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Plug-ins Page: Applied Science Fiction by Jack and Sue Drafahl

One of the most popular image editing software products today is called a plug-in, or plug-in filter. Basically, these small add-on programs are designed to enhance the powerful editing programs like Adobe Photoshop. These filters are designed to solve technical and creative problems not always solved in the editing program. Since Adobe Photoshop is the most popular image-editing program on the market today, most plug-ins are designed to be Photoshop compatible.

There are literally thousands of these filters that include color correction, photographic filters, image sharpening, digital camera and scanner communication and image compression to name but a few. There are unlimited creative effects available that allow you to design works of art that will exceed your wildest expectations.

New plug-in filters are popping up everywhere. In fact, there are so many that it is tough to track them all and keep them straight. We felt that there was a need for a regular update to help keep you informed on the latest and greatest plug-ins. So, we will be offering the frequent "Plug-ins Page" that will highlight a different manufacturer each month and feature their most popular plug-in filters.

Our first featured manufacturer, Applied Science Fiction, is a new entry in the plug-in market, although you may have already heard their name. They are not newcomers to the industry as their popular Digital ICE technology has been included in film scanners for years. This proprietary technology included Digital ROC, which was used to correct faded images and restore their color. Up until now this technology was only available in conjunction with scanners.

Well, the wait is over as Applied Science Fiction has now released a plug-in version of Digital ROC. This plug-in filter is Photoshop compatible and is activated from the filter menu. It uses proprietary algorithms to analyze the color gradients as the image is loaded.

Using the optimal tonal curve for each color channel, it will then correct the image for faded colors, or color casts created by fluorescent and tungsten lighting. Although Photoshop 7 now includes Auto Color, we feel that Digital ROC is head and shoulders above this Photoshop correction feature.

Wait, there's more! They have a second image correction plug-in filter called Digital Sho that optimizes image exposure and contrast. It is used to correct hidden detail in images with exposure problems due to flash-fill mistakes or backlit subjects. This plug-in filter uses proprietary algorithms to adjust the darker areas, and then automatically re-adjust them to reveal hidden detail. Even if you have a good working knowledge of the levels editor in Photoshop, you will find that this plug-in filter can do a better job and faster.

These plug-in filters are only available for Windows at this time. Mac users will just have to wait for a bit as they are currently in the works.

Each filter sells for \$49.95 and is available for purchase on the Applied Science Fiction Web site. If you want to try these filters out, just log onto www.asf.com and download a trial version of their new plug-in filters Digital ROC and Digital SHO.

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