

'You have your sister's eyes'

With Photoshop's digital editing tools, a friendly compliment becomes the literal truth

I recently read an article that a Nobel prize in mathematics was awarded to two scientists who developed a calculation to determine how many pictures had to be taken of a group to get at least one photo without anyone blinking.

For groups of less than 20, you would divide the number of the group by three. The numbers changed under adverse lighting conditions.

Most photographers have taken more than their fair share of shots that were marred when someone blinked.

In the days of film, the only way to avoid this was to shoot multiple shots hoping the odds would eventually be in your favor. You may not have always gotten the best expression on everyone, but at least you had open eyes.

With digital photography and the ability of seeing instant results, there is no longer the surprise of a bad shot. You can retake the photo until you get it right.

That's the best solution — a good initial image — but it isn't always possible.

Fortunately, the ability to resolve such problems has become easier with digital imaging.

Moving eyes from one person to another is not too difficult, and even if you don't have the exact eyes of the subject, borrowing them from another family member might work.

In one of my family photos the expression "You have your sister's eyes," has taken on a new meaning.

I don't think a formula has ever been made to calculate how many photos have to be taken to capture three active little girls. This was the case last fall when I tried to photograph my daughter and two of her friends.

Despite taking 40 shots, in any one of the pictures only two of the three girls looked their best.

To make a really good photo, reflecting the best expressions of the three girls, would require the combination of several images.

Most imaging programs have the ability to copy and paste selections from one image into another. Many imaging programs support the concept of layers, which



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allow you float a selection of one image over another indefinitely much like a page layout program.

This allows you to move

the object around until it is in the location you desire.

The steps to do this may slightly differ from program to program, but the concept is



WAYNE PALMER/For the Sun-Gazette

In the top photo at left, the two girls on the right have good expressions. Wayne decided to replace the face of the girl on the left with a nicer picture of her smiling, middle photo. He selected it and copied it into the original image, bottom photo, then used a Transformation tool to reduce the new head to the same size as the one it would replace. Using masking or erasing, you can then blend the new head into the original photo. The final product is seen above: three brightly smiling little girls.

the same. The example shown here is done within Photoshop Elements.

For best results, the images you want to combine should be taken with the same type of lighting and be near the same relative size. If they aren't, the results may be noticeable.

The first step was to choose the images that had the best expressions.

I selected one where the expressions were good for two of the girls and carefully chose another image, which had a good expression of the third girl and also had her in the same position as the face that was to be replaced.

Starting with that image, I made a selection of the area I wanted to move. Most programs offer multiple tools to make selections. In Elements, I chose the Marquee tool, which makes rectangular selections, and I selected the entire head along with some of the surrounding area.

I then copied the selection and pasted it into the other image that had the two good expressions. This is a similar

process to copying and pasting text in a word processing program.

Using the Move tool, I positioned the face into the general area of where I wanted it to be. Elements has a feature called Layer Opacity which allowed me to lower the opacity of the added head layer to see through to the information below. Using the eyes of the original picture, I was able to align the new head with the old one.

The added head was slightly larger than the original, and in order for it to look believable, it needed to be reduced in size.

Using a Transformation tool, I was able to proportionally reduce the new head to be the same size as the original head.

With the lowered transparency, I was able to use the eyes of the two heads for perfect alignment. When satisfied with the alignment and resizing, I returned the opacity back to normal.

The next step was to remove any unneeded information around the head. If

the editing program you use does not support masking, a technique I strongly recommend, then more than likely it has an eraser tool, which will allow you to delete the information, you don't want.

Using an Eraser tool, I carefully deleted the extra information until the added head blended into the surroundings of the original.

This was the most difficult step as if I removed too much information, and couldn't undo the step, I would have to start over again.

If you use Photoshop, I would recommend you use the masking feature instead of erasing. If you use Photoshop Elements, use the masking feature in conjunction with a Pattern Adjustment Layer option.

Masking is a superior technique because it is non-destructive, meaning you can put back the information you hide.

So with digital editing, a little planning and practice, you can create the picture you wanted to take, even if you couldn't do so in reality.

Spider-Man 3 game fairly disappointing compared to its excellent predecessor

Upon hearing that Columbia Pictures was making a third installment to their hit movie series "Spider-Man," I knew there had to be a video game.

I feared it would only be on the Playstation 3, but luckily for me and others who do not have a PS3, it came out on multiple systems including Xbox, Xbox 360, PS3, PS2, Wii, Nintendo DS and the PSP.

I was hoping the game would be as good as its predecessor, Spider-Man 2, but, I was disappointed.

When you first start the game, you think, "OK, this is going to be cool," and it kind of is, but ultimately it just didn't do it for me.

Bruce Campbell, who has guest-starred in the movie trilogy, narrates. Come on, they couldn't get Stan Lee to do it? Big disappointment.

Campbell's wisecracks were quite annoying and not funny at all. Let's face it, he's not Peter Parker.

When the game starts, you see Spider-Man swinging into action after a building is bombed. This is where you get your tutorial from the very annoying Bruce Campbell.

You start fighting a local gang known as the H-Bombers, led by Carlyle The Mad Bomber. There really is no explanation of who he is, so if you're not a comics fan, you're pretty much lost.

I wish Activision had come up with a cooler character, like Scorpion or Electro. How is it the PS3 ver-



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you go into "rage mode" with the suit, the edges of the screen will become black. If you do not remove the suit and the screen goes completely black you will pass out and fail your mission.

SPOILERS AHEAD — In the game, Jameson tells Peter Parker and Eddie Brock, the new freelancer at the Bugle, to take a picture of Spider-Man in the act of robbing or hurting someone. In the movie, Brock takes pictures of a bank robbery pulled off by Sandman, and puts Spider-Man in digitally.

In the game, Brock gets a black suit, like Spidey's, and begins mugging people. I liked that. As Spider-Man you bust him in the act, and Brock is fired. That sequence is done quite well.

Other villains which appear are Kraven the Hunter, the Lizard, Morbius the Living Vampire, and Shriek, who in the game is Morbius' wife.

with 20 times the "normal" dosage of Lizard DNA, and turns into Mega Lizard.

Kraven the Hunter doesn't do much in the game. He is only hunting the Lizard, and trying to kill Spider-Man for "interfering." He really has no point other than that.

Close to the beginning of the game you fight New Goblin, who is pretty much an angry surfer. Once you beat him, you don't see him again until the end of the game.

Once you get into the "movie" storyline you finally see Sandman. In the movie they made a big deal out of him because he killed Peter Parker's Uncle Ben. Being such a crucial character, you think you'd see him in the game more than you do.

The game, unlike the movie, ALMOST got Venom right, almost being the key word. Venom has a more demonic distorted voice in the game than in the movie, more like what Venom is supposed to be like.

Unfortunately he still refers to himself as "I" and "Me," whereas in

the comics and the show he calls himself "We" and "Us," speaking for both Brock and the Symbiot.

Finally while you are fighting Venom as Spider-Man in one of the final battles, New Goblin shows up, to say he now knows you didn't kill his father and should have known it because you "stuck by him even though he hated him." Can you say PLOT HOLE?! How did New Goblin find this out?

At that point, I started asking myself, "When did this turn into Adam West's version of Batman?" I asked myself the same question during the final battle of the movie, when Spider-Man and New Goblin fought Sandman.

Did I mention Venom kidnaps Sandman's daughter and that's why he's in the final battle? He then tells Sandman that Spider-Man killed his daughter, yet all Sandman can say at the end of the game is "Sorry, I shouldn't have believed him."

To top it off it looks like New Goblin sacrifices himself to save Spider-Man but it never comes out and tells you.

The game tracks how long you play it, and over the course of a few days my max time was five hours and 25 minutes. A good game takes a lot longer to finish.

Unfortunately, Spider-Man 3 the game gets three out of a possible five stars. Do yourself the favor, if you want to play the game, rent it, or wait a month until it drops in price.