

Frame With UI



This project began when I subscribed to SmugMug's web photo gallery service. SmugMug lets you create all kinds of fancy folders and galleries, with lots of customization choices. But options for displaying individual pictures are very sparse. I decided I needed to create my own frames for the photos I uploaded to SmugMug.

A web search led me to various PhotoShop actions for creating frames. I found one style I liked, and then spent the next six weeks tweaking it to my satisfaction. Actions are royal pains to edit or copy, and they don't offer easy ways to customize if your photo doesn't match the size or orientation of the photo you used when you created them. After creating a few actions for different-sized photos that didn't quite give me what I wanted, making me move things around after creating the frame, it became glaringly apparent that I needed something different.

There were two main requirements. It must be possible to specify all parameters for the frame before creation of the frame begins, and the frame must be automatically resized for different sizes of photographs.

More web searches taught me that it is possible to write scripts for PhotoShop using JavaScript, and to create dialog boxes for them. Eventually, I pulled together enough documents and samples to put together an effective frame script.

Installation

This document describes use of the Frame With UI script on Windows machines. I do not have access to a Mac, so I can't provide Mac-specific information.

Copy the .js and .jsx files you got from GitHub into a folder of your choice. It is not necessary to copy them into your Photoshop scripts folder.

Usage

Open the picture you wish to frame and select File | Scripts | Browse... . Select the "FrameWithUI.jsx" file. The following dialog box will appear:

Frame My Photo

All fractions are relative to image height

Selected style: Vertical Dark Manage Styles

Frame

R: 50 G: 50 B: 50 ☐ Hex Pick Color

Width fraction: 0.04 Bottom extension fraction: 0.035

Inner offset fraction: 0.003 Inner line width fraction: 0.0025

Text

R: 255 G: 255 B: 255 ☐ Hex Pick Color

White Black

Title

Title: Letchworth Upper Falls

Size Fraction: 0.025

X Fraction: 0.02 (distance from left edge)

Y Fraction: 0.03 (distance from bottom edge)

Copyright

Owner: Robert D. Richardson

Copyright Year: 2013

Size Fraction: 0.015

X Fraction: 0.02 (distance from left edge)

Y Fraction: 0.01 (distance from bottom edge)

Add Frame

Reset Frame

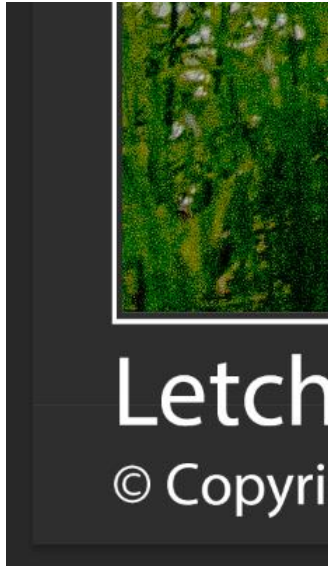
OK

Set your desired choices and click Add Frame. The frame will be generated. If you don't like the way it looks, you can click Reset Frame to remove the frame from your photograph.

(I recommend starting with an image that has a single layer to avoid having any adjustments you may have made getting applied to the frame. My workflow includes creating an uncompressed JPG of my photos once I finish editing them. I use that JPG as the starting point for my framed photos.)

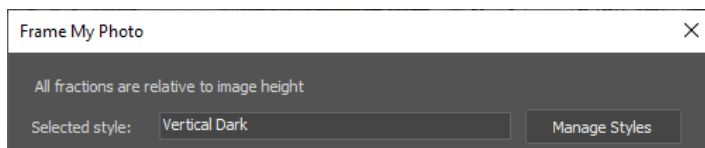
As the note at the top of the dialog box says, all sizes and distances are specified as fractions of the photo size. That way, it doesn't matter what size the photo is.

What the frame is



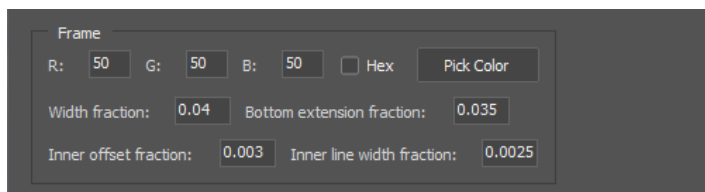
The frame consists of a very thin stripe around the photograph in the color selected for the frame. Around that is a slightly thicker white stripe. Outside of that is the main body of the frame, which is the same width around the top, right and left sides. The bottom piece of the frame is typically twice as wide as the other three sides to make room for the title and a copyright notice.

Style label



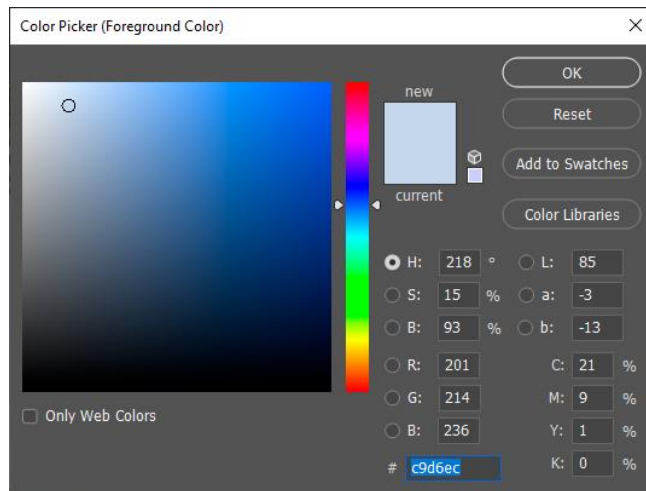
The top portion of the dialog box shows the name of the frame style you have selected. The managing of frame styles will be discussed in a later section.

Frame selections



Colors are represented by three values, one for the intensity of red, one for green, and one for blue. Valid numbers for these are 0 (no color) to 255 (as bright as possible). Often, colors are referred to in hexadecimal (base 16) numbers, so there is a check box allowing you to choose that. In hexadecimal, numbers from 10 to 15 are represented by the letters a through f, so the largest possible value is ff. (Note to self: there is no check if numbers too high are entered into those boxes. If invalid numbers are entered, an ugly error message is generated that may not appear until after the dialog box is closed. Add a check.)

Clicking “Pick Color” brings up the standard PhotoShop color picker dialog, which looks like this:



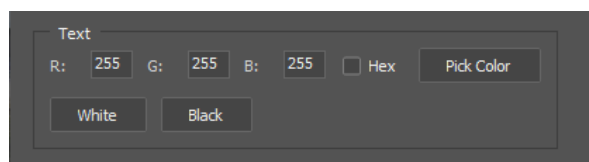
The width fraction determines the width of the main frame. Note that the number here is the total increase of the size of the image, not the width of each side. So, the width of the frame on the left side will be the original image size times the width fraction divided by two. (Note to self: this is needlessly complex. Change this so the width fraction gives size of the frame, not the increase in total width of the image.)

The bottom extension fraction determines the width of the bottom piece of the frame.

The inner offset fraction is the width of the innermost line around the image, drawn in the frame color. The default value makes this so thin as to be barely noticeable, but it is important (or at least, I think it is).

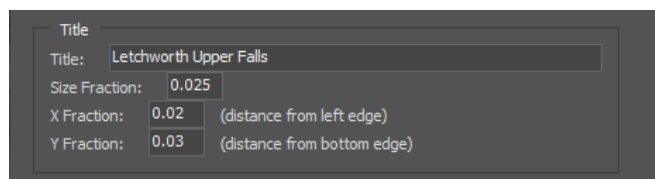
The inner line width fraction gives the width of the thin white line drawn outside of the offset line.

Text selections



The text block lets you choose the color for text in the frame. The top row of controls is the same as the color controls for the frame. The White and Black buttons allow you to choose either white or black text with a single click.

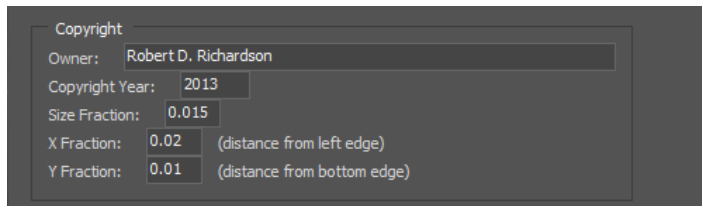
Title selections



The title block provides choices for entering the title of your photo, the size of the title text, and the distances from the lower left corner where the lower left corner of the title will be. I like to have the title aligned with the left edge of the image, so I use an X fraction value that is half of the frame width fraction. That will change if I change the meaning of the frame width value.

The title defaults to the name of the file being edited, with the extension removed. The sample above was generated when I was editing a file named “Letchworth Upper Falls.jpg”.

Copyright selections

A screenshot of a 'Copyright' dialog box. It contains several input fields: 'Owner' with the text 'Robert D. Richardson', 'Copyright Year' with '2013', 'Size Fraction' with '0.015', 'X Fraction' with '0.02' and a label '(distance from left edge)', and 'Y Fraction' with '0.01' and a label '(distance from bottom edge)'. Each field has a small square icon to its left.

The copyright block allows you to enter copyright information and to control the size and position of the copyright notice. The copyright owner defaults to my name. You can change the default yourself if you’re feeling adventurous by editing the file FrameDialog.jsx in any text editor, but the owner is included in frame styles, which will be discussed shortly. (Note to self: Do something more intelligent for the copyright owner. Maybe pop up a dialog box asking for the name to be specified when the frame dialog opens, if the owner is not specified in the XML file.)

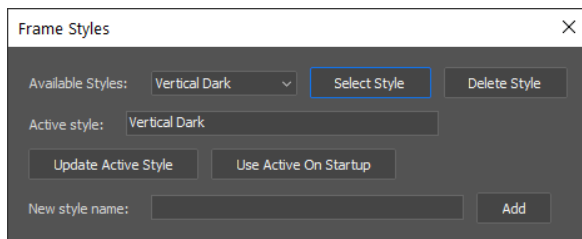
The copyright year defaults to the year the file being edited was created.

The X and Y fractions determine the position of the lower left corner of the copyright text block, with respect to the lower left corner of the frame.

Managing styles

One set of frame settings is not going to work with all of your photographs. You’ll want to save frequently used sets of settings. For example, I use a frame width of 0.04 for vertical photos, but for horizontal settings I find a slightly wider frame looks better, and I use 0.05.

When the “Manage Styles” button is clicked on the main dialog, the following dialog box appears:

A screenshot of a 'Frame Styles' dialog box. It has a title bar with a close button (X). Inside, there's an 'Available Styles' section with a dropdown menu showing 'Vertical Dark', a 'Select Style' button, and a 'Delete Style' button. Below that is an 'Active style:' section with a text box containing 'Vertical Dark', an 'Update Active Style' button, and a 'Use Active On Startup' button. At the bottom is a 'New style name:' text box and an 'Add' button.

When you click the down arrow on the Available Styles drop-down box, a list of available styles will appear. When you click on a style name, it will be displayed in the drop-down box when it loses focus. Merely selecting a style in the drop-down box has no effect on the frame. To apply the style to your frame, click the Select Style button. The name of the style will be displayed in the Active Style text box. (Entering a style name in the text box has no effect. The only thing that affects your frame is clicking the Select Style button.)

Clicking “Delete Style” will remove the style currently chosen in the drop-down box from the list of available styles.

Clicking the “Update Active Style” button will replace settings for that style with the current settings in the main frame dialog. For example, I found that when I used my “Horizontal Dark” style, I had to move the title up by a couple of pixels. So, I selected Horizontal Dark style for my frame, changed the title Y fraction from 0.03 to 0.032, and clicked Update Active Style. Now, when I use that style, the title appears in the correct place.

Clicking “Use Active On Startup” will store the currently active style name, so that the next time you open the frame dialog, that style will automatically be selected.

To create a style, choose the settings you want in the main dialog, click Manage Styles, and then enter the name of your new style in the New Style Name textbox and then click the Add button.