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Rangefinder Magazine
June 2005

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First Exposure by Jack and Sue Drafahl
Photoshop CS2 Revisited

In last month's issue of Rangefinder, we happily touted the advantages of the new Adobe Photoshop CS2. We gave it a rousing four thumbs up, but due to space allocation, we could only cover some of its key features in that article. As we continue to use CS2, we have discovered more and more reasons to justify a product upgrade. So we decided to write a second article to provide an in-depth look at some of the new features and expound on those we did not cover in the first article.

Adobe Bridge

One of the most powerful and flexible tools in the new CS2 is called Bridge. It takes the best from a file manager, such as a thumbnail database and an EXIF digital camera manager, and combines them all into one program. Bridge can be opened from any of the CS2 programs, or used as a stand-alone program. It allows you to maneuver from directory to directory, displaying thumbnails of each file. When you select a file, a large thumbnail appears on the left and displays extensive information about how the digital file was taken, or specifications of the scanned film image.



Bridge can be custom configured to your tastes with modifications to thumbnail size, filmstrip modes and background colors.



Illustration of a dual-monitor display. The left monitor can be used for menus, and bridge, while the right menu can be used for full-screen image editing. Images in Bridge can be dragged from the left screen to open on the right.

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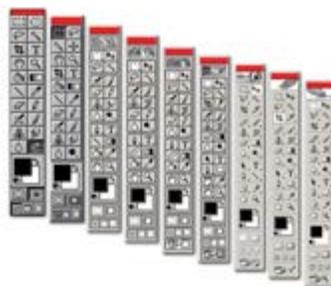
Classifieds

A nice feature in Bridge is its display of the history log. This log works much like the history palette in Photoshop, as it keeps a record of your every move. If you decide you have taken a wrong turn in your editing direction, you can open the history palette, go back in time, and start again. Bridge takes it even one step further as it will save out a linked text file. So, if you want to remember the exact editing settings you used on an image last month, Bridge will supply that information for you.

Another plus to Bridge is its renaming function. With this tool, you simply group some images, then right-click the mouse and follow the instruction to batch rename the files. Any types of files can be renamed, and they don't even have to be Photoshop-compatible.



The filters menu in Photoshop CS2 is very much like the filter menu system in Adobe Elements. When you open the filters gallery, just click on any of the effects, and it will be applied to the entire image or a selected part.



Photoshop toolbox evolution as it has progressed over the years (from left to right: version 2.5, 3, 4, 5, 5.5, 6, 7, CS, and CS2).



The shadow/highlight menu allows you quick corrections to images that are difficult to recover.

Bridge is a lot more than just a file manager for Photoshop. It actually manages files from all the Creative Suite 2 products and it can even be used to preview files between programs. We took files from Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator and Go Live and moved them from one program to the next. Bridge keeps track of the compatibility between file formats, and converts them as needed.

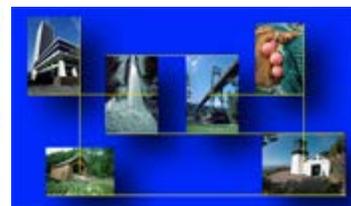
We were curious about Bridge's limitations, so we tried it with other non-CS2 Adobe programs like Premiere and DVD Encore. When we brought layered images into Premiere Pro from Bridge, each layer came in on its own timeline which then could be individually manipulated with effects. Very impressive! It worked so well that we even went outside the world of Adobe and found that Bridge could import files into almost every other competitor's product. Our vote is that you can forget the Windows file manager because Bridge is by far the best way to manage files.



Adobe Stock is a service that can be accessed from Adobe Bridge. You can download "hold" images that allow you to put together a presentation to see if it works.



Part of Adobe's download service is a Web page called Adobe Studio. Here you can preview thousands of Photoshop additions from third-party contributors. Brushes, Actions, Styles and Shapes are just a few of the goodies that come as free downloads.



When you add layers to a background image and move it around, Photoshop will add a guide when an edge or center of one layer aligns with another. These auto guides reduce alignment of images from minutes to seconds.

Dual Monitors

One problem in working with Photoshop is finding room on the screen for all the menus and still having room to edit your image. One solution is to use as large an editing screen as possible—19 to 21 inches—and surround the image with menus.

We found a better solution is to take advantage of Adobe Photoshop's dual-screen mode. If you haven't heard of it, we'll explain how it works. Many computers today can support two monitors. If you set them side by side, you can drag all your menus, including Bridge to the left monitor. This leaves the right monitor free for full screen editing of your images. This really simplifies and speeds up the editing process. If you need to

load a new image, simply drag the thumbnail from Bridge on the left screen to the right screen and away you go. Once we set our editing system up with dual screen, we were hooked, and now we can never go back to using a single monitor.

Smart Guides

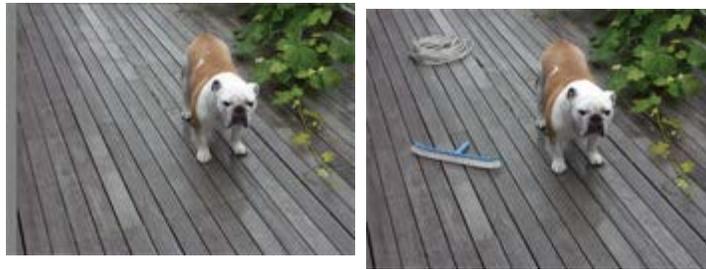
If you are the type of image editor who works with groups of layers and needs to keep them aligned, you would normally add guides to help with alignment. Your job just got a bit easier as CS2 anticipates your every move. When you move a layer close to another, guides will automatically appear when they are aligned. If you want the top of one image to align with the center of the next, a smart guide will appear again. What used to take minutes for each alignment is done in the blink of an eye.

Auto Transform

A new feature we could not find listed with the new layers features is another anticipation of what you want next. In past versions of Photoshop, when you added layers, you had to go to the Edit > Transform menu or right click on an image to resize or distort the image. In this new version, CS2 assumes you will want to scale or modify the layer, so it automatically adds handles to the layer as soon as it is selected. If you touch one of the handles and then right click, all of the remaining transform commands are made available. This is another great time-saving function that really makes this new version a plus.

Vanishing Point

In our first CS2 article we described a new filter called Vanishing Point. With it you can assign a grid to provide the correct perspective to new layers pasted in from other images. It can be also used to remove objects from the surface of perspective lines. Since the lines are constantly changing, using the clone tool or healing brush would be very difficult. With Vanishing Point, you select areas not affected and paste over objects you want to remove. It will keep the lines the same as the underneath objects. Vanishing Point even has settings to help match any lighting changes in the scene.



This sample image from Abode shows how vanishing point can be used to accurately remove objects from lines that change in perspective. Each of the objects in the scene was removed with the vanishing point clone tool on a preset perspective grid.

Blur Filters

A blooming effect occurs when digital cameras are pointed into the sun. If you use the new blur filters, in conjunction with other filters and lighting commands, you can negate this blooming effect. To fix this problem select the blooming area with the magic wand, expand the selection, feather it, and then apply the new Filter > Blur > Surface Blur filter. This will soften the edges considerably. Now apply the Filter > Blur > Radial with the zoom box checked. Finally, go to the Filter > Render > Lens flare, and apply a slight lens flare. The blooming will disappear, and the image will look as if it were shot on film.

Animation

If you work with animation files in Web page design or for video production, you can use the power of layers to create some very exciting animations. In the animation palette you can duplicate a layer, move it, change its opacity and apply different effects. You can then add frames in between (tween), and the animation will create movements and effects using the first and last image. The final animation can then be saved as a GIF file in Photoshop or as a Flash or Quicktime file by jumping to CS2 Image Ready.





Bridge can be used to find and drag files from various media and place them in Adobe Premiere Pro for creation of video projects. Layered images can come in as multiple tracks in your video.

When you select a font in Photoshop, you now are presented with a WYSIWYG view of the font. You can then apply one of the hundreds of text styles from the styles menu.

The RAW file menu includes a clipping view, which shows you areas that are burned out, and a multi-color histogram, which shows the gamma spread with each color.

PDF Output

For those using Adobe Acrobat who want to expand their PDF creative skills, you can now use the new PDF interface in CS2. When the new PDF menu opens, you have a choice of saving the file in Acrobat version 4 through 7. You can also control the image quality, compression, encryption, color conversion, color profile, and optimize the file for Web viewing. The compatibility of all the Creative Suite 2 programs ensures that the new PDF will import into Acrobat perfectly.

WYSIWYG Fonts

When working with text overlays in CS2, you now have a visual font preview for easier typeface selection. These fonts are visible from either the font pulldown at the top of the editing screen or from the character palette itself. If the font is too small and you have trouble seeing the fonts on your high-resolution monitor, you can go to the Edit > Preferences and change the font preview setting to a larger size.



The exposure control menu gives you three sliders that control exposure and gamma with a bias that can offset your changes towards highlights or shadows.



The animation palette in Photoshop CS2 can take layered images and create animated motion effects. Create your first and final image and then add frames in between. The series then is saved as an animation file that can be used on the WEB or in video projects.



The new noise reduction menu allows you to reduce digital camera noise, film grain and JPEG artifacts, and still maintain a high level of image detail.

Image Processor (Scripts)

Batch processing of files has just gotten a lot easier with a new function in the File > Scripts > Image Processor Menu. When you select this menu, you are given a step-by-step choice for batch processing images. You simply select an open image or images from the hard disk and decide upon a save location. Set the file type (JPEG, PSD or TIFF), and resize if necessary. You can then add any actions you want to apply to the images, and magically it all happens. This is a fabulous time-saving device for processing large groups of images.

Stock Photos

Finally, we come to a special service designed for image editors who need photos they don't already have on file. Adobe has set up an online stock agency that allows you to select a thumbnail version of a stock image so you can place it in your presentation to a prospective client. Access to Adobe Stock is through Adobe Bridge, located in the Favorites menu. When you decide upon the final layout, you can then download the full version of the image and pay for it online. The Adobe agency gathers images from a wide cross section of stock agencies, so you have a high probability of finding just the right image.



Vanishing point can also be used for creative effects. In this case we assigned a grid to two sides of the building and then used the vanishing point selection tool to cut and paste new floors to the building.

The key elements found in the new Creative Suite 2 programs are flexibility and compatibility. That's a hard combination to find in any other image editing suite. So what are you waiting for? We'll say it again: Upgrade to CS2

You won't be disappointed. For further information about CS2, check out www.adobe.com/.

Jack and Sue Drafahl are freelance journalists/photographers living in the Pacific Northwest. They have owned and operated a custom lab and service bureau, Image Concepts, for many years. They can be reached at: digitalduo@jackandsuedrafahl.com. The Drafahls' new web site is: www.jackandsuedrafahl.com/.

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