Chapter 1: Creating Elements Projects

In This Chapter

- ✒ **Understanding creations**
- ✒ **Creating photo books, greeting cards, and photo calendars**
- ✒ **Creating photo collages and slide shows**
- ✒ **Ordering prints**
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Adobe Photoshop Elements offers a number of creations that you can share onscreen or in print. From both the Create and Share panels in the Task Pane in the Organizer and from within the Photo Editor Panel Bin (for Create only), you have menu choices for producing creations and sharing your media.

In Chapter 3 of this minibook, we look at sharing files for screen and web viewing. In this chapter, we talk about creations designed for print and sharing.

Getting a Handle on Creations

In Chapter 3 of this minibook, we talk about online albums, attaching files to e-mails, using photo mail, and using online sharing services. All these creations offer different output options, such as e-mailing, burning files to a disc (Windows), creating HTML or PDF documents, as well as printing. You create them all using the Share panel.

You create the remaining creations — photo prints, photo books, photo collages, photo calendars, greeting cards, and print labels — via the Create panel. All these creations are designed for output to your printer or for sending files to an online printing service or to friends and family.

When you observe the Create panel in Windows and on the Macintosh, you see only one item not supported on the Macintosh, as shown in Figure 1-1.

REMEMBER

When you make a creation that will ultimately be sent to an online service or shared with other users, keep in mind that you first must select the photos you want in your creation. For example, before you create a photo book by clicking the Photo Book button in the Create panel, you need to select photos for your book. If you happen to click the Photo Book button and nothing happens, more than likely, you haven't selected any photos.

You can select photos in either the Organizer or the Photo Bin in the Photo Editor. Note that the Instant Movie and DVD with Menu options appear only if you have installed Premiere Elements.

After selecting photos, click the Create button. Elements then opens a drop-down menu where options are listed for the type of creation you want to make. The options for Photo Book, Greeting Card, Photo Calendar, and Photo Collage all use the same wizard when you click one of the respective buttons in the Create panel. The remaining options, Photo Prints and Slide Show, use different wizards where options are selected.

Windows   Mac

No Slide Show options

Figure 1-1: The only difference between platforms with the Create options is that the Macintosh has no support for creating slide shows.

Elements offers you some consistency when creating photo books, greeting cards, photo calendars, and photo collages. If you know how to set attributes for one of these creations, you can easily work with any of the other creation types.

After you make a creation, you can save it as a project that can also be added to the Organizer window. Photoshop Elements projects are saved as Photo Project Format with a `.pse` extension. If you want to return to a project and make more edits, you can open the `.pse` file and edit your project. You can add `.pse` files to the Organizer and view them in the Media Browser so that they're easily accessible if you choose to open a project and perform more edits.

Creating a Photo Book

You can design the creations you make for printing locally to your desktop printer or for uploading to a professional print service. The professional services offer you choices for covers, assembly, paper stocks, and so on, as well as opportunities to distribute the printed material to friends and family.

Photo books follow a sequence of steps that are the same for other creations you make in Elements. To describe completely the process for making a creation, we start by showing you how to create a photo book.

Follow these steps to create a photo book (the same steps are used for creating greeting cards, photo calendars, and photo collages):

1. **Select files in the Organizer and click the Create tab. Or, open several photos in the Photo Editor, select the open files in the Photo Bin, and click the Create tab.**

   You begin working with creations following the same procedure. You first select files in the Organizer or photos in the Photo Bin in the Photo Editor and then click the Create tab in the Organizer Task Pane or Photo Editor Panel Bin. Ideally, you might start with an album containing the photos you want to use for your photo book. (See Book II, Chapter 3, for more on creating albums.) You can then just click the album to display the album photos in the Organizer window and easily select all the photos or select an album directly in the Photo Bin in the Photo Editor.

   To select all photos shown in the Organizer's Media Browser or the Photo Editor Photo Bin, press Ctrl+A (⌘+A on the Mac).

2. **Open the Create drop-down menu and choose Photo Book.**

   Whether you're working in the Organizer or the Photo Editor, the Photo Book option is available in the same Create drop-down menu in the Panel Bin. When you click the Photo Book menu item, a wizard opens, and you can make choices for the output and the design of your creation. The same wizard opens for other creations, such as greeting cards, photo calendars, and photo collages.

3. **Choose an option for outputting your creation.**

   In the left pane shown in Figure 1-2, you make a choice for either printing your creation or using the Shutterfly online service. For both Print Locally and Shutterfly, you have options for choosing the size of your output.

4. **Select a theme.**

   In the middle column, choose a theme for the photo book design. When you click a theme, the preview pane on the right side of the window displays a preview of the selected theme. Elements uses an Adobe Flash interface where you see photo book pages automatically scroll using the selected theme.
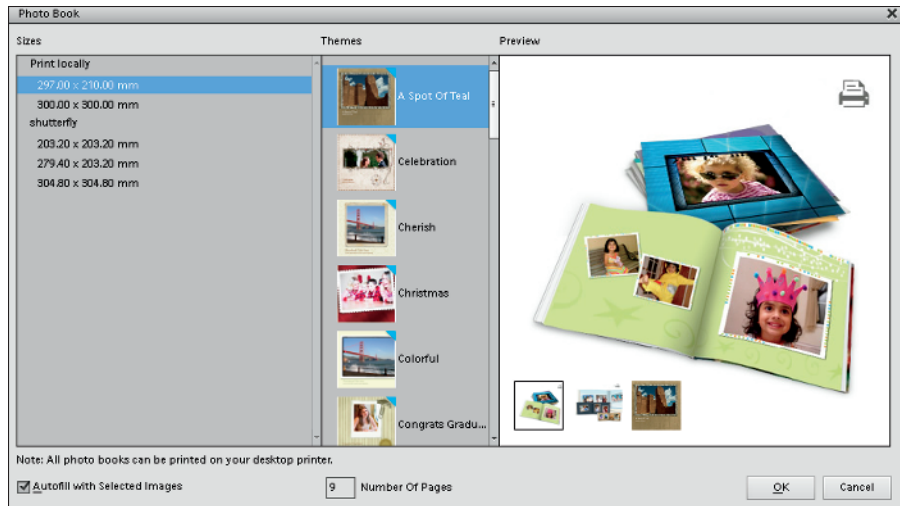
Figure 1-2: Select photos and click the Photo Book option to open the Photo Book wizard.

At this point, click different themes and observe the Preview pane for a dynamic display of the respective theme. Take a little time to look over all the wonderful options you have for a photo book design.

The first time you use a Theme or other asset in the Graphics panel, Elements downloads the Asset to your computer. The assets are stored on Adobe's website. You must wait until the download finishes before you can continue.

5. **Type the number of pages in the Number of Pages text box.**

By default, Elements adds a title page and two additional pages no matter how many photos you select for your album. Count the total photos you intend to use and type the number of photos in the text box. You can add or delete pages when you're in the the Creation wizard.

6. **Click OK and then examine the pages.**

When you click OK, the Create panel changes and displays three buttons at the bottom of the panel. As shown in Figure 1-3, the buttons open panes for Pages, Layouts, and Graphics. When you open each pane, you can make additional edits. By default, when creating photo albums, the pane in view is the Pages pane, shown in Figure 1-3. In the Pages pane, look over the total number of pages for your photo book. You can scroll pages by clicking the left/right arrows at the top of the Image window (see Figure 1-3) or by double-clicking pages in the Pages panel.

Switch to Advanced mode   Click the arrows or pages to preview each page
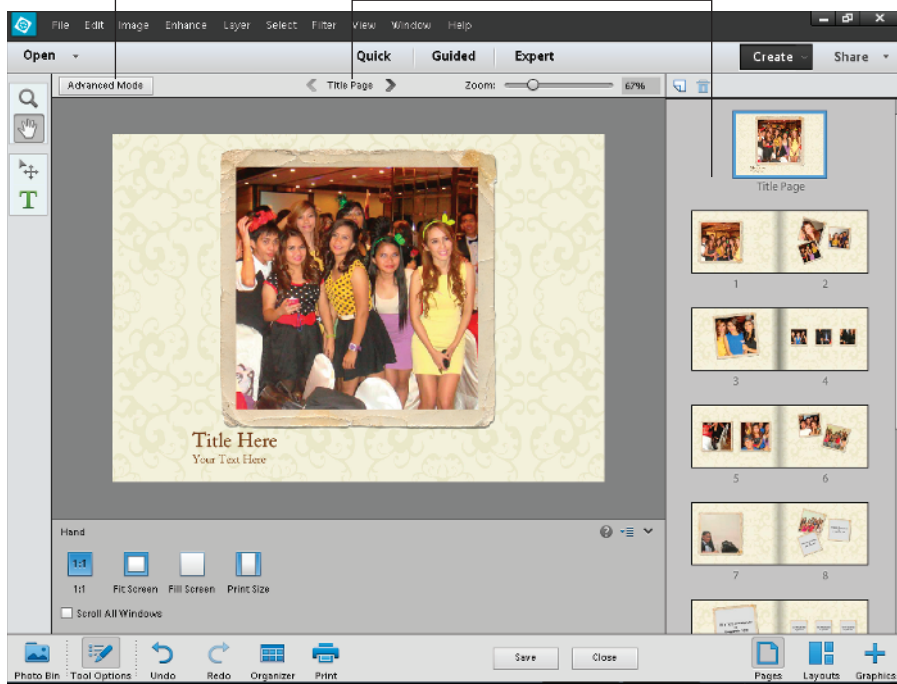
Click a button to switch panes

Figure 1-3: The Create panel has three buttons that are used for changing the Create Panel panes.

7. Click the Layouts button and choose a layout.

In the Layouts pane, you find many choices for different layouts. At the top of the panel, a display of different layouts appears, as shown in Figure 1-4. Scroll down the panel to find additional layouts for One, Two, and Three photos per page.

To change a layout, double-click the layout choice in the Create panel. When you change layouts, you need to populate the placeholders. Drag photos from the Photo Bin to a placeholder, and Elements fits the photo in the placeholder frame.

REMEMBER

When you see arrows pointing up or down in any of the panes in the Create panel, you can click them to collapse/expand items in the individual panes.

8. **Adjust a photo in a frame.**

If you change a layout or add more photos to placeholders, or even if you let Elements populate a layout, you may want to make adjustments for individual photos within placeholders.

To edit a photo within a placeholder, double-click the photo. A toolbar appears above the photo, as shown in Figure 1-5. From left to right on the toolbar, you can

- Zoom in or out of the photo by dragging the slider left and right.

- Rotate the photo by clicking the blue icon. (Each mouse click rotates the photo 90 degrees.)

- Get a new photo to place in the frame represented by the folder icon.

- Commit the current operation. You click the green check mark to accept your edits.

- Cancel the current operation. Click the last icon above the image to cancel your edits.

You can also size a photo within a frame by clicking one of the handles on the selected image and dragging in to reduce size or out to size up. Move the cursor just outside a corner handle on a selected frame, and you can rotate the image and frame together.

If you double-click a photo in a frame, you can open a context menu (right-click or Control-click a one-button mouse on a Macintosh) and choose from some transformation options that include scaling, perspective, and distorting the photo. Choose a menu command and drag a handle to perform the operation.

TIP

You can skew an image by pressing Ctrl or Option (Mac) and dragging a corner handle.

Figure 1-4: The Layouts pane offers many choices for changing the layout design.

Figure 1-5: Double-click an image to open a toolbar above the image.

9. **Click the Graphics button and use artwork.**

    Click the Graphics button, shown in Figure 1-6. In the Graphics pane, you can change the background design and frames and add graphics.

    To change the background or frames, double-click a background and/or frame in the Graphics pane. To add a graphic, click and drag the graphic to the Image window where a photo page is displayed.

10. **(Optional) Switch to Advanced mode to edit images and the layers.**

    Click the Advanced Mode button (refer to Figure 1-3) to open Advanced mode, where you find more editing options, as shown in Figure 1-7. You can edit the layers for further customization of the photos in your photo book. To do so, you need to know a lot about working with layers, layer styles, and layer effects, as we explain throughout Book VI. Also, you have access to the Expert Photo Editor Tools panel, where you can apply edits to images as well as have full access to menu commands.

11. **Click the Basic Mode button if you're in Advanced mode and look over the project.**

    Now you're ready to take the last steps to finish the project.

12. **When your project is complete, decide what you want to do with it:**

    • *Click the Print button* to open the Photo Prints pane in the Create panel.

    • *Click the Save button* if you want to save your project and return to it later for additional editing. You can also save your creation as an Adobe PDF file. You can then exchange the PDF with friends and family.
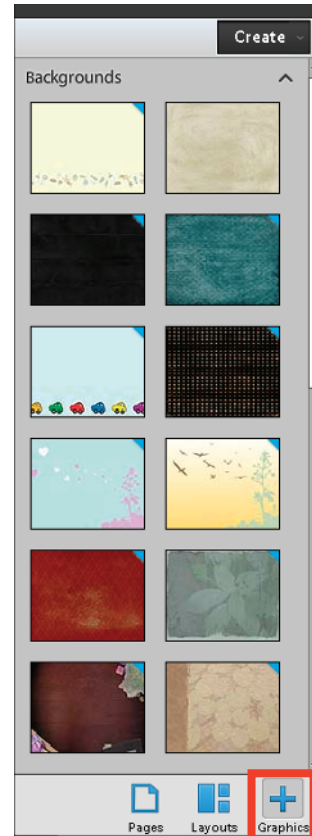

Figure 1-6: Scroll the Artwork tab to find options for Backgrounds, Frames, and Graphics.
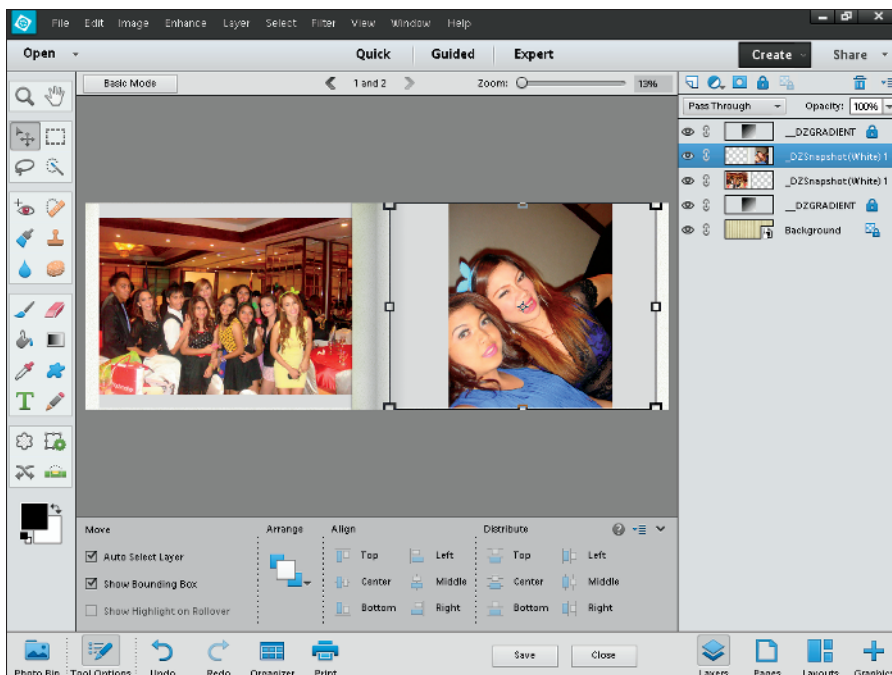
Figure 1-7: Click Advanced Mode to gain access to layers, tools, and menus for full editing operations.

In the Print dialog box, you find options for printing your creation to your local printer as a photo book, as a picture package, or as a contact sheet, as shown in Figure 1-8. For more details on these print settings and complete coverage of all options in the Print dialog box, see Chapter 2 in this minibook.

All the steps outlined in this section are the same steps that you use for making greeting cards, photo calendars, and photo collages.
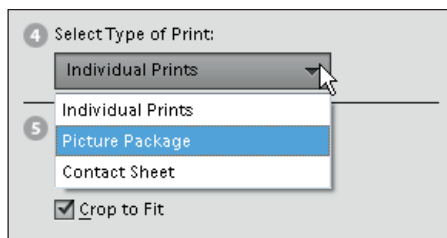
Figure 1-8: Click the Print button at the bottom of the window to open the Print dialog box.

Getting in Touch with Greeting Cards

In Photoshop Elements, creating greeting cards like the one shown in Figure 1-9 is a snap. Here's how to create a card by using the Greeting Card panel:

1. **Open the Organizer and select a photo or open a photo in the Photo Editor.**

2. **Open the Create menu in the Panel Bin and select Greeting Card.**

3. **Follow the same steps as you do when creating photo books, which we cover in the previous section.**

   First choose the output source (local printer or Shutterfly); then choose a theme and click OK. Click the Print button at the bottom of the wizard to open the Print dialog box if printing locally on your printer.

When you make creations and use the templates provided by Elements, your photos automatically are assigned a photo frame. In most cases, you'll want to eliminate the frame and use one of your own choosing. We talk about how to clear photo frames and add new frames in a web extra for creating calendars that you can find at www.dummies.com/extras/photoshopelements12.

*Top photo courtesy Leah Valle (*www.13thwitch.com*)*

Figure 1-9: Use the same steps for creating greeting cards as you do for creating photo books.
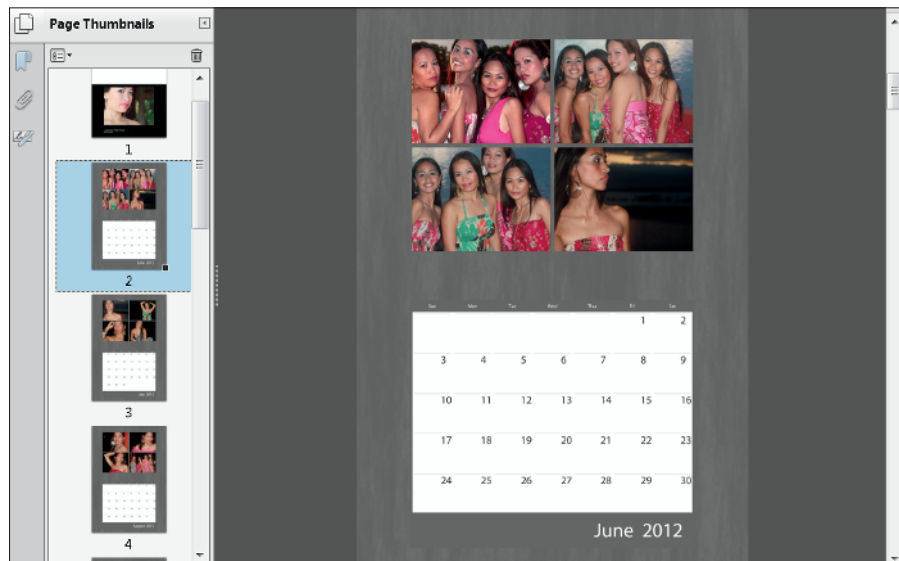
Making a Photo Calendar

Are you ready to design a personal calendar using your favorite photos? Elements helps you design an attractive calendar of the kids, the girls' soccer team, the Bullhead Moose fraternity, or any other type of activity or event you want to work with. Elements makes it easy to create professional-looking calendars.

There's quite a bit to creating calendars in Elements. For more information on creating calendars and also making your own custom calendars, see our two web extras at www.dummies.com/extras/photoshopelements12.

Here's how you create a calendar that can be ordered and professionally printed via an online service:

1. **Select photos in the Organizer. Alternately, you can open images in the Photo Editor and select the open photos in the Photo Bin.**

   For calendars, you might want to select 13 photos — one photo for the calendar cover and one photo for each month. You can also choose 12 photos and use one of the calendar months for the cover photo.

2. **Open the Create drop-down menu in the Panel Bin and click the Photo Calendar option.**

3. **Choose an output source the same as when choosing a source for photo books.**

4. **Follow the same steps that we outline in the section "Creating a Photo Book," earlier in this chapter.**

When saving creations, you have a choice to save as a Photoshop Elements Project (*.pse) or as an Adobe PDF (*.pdf) file. In Figure 1-10, we saved a calendar as a PDF document and opened it in Adobe Reader.

Photo courtesy Leah Valle (www.13thwitch.com)

Figure 1-10: A photo calendar saved as a PDF file.

Assembling a Photo Collage

To put together a photo collage (see Figure 1-11), you first need to select a few photos in the Organizer or the Photo Bin and then click the Photo Collage option in the Create panel.

The Photo Collage wizard opens, and you follow the same steps that we cover in the earlier section "Creating a Photo Book."

Creating a Slide Show (Windows Only)

We have to make some choices for the amount of coverage we can devote to each feature in Photoshop Elements. Sometimes it involves some trade-offs. Because the process for making creations earlier in this chapter is vitally important to four creation types, we feel it's more valuable to most readers than a thorough coverage of slide shows, especially because Macintosh users can't use this feature.

That said, this section includes a brief description for many of the toggles, switches, and commands that are available for producing slide shows. Most of what you find in the Slide Show window is straightforward and intuitive. In addition, we address many options from the Slide Show Editor (shown a little later in Figure 1-13) in other chapters throughout this book.

If creating slide shows is important to you and you need more details on some of the options available, search through the Elements Help system to fill in the gaps.

Creating slide shows follows the same initial steps as you find with other creations. To create a slide show using the Create panel, follow these steps:

1. **Select the images you want in the Organizer or Photo Bin, click the Create tab, and then click the Slide Show option.**

**Figure 1-11:** Photo collages are a snap to create in Elements.

The first thing you see is the Slide Show Preferences dialog box, as shown in Figure 1-12.

You make choices in this dialog box for setting up your slide show — stuff such as setting transition type, adjusting transition duration, adding music, and adding background color.
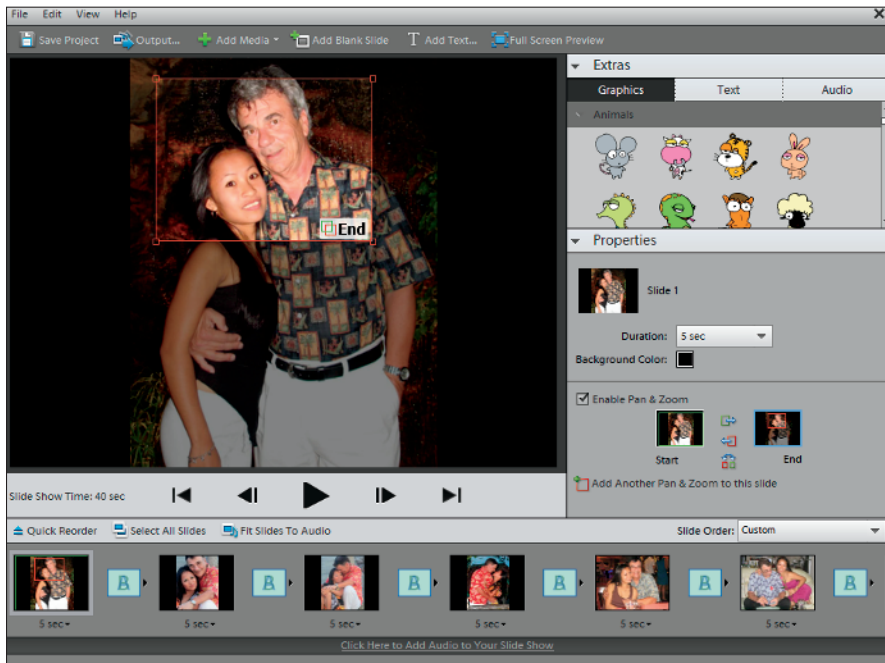
2. **Choose your slide show settings and click OK when you're done.**

   The Slide Show Editor opens, as shown in Figure 1-13.

3. **Define the attributes, such as transitions, artwork from the Extras panel, zooms, and time codes.**
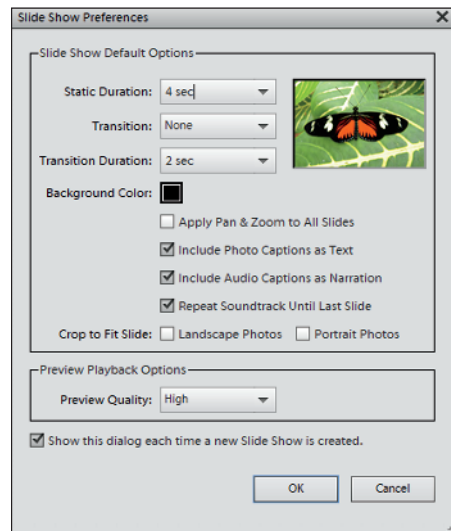
Figure 1-12: The Slide Show Preferences dialog box.

Figure 1-13: The Slide Show Editor.

To add transitions, click the right-pointing arrow adjacent to the transition icon appearing between slides and choose the transition effect you want from the pop-up menu.

Other choices you have for creating slide shows include adding graphics by dragging items from the Graphics panel and adding text by clicking the Text tab in the Extras panel and then double-clicking one of the type styles in the Extras panel.

4. **Size, rotate, and perform image editing in the Properties panel.**

    The Properties panel offers you editing options that we discuss throughout this book.

5. **(Optional) Add audio by opening the Add Media menu at the top of the dialog box. Choose Audio from Elements Organizer or Audio from Folder.**

    You can have Elements fit the slide duration to the audio duration. Add the audio and click the Fit Slides to Audio button.

6. **Choose an output option.**

    Click the Output button at the top of the dialog box (refer to Figure 1-13), and the Slide Show Output dialog box opens, as shown in Figure 1-14.
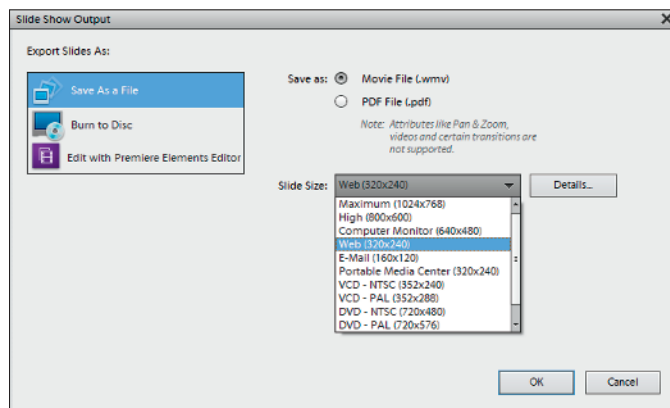
Figure 1-14: The Slide Show Output dialog box.

In the dialog box, you have several options from which to choose:

*   *Save as a File:* Click Save as a File, and in the right pane, you can select from two options: Movie File or PDF File.

Select Movie File to export the file as a video in WMV or QuickTime format. From the Slide Size drop-down menu, choose an option for the media size.

Select PDF File to export the file as an Adobe PDF document.

- *Burn to Disc:* Click Burn to Disc to write a self-running VCD (Video CD). Note that if you choose to write a VCD, the image resolution is much lower than writing slide shows to DVDs.

- *Edit with Premiere Elements Editor:* This option works only if you have Adobe Premiere Elements installed on your computer. If you do have Premiere Elements, clicking this option opens the slide show in Premiere Elements.

7. **Click OK in the dialog box after making the output choice.**

Elements outputs your slide show using the settings you applied.

Working with Photo Prints

When you open the Create panel and click the Photo Prints option, you find options for printing files locally on your desktop printer and ordering prints from online services.

Printing to your desktop printer

When you click Photo Prints on the Create drop-down menu, the panel displays options for printing to your local printer or ordering online prints with a professional print service (see Figure 1-15).

Click the Local Printer option in the Photo Prints panel and the Print dialog box opens. This action is no different than choosing File⇨Print in the Organizer or in the Photo Editor. In all cases, the Print dialog box opens where you set attributes for the print output.

The other options you have for local printing are Picture Package and Contact Sheet. These options are also available in the Print dialog box.
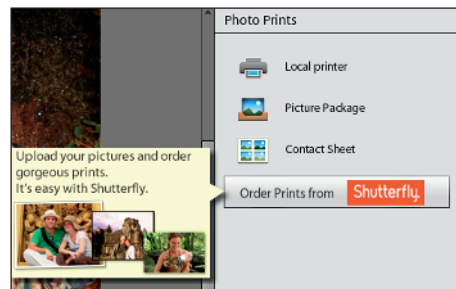
Figure 1-15: The Photo Prints panel.

For local printing and the options you can use, see Chapter 2 of this minibook, where we thoroughly discuss local printing of individual photos, picture packages, and contact sheets.

Ordering prints online

You can order prints online by using only the Shutterfly online service. When you mouse over Shutterfly, a pop-up box provides some information about the service, as shown in Figure 1-15.

When you click Order Prints from Shutterfly, a wizard opens and walks you through the steps for setting up an account and ordering prints. You also find options for choosing the address or addresses where you want your prints to be shipped. You can have one set of prints sent to your address and duplicate prints sent to family and friends.

TIP

Online print services were once the cat's meow for photo distribution. However, in recent years, sharing photos via social services such as Facebook, Flickr, Myspace, and Adobe Revel has proven to be much faster and much more efficient — and more environmentally conscious. Unless you have a good reason for having photo prints, join us in using one of the many social service networks that we explain in Chapter 3 of this minibook. The social networks are much more efficient and less costly than using a print service.

Printing to Adobe PDF

All the print options you have in Elements can be saved as PDF documents. Rather than collect printed paper documents for items such as calendars, greeting cards, and photo collages, you can make your creations and save to PDF files. You can then share these files on your social network connections.

To output a creation to PDF, you need a little help from another application. You have two choices in Windows:

✔ **Purchase Adobe Acrobat Standard or Pro and use the Adobe PDF printer driver that's installed with your program installation.** Simply choose the Adobe PDF from the Select Printer drop-down menu in the Print dialog box and click OK. Your file is then printed to disk as a PDF file.

✔ **Download a free PDF printer driver, such as pdf995.** You can find several PDF printer drivers available for free download by searching the Internet. After a driver is installed, it appears as a printer. You follow the same steps as for printing to Adobe PDF. Select the printer driver in the Print dialog box and click OK, and the file is then printed in PDF format.

Macintosh users don't need to be concerned with printer drivers. Output to PDF is built into OS X. When you choose File➪Print, click the PDF drop-down menu and select Save as PDF. Your file is saved as a PDF document that can be viewed in the free Adobe Reader software or with OS X's Preview application.

Getting Organized with CD/DVD Labels

Another creation option in Elements is a simple, easy way to create CD and DVD labels. From the Create panel, choose a menu item for CD Jacket, DVD Jacket, or CD/DVD Label from the More Options drop-down list. From templates provided in the panel, Elements offers you an easy method for printing your personalized labels and jackets for CDs and DVDs.

This feature for printing CD/DVD labels is a bit weak in Elements. You may need to fiddle around quite a bit to get the images to fit a label. Using some templates provided by the label developers is often a much better method for printing labels.

Creating a DVD with a Menu

Creating a DVD with a menu is supported in both Windows and on the Macintosh; however, you need to have Adobe Premiere Elements installed to create a DVD with a menu. In Windows, you can create slide shows and use the slide shows when creating a DVD with a menu. On the Macintosh, you need movie files that can be created from still images using Adobe Premiere Elements, Apple's iMovie, or Apple's iPhoto.