

Camera club Communiqué

February 2020 U3A ACT Australia

The U3A Camera Club *Communiqué* is part of a newsletter sent to members of "The Camera Club", which is a year-long course run by the University of the Third Age in Canberra, ACT. For privacy reasons, class notices have been omitted from this public version. The U3A Camera Club can be contacted at u3acanberracameraclub@gmail.com

A Month of Composition

This recent holiday season on the on-line resource pages has seen a plethora of posts about composition. Most have been the same old



suggestions about "rules" and "lines" and so on, but one rather fresh approach came from Alphonso Sanchez on *Picture Correct*. Even though Sanchez ambiguously titled his post "A New Photographer's Guide to Composition" veteran photographers will find his "new" way of looking

at the subject enlightening. What is often overlooked is that photography is all about perception, so it is not a far call to apply the psychology of perception to photographs. Without saying so, this is much what Sanchez does in this post: check it out at

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/a-new-photographers-guide-to-composition/>

Understanding Exposure Value in Photography

Some of us get confused about the difference between *Light Value* and *Exposure Value*. In this article, Shane Messer explains the difference and the application of both to photography.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/understanding-exposure-value-in-photography/>

Comparison of Cloud Storage Options



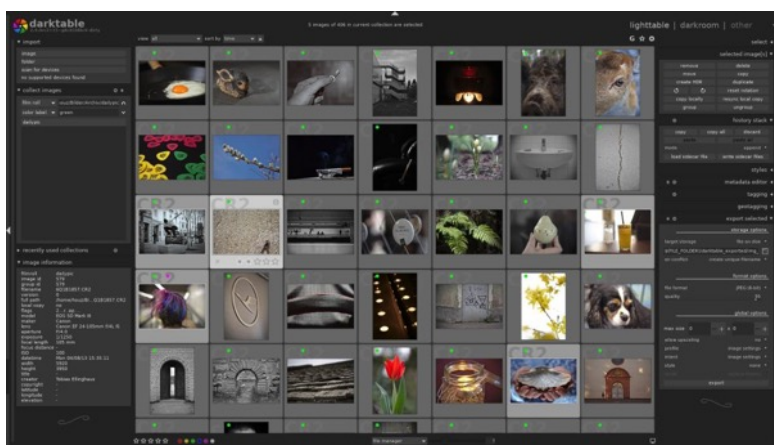
Some of us use it, others mistrust it, some can't afford it, but clearly Cloud storage is here to stay. While professional

photographers would have the greatest need for such storage — when in the field, it is convenient and saves carrying around other hard drives, memory cards and so on — for many amateurs, Cloud Storage is an expensive medium and one we cannot deduct for income tax purposes. Of course, there are free services but they generally don't allow much storage before you have to pay for a more generous allowance. And finally, storage somewhere, probably offshore, tends to leave many of us with a feeling of insecurity: it seems more comfortable to store our images on hard drives tucked away safe at home.

All that being said, in this bushfire season there is one possibility which is hard to ignore: storage in the Cloud of our more valued photos and possibly, photographs of our important papers, passports, credit cards and so on. At least, there in some less fire-prone part of the world, they would be safer and ready to recover in the event of a catastrophe.

Jamie Carter and Ben Andrews at *Digital Camera World* have done the research and prepared a comparison between free and paid options of the best Cloud storage offers.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/buying-guides/the-best-free-cloud-photo-storage-platforms-and-apps>



Alternatives to Adobe

In a round-up of the best photo-editing software for 2019, Rod Lawton from *Digital Camera World* takes a look at the popular Adobe products but also at alternatives which do the same work,

some perhaps even better than the old industry standards. There are also

programs which can work in conjunction with the Adobe products to extend the scope of our photography.

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/buying-guides/the-best-photo-editing-software>

Also, it is worth checking the best *free* photo editing software on offer:

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/buying-guides/best-free-photo-editing-software>

This article, also by Rod Lawton, details well-known programs like *Gimp* (it's been around as a freebie but reputedly has a hard and steep learning curve) but also others, such as *DarkTable*, a program which is emerging as a winner in the alternative stakes.

The Joy of the Left

Those of us who lived like troglodytes back in the Darkroom Ages B.D. (Before Digital) will remember the rule “Expose for the shadows and develop for the highlights”. Digital cameras and RAW processors have reversed the process with the dictum “Expose to the left”, that is, expose for the highlights which, of course, are shown on the left of the histogram on the camera. Using this advice and a RAW processor such as *Lightroom*, *ON1* or many others, it is often possible to reclaim up to one-and-a-half stops of over-exposure.

In an article by Pye Jirsa called *What is “Exposing to the Left” and Should You Do It? Understanding Exposure Part 2*, explains how to capitalise on this handy piece of advice. <https://www.slrlounge.com/expose-to-the-left/>

Note that this is the second part of a post for *SLRLounge* on getting correct exposure, Part 1 is available at <https://www.slrlounge.com/understanding-exposure/>

Color Noise Reduction Isn't a Free Ride

Whatever Spencer Cox writes on *Photography Life* is always worth reading and here, under this heading, he gives an excellent explanation of colour noise and how to reduce it using programs such as *Lightroom*.

However, there are several kinds of *noise* causing trouble in digital photography. One of course, and probably the best-known, is what we might call *camera noise* because it is generated within the electrical environment of the camera itself. Digital cameras are getting better at reducing this kind of noise but it is a problem not yet solved by the manufacturers. There are also varieties of noise recorded on the camera sensor which have their origins in the external environment — we live in a noisy environment, electronically speaking — and that kind of noise is probably to be with us forever.

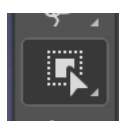
Mostly, we consider noise under two headings, *luminance noise* and *colour noise*, this latter being what this article is all about. In the article, Cox refers the reader back to two previous articles (the second by his partner at *Photography Life*, Nasim Mansurov) and it is a good idea to take his advice and consult them first before diving into the Pandora'sBox of colour noise. They can be found at:

<https://photographylife.com/what-is-noise-in-photography>

<https://photographylife.com/photo-noise-reduction-tutorial>

<https://photographylife.com/color-noise-reduction?>

Photoshop Has a New “Object Selection Tool”



If you ever want to extract one part of a photo and impose it on another — as in photomontage, for example — then the new Tool in the Tool Box of *Photoshop* is the tool to use. Called the *Object Selection Tool*, it is found in the same compartment as the *Magic Wand* and *Quick Selection Tools*. Powered by Adobe's *Sensei* artificial intelligence, it allows the photographer to draw a marquee around the object he or she wishes to extract and the Sensei (Japanese for “teacher”) fairly precisely selects it; by using the Copy command, it is then possible to transfer that part of the image to another, thus creating a photomontage. Of course, this process does often require some refining, but overall, the Object Selection Tool does a very good job, much faster than the older Quick Selection Tool and much more accurately than the Magic Wand Tool which hide in the same cupboard.

Of course, it will be present only on the most recent upgrade, but sometimes, depending on what customisation you have done to your copy of *Photoshop*, the Object Selection Tool will not appear. Adobe advises, in such circumstances, that the customisation be set back to the defaults — go to *Edit/Toolbar/Restore Defaults*.

Window Portraits

One of the nicest ways of taking a portrait of someone is to use the available light coming through a window. Seating the subject near the window offers many opportunities for different poses, but it is best to avoid a window that does not face the sun — a dull day often gives the best, softest light.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/window-portrait-photography-activity/>

Understanding Luminosity Masks in Photoshop

Madhu Manickam writes for *Photography Life* and this article discusses a very useful feature of *Photoshop*, Luminosity Masks. Of course, other programs also enable the use of luminosity masks, but this is an excellent introduction (although it might be a good idea first to read the *Photography Life Beginners' Guide to Photoshop*, by the same author, at <https://photographylife.com/photoshop-beginner-guide>



A landscape with the accompanying layer mask.

The point about a luminosity mask such as the above, is that it allows the photographer to make adjustments to some of the tones and not affect others. In this case, Manikam wanted to lighten the shadows but not blow out the highlights in the process. The mask protected the highlights while he worked on the shadows. See the full article at <https://photographylife.com/luminosity-masks-in-photoshop?>

50 Photography Terms You Need to Know

Again, Spencer Cox from *Photography Life* comes to the rescue with a glossary of important terms used by photographers. The list includes everything from “Aperture” to “Zoom Lens”. It would be worth copying this article and keeping it handy for the next time you come across a term you don’t understand — or of course, if you wish to impress by dropping the occasional technical term into a conversation....

<https://photographylife.com/photography-terms>

Take Better Night Sky Photos with Image Stacking

Spencer Cox (always a *Communiqué* favourite) writes: *The night sky is one of the most alluring subjects for landscape photographers. It’s also one of the most frustrating. If you’ve ever tried to do astrophotography, you’ve probably*



run into all sorts of issues: blurred stars, high ISO noise, and shallow depth of field....What can you do about it? One answer is often overlooked, but surprisingly helpful and easy to put into practice: stacking images.

<https://photographylife.com/night-sky-image-stacking?>

Nature Photos on Cloudy Days



We still tend to believe that a good photo requires bright sun. Surely, that is a hang-over from early film days when film speeds were slow and photographers were advised to take their photos with their back to the sun! Despite the old, and now bad advice, good photos are often taken in low light and in nature photography, often a

cloudy day offers the best kind of light. Pets, portraits, landscapes can all benefit from a hazy to dull day. Even rainy days have their advantages in that colours tend to be more saturated.

The author of this post on *Picture Correct*, Andrew Goodall, lives in South-East Queensland where he runs a gallery and specialises in landscape photography. It can only be hoped that the landscapes around him have not been devastated by recent bushfires....

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/nature-photography-tips-for-cloudy-day-photos/>

Bob Hay - Presenter