

Robert van de Voort reviews Pixtivity Pro version 2.

I find it important to present my work in a pleasant and appropriate manner to my clients or friends. Therefore I was intrigued when Auto-Fx® launched this program software. I have always been impressed with their software, so I was quite curious to find out how this software program would work to present my work to others.

The interface is quite different from the other automatic programs like Dreamsuite®, and that makes sense, we are working on a program that launches your images as a flash program onto the web or as a presentation on a DVD or CD, it does not alter your image.

You start with a managed presentation menu, which gives you the option of so many different layouts, it will take you a while to select the one you like best! You can choose between artistic (about 100) frames, artistic storyboards, about 150 frames in autoplay, or you choose between Multiple categories photo and movies, photo strips, a slideshow, storyboard, the options are numerous. There is definitely an option for each occasion you want to present, it could be a wedding, a birthday party or a commercial photography assignment that you want to wrap up in a very pleasant and professional way - people will wonder "how did she (he) do that"?.

Okay, you have found the frame you want to present your images with, then you can select from the menu the various fade or image effects: mask or motion effects are also a possibility, but keep in mind the more motion or other transitional effects you choose it may require more processing grunt. You need a powerful processor to execute the complex and multiple transitions, so be warned, do not send a very complex transitional effect with large files to a friend that has a very old PC, they will be struggling to see the images changing rapidly. but any normal single effect will run smoothly on any pc or Mac.

Okay so you have made your selection out of this multitude of possibilities, and then start with managing your content, meaning which pictures do you want to load into this presentation. You can select from whatever folder, then you can delete those images that are not appropriate.. At this stage you have the possibility of cropping your image or not, you can rotate the image but these image editing tools are very limited, they just do a basic crop or rotation. You cannot add anything like a canvas, so you should do this before you load your images into this program. All editing is non destructive – your original images are not changed at all. Some of the image effects are awesome, very visually striking and some are quite novel so you get to make a “new” impression!

At this stage you have the chance of adding a title or a caption or a link to your photograph, and you can choose your colour of the fonts, you can even add an Url.

Animations are another option that you can add to your images, you can select from a variety of animation topics, you can choose between bodies, for instance an angel or a bodybuilder, bubble text or your own text, again the options are unlimited, you can select a combination of a variety of animations for one or more images. Again keep in mind that the more animations you load into one image, the more processing power your computer needs in order to render these images fast.

If you have a video – or a movie – no problem – Pixtivity handles this too with some great frames to make it work and perform easily, you do not need a degree in computers to work with Auto-Fx!

Now you come to your last section of your image presentation, you have the option to change the background colour of your presentation, add background music, add a presentation title, change the timing interval, perhaps add a title or caption to fine tune the appearance of your individual image with a variety of options that Auto-Fx® is offering us to make your presentation very much like you wanted it to look. You can even let the link to any website or other link open in another window. Different frames have different fonts, but sometimes I like to override the default font. We suggest Auto-Fx could offer us in an upgraded version the possibility of changing the fonts and style for each presentation.

Your final step in this program will be a preview and publish it on the web. If you like what you have done, you can publish it to disk and it will be saved as a Flash file (SWF). If you want to upload this to your website or want to send it to a friend, I suppose you zip (I use 7-Zip – free and good) the file with any method that you like to use, otherwise the files may be quite big to transmit.

Pros:

Flexible, easy to create a presentation, excellent choices of presentation methods, very impressive choice of frames and other presentations available.

Cons:

You cannot create a separate title page with the fonts and layout as you like, it only offers you the possibility of a title caption or a link .

Price: for those who rely to present images on the computer this program offers good value for money, but like everything - it is a little pricey if you use it only occasionally, but any wedding and event photographer will capitalise on this software asset easily.

Conclusion:

I am almost getting used to it; Auto Fx® delivers with each software program an abundance of choices to make your presentation or effect as personal and professional as you want it to be. They definitely do not skimp on offering you a multitude of choices to suit your taste. To run this program efficiently may I suggest you download the content of the DVD onto your hard drive.

If all your images are in the same folder, you can make a presentation within 10 minutes, perhaps even faster as long as you have preset in your preferences the way you want it to look. I suggest you do a dummy run first to get used to the program, but once you have done one mock presentation, you are pretty well set for the rest, and if you are stuck, Auto Fx ® gives you extensive help tutorials to help you out with any problems you may have.

A sideways observation:

I cannot help to compare this program to another presentation program I tested, Compupic Pro® offers a software program called Pro Show Gold. That program is a professional slideshow presentation image program aimed at a commercial user and of course also non-commercial but pro show gold is definitely only a professional slide presentation without anything added to your images other than over 280 transitions and or your music. Auto-Fx offers creativity and artistry and computersavvy presentations styles to your images – a different concept so perhaps I should not even compare them as they both target different audiences but they both offer a similar software feature.

Auto Fx® has with this program Pixtivity® aimed at the larger audience that you possibly will find on Twitter®, Facebook® and the like... It offers fun, artistic presentations, some high-tech looking presentations like showing your images on an iPod® it is definitely more playful than commercial. Notwithstanding that aspect of it, I have been able to find simple and effective professional frames or presentation methods to present a commercial looking photographic assignment or model portfolio.