

Art Explosion 750,000 Review

by Fabio Fabbri

I got up on that April 9 with the feeling that it was going to be a nice day. The Sun was shining and bright, and I was going to a TNWoU meeting. I was little late, so I had my breakfast in a hurry and left. There was going to be a presentation of the Mac Applications from NOVA Development given by our friendly Editor Jim Tezloff. That was not the only reason why I was happy to go there, and be on time. I am so new to my G5 and Mac OS X that I didn't want to miss any of Bill Geraci's class. I sped a little and I was proud to be the first to be served the door prize ticket. Diane assured me that the ticket was the lucky one, and I don't know why I had the same feeling.

As usual, Bill's knowledge, versatility and expertise made his class very interesting, and finally Jim made his presentation, showing us the many wonders of the NOVA Development products, especially of Print Explosion and Greeting Card Factory.

I have a friend that never loses a chance to mail me beautiful cards that he makes. I always wondered how he could do such a nice looking job not having had any experience in printing or composing for that matter. He had to have a secret up his sleeve, so I thought.



Finally I discovered what my friend's secret was, and so I got very interested in the NOVA products when Sandy White was presenting them. What caught my eye was the Art Explosion with its 750,000 images, but when it came to a show of hands for the preferred choice of the prod-

ucts, I was surprised to see that I was the only one interested in it. All the others chose Print Explosion or Card Factory. Does it tell you something? Am I some kind of a nut? What am I to do with 750,000 images? I am retired, and for sure I am not going to start a "pre-press shop" now. In any event those were the door prizes, and as a long shot, I could win one of them: the lady said she gave me a lucky ticket.

Finally, the numbers came out of the hat one by one, and the first 3 or 4 laid there on the podium unclaimed because those lucky people already left. Then came my number, and I didn't lose any time in picking Art Explosion. It was the biggest and the heaviest box on the table, and its price alone made you pay attention. The good people of TNWoU made me sign my life away, making sure I was going to guarantee a report, before Sandy handed the "box" to me. He also proceeded to tell me, and he was adamant about it, that because of a printer typo the images really were 750,002 and not 750,000 as written on the cover. He told me that to comply with my obligations to keep the NOVA Art Explosion program, I had to find the 2 extra images, and refer them to him in writing. I reassured him on the matter and he was happy as a lark.

By the way, did you notice why I won the prize? I was there early and stayed to

By the way, did you notice why I won the prize? I was there early and stayed to the end, so you guys that come late and go away early don't have a chance.



the end, so you guys that come late and go away early don't have a chance.

I got home with the "box" in my hand, and went directly in my basement/office leaving it on my desk. My 5 year old granddaughter Julia was with us, and she always wants to play with "nonno" (Italian for grandpa). This time she wanted to make believe we were selling computers (there are few around, and she sold many of them). Ok I said, I make room over here where we ship them, and you move that box over there, to make room for pick-up and delivery. She took the box with some difficulty, and said: "This package is very heavy, nonno!"

Yes, the "Package" is heavy, impressive and very colorful. It weighs 9 lbs., measures 10.5x11x41/8", and retails for \$180.00 at CDW. Doing some Math, that comes to \$20.00 per lb., and about 4166 images per dollar. Not bad, all considered. It is made by NOVA Development Corp. - Calabasas, CA. - Phone 818.591.9600 - Web site <http://www.novadevelopment.com>, and it is especially built for Mac OS X.

A variety of images are printed everywhere on the box: front, back, sides, top, and bottom. If that was not enough, there is also a secondary side hinged cardboard

Art Explosion 750,000 continued **Review**

by Fabio Fabbri

cover with more of them on both sides. There is also more advertising, making sure you understand that this Art Explosion Program is the best on the market, it has real Macintosh File Names, it has Web Graphics & Animations, it is the most complete, it is the easiest to use, it has 1800 high-quality fonts and it comes with a guarantee that if you don't like it, the company will refund your money in 30 days, no questions asked. What do you want more than that?

The System requirements are very simple for a today's Mac users. The only things needed are a Mac with a Power PC processor running system 8.1 or later, a monitor displaying thousands, or better, millions of color, and last but not least a DVD-ROM player. According to the writings, Art Explosion is a clipart that works with practically all the word processing, desktop publishing, and graphics programs to many to list here. NOVA is so sure that you like their Art Explosion that after you register, guarantees you FREE unlimited technical support.

The real question now is: Will it work? Well, lets open up the "package" and find out.

The Art Explosion Package contains a 12-page Read Me First User manual, a registration card, 6 DVD-ROM disks, and two books.

The Books.

Yes, the 2 large volumes show all 750,000 images (or 750,002?). The books are titled Volume One and Volume Two. Volume two is a continuation of the one, starting with page #951. Volume one starts with an introduction to Art Explosion, explaining, beside the installation, the kind of images presented and the procedure in retrieving them. The index on both volumes is the same, and includes all the images. You might be on one volume index that could make reference to a page in the other one.

User Manual. It is a separate copy of the instructions you find at the beginning of Volume One so you don't have to log along 4 lbs. of paper when you are just looking for some refresher info. It is very practical, informative, and up to the point.

Images

There are an enormous variety of images, presented in Portfolio catalogs each corresponding to different categories of images, such as:

- Vector Images. They are comprised with lines and curves, printing clear no matter the size. They come in .EPS - Encapsulated Postscript - format.
- Raster images. They are in 300 dpi and are not scalable to the same degree of the vector images. They are in TIFF (.TIF) - Tagged image File format.
- Fine Art. Unique in the sense that it represents fine artwork from hundreds of artists that have expressed their style in oil and pastel colors, in .TIF format.
- Classic images. From the famed Dover art library. They come in black and white, 300 dpi and in .TIF format.
- Traditional Images. Steeped in history and rich in tradition. They come in black and white, 300 dpi and in .TIF format.
- Photographs. Art Explosion provides 2 different kinds of photographs: one in 24-bit 72 dpi and the other in 24-bit 240 dpi, and both in JPEG (.JPG) – Joint Photographic Expert Group format. They are Ideal for Internet use, presentations, and printing with inkjet printers. They can be reduced for higher resolution.
- Backgrounds. Provided in 72 dpi 24-bit color in .JPG format.
- Technical Symbols. In "vector" clip art style for engineering and archi-

tectural purposes for office and homes. They help in floor plan drawings for home remodeling, landscape contractors, and CAD programs such as Corel DRAW and Deneba Canvas. They are provided in .PICT, the Apple developed Picture Format.

- Art Explosion. It contains a variety of small file, fast loading buttons, bullets, banners, etc. as well as GIF – Graphics Interchange Format – animations, designed especially for the internet.

Disks

5 of the 6 DVD-ROM disks contain all the images, and each one of them is labeled with its contents divided in catalogs and categories. The sixth disk is the Installer.

To be continued...

Installation & Procedures

The Art Explosion installation and the images retrieval procedures will be presented in the Report # 2, in the next issue of Passages.

Art Explosion Report #2: Review

by **Fabio Fabbri**

"The Procedure"

If you read my first report now you know it is time to "Show and Tell".

The equipment.

I have a G5 dual with 2.5 GHz - 1.5 GB of RAM - 160 GB Hard Drive. Bought in January 2005, the G5 has given me trouble from the start. From time to time it had the fixation of booting up on the network giving me endless aggravations. Finally it decided to do it all the time, and CDW replaced the APL Logic board no questions asked. I have MS Office 2004 (that I am working with) and Virtual PC installed (that I have not even opened yet).

The operator.

As green as grass on the putting hole at Midlane Golf Resort when it comes to Mac OS X. Having had a print shop I started in the early '80s with a IICx and System 6 when there was hardly anybody you could talk to about computers, including the salesmen. If you didn't learn it yourself from the manuals you were out of luck. With 25 MHz of speed I went through a lot of coffee waiting for its answers. I graduated from that "little devil", and came up to a G4 and System 9.2.2 that I still have and like. For whatever reason Mac OS X is not in my blood yet. I give the fault to my new computer problems, and that for me is probably the best excuse, if you know what I mean.

My age?

I don't know if it is a strict requirement but, by order of a certain party in the family I am not supposed to divulge anyone's age, least of all mine. Let's say I still remember when Vince Lombardi said, "Winners never quit, quitters never win" which is an achievement by itself - memory wise.

Art Explosion installation.

It is so simple that even a grown up can do it. Insert the "Install Disk" (what else) in the drive and follow the instructions. In a matter of one minute you are up and running. The procedure installs the "Extensis Portfolio Browser" software, which easily displays any and all the images that are stored in the 5 DVD-ROM disks for easy selection.

The installation program does not copy any of the clip art or Photograph to your hard drive. Once the installation is done all the images are available to be "imported" into practically any file of any application by inserting in your drive the disk that contains the image(s) you want. Obviously the question is "Where is that image?"

Well, it is in one of those 5 disks. Fair enough?

The only problem I've had so far, really, was to get the proper disk out of the jewel case. It is a 5-disk jumbo size case that seems it wants to open always with the wrong compartment. Finally I made it without breaking anything. The Installer disk is stored separately in its own folder.

The Procedure.

What it all amounts to is having your document ready, and depending on your application you will want to "Import", "Insert", "Place", "Drag Dropping", etc., an

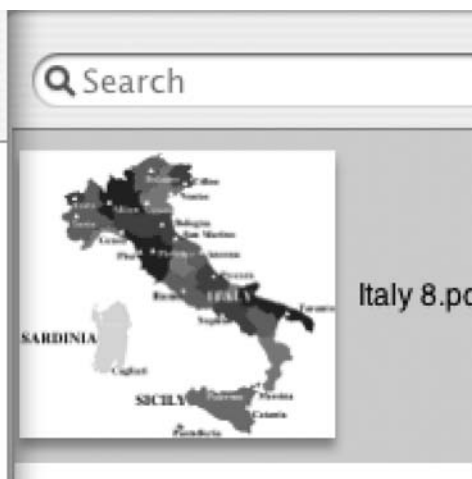
image from Art Explosion to your document. You can preview an image, copy and paste an image, edit an image, and copy files to your hard disk.

At first, choosing the proper disk to have your right image might seem difficult, but actually it is not. The good people at NOVA, from the start, have separated the "Web Graphic & Animation Categories" from other images, with an 8.5 x 11 - 10 point 2 sided enameled card board showing samples in color and categorizing them, making reference to the captions you find on the disks. Each DVD-ROM is numbered and labeled with its contents. Each one of them contains one or more image catalogs, and each catalog corresponds to a different category of images.

That said, don't you even think the images you want are jumping out of the disks looking for you, you MUST look for them, which requires a small learning curve, and a little time.

I have a friend that was going to spend a 3-month vacation in Tuscany, Italy (God bless him) by staying in one of those refurbished winery/farm houses close to Florence. Being born and having lived there for 27 years I thought of composing an itinerary with some of my experiences and places to see that usually are not in the tourist stops. I composed the itinerary, and then I wanted to insert the map of Italy in my text. I went in the volumes index (either one would do because the indexes are the same) looking for Italy and directed me to 6 different places to choose from. Page 935 for cartoon images of Italy, pages 939 and 1,672 for Maps, pages 859 and 865 for People, and finally page 1,420 for Titles. No wonder you have so many images.

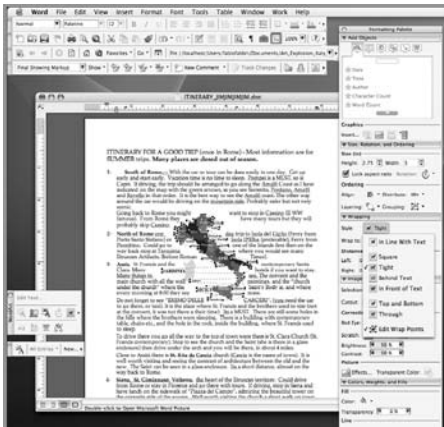
In the volumes I went to see all the Italy images in all those pages and found what I wanted: Italy 8, a colorful image with many city names. The "index" on page 935 told me that it was a "cartoon - vector" image, and the category was "maps". With that in mind I went looking for the disk containing



Art Explosion Report #2 continued:

those qualities and disk # 3 did fit the bill.

I inserted # 3 disk in the drive and opened it by double clicking its icon. I went to “maps” icon and opened that also. I scrolled down the names and finally found “Italy 8” icon and double clicking I opened that file. What do you know, here came the image I wanted in beautiful colors and in .PDF format. That file can be exported in .JPG and a dozen of other formats. It could also be saved on your hard drive, something that I did.



At this point I opened the Italy Itinerary file that I composed earlier, and positioned the cursor where I wanted the image to be and gave a click. Following the procedures required by my application from the Menu bar I chose Insert > Picture > From File and in the “Choose a Picture” window that did open, by scrolling, I found the icon I wanted. I double clicked on it and the image appeared in my text exactly where I wanted it. With some minor adjustments and using the “Formatting palette” in the “Text Wrapping” I chose “tight”. When the overall picture met my liking I made a “Screen Capture” and in the enclosed picture you see the result.

There are different ways of importing images in your documents, and different ways to find the images you want in the DVD-ROM. You have to choose the one that suits you best, and stick with it. I

understand that in the copy and paste method, for as much as it has its advantages, the color of the image may differ somewhat from the original.

My impressions.

I am very pleased in the way this program works. No effort ever in managing this huge amount of images. The installation was simple, the retrieval of images easy and fast. The big question is: What am I to do with 750,000 (or 750,002) images? I don't know. In my position a little less would have done it, for professionals it's a must, but all in all I am happy I won this Art Explosion software that will keep me busy for the rest of my life in finding ways to use all those images, needed or not.

In my case the images are all stored in 5 DVD-Disks and obviously there are so many images per disk that when you are looking for the one you want it takes some time to download all of them even for a fast Mac like mine. I understand the same Art Explosion 750,000 comes in CD-R disks - 48 of them I believe, giving fewer images per disk. With less files to open the downloading would be faster and easier. (Editor's note: I agree with Fabio – the 48-CD version of Art Explosion is my preference for speedier access to images.)

I have to compliment again the good people of TNWoU in making it easy for me to give a report. They give you an outline on how to make it, and I thank them very much because in writing I have the bad habit of wandering around a little. Hence it would be proper to adhere to what they are asking for.

At this point I want to make sure I am going to find out the 2 extra files that Sandy was talking about. After all I signed a piece of paper about giving this report and I don't want to let a good friend down and have to return the Art Explosion program that I like. To that extent, and also for safety, I started to make copies (only one for each) of the original DVD-ROM disks. I



could only go so far, wasting my empty DVD disks, because of a corrupted (?) file “X-Ray – Squirrel 1.eps” (see my screen capture) that I consider it to be the image #700,001.

The same happened with file “Equipment 1.eps” (no screen capture shown) that I consider image # 700,002. I assume NOVA replaced the 2 files with new good ones and forgot to delete the defective ones. So proving my point and not wanting to waste anymore DVD-R disks I will stop while I am ahead.

I welcome anybody to prove me wrong on that matter, and if that should be the case, I am ready to apologize, most of all to NOVA, but until then I stick to my guns.

Last but not least: did I say I was going to be early at the meetings because I didn't want to miss any part of Bill Geraci's very enlightening classes? Nah. I want to be early so I get another lucky ticket from Diane and have the pleasure to write another report.