

Introduction

Just as the camera is no longer relegated to the elite or industry professionals, Photoshop is no longer considered the tool of graphic designers alone. Whether it is used to scan photographs, paint a landscape, apply effects to text, create Web pages, or alter images, the application enables all users to accomplish one common feat: to produce professional-quality images in virtually any digital format.

You may be surprised at how many people outside of the design industry are aware of and have even used Adobe Photoshop. The software application that is the industry standard for manipulating digital imagery is also the most commonly referred to when the topic comes up even among those who don't use Photoshop every day of their professional lives.

A salesman might say, "The folks in marketing are 'Photoshopping' a representation of what the final product will look like." Or, you might hear the host on *The Daily Show* say in reference to the story graphic for a news item, "that graphic of President Bush and Putin was badly Photoshopped. I apologize. The artists responsible for this outrage will be flogged." Or your relative might say "why did you Photoshop my head onto Mt. Rushmore?" Photoshop is a part of our culture as much as Xerox has come to mean photocopy.

However, because of its proliferation amongst such a large user base, Photoshop does different things for different users. And because most of the program's users employ the program for a specific purpose, what one user knows might not be helpful in solving another user's problem.

This book, then, is assembled to help all of Photoshop's diverse users quickly find answers to their specific challenges:

- How do I correct for red eye in my photographs? (Task 112 explains how.)
- How do I convert my document's color space? (Task 45 details the process.)
- How do I convert my photographs for Web display? (Task 235 shows the way.)

And these are only three questions this book addresses.

This book doesn't try to be an in-depth guide to using Photoshop to achieve a specific goal such as creating Web sites or publication graphics. Rather, this book serves as an indispensable reference, ready to provide you with quick-to-follow, easy-to-understand, step-by-step instructions to specific challenges culled from over 10 years of professional and instructional experience with Photoshop.

With over 250 common Photoshop challenges explained within 10 simple steps or less, you as the reader will have quick access to your problem's solution in a matter of minutes or seconds — whether you are scanning photographs for fun, correcting images professionally, or building a Web site for a nonprofit organization.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into 17 parts to organize the types of tasks you might want to accomplish. Within each part is a group of tasks; each task occupies a double-page spread in this book, meaning that you can find everything you need to complete a given task by holding the book open to two facing pages.

Beyond each task's numbered, straightforward instruction, the spreads are accompanied by tips, notes, cross-references, and cautions. These supplementary bits of information, while not integral to completing a task, can be used to enhance your understanding and mastery of a given challenge.

The book's parts are organized in a logical fashion. The initial chapters introduce you to the Photoshop CS interface, assisting new users with the application's environment. As you move through the book, the chapters build in terms of complexity based on the frequency of the operations for most users. More common tasks, such as selections and painting, are covered in the first quarter of the book, while more advanced tasks, such as automating your work flow and creating Web graphics, are in later parts of the book.

The book's parts are divided as follows:

Part 1: Photoshop Basics

Setting the preferences, importing pictures from your scanner, and saving to different file formats. These are some of the items that you learn in this part to get you accustomed to Photoshop.

Part 2: The Work Area

After learning the basics, it's time to get familiar with the tools and palettes in Photoshop. In this part you inspect the toolbox and numerous palettes and learn how to customize your workspace. While the image editing commands and palettes might seem a little overwhelming at first, this part will help get you comfortable with your Photoshop work space so you can say “revert to a previous state” with confidence.

Part 3: Color Essentials

Unless you are trapped in time, like the 1980s, chances are you don't have a monochrome monitor that sports only green phosphorous. This part explains how to customize your color settings, calibrate your color monitor, and deal with the other important basics of color management.

Part 4: Color Adjustments

Do you have an image showing a horse of a different color? This part introduces you to the many ways you can color correct your artwork in Photoshop CS.

Part 5: Selections

For the most part, if you want to modify a photo or some other artwork in Photoshop CS, you first have to select it. Whether a simple rectangle or a complex, multipart freeform shape, selections can be made using a number of means. This part explains how to make, save, resize, rotate, and delete selections, as well as how to apply some simple modifications (such as a stroked edge).

Part 6: Path Essentials

While not known as a vector-based imaging tool, Photoshop CS does have its fair share of path tools. These tools enable you to share paths with other programs like Adobe Illustrator to create clipping paths or geometric design elements.

Part 7: Transformations

One of the more common uses of Photoshop CS is resizing and cropping a given image. Using any number of the application's transformations, you can not only resize and crop your images; you can twist, turn, bend and scale them before your eyes. This part shows you how.

Part 8: Painting Essentials

Not all Photoshop users pick up the program to modify photographs. Using the application's painting tools, you can draw and paint with a variety of brushes, colors, and effects. This part details the different tools at your disposal, as well as how to modify them to achieve unique results.

Part 9: Advanced Painting Techniques

In this part we get a little bit more advanced with Photoshop's painting options — from learning how to paint from history states to defining your own custom brushes. Once you mastered the tasks in this part, you might never pick up a real paintbrush again.

Part 10: Channels and Masks

Channels and masks, too, contribute to Photoshop's reputation as a first-class digital imaging package. Masks enable you to hide certain parts of your image so you don't accidentally edit them, and channels enable you to store masks for later use. Mastery of these two features enables you to gain a greater degree of flexibility and creative control than you would have without making use of these features, and this part gives you the low-down on how to make the most of channels and masks.

Part 11: Layer Essentials

When Photoshop 3 introduced layers, the design world went crazy. While layers might not induce you to perform euphoric jumps in the air, they will save you hours of time and make it much easier for you to modify your images. This part details how to create, organize, and modify content layers and layer sets.

Part 12: Layer Styles and Shape Layers

Layer styles may be arguably one of the best time-saving additions Photoshop has ever seen. However, by enabling you to apply effects (such as drop shadow, bevel, and stroke effects) without stamping their results into your artwork, Photoshop not only saves you time, it also enables you to modify these effects on a selective basis without changing your original artwork. Also, using shape layers, you can create artwork that scales to any size while printing with crisp, sharp edges.

Part 13: Type

You can not only use Photoshop to modify or improve your digital photographs, paintings, and layouts, you can also use it to treat typography. While allowing controls similar to most word processors, including a spell checker, Photoshop enables you to combine its other niceties, such as layer effects or path distortions, to live text. This part explains how to create and modify text in your artwork.

Part 14: Filters

A filter provides an easy way to manipulate or create digital imaging effects and, out of the box, Photoshop comes with numerous sets of filter. From artistic to lighting effects, this part details how to make the most of these filters and filter effects.

Part 15: Automations

Aside from the physical harm of repetitive stress injuries, replicating the same operations over and over can be downright mind-numbing. Photoshop provides a series of technologies that enable you to automate repetitive operations that you would perform on a single image or a set of images. This part fills you in on how to put Photoshop to work for you.

Part 16: Print Essentials

When you are satisfied with the result of your work and deem your image perfect, you can share your art with friends and colleagues via e-mail, or you can print out a physical manifestation of your digital prowess. This part explains how to set up your printer and page setup options.

Part 17: For the Web: ImageReady

ImageReady is Photoshop's companion application built for Web graphics optimization. Although we can't teach you how to create a Web site in 10 steps or less in this part, we sure can help you get started by detailing some key features of ImageReady that enable you to animate or optimize your images for Web display.

Who Should Read this Book

Photoshop users are a diverse bunch. The only assured commonality they all share is that they use Photoshop on a computer; all else is open to the imagination and needs of the particular user. Because of this diversity, this book casts a wide net in determining its audience.

Beginners and intermediate users to Photoshop will likely gain the most benefit from this book. In many ways, this book is the excellent companion to Photoshop users who feel they have straightforward questions for which they want a straightforward, simple answer.

Although the book is designed more as a reference than a cover-to-cover read, newcomers to Photoshop will strongly benefit from reading Parts 1 and 2 in their entirety before moving on to specific areas of interest later in the book. Intermediate users should consider scanning the 17 different part titles to determine which aspects of Photoshop CS remain overlooked in their current experience; for example, automations, covered in Part 15, are a commonly ignored but incredibly powerful feature of Photoshop CS.

Who Should Not Read This Book

If you are looking for a book devoted to special effects and techniques, this is not the book for you. This book is also not an in-depth guide to using Photoshop to achieve more ambitious goals such as creating full-fledged Web sites or publication graphics. Our goal is to help you understand Photoshop and standard Photoshop techniques by giving you the necessary knowledge to find your way around this awesome application.

Tools You Will Need

As mentioned earlier, there are two certainties that bind all Photoshop users: a personal computer and a copy of Adobe Photoshop. That's it.

For those with a personal computer but no copy of Photoshop, be sure to visit Adobe's Web site (www.adobe.com). With nearly every piece of software they release, Adobe releases a fully functional, free, 30-day trial version, and Photoshop CS is no exception. Although the file size and download time may be steep (upwards of 300 MB in some cases), the price can't be beat for the ability to learn the industry's mainstay application. When you're ready to buy the application outright after your demo version expires, visit DealNews (www.dealnews.com) and search for Photoshop — chances are you'll find some deals that enable you to save a few hundred bucks of the street price of the software.

Lastly, to really gain the most benefit from this book, have a number of your own images on hand and ready to manipulate. While several tasks detail how to create certain artwork from a blank canvas, most tasks assume you have some digital artwork ready to open and modify. If you're new to the program and don't have any images to work with, there are a number of ways you can acquire imagery to work with.

First, you can visit this book's Web site to download nearly all of the images used as examples in this. While these images are free for you to experiment with, you cannot use them in your own published materials.

Second, you can use the Google image search site (images.google.com) to scan the Web for sample images you can work with following the instructions in this book. However, almost certainly you can not use the images you find for your own work without infringing on somebody else's copyright. Always check with the Web site from which you download images to see if they are in the public domain.

Last, but hardly least, you can go commercial. For some of the most beautiful stock photography images money can buy, visit LuckyPix (www.luckypix.com). This stock house features an impressive lineup of conceptual imagery. You'll have to pay to use any of the images in any of your work (whether it is commercial or personal), but you can be certain that you'll be using amazing shots.

For a cheaper alternative, you can check out iStockPhoto (www.istockphoto.com) where designers and photographers pool their personal images into an amazing collection of 50-cent images. All the site's images are royalty-free, so once you've dropped your pocket change to download a photo, you can use the image for almost anything you might have in mind.

Additional software, such as plug-ins or companion applications, are also be listed on the web site. Although these software packages aren't covered in this book (nor are they necessary to complete any of the tasks), they can help you streamline the steps you have to perform to accomplish certain tasks.

Icons

Each task includes several margin notes that provide additional information, tips, and caution.

note

Notes provide additional information or help in working with Photoshop.

tip

Tips point out an interesting idea or technique that will save you time, effort, money, or all three!

caution

Cautions are used to alert you to potential problems that you might run into when working with Photoshop.

cross-reference

Although this book is divided into tasks to make it easy to find exactly what you're looking for, few tasks don't rely on previously acquired skills. Cross-references point to other tasks in the book that are a prerequisite for or a compliment to the current task.