AI for Photo Fun

Bill Cameron

When I got home from our chapter's Christmas party, I found Jude Gallaher had emailed me a photo Wendy Fox had taken of my buddy Ken White and me. I liked the picture, but the background just showed the restaurant's parking lot. And there was nothing to indicate that the photo was taken at a Christmas event.


I uploaded the photo to an artificial intelligence app called Gemini. Told Gemini what I wanted, and in less than a minute, I had this with a warm Christmas background. (Photo at right). As I continued to work with Gemini, I was able to add more detail to the photo. Now Ken and I can be Santa's elves.

AI is, you could say, my new hobby. I use it for research, brainstorming, conversation, and just experimenting to learn what it can do. But the most fun I have with AI is photo editing.

I've tried four different AI programs – all free – and found that Gemini, a Google app, works best.
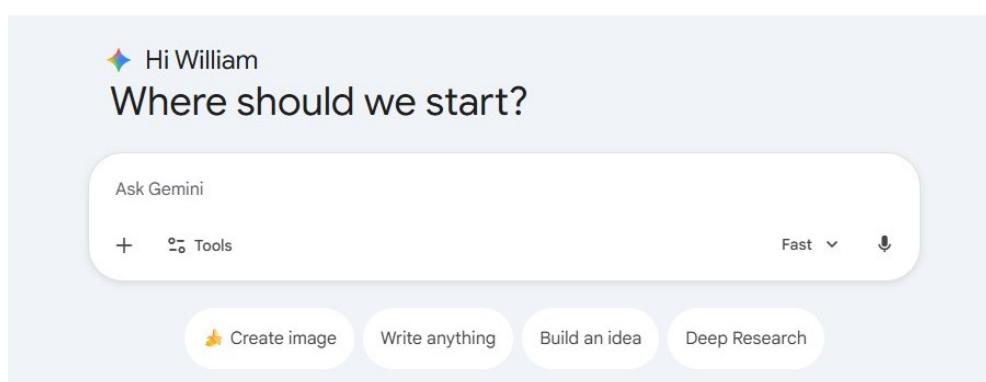
Once you've downloaded Gemini to your computer (theoretically, you can use your phone, but the larger computer screen is a big help), open it and you'll see this simple start page:

Click on the + sign to upload your photo; then explain to Gemini what you want it to do. You can do this by typing right where it says **Ask Gemini**. Or you can use your voice by clicking on the microphone icon. I always type. It's important to get your instruction (called a "prompt") just right and I like to be able to look at what I've written and fine-tune it before sending it.

My prompt for the party photo was: *Change the background of this photo into a Christmas scene.*

There's much more Gemini can do with photos besides changing backgrounds. It can remove or add objects or people. It can put people in different clothes. Or different places. It can realistically add famous people, living or dead (subject to some restrictions). You're limited only by your imagination.

One of the rewarding applications of this process is

restoring old black-and-white photos and turning them into full color portraits. A friend sent me this old picture of one of their deceased relatives.
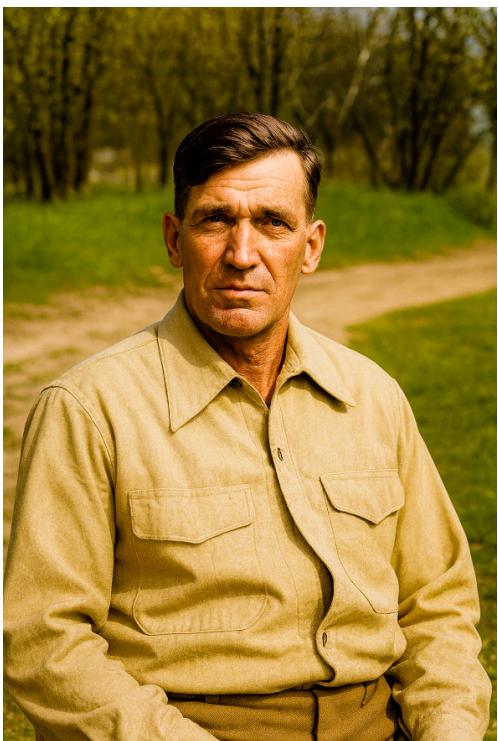
I uploaded it to Gemini and gave this prompt: *Edit this photo into a professional portrait of very high quality and color.* This was the result:

I've read dozens of articles about AI, but the truth is that I seem to have read the same article dozens of times. They all say essentially the same thing: AI is amazing and it will either make the world wonderful or kill us all.

Meanwhile, it's a lot of fun to fool around with.