# Pixel Dispersion / Explosion Effect

1. Open a suitable image in Photoshop

2. Make two copies of the background layer by pressing CTRL+J twice

3. Turn off the 'Eye Icon' on the top layer. (Layer 1 copy)

4. Click on the middle layer (Layer 1) to select it, the background will turn blue to indicate it is selected. Double click the name, Layer 1, and rename it 'background only' (double click on the name, not the layer, then type in your new name), as shown in Figure 1

**Figure 1**

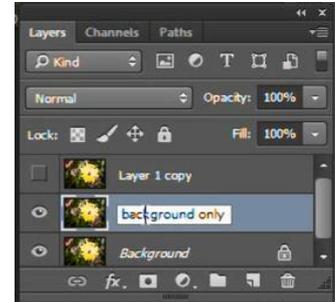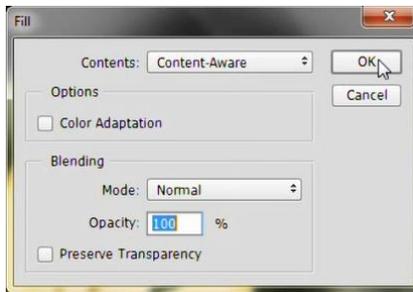5. Make sure that this layer is still selected (blue) then make a selection of the subject, using a suitable selection tool

6. From the 'Edit' drop-down menu select the 'Fill option. In the dialogue box select 'Content-Aware' from the Use drop-down and leave the Blending Mode as 'Normal' and Opacity at '100%'. Leave 'Preserve Transparency' unchecked and click 'OK', as shown in Figure 2

**Figure 2**

7. Deselect the selection by pressing CTRL+D

8. Turn the 'Eye Icon' back on, on the top layer. (Layer 1 copy)

9. Select this layer and rename it 'Subject' using the same method a step 4

10. Make another selection of the subject

11. Copy the selection onto another layer (CTRL/J), this will delete the background on the new layer. Rename this layer 'Subject Transformed'

12. Make a copy of this layer (CTRL/J) and rename this new layer 'Subject only'

13. With the 'Subject Transformed' layer selected, press CTRL/T to bring up the free Transform controls

14. Drag out the subject in the direction that you wish the dispersion effect to take. Once you're happy click the tick near the top of the screen or press the 'Enter' key on the keyboard to commit to the transformation, as shown in Figure 3

**Figure 3**

Designed and written by

**GEOFF CABLE**
**& GARY CROUCH**

The creators and
administrators of
the

15. Turn off the 'Eye Icon' on the 'Subject' layer (the third one down)

16. Select the top layer (Subject only) and create a layer mask, by clicking on the icon at the bottom of the layers panel. (third from left, it looks like a rectangle with a circle in the middle)

17. Select the second layer down (Subject Transformed) then Create a layer mask, as above, and then reverse it (turn it black) by pressing CTRL/I)

18. Select the layer mask on the 'Subject only' layer by clicking on the mask itself, not the layer

19. Make sure that your foreground color is Black and the background color is White The quickest shortcut to reset these is to press the 'D' key to reset the colors to black and white, followed the 'X' key to swap the foreground and background colors

20. Now select your brushes. Click on the Brush Icon in the tools panel or press the 'B' key. If the Brush tool isn't visible in tools panel, right click on the top tool in the Brush tool set and select it from the pop out menu

21. Click on the little downward facing triangle icon, which is next to brush size and shape icon, at the top left of the screen. Then click on the settings icon, at the top right of the dialogue box, to bring up a drop down menu of brush presets, as shown in Figure 4

22. Select 'Square Brushes' (third from the bottom)

23. Select any square brush, by clicking on it. You can make the brush bigger or smaller by pressing the right and left bracket keys



Figure 4

24. Now for the fun part!

25. Click, don't brush, around your subject to create the effect of the pixels disappearing, vary your brush size as you go

26. If you make a mistake, or are not happy with the result, change the foreground color to White and paint out the unwanted effects

27. Now click on the black layer mask on the 'Subject Transformed' layer

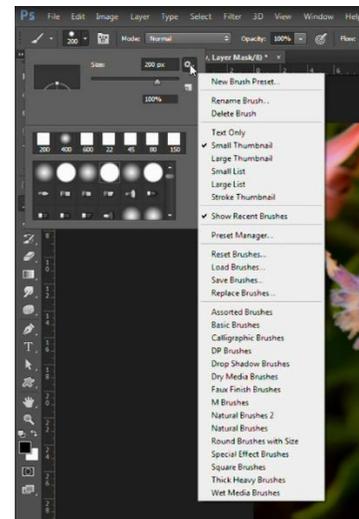28. Change your foreground color to White. ('X' key or by clicking on the little curved arrow)

29. Now click on the areas that you wish to place the 'dispersed' pixels into. Click with the brush, do not paint). Vary your brush size as you click. As above you can paint out mistakes by reversing the foreground and background colors (In this case from White to Black)



30. If you wish you can add a drop shadow, or other effect, by clicking on the 'FX' Icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. (second from the left)

31. When you have finished save your work in your chosen format. (File>Save as)

**Figure 5**

You have now completed your Pixel Dispersion/Explosion project, as shown in Figure 5.

That concludes our look at how we use Photoshop to create a Pixel Dispersion/Explosion effect.

We hope you found that useful, go to our web site for more video's and information. I'm GC from GC2 Photoclub, hope to see you again soon.