

ON1 Photo RAW Pitfalls: Protecting Your Competition Eligibility

ON1 Photo RAW (version 2025-2)



Introduction

The rapid advancement of AI-generative technology in photo post processing has fundamentally transformed the creative process. ON1 Photo RAW's cloud-based Stability AI mode represents the application's key innovation.

Using these tools, the user can seamlessly add new components to photos or reconstruct missing areas with synthetic content that appears consistent with the existing image.

The application's key AI-generative features includes:

- **Generative Eraser:** which creates new content to fill in-removed areas.
- **Generative Crop:** which states image boundaries with generated content.

While these two AI-generative tools offer creative possibilities, they directly contradict CAPA's competition guidelines requiring ***all image elements to originate from the photographer's original capture.***

CAPA Competition Guidelines

CAPA's Eligibility Criteria specifically outlines restrictions on AI tool usage. Understanding these limitations is essential for photographers seeking to ensure their submissions remain eligible for CAPA competitions:

Images that have been created or modified using specific AI generative techniques are not permitted for submission into our competitions. This includes:

- **In-painting** (where AI fills in generated elements not captured by the photographer or removes and replaces elements from a photograph with AI-generated content);
- **Out-painting** (where AI extends beyond the original boundaries of the photograph using generated elements);
- **Image-to-image AI** (where AI transforms an entire photograph based on text prompts or style references);
- **Text-to-image** (where images are generated from scratch based on text entered into a prompt description).

These restrictions apply whether or not text prompts are used in the AI generation process.

All parts of the submitted image are the creator's original work, containing no elements produced or captured by others.

ON1 Photo RAW's Dual Processing Modes

Understanding how ON1's AI features work is crucial for maintaining competition eligibility. The application offers two distinct processing approaches:

Local Processing Mode

- Runs entirely on your computer's hardware
- Uses existing image data for enhancements
- Does not generate new content from external sources
- Maintains competition eligibility

Cloud-Based Stability AI Mode

- Requires a separate Stability AI account and API key
- Processes images using external cloud-based AI models
- Can generate entirely new content not present in the original capture

Feature-by-Feature Breakdown

Competition-Safe Tools

Basic Enhancement Features:

- All standard adjustments (brightness, contrast, hue/saturation, cropping)
- Traditional filters and layer operations
- Enhanced color correction tools
- AI Brilliance tool
- Intelligent depth masking capabilities

AI-Powered Safe Tools:

- **Perfect Eraser** (Local mode only - removes dust spots and power lines using existing image data)

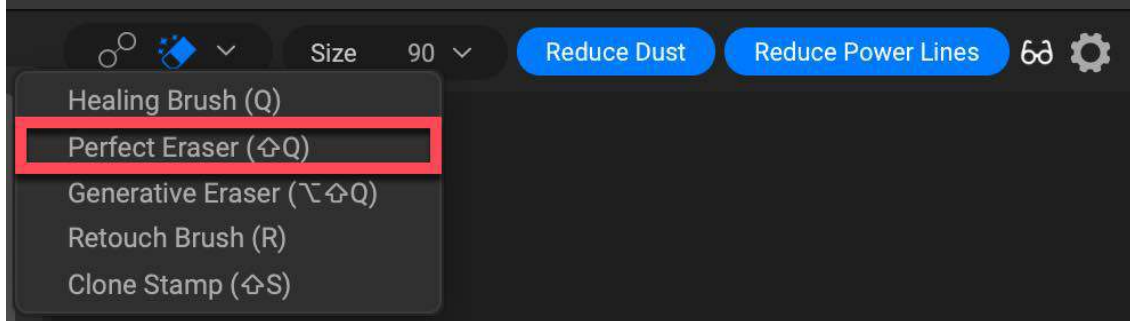


Figure 1 – Screen capture of the Perfect Eraser tool with options to address Dust and Power Line distractions.

- **Generative Crop** (Local modes - intelligently crops and straightens using original image content)

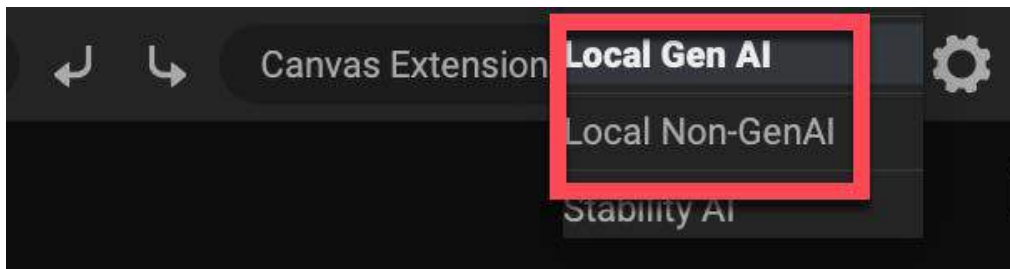


Figure 2 – Screen capture of the Local Gen AI and Local Non-GenAI options within the Crop Tool.

✗ FLAGGED TOOLS

Cloud-Based AI Generative Features:

- **Generative Eraser with Stability AI** - Creates new content to fill removed areas (Distractions – wires, people & vehicles)

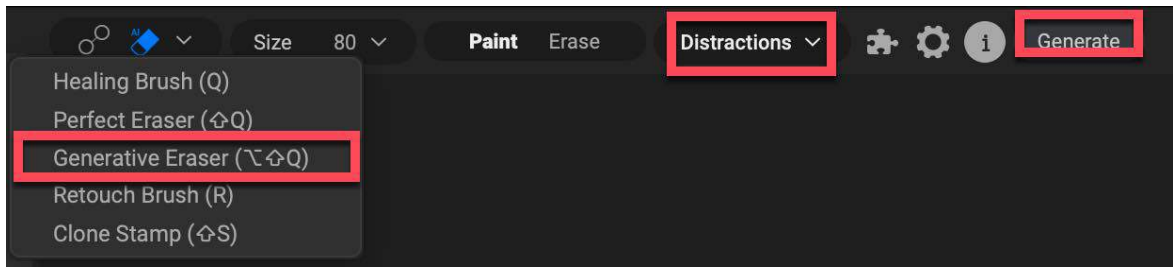


Figure 3 – Screen capture of the Generative Eraser with the Distraction options.

- **Generative Crop with Stability AI** - Extends image boundaries with generated content

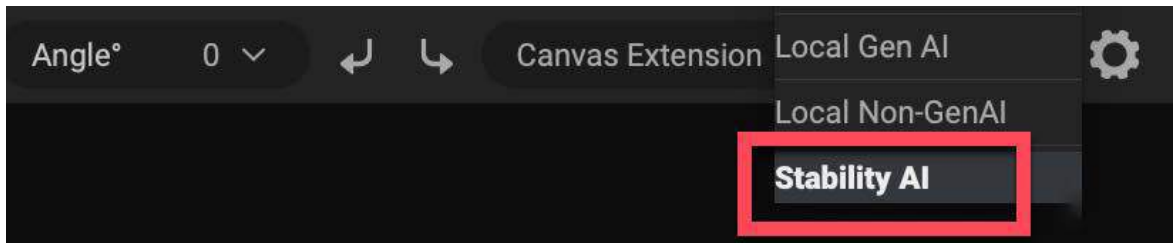


Figure 4 – Screen capture of the Generative Crop with the Stability AI feature.

The Metadata Challenge

ON1 Incorporated is not a member of the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity (C2PA) framework, which creates several verification challenges:

- No automatic documentation of AI modifications in image metadata
- Verification of which editing tools were used becomes difficult
- Photographers bear the full responsibility for tracking their own editing processes
- Competition verification become problematic without automated AI detection tools.

However, ON1 Photo RAW's cloud-based AI-generative features remain detectable using specialized photo forensic tools. These include Error Level Analysis and Noise Analysis, which can identify AI-generated content even without metadata documentation.

Best Practices for Competition Photography

Before You Edit:

- **Preserve your original files** and work on copies when editing. For JPEG files, always duplicate the original before making any edits to maintain an untouched backup. For RAW files, this isn't necessary since RAW editors work non-destructively. Your edits are stored as instructions separate from the original file, and changes are only applied when you export the final image. The original RAW file always remains unmodified.
- Understand which processing mode you're using (Local vs. Stability AI)

- Review the specific competition's AI usage policies
- Plan your editing workflow to stay within acceptable boundaries

During Editing:

- Utilize local processing modes when possible
- Avoid any tools that generate new image content
- Keep detailed records of your editing process
- When in doubt, use traditional (non-AI) editing methods

After Editing:

- Review your final image, comparing it to the competition criteria for compliance.
- Be prepared to explain your editing process if questioned
- Consider keeping both original and edited versions for verification.
- Always verify current requirements before submitting your work.
- Save Images with Metadata in ON1 Photo RAW

Export Image with Metadata

Step #1: Select **File > Export**

Step #2: Select the **JPEG** in the File Type field as shown in figure below

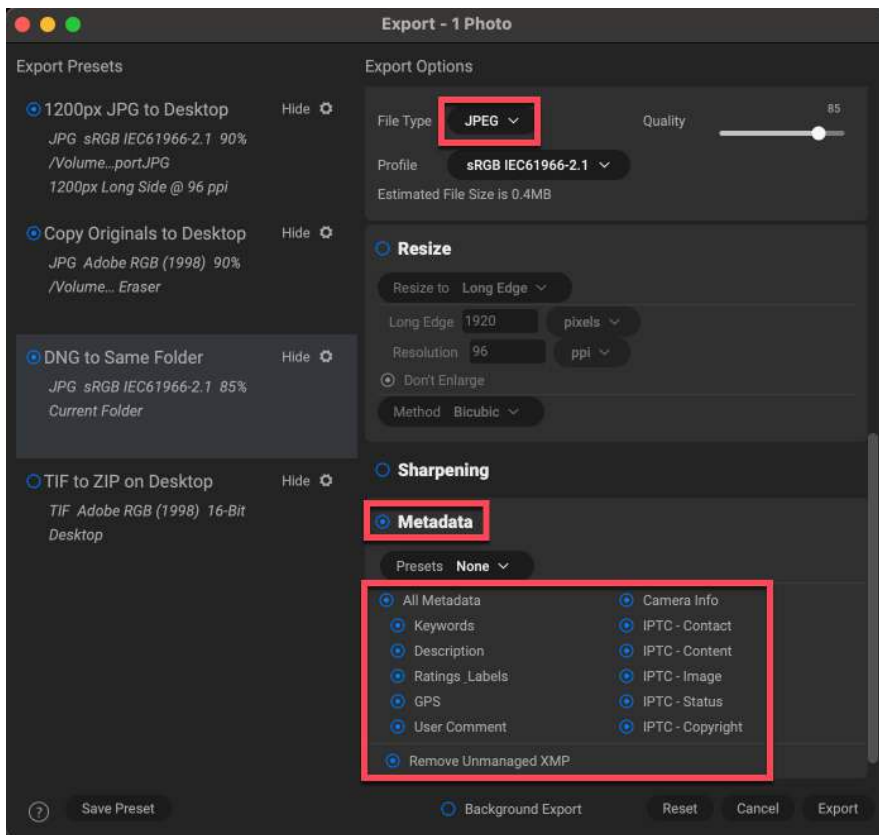


Figure 5 – Screen capture of the Export

Step #3: Select the **All Metadata option** so all the metadata fields are selected, as shown in the figure above.

Step #4: Select the **Export** button to save the image.

Special Note - Keep these files accessible throughout the competition period.

Image Requirements for Competition Winners

CAPA may request the following image files from the potential winners:

- Original unedited JPEG or RAW file
- All source images used in composites or blends
- Working file (PSD or DNG) showing your editing process
- XMP metadata file (when applicable)

Verification & Authentication Processes: All potential winning images files will be subjected to our analysis to ensure the authenticity of the submitted image and verify compliance with competition guidelines.

Important: Photographers that cannot provide the required verification files or fail our authenticity analysis then the image will be disqualified and competition results will be adjusted accordingly.

Closing Comments

If you have any questions or concerns relating to the above details, you can email me at competitions@capacanada.ca

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