

Deneba Canvas 7

Two image-editing programs in one

by Jack & Sue Drafa

When visual images were first created on computers, they were made using vector imaging. Each image was made up of a series of dots that were connected together with lines to form an image on the screen. The more dots, the more complex the illustration. As time went on, these vector drawings became more sophisticated offering fine detail controls.

Eventually, someone came up with the idea of importing photographs into these drawings. These imported files were called bitmaps, and consisted of columns and rows of dots representing a full-color image, like those projected on your TV set. The bitmaps were edited in a photo-editing program, and then imported into the final vector illustration, where text was added.

Today, most of the larger software companies offer two programs: one that lets you edit the bitmap and then another program which imports the bitmap into a vector illustration program. Most programs allow you to double-click on a bitmap and immediately be launched out of one program and back into the bitmap editing program to make any necessary changes. It still meant that you had to bounce back and forth between programs in order to work with both vector and bitmap images.

The Canvas 7 software program from Deneba Systems, Inc., offers a different solution to this problem. They put both features into one editing program. You can mix and edit bitmap and vector images all in the same program. Canvas 7 is an integrated program with powerful features for illustration, precision drawing, painting and image editing, text layout and web publishing. This versatile editing program offers features not found in any other editing program on the market.

Because this program includes both sides of the image-

editing equation, it features a large variety of editing tools. Most are controlled from pulldown menus, and pulldown tabs at the top of the screen. The bitmap controls are under the heading of "image," while the vector imaging controls are under the "object" pulldowns. The rest of the pulldowns have a mixture of commands that apply to both types of images.

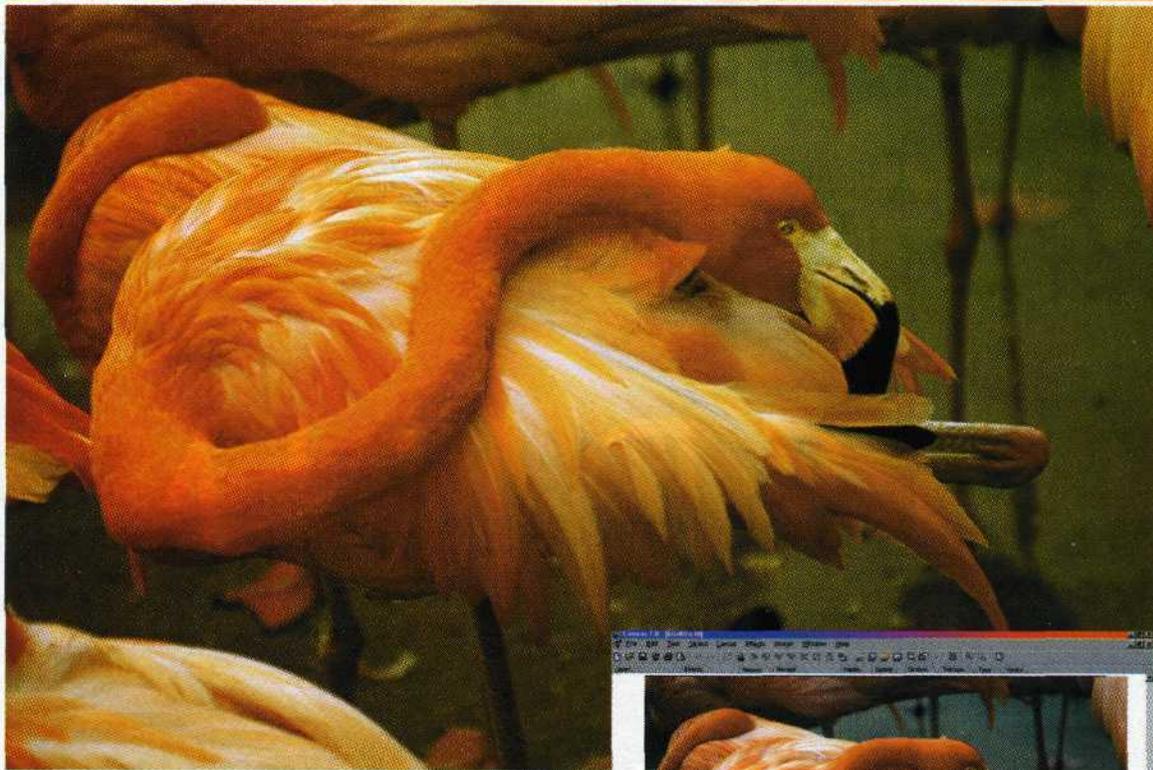
A unique part of the program is a section under objects called SpriteEffects. This group of special commands takes filters normally reserved for bitmap editing and applies them to the vector image. Let's take an example of an illustration of a leaf that is made up of approximately 50 connect-the-dots. The edge of the leaf is very sharp and doesn't resemble a bitmap in any way. But, if you take the blur filter from the SpriteEffects and apply it to the leaf, it becomes diffused and takes on the appearance of a bitmap image.

Over the last couple of years, we have played around with a variety of Photoshop plug-ins such as Eye-Candy, KPT Filters, Test

Strip, and plug-in programs from the Internet. We are happy to report that almost every filter works in Canvas 7. You now have hundreds of special-effects filters you can apply to both vector and

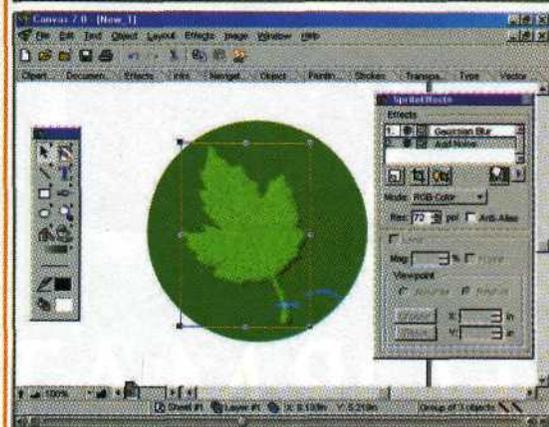
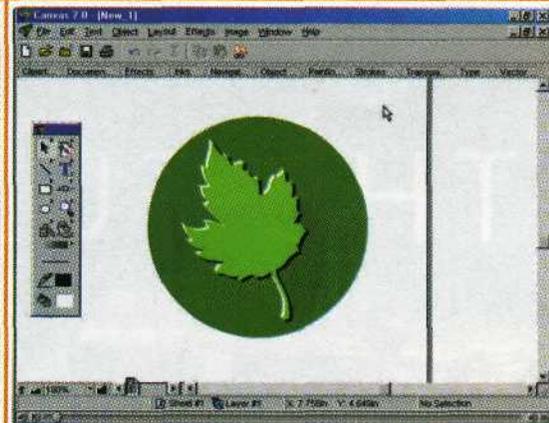
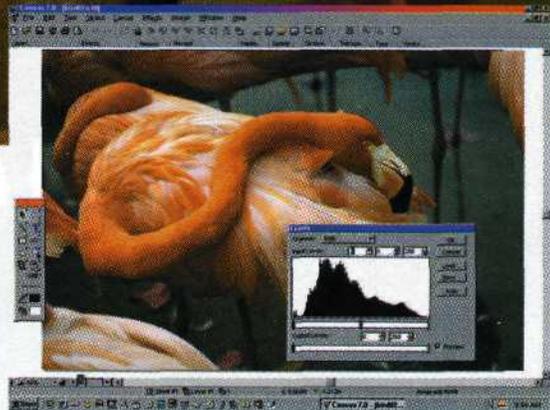
Right: Scan of color negative.
Middle right: Background selected using magic wand, wings selected and set to transparency function, new background added with KPT6 plug-in filter.
Far right: Same, but made with different plug-in filter.





Above: Scan of original color negative has an unattractive color cast.

Right: The color was easy to correct in Deneba Canvas 7, using the histogram feature. The program offers lots of functions and capabilities, and Deneba provides a good instruction manual and instructional CDs to help new users get the most out of it.



Top: Original clipart.

Above: SpriteEffects applied to clipart. Canvas 7's toolbars, pulldown menus and tabs, and windows provide lots of creative control options.

bitmap images in the same program. If you are only interested in editing photographs, then it may not be important, but if you plan on adding logos, text, and illustrations, then this program is a dream come true.

Canvas 7 features all the professional photo-editing controls like contrast, color balance, gamma, layers, channels, masking, selection tools, cloning, and dozens of other bitmap controls. Each control has the option of previewing the effect before applying it to the image. The program imports just about every file format imaginable, and works in grayscale, RGB, and CMYK color.

If you are working on a WEB project, this program can create all the parts and will provide a visual showing how internet file compression will work with your files. That way you will have the best-looking images, and the fastest loading.

The vector half of the program has all the features required of a professional illustration package and more. You

can draw just about any type of vector shape, add text, set up special document formats or modify them. Best of all is that you can apply the SpriteEffects.

If you don't want to draw, then you can import from the thousands of vector clipart images included on the program's clipart CDs. If you are into fonts, Canvas 7 also includes hundreds of the classic and more unusual fonts to make great presentations.

You have to keep in mind that this program is larger than most programs and requires a lot of memory. We ran out of memory with several files on a Celeron that had 128 MB of RAM. We moved to a Pentium with 256 MB of RAM, and that seemed to do the job. One solution to the memory problems is to reduce the amount of undos, so that the program is not storing more than one backup step at a time. Since today's hard disks are big and fast, the best way to edit important files is to save progressive versions to hard disk.

Since Canvas 7 has two programs living together, the controls are referred to by other names or located in different locations than we are used to. If we had no previous knowledge of other bitmap and vector programs, our learning curve on Canvas 7 would have been easier. The instruction manual is a good reference source and fortunately, Deneba has also created instructional CDs that take you through all the features and potential applications of Canvas 7. We would highly recommend taking time to review these before you jump into this elaborate editing program.

This is the first time we have used a Deneba product, and are quite impressed with Canvas 7. The complexity of the program requires some time to acquire proficiency, but once you do, you will find it an excellent tool to add to your digital darkroom. For further information, be sure to visit their website at www.deneba.com. ■

