

Photoshop guru Scott Kelby<sup>1</sup> of NAPP, and beyond, fame talked about his own **"Photo Editing Code of Ethics"** in a recent blog [see: <http://www.scottkelby.com/blog/2007/archives/693>] and it got me to thinking about mine. For what it is worth, here are my COE for my work on digital processing of photographic images:

- I will try to avoid cropping an image since I prefer to compose the image while I am shooting. However, many times it is impossible to put yourself exactly where you want to be in the field and I have no qualms whatsoever about cropping the image if that best portrays the "scene" that I want the viewer to see.
- I will remove distracting small elements (trash, telephone wires, etc.) from the photo if they have no bearing on the overall composition of the scene / image. I will not do this if the image is being made for documentation or record purposes, but any image for art's sake is fair game.
- Like Scott, while I don't mind taking something out of an image I have a real problem in adding anything to an image. That includes changing the sky, or any other background. Interestingly enough this does not include enhancing the sky to make it look better – perhaps even "better" than it actually was, but I can't bring myself to replace it. And, in terms of adding things, or people, that just is not in the cards.
- Unlike Scott, I have a problem cloning in additional items in an image – whether it be flowers, clumps of grass, or anything else. [Note: this does not include cloning over trash, wires, etc. – see second item above.]
- I will do everything I can to make the final image look as good

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<sup>1</sup> If you are not familiar with Scott Kelby and you work with Photoshop then you should probably get familiar with him. He is the founder and leader of National Association of Photoshop Professionals, head of Scott Kelby training, Photoshop TV and about anything else connected with Photoshop and the rest of the Adobe suite of products. I can't think of a book he has written on the products that I have not impressed me, I own and regularly use the ones for the products that I own. I visit his blog everyday. Guess you could call me a groupie.

as I remember the original scene at its peak – in terms of color, contrast, detail, etc. This will include using every creative tool (layer exposure masking, white balance manipulation, filters, etc) available to me in Lightroom™ or Photoshop®.

- And, like Scott I will do about whatever it takes to make any photos I take of people (not many) have the individual look their absolute best – softening of the face, enlarging eyes, etc.

In general, if I had to sum it up in a few words ---

I'd like to think that (other than the very limited portrait work) *I limit my digital lab work to what could have been done in the typical darkroom.*

That is, If one wanted to take the time and effort to do it. In a wet darkroom, I just did not have the time, or patience, to cut out all the masks, experiment with different chemical mixes, color gels, times in the solutions, etc. And then when you finally got the print you wanted – have any hope at all that you could recreate it on demand.