo Options bar that appears at the bottom of a photo thumbnail is smart about making itself visible. If the lower portion of the image is dark, the bar appears white; if the image is light, the bar appears black.

**Figure 1.7**  
Most of the actions you take are available from this pop-up menu.



You can choose to show or hide the photo's information by marking items in the View menu (**FIGURE 1.8**):

**Figure 1.8**  
The View menu.



## Get More Details in the Properties Pane

**Figure 1.9**  
Properties pane button.



The information afforded by the thumbnail view is pretty basic. To view more data, select a photo and then click the “i” button in the lower-right corner (**FIGURE 1.9**) to display the Properties pane.

You can edit a selected photo’s caption and rating in the Properties pane, too, but mostly it’s a repository of more detailed information about the image (**FIGURE 1.10**). You’ll find the date and time it was taken as well as uploaded, and image metadata such as the F-stop (aperture), exposure, and focal length. You can’t edit any of the information, but it’s helpful to review your settings sometimes to see how they affected the outcome of the picture for future shoots.

**Figure 1.10**  
The Properties pane visible.

The screenshot shows the Adobe Photoshop Express interface. On the left, there is a grid of photo thumbnails. The selected photo is titled "Sunset 1.jpg" with a rating of five stars and a date of "06/30/2007". Below the thumbnail, the caption "Sunset overlooking Elliott Bay" is visible. On the right, the Properties pane is open, displaying detailed metadata for the selected image. The pane includes a title bar "Sunset 1.jpg", a caption "Sunset overlooking Elliott Bay", and a list of metadata fields: Taken (Sat Jun 30 2007 09:12:31 PM), Posted (Wed Mar 26 2008 01:51:28 PM), Camera (NIKON D80), and Albums (Good Pictures). Below this is an "Advanced" section with a table of technical specifications.

Tag	Value
file size	1.8MB
image size	3888 x 2600
camera make	NIKON CORPORATL
camera model	NIKON D80
shutter speed	
fstop	f/16
focal length	66.00 mm
exposure	1/30 sec
flash	No

## Display Photos in a Grid

**Figure 1.11**  
View as grid.



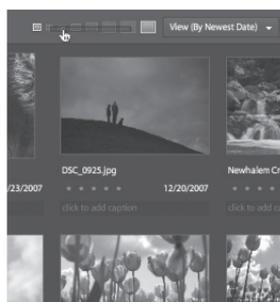
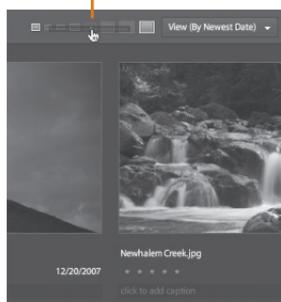
Photoshop Express offers three ways to view your photo library. The default format arranges the thumbnails in a grid pattern. Click the View as a Grid button (**FIGURE 1.11**) to switch to this view (if it's not already selected).

### *Resize image thumbnails*

To view more or fewer images in the grid view, use the Adjust Thumbnail Size slider to make the thumbnails smaller or larger. Simply click and drag the slider or click a point on the bar to jump to that size (**FIGURE 1.12**).

**Figure 1.12**  
Making thumbnails smaller.

#### ADJUST THUMBNAIL SIZE SLIDER



**tip**

Click the size indicators at each end of the slider to make the thumbnails either their smallest or largest sizes.

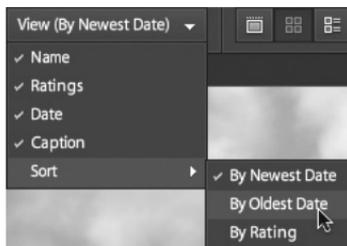
## Sort photos

Usually, photos are arranged based on the dates they were taken, with the most recent pictures appearing at the top of the library (referred to as By Newest Date). The View pop-up menu indicates the sort order in parentheses.

In the grid view, you can also sort your library in reverse chronological order (By Oldest Date) or based on rating (By Rating). Do the following:

1. Click the View pop-up menu.
2. Highlight the Sort option to display the Sort submenu (**FIGURE 1.13**).
3. Choose a sort scheme from the submenu.

**Figure 1.13**  
The Sort submenu of the View menu.



## Display Single Images

**Figure 1.14**  
View as a single image.



To focus on just one image at a time at a larger size, click the View as a single image button (**FIGURE 1.14**). Your photos appear in a strip at the top of the library, with the selected image displayed large below it (**FIGURE 1.15**).

**Figure 1.15**  
Viewing the  
library one  
image at a time.



### *Sort photos*

The View pop-up menu in the single-image view gives you the option to view By Newest Date, By Oldest Date, and By Rating. Since you're viewing a large preview of the photo, you need to activate the Properties pane to see more information such as the photo's filename, rating, and caption.

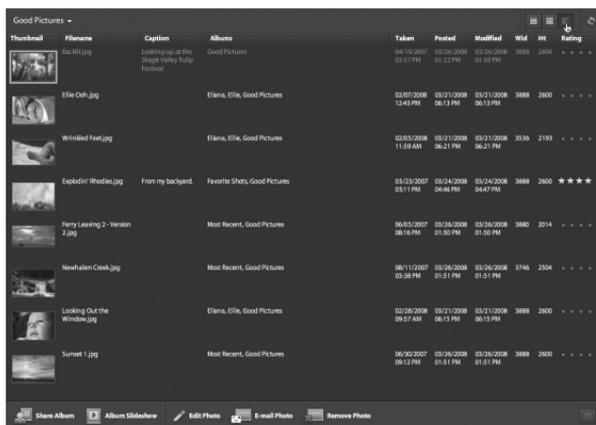
### **Display Photos as a List**

**Figure 1.16**  
View as list.



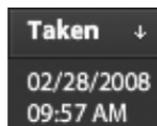
The list view is designed for those left-brained people who want to see as much data as possible in one place. Click the View as list button (**FIGURE 1.16**) to display your library as a multicolumn table that includes much of the information found in the Properties pane: Filename; Caption (which you can edit); Albums to which the image has been assigned; dates and times for when the photo was Taken, Posted, and Modified; Width; Height; and Rating (**FIGURE 1.17**).

**Figure 1.17**  
Viewing the  
library as a list.



## Sort photos

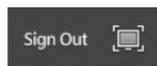
**Figure 1.18**  
List sorting.



Instead of the View pop-up menu, you sort the list view by clicking a column heading. An arrow indicates whether the items are sorted By Newest (down arrow) or By Oldest (up arrow) (**FIGURE 1.18**). Columns such as Rating, Width, and Height are sorted from greater to lesser, and vice-versa.

## Full Screen Mode

**Figure 1.19**  
Full screen  
button.



Photoshop Express usually operates within the confines of your Web browser window, but if you want to eke out every last bit of screen real estate, click the Full Screen button in the upper-right corner of the interface (**FIGURE 1.19**).

The service won't accept keyboard input in full-screen mode, except for the Esc key which kicks you back into normal windowed mode.