



## Rangefinder Magazine

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### First Exposure:Photoshop 6.0

by Jack & Sue Drafahl

Photographers working in the digital world today must have a versatile and reliable editing program. It needs to cover a broad spectrum of editing situations and provide more tools than you'll ever need. For over 10 years, Adobe Photoshop has been working to become the industry standard in photo editing programs. This program is one of the most powerful photo editing programs ever made. It features all the necessary controls for color, contrast, gamma, sharpness, retouching, special effects, printing output, text overlay, composite images, and so much more.

Adobe has just released its latest version, Photoshop 6.0. For two months before the release, we had the privilege of working with the Beta version of the program. It was amazing to see all the improvements that Adobe was incorporating into the updated version. We are so glad that they finally released Photoshop 6.0, because we couldn't wait any longer to spread the news. The problem is where do we start? Adobe has made so many improvements to the program, we could not even begin to cover them all in the space allotted. So, in all fairness to the new version, we will concentrate mainly on the changes from versions 5.0 and 5.5.

### Vector Editing

Adobe has come full circle with the incorporation of vector shapes and vector editing tools that can be combined with photographic images. The vector shape tool is found in the tool box, and expands out into six different shape types. You can easily draw and edit lines, rectangles, ellipses, rounded rectangles and polygons. The final choice is a custom shape tool, which accesses a pulldown menu with additional shapes. You can even add more shape libraries from the options section, so you see, the sky is the limit.

The color range tool is used to select and create a mask of a specific color in an image. Using the Add, Subtract, Intersect and Exclude buttons, you can quickly combine shapes. You can then edit each control point in the vector shape by adding or deleting points. Simply move the point or change the direction of the path with the two handle controls found on each selected anchor point. When you have a new shape you like, save it out as a new shape.

The extract command is used to mask out backgrounds. You can also modify one shape by laying a second across part of the first and using it to subtract from the first. The Intersect function only leaves the parts intersected by both shapes, and the Exclude function leaves only those parts not included in the overlay. Once you have the overlay you like, you can combine the two shapes.

The best part of all is that these shapes can easily be modified using the styles palette. This palette has dozens of graduated colors, bevels, shadows, and patterns. You can select any of these styles and drop them on a shape and magically the shape then takes on this style as its own. Each style can then be edited from the layers menu, and changed to suit your taste.

### Text Enhancements

The brush palette has dozens of shapes and sizes for maximum creative effect when editing. The folks at Adobe made some really great changes when it comes to incorporating text. You can now type directly on the screen and the text tools work much like a basic word processor. Photoshop 6.0 now has full character and

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paragraph control and uses many of the special effect filters and plug-ins. You can warp the text to follow a path, wrap your text around an object, or fit it to shape. If you don't like the warp shape, you can edit the anchor points of the text shape and even create your own warp style.

The gradient palette has some very striking color combinations that can be edited to your own specifications. You can now create better looking PDF files with new Enhanced PDF support that lets you include duotones, layer effects, and spot color channels. You can create the text directly in Photoshop, or import it from your word processor. Add pictures, shapes, special effects, and then save it out as a PDF file that can be read back into Adobe Acrobat or printed to most any output device.

You can also avoid printing surprises with the new Print Preview. This function allows you to view an image just as it will appear in its final form. It includes crop marks, captions, labels and registration marks. Photoshop 6.0 also features built-in controls that allow for accurate previewing of CMYK and RGB images on-screen or from a desktop printer.

### **Editing Ease**

One of the most powerful parts of Photoshop has always been its layers and Photoshop 6.0 now takes it to a new level. Both vector shapes and text can be accessed through the layers pulldown menu and dozens of layers can be added and manipulated to create one image. Styles can be added, order changed, transparency changed, masks and clipping paths added. Each layer can be used with the right mouse button, or from the layers palette found under the Windows pulldown. The creative potential unleashed by the layers section is only limited, as they say, by your imagination. Photoshop 6.0 also features some new and improved controls to make your editing life easier. The Liquefy command allows you to distort or warp a specific section of an image by pushing and pulling pixels. The Extract Image command uses improved tools to help you isolate complex areas and make more accurate masking selections. Even the Cropping tool also has a new look. When you select a specific area to be cropped, the area outside the crop box becomes darker. This lets you visually check the final crop and make any last minute adjustments.

Third party plug-in filters, such as Corel KPT (originally MetaCreations) and Eye Candy, still work well with 6.0. If you have new filters and plug-ins, the installation program may not locate the new Photoshop 6.0. Don't assume that these filters will not work with 6.0. You may have to manually locate the plug-in directory for the install program. We tried dozens of filters, and found them all to work great in Photoshop 6.0. We even tried several digital camera plug-ins, such as the Kodak DC 290, Fuji FinePix 4700, and the Kodak DCS 660, with no apparent problems. Photoshop 6.0 wears two hats. One hat allows you all the controls for creating and editing photos, illustrations, and text. This is the hat most photographers would wear when getting into some serious digital imaging. The other hat allows the Photoshop 6.0 user to design Web graphics. Since instant communication is now a way of life, Adobe saw the need to expand their program to include improved Web page creation tools.

### **Web Graphics**

The crop tool now uses a dark area outside to crop to give you a better idea of how a final crop will look. You can now slice web graphics directly in Photoshop 6.0. Slicing is important with complex layered image files so that compression settings minimize download times. The extensive editing tools in Photoshop 6.0 also allow you to create buttons, navigation bars and design other Web graphics using the new vector drawing tools. Adobe ImageReady 3.0 is a web-production companion product that comes with Photoshop 6.0. You can edit files in Photoshop 6.0 and quickly jump back and forth between the two programs and your files are saved automatically. ImageReady 3.0 also allows you to use animation features to edit layers frame by frame and achieve the motion effect commonly found on the web.

When an image is loaded into ImageReady 3.0, it has four tabs at the top of the image. It shows the original, optimized, 2-up, and 4-up, each showing file size, visual image quality, and download time for the image in that specific display. The name of the game on the internet is speed vs. quality, so the 4-up display is really nice because you can see a side by side display of image quality vs. time for each download. When you have your WEB files the way you want them, you can then save them out as HTML files.

The new vector-drawing tools in Photoshop 6.0, combined with its ImageReady 3.0 partner, provide unlimited possibilities for web designers. With these tools they can create buttons, incorporate vector objects, automatically create slices from layers and store designs for ongoing web production.

Of course, as photographers, the Photoshop we have come to know and love still exists. We can retouch, color correct and bend the gamma curves in all our photos. Now we can also edit vector shapes, add text and make it warp, layer any effect and mask just about anything that gets in our way. Photoshop 6.0 just makes our image editing life one step

better. Thanks Adobe...we owe you one!

Check out their web page at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

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