

Print Explosion Deluxe 3

REVIEW

by Jim Tetzlaff



Print Explosion® Deluxe 3.0
The Fastest, Easiest Way to Create Spectacular Print Projects!

BUY NOW!
\$49.95

DVD EDITION
CD-ROM EDITION

A while back, I was given the opportunity to show TNWoU members a demonstration of Nova Development's Print Explosion Deluxe 2, along with their other products, Greeting Card Factory and Art Explosion. I had a great time going through the basic steps of applications and printing a card up to show you how pretty a card can be without doing any color syncing and other worrisome chores for an amateur.

Recently, Nova released a third version of Print Explosion Deluxe and offered it to registered users of PE2 a substantial discount to upgrade. I took the bait, but why not? I enjoy using Print Explosion. I ordered online and it was about 10 days before it arrived by mail. Pretty good considering I bought it as a pre-release.

The install was fairly straight forward and the installation with came out to about 1.73 GB of hard disk space. Instead of placing a folder in you Applications folder, you get a package install. I had to 'Show package contents' to get to the Graphics folder. Why? So that I could copy my folder of 'Made with a Mac' pictures into it. The folder is in the Contents folder/MacOS/Graphics. A lot of chasing. I'd rather they installed a plain old folder.

The application will run on older, G3 Macs using OS X 10.2 or later, along with the new Intel-based Macs. If you don't have

a DVD reader, you can exchange the DVD for CDs for free via mail.

The version in the box, not surprisingly, is 3.0. When I launched the program...well it took a while for the beach ball to go away. Hmm...so much for the tout "the fastest, easiest way to create"...and so on. Every time I tried to click on something, the beach ball revisited me. Yep, pretty frustrating. I almost wrote to them to complain, but what do you know. Checking in at Version Tracker, I found an update to version 3.0.1.1. That seemed to help matters considerably. Now only starting up the application is time consuming.

Enough about the install details. What's different about it? In a word, plenty! Just on first impression with what I've worked with in Print Explosion 2, the choices of graphics for the various greeting cards, business cards and certificates appear to be much prettier and refined, using more JPEG images and a bit less of the cartoonish clip art. Some the new designs for graduation cards are simply beautiful. In Print Explosion 2, there are 15 different categories of project to choose from. In Print Explosion 3, there are now 17 categories, with Scrapbooks being the main 'hot' thing to consider. With 19 sub-categories, I'm sure it has something for everyone.

Now for the fun stuff...creating.

While there's many categories to choose from, I'm going to stick with one of my favorites, creating a greeting card. I always start with a card from the template and then change the card from there. In the graphics shown here, you can see that you choose a template in Print Explosion 3 as opposed to choosing a project in Print Explosion 2. Once you decide on a card for your starting point it's time to customize it. You can change any text on the card which I usually do to include the name of the person I want to make the card for. Using the pages palette you select each page of the card you wish to change.

Whether your changing text or adding a graphic, it's real easy to do so. There are thousands of graphics to choose from and the fonts are whatever you have active on your Mac when you are creating your project. There are some 900 free fonts provided with Print Explosion 3 DVD so you can transfer them onto your hard drive and activate the ones you want to give a try. To change the text anywhere on the pages, at first you may want to click once over the area of text you want to change. You will see an object box appear. You can simply double-click over it or press Cmd E or mouse up to the toolbar a select Edit/Edit Text. You'll get a Customize text palette where you can edit the text, choose a different font, choose a style like bold, wild or staggered. You can also change font colors and add text effects. In addition, there are a bunch of fancy text style you can choose from too, but I use that usually for new text that I'm adding on another page or a different part of a page. If you're not making changes to what's been typed, once you clicked on the text box to select it, you can use the inspector palette to work with the text that's there. There are two tabs on the palette, one for text manipulation and one for working with font colors. You can work with the object or the outline of the text you've selected. By selecting the outline of a font that is, perhaps, light blue in color, you can choose to add a black outline to the selected text.

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If you're thinking you have a lot of flexibility with text, you're right! But, you get to play with the graphics too. Let's say you found a card that has just the right verse, but some of the graphics are not quite appropriate for your Aunt May. Well, you have thousands of alternatives to choose from. Simply click once on the graphic you want to replace and mouse over to Edit/Replace graphic. This will open the folder that has the graphic you want to replace. You can choose another from there or go to another folder and choose something from one of them. It's that simple. You can resize the graphic, rotate it, skew it, lighten the clip art graphics (not the JPEGs) and you've got a new flavor to your card (or business card, postcard, certificate, banner and I'm sure with every other project that Print Explosion 3 offers.

On the cons side of the application, I'm not happy with the new way it handles the JPEG graphics. In version 2, if you re-sized the object box, the graphic would re-size proportionately. Not so, at least by default, in version 3. The image stretches or distorts to fill the object box. Not good! You have to be careful with how you're doing your re-sizing.

The other problem as I see it is the lack of templates for envelopes sized for the half-fold and quarter-fold cards that are the norm for the cards. I wish they had more to choose from in those envelope sizes.

Getting back to what I see as the most versatile part about Print Explosion and that's the ease with which you can personalize your greetings. For every card I've creat-

Choose a Graphic

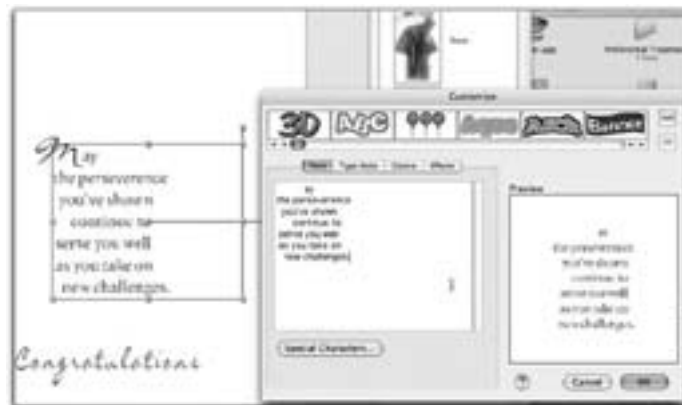


ed, I've never found anything on the back of the card. Excellent! Early on in this review, I mentioned my 'Made for Mac' graphics folder. Well...you know how Hallmark and American Greetings put their logos on the backs of the cards (along with the \$3.99 or \$4.99 price and UPC.) I've stolen that idea too!

Let's say you created a card for a favorite high school grad and going off to college is next. Here's a perfect time



Choose a Project



Edit the text

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to add an extra sentiment – on the back! First you may add a graphic like the one in the figure above.

Then perhaps add a shape.

Once that's done, it's time to add the text of your sentiment.

Then I like to add my own 'Maker' ID, 'a Jim and Judy creation'. And, of course, I add one of my many 'Made with a Mac' graphics. Just BECAUSE I can't imagine suffering through Windows like I have to at work. I guess things at work are supposed to be more difficult.

There you go. If you have any version of Print Explosion, you've got a nice and easy application to work with. Version 3 is a definite step up.



Select a graphic

The back page...
with the text and all.



Choose a Shape



About: Print Explosion Deluxe 3 by Nova Development.
Website: www.novadevelopment.com
Supports iLife®.

System requirements: •Macintosh G3 or faster or Intel®-based Macintosh
•Mac OS X 10.2 or later
•512 MB RAM
•DVD Drive
(Update to 3.0.1.1 available at VersionTracker or MacUpdate.)
•Works with all popular inkjet and laser printers.
Price: \$49.95