Running a Photographic Competition with PhotoComp

Contents

Terminology

The "Competition folder" is the folder that contains all the information about the current competition. This includes

- a file with a .pcss extension, that holds the information about the competition structure and its awards.
- a file called "entrants.xml", which contains details of each entrant and their entries.
- a folder containing the individual image files for PDI classes.

The "web application" is a program on the PhotoCompSoftware web server. It is used for entrants to create their entry and upload image files .

The "Download/Backup folder" is a folder on your machine that is used when you download entries from the web. If you lose your Competition folder, you can recreate it from the data in the Download/Backup folder, so ideally the two folders should be on different physical disk drives.

The "Organisation code" and "Web password" are provide by PhotoCompSoftware, and are used to manage email and web entries. The password stays the same from year to year unless you request a change.

Running the programs

You cannot start another PhotoComp program if one is already running.

The main page of each of the PhotoComp programs has a dropdown list at the top that shows the current competition (1).
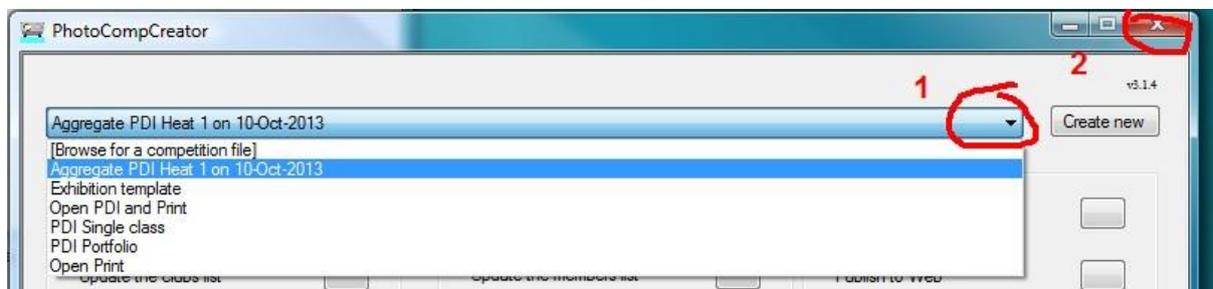
If the wrong competition is shown, select "Browse for an competition file" from the list and find the correct one.

In most cases the information you enter or download is not saved until you click "Finish" on the main page. If you click the "dismiss box" (2 above) you will receive a warning, and then you can choose to exit without saving the data - useful if something has gone wrong - or continue.

Creating your first competition

In this section we will discuss setting up and running a typical club competition with intermediate and advanced classes for PDI's and prints.

We will be setting up information about the competition overall, each medium (PDI and print) and each class within each medium (Intermediate and Advanced)

Setting up your Organisation data

Start PhotoCompCreator

If you have not already done so, Click "Update your organisation data"

Add

- Your organisation's name
- Organisation code (shown on your licence receipt)
- Web Password (shown on your licence receipt if you are using web entry)
- Address (usually of the competition secretary
- Country
- Time zone

- Click "Browse" beside "Logo" and locate a logo that will work well against a black background
- The other information is optional – it is used for creating additional competitions

Click Apply

Click "PhotoComp Settings" and

- Add your email address, and any other email addresses that you would like to receive replies to messages sent by PhotoComp.
- If you would like entrants to receive an acknowledgement when you download their entries, tick "Send email acknowledgements"

Click Apply

In the dropdown list (1 above), select a suitable template[1] – we will choose Open PDI and Print and click "Create new".

- You will be asked for a short name for the competition. This will not be seen by the entrants, so you can keep it as short as possible.

- You then create a folder for the competition. It's a good idea to keep all your competition folders in a single master folder

"Update your competition data" will then open. There are three tabs at the top of the page

With the PhotoComp tab, add

- A title for the Competition as you would like to see it on the web entry form
- The Competition date (the date of judging)
- The Entries Close date and time
- The projector resolution Leave "Limit classes per entrant" and "Limit entries per entry" empty (these limit the number of entries and entrant can submit in the entire competition)
- You can type in the judges name – this will be shown on the welcome screen for projected images
- Choose whether the competition is open to members only, to anyone or is an interclub competition (see a separate document or information about interclub competitions)

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[1] When you have created a competition, you can use that as a template for future competitions

- You can change the location of the image folder (that will contain the image files) by clicking "Browse" beside "Image folder".

If you are using the web entry, select the "Web" tab and

- Click Browse and choose a location for the download/backup folder. If possible this should be on a separate drive from the one you will use to store the exhibition entries.
- Edit the "Web description/rules" using the Change button. You could use this to inform web entrants about information that applies to the entire competition – perhaps a set subject.
- Enter the organiser's name – this will be shown on emails etc
  (you can ignore "set parameters for entries via the web" for most club competitions).
- Emails are sent from your organisation code @ PhotoCompEntries.net (eg demo@ PhotoCompEntries.net) . To change the address where replies will be sent use "PhotoComp Settings".
- If you are collecting prints, you can add an address to which they must be sent (this is optional)
- Select your time zone
- You can affect the "look" of the web pages with the Web theme – see the article "How to Personalise the Web Entry facility"
- At the end of the web entry process you can ask a question and get a list of entrants that ticked a box (For example, "Tick the box for further information about out club?". Type your text in the "Ask at end" box, and view the results with PhotoCompResults
- On the web entry form there is provision for entrants to enter their photographic honours (for example a/FIAP). There is space for four, but you can allow from 0 to 4.
- "Oversize images:" lets you choose what should happen if an entrant submits an image that is larger than the maximum you allow. You can reject the image, you can ask if the entrants wants the system to resize it for them , or you can ignore the fact it's oversized and let the system resize it as needed (this is the usual options for club competitions).

- If you click the Test button, and all is OK, your browser will open with a page saying "No open competitions for xxx" and the bottom of the Web tab will show "Entry FTP OK"

The web options tab

- These options let you specify what is shown on the entry form.

The template we chose contained print and PDI media. We need different classes however. Click update to access the page for the Print medium.

Make sure that the correct type medium is selected – PDI, Print, or prints viewed as PDI's. In this case, entrants will provide both a print and digital file for projection, with the intent that the judge will evaluate print whilst the audience view the projected version of the image.

Now add or update the classes in the medium.
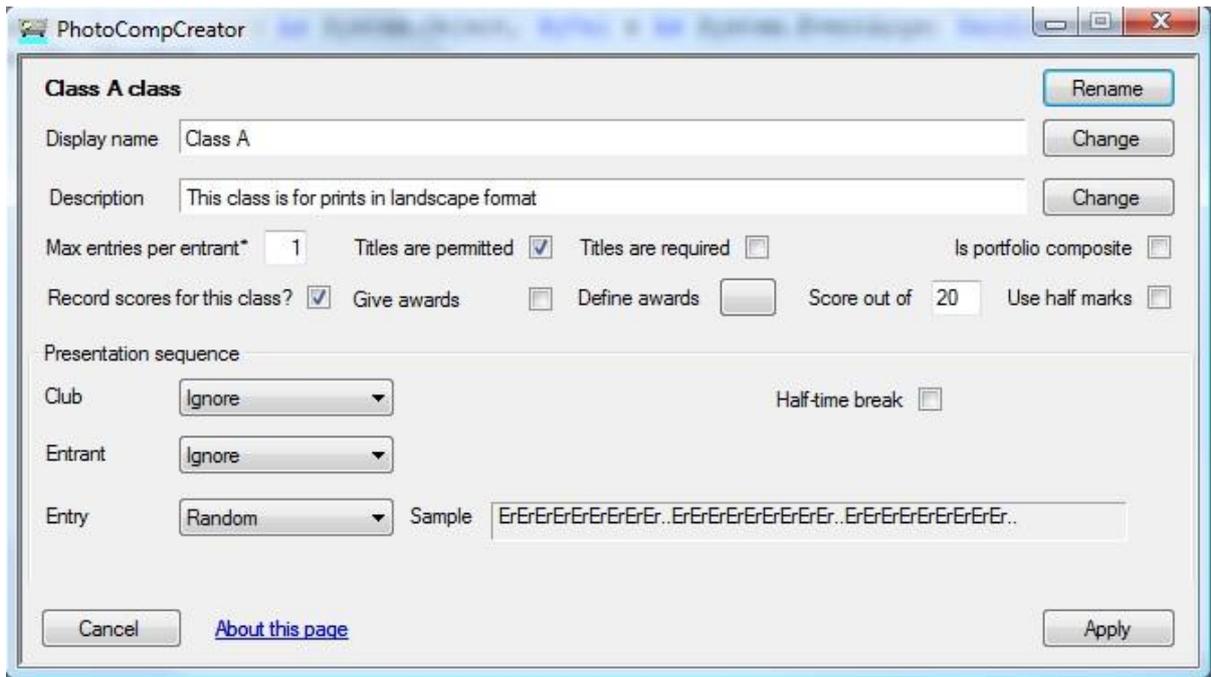
In this example we need to rename the class "Intermediate", change the display name and clear description.

The description, which is optional, can either be

- a single line of text
- a reference to "standard" PSA and FIAP definitions in the form
    - FIAP+PSA rules/Nature
    - FIAP+PSA rules/Travel
    - FIAP+PSA rules/Mono
- a reference to an HTML file containing your text, such as *printSizes.htm* All such files for the competition should be in a single folder so they can be uploaded to the web.

In a competition such as ours, where each entrant may only enter their assigned class, you can set the Max entries per entrant to 1. (You can control which class each member can enter using the membership list and choosing "Members only" as the competition type). In other styles of competition entrants may be allowed to enter more than one class.

Set the Max entries per entrant for this class, and tick the appropriate boxes for titles. Next set the options for how the class will be judged - whether scores, awards (such as First, Second etc) or both, and if scoring, the maximum score.

If you are assigning awards, you need to specify them before judging begins. Use the "Define awards" button (as described in the next section below).

You can leave presentation sequence as is, and click Apply.

In our case we would need to repeat this process for the advanced print class.

Return to the competition page and select the PDI medium. Again, make sure it shows PDI and update the classes. In our example we need to delete the novice class and update the other two.
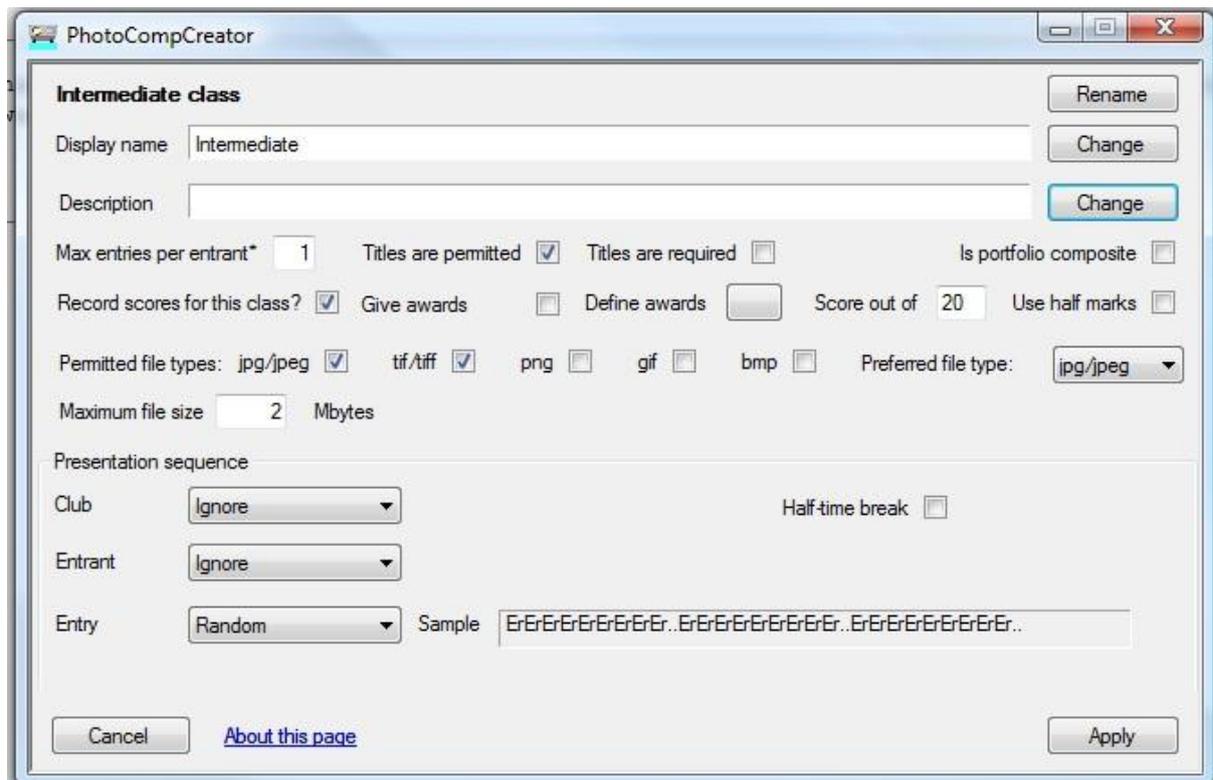
For PDI classes we also need to set the permitted file types and, optionally, a maximum file size. Entrants can upload files of whatever size they like, but if they are larger than the maximum size you specify, they will get resized on the server to your preferred file type at a quality that results in a file size that is less than your limit.

When you when you click apply and return to the main page you will be asked to create or select a folder for the competition. We suggest you keep all your competitions in a master folder for your club's year (referred to later as the "PhotoComp" folder), and within that each competition needs a separate folder. This should have a short name such as "Open Round 1"

You may want to consider putting your "PhotoComp" folder on an external hard drive, so that competition data can be moved easily from machine to machine[2].

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[2] You should be particularly careful if using cloud storage such as Windows OneDrive or Dropbox. See Notes on Dropbox and OneDrive

Defining awards

If you have already set up awards for a class in the competition, you can copy them with the dropdown list and make any modifications you need by selecting an award in the list and using the "Update" or "Remove" buttons.

Use the "Ist, 2nd..." button to create one First, Second and Third awards plus any number of Highly Commended and Commendeds for the class.

To add a new award, click "Add"...
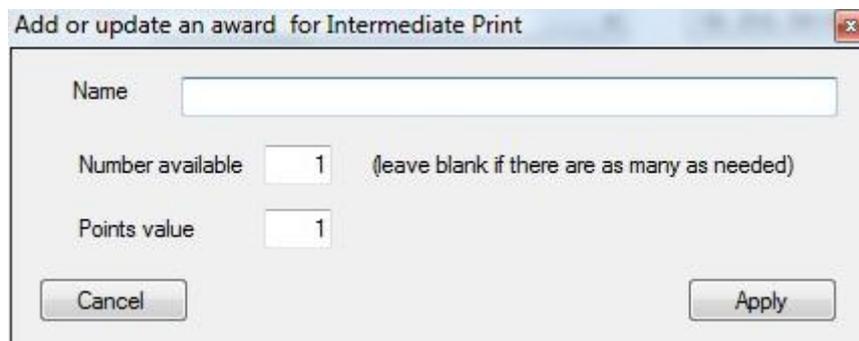
Give your award a name, and set the number available. If there's no limit, type 99 or clear the box. You can assign a points value to the award for use when calculating league tables, so perhaps a First gets 7 points, a Second gets 5 and so on (note the awards created with the "Ist, 2nd..." button have points values 5,4,3,2, and 1. You can change these).

24/05/2012 10:24
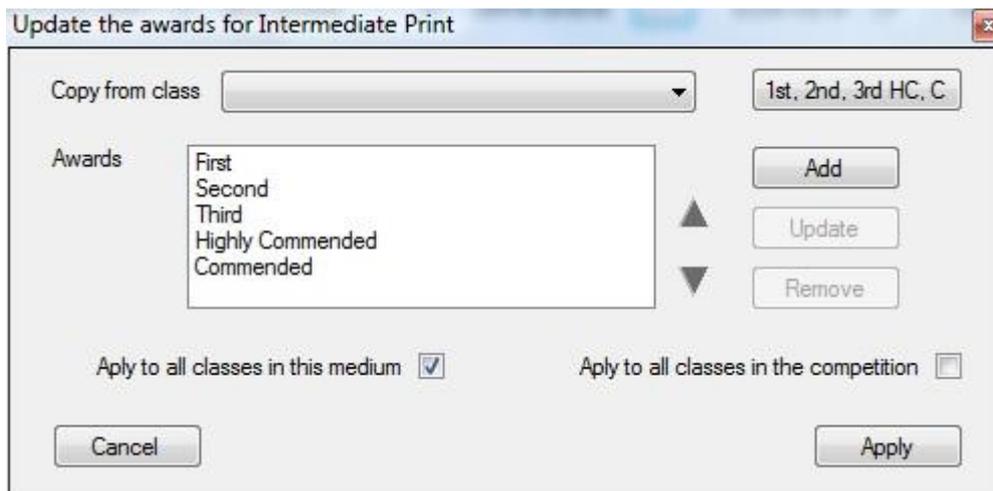
The sequence of awards shown in the list is the sequence that they will appear in reports etc. You can change the sequence by clicking on an award and using the up and down arrows

You can click one of the boxes to apply your awards to all the classes in the medium or the competition, so if all classes have the same awards, create the classes first and then add the awards to the last class, ticking the "Apply to all classes in the competition" box

Setting some options

Click "PhotoComp settings"

- The Folders tab
  - o If you run competitions and exhibitions on the same computer, you may need separate settings folders.
  - o You can clear testing data from the current competition and, optionally, the web, by clicking "Reset the competition…"

- The General tab contains options that apply to all of the PhotoComp programs.
  - o You can remove a competition or clear all the entries in the dropdown list shown on the fist page

Publishing your competition to the web

Click "Publish to web"

- Set the competition start date. If you are testing, you can tick the TESTING box – this will show a warning on the web pages in case an entrant finds the site before you are ready.
- Tick the elements that need uploading, and click "Upload".

Changing email text

If you are not using the default text for emails and letters, you should update the text using PhotoCompCreator/"Update email/letter text".

Creating a new competitions from last year's competitions[3]

You need to know

- The name of the new competition
- The date entries open
- The date entries close
- The date of judging
- Any changes to awards
- Judges' names

Run PhotoCompMakeNext[4]. This takes you through the process of

- creating a new folder containing an competition .pcss file with the new name, dates and awards
- uploading the necessary files to the web

for each of the competitions in the folder containing last year's competitions.

You will be asked to save each.pcss file… at this point you should also create a new folder for that competition (with the "New folder" icon on the "Save file" dialog) and provide a short name for the .pcss file.

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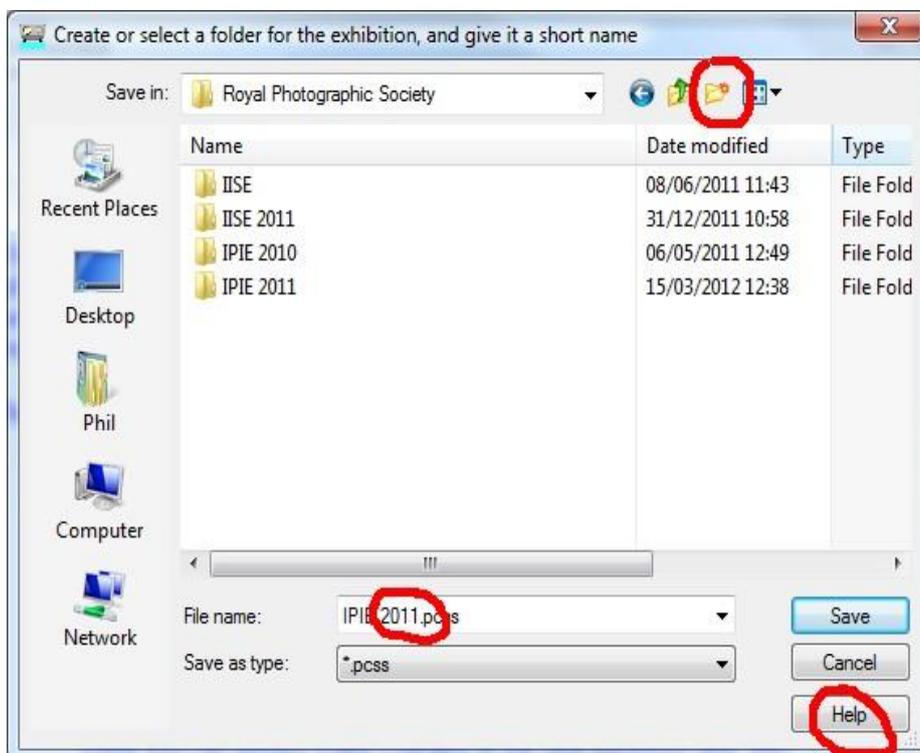
[3] You should make new competitions rather than just updating previous ones, as there is some "hidden" data that must be recreated by the software.
[4] In the Launcher on the "PhotoComp Extras" tab

If possible, you should create the new folder on a different physical disk drive from the Download/Backup folder. You can see the location of the current Download/Backup folder by clicking Help

If you need to change awards, see "Changing awards"

Updating your own website

You will need to update your organisation's site to reflect the new dates etc. The link to the web entry form will not need to be changed.