

Book review

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Max Pixel's Adventures in Adobe Photoshop Elements 3

I seem to have accumulated a vast number of photos recently, mostly starring a gorgeous baby called Thomas! In order to do something useful with these photos I need to learn to use Photoshop Elements, so in June I decided to take up the club's offer of a free book in exchange for writing a review. I chose Max Pixel's Adventures because it looked like it was aimed at the right level, even though the idea of being guided through my learning experience by a cartoon character didn't really appeal.

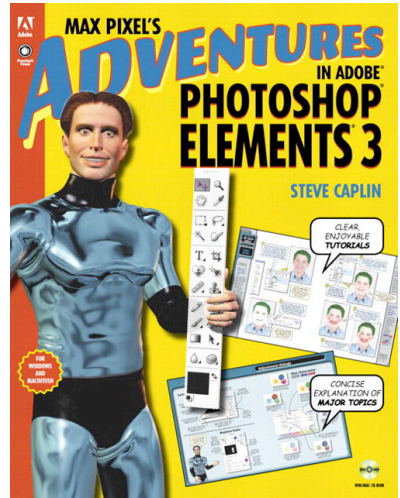
After the book arrived I always seemed to be too busy to spend much time looking at it, until the September school holidays when my 12 year old nephew Hayden came to stay. He noticed the book lying around and leapt on it with great interest. Max Pixel appealed to him immediately, and he started working his way through the book.

We worked together on several of the exercises, and both found the book a little difficult to follow for several reasons:

- The information is presented in cartoon speech bubbles, and although the bubbles are numbered they're just not as easy to read as ordinary paragraphs.
- The instructions aren't complete, ie it isn't possible to follow step-by-step through a whole process. We still got there in the end, it just involved a few head-scratching moments trying to work out which tool to use, where to find it, and how it worked.
- Occasionally the instructions seem to refer to a different version of the software, so we had to figure out alternative ways to do things.

Despite these flaws, the book demonstrates useful techniques, and for reasonably computer literate folk provides a guide of what to learn. We had fun working things out together, it was like solving a puzzle. Hayden continued working through the book after I'd run out of time, and I was impressed to see the clever tricks he learned from it.

I'd say the book is suitable for people with plenty of time who like cartoons and brain teasers and have a good general understanding of

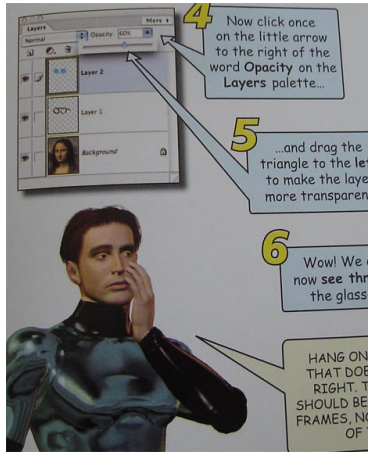


computers... ie teenagers! Personally I prefer information given to me in a more streamlined fashion, for maximum absorption in minimum time, and I don't have much patience for the hide-and-seek method this book uses.

If anyone wants to try their hand at learning Photoshop Elements 3 I'm happy to pass this book onto another club member, just email

raewyn@digitalfusion.co.nz.

The book comes with a CD that includes a trial copy of Photoshop Elements.



Max Pixel's Adventures in Adobe Photoshop Elements 3 is written by Steve Caplin, and published April 15, 2005 by Adobe Press. Thanks to Peachpit Press for providing a copy of the book for review.