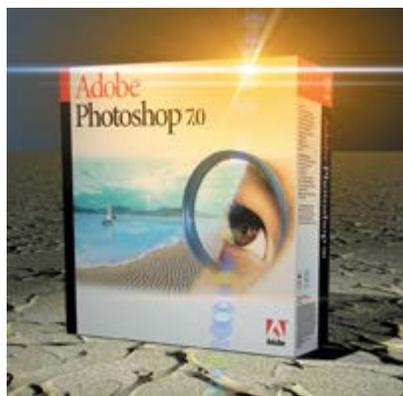




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First Exposure: Adobe Photoshop 7.0 by Jack and Sue Drafahl



The biggest news at PMA 2002 was the introduction of Photoshop 7 from Adobe.

Although some of us lucky ones were privy to a Beta version, most of the crowd was in shock. Surely it wasn't time for an upgrade yet, was it? It seemed like just yesterday that version 6 was released. Obviously, the folks at Adobe had a few new tricks up their sleeves that they were anxiously waiting to show us all.

Adobe has made a distinct effort to design a streamlined work space with photographers in mind. They realize that nowadays photographers input photos into their computers from both scanners and digital cameras. It often gets confusing trying to match file names with intended photos. Thankfully, Adobe has included a thumbnail file browser with Photoshop 7 that is a fabulous feature.

Once you open the file browser, you can select a specific folder on your data drive and thumbnails are quickly created. Just make your image choices and drag them onto your editing screen. You can then sort them, change their names and even rotate the verticals. If you need a larger version, just click on the thumbnail. This is great for digital cameras, as you can quickly import your images, sort them and view all the camera information.



The new look of the various Photoshop 7 menus on the Windows Platform. The Mac menus are very similar in appearance.



The new Image Ready 7.0 program allow you more control over the viewing of animations, and image compression for the Internet.

If you often use the brush palette in your image editing, you will be thrilled with the new brush engine. When your first open the brush palette, you will see each brush displayed in the new brush stroke format, which shows you how it will look on the screen. You also have the option of changing it back to the older brush format if you choose. This new brush engine allows you more creative control of how the brush is applied to your image. You can change shape, size, scattering effects, texture, color dynamics, and more than a dozen other controls which makes the brush palette one of the most creative controls in the new version of Photoshop.

Photoshop 7 also gives you the freedom to customize the tools you use most and provide quick and easy access to them. Best of all, it is simple to create custom tool presets. Just load the tool you want to customize, make your changes, and then add the new tool to the tool preset menu in the upper left corner of the edit screen. You can also design a custom workspace with your specific palettes and tools. Just load your workspace in and magically the screen appears with all the tools and functions just the way you like them.

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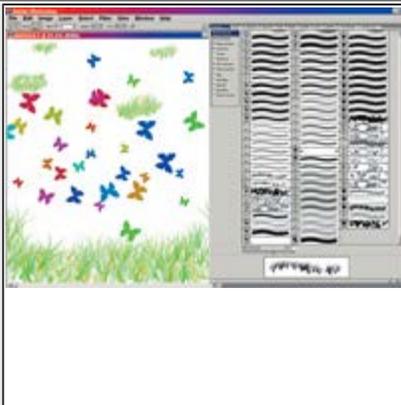
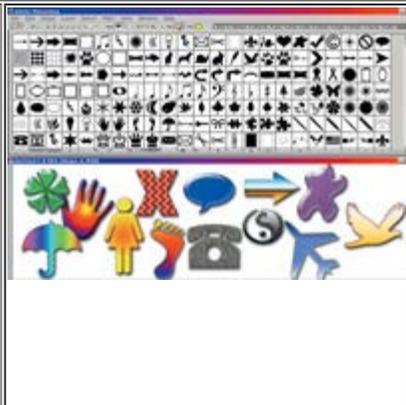
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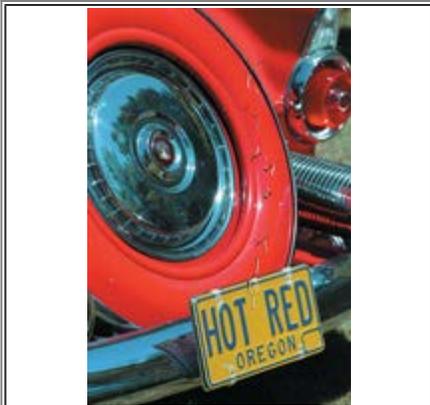
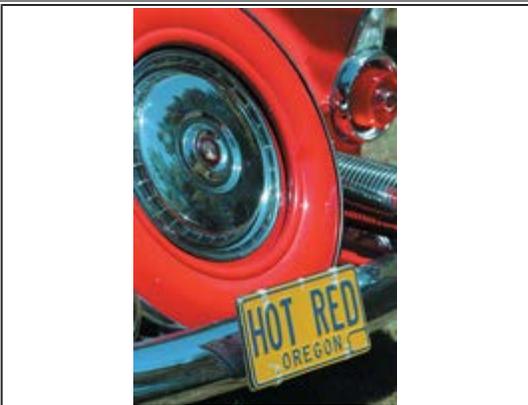
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<p>The new file manager allows you view thumbnail versions of each file before you load the file. No more guessing, or using other programs. You have the option of changing the display the way you want. The most common setup is with the thumbnails on the right, folders in upper left, enlarged image in center left, and file description in lower left.</p>	<p>The tool preset menu allows you to see all the preset tools, and create your own unique preset toolbox.</p>	<p>The new brush palette gives you a better visual representation of how a specific brush will be applied to the screen. You also have the option of setting the palette back to the older Photoshop 6 look.</p>	<p>The symbol menu has been expanded to include more symbols, plus the ability to look at all the symbol libraries at the same time. As you drag and drop each symbol on the screen, Photoshop will create a new layer for that symbol. Styles such as emboss, bevel, and shadow can then be applied from the styles menu.</p>

Speaking of tools, Photoshop 7 features two of the most innovative new tools, called the Healing brush and Patch tool. These two retouching tools share the same spot on the toolbox, fourth down on the left, but serve different functions.

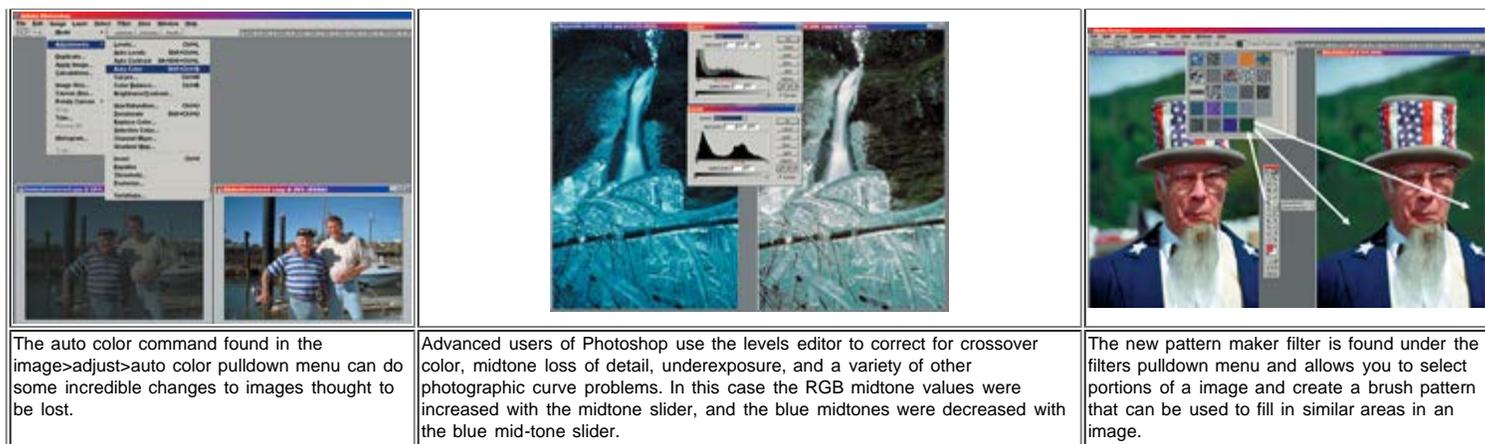
The Healing brush works in a similar fashion to the clone tool, which is designed to repair photo problems. The Healing brush will accurately match the texture, lighting, and shading of the sampled pixels to the source pixels. You make your correction and then the program hesitates a second as it makes all the necessary calculations. Then magically, the repaired area blends in right before your eyes. More than once we have glanced over our shoulders to look for the magician performing tricks. It is so slick that you can't help wondering how do they do that? We found that it takes longer for the Healing brush to perform its tricks than the clone tool, but its accurate reproduction makes it the perfect candidate for difficult repair jobs.

		
<p>Original color negative image damaged during photo finishing.</p>	<p>Left image is a zoom in of the damaged area. Right image is using the patch tool to select areas next to the scratch and drop on the damaged area. The patch tool then matches the surrounding area so that no editing is evident.</p>	<p>Final image after the healing/patch tools were used to blend the paint in the car to the damaged areas in the image. (In this case the tool would be called the auto-body repair tool —just kidding)</p>

The Patch tool allows you to drag a selected area over an area to be repaired or you can do the opposite. Much like the Healing brush, the Patch tool will match texture, lighting, and shading of the sampled pixels to the source pixels. The selection can be feathered from 5-6 pixels for a better blend. We found this tool to be great for removing large amounts of dust particles and scratches. The speed of this tool far surpasses any combination of older Photoshop tools.

The work space in Photoshop 7 has been redesigned to make life easier for the image editor. It is more organized with a palette well where you can dock all the palettes you use most often. Instead of having several palettes floating on the screen getting in the way, they are docked just a mouse click away. Simply touch the desired tab and your palette choice opens immediately. When you are finished, it rolls back up into the palette well until next time.

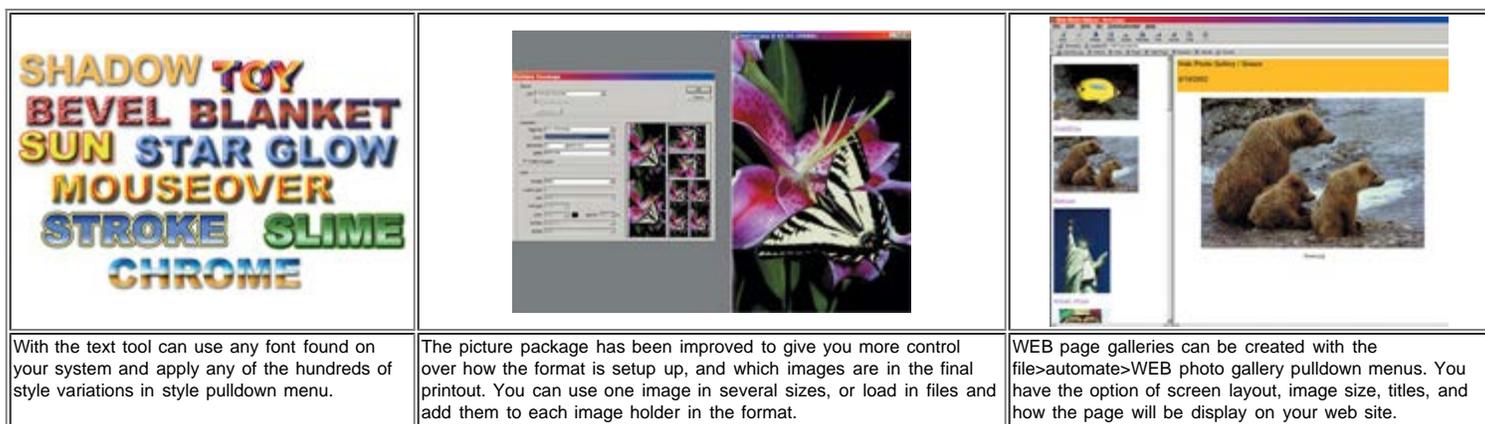
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One feature that makes color correction easier is their new Auto Color function. This command looks at the highlights, midtones, and shadows, and then removes any predominate color shift. We found it makes a good color decision more often than not, so that beats having to juggle the Auto Levels.

The new Photoshop features five additional layers blending modes—linear burn, linear dodge, vivid light, linear light, and pin light. If you need to create special backgrounds using patterns, Photoshop 7 has a new Pattern Maker. Version 7.0 also creates separate layers for each new vector shape you add. You see, the list of creative innovations goes on and on.

One handy feature Adobe finally included is a spell checker. We would all have trouble winning a spelling bee these days, as word processing programs have spoiled us. Just right click on the text, and it will correct your spelling in English and even several other languages.



Since our lives revolve around the Internet, Photoshop 7 includes Image Ready 7, which features an optimization method for GIF files and it allows you to see your animations in the editor. The program also features several other web authoring tools to increase the speed and quality of your web page design.

Just when things were starting to settle down from all the hoopla from Photoshop 6, Adobe stirs up the pot again. It's obvious that a lot of time and effort went into designing this new version. Their efforts to organize and customize the work space are greatly appreciated. The File Browser is the answer to the photographer's prayer for visual image confirmation. Best of all though, are the Healing brush and Patch tool. These fabulous functions make photo restoration and image retouching easier for us all. Hats off to the Adobe crew—Photoshop 7 is a winner.

Best of all, you can purchase a full version upgrade for only \$149. For further information about Photoshop 7, contact Adobe at www.adobe.com.

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