



Adobe CS3 reviewed

Find out why CS3 has been hailed the largest software release in Adobe's 25-year history

WHENEVER a program receives a major upgrade, we tend to judge it as either an evolution or a revolution. In the case of Adobe's new Creative Suite 3 release, the answer lies somewhere in between. There are a number of changes and additions – some are bold new moves and others will just make your workday a little smoother.

CS3 was built around some common goals across all applications, which consist of new features, including several for web and mobile device design; tighter integration with Flash; a general interface cleanup across applications and platforms; and optimized performance on both Windows and Intel Macs.

Here's how it's improved the three Adobe applications most graphic design pros use with every day:

Illustrator CS3

It's FAST – especially on an Intel Mac – by about 60% overall. And you'll like the expanded Control Panel, which includes more context-sensitive controls that were previously hidden in dialog boxes.

Two big new features • Live Color – A new and automated way to create, apply or modify colour schemes in a file or an entire project. Use any one of 23 classic

colour-harmony rules (i.e. Complementary, Triad) to create a pleasing set of colour swatches to work with, based around any colour centre. Change any one of the swatches manually and all of the others in the set move with it, following the colour harmony rule chosen.

The two key dialog boxes for this system are the Color Guide palette (where you choose colour rules and save swatch sets) and the Live Color dialog box (where you can change the relationships between colours, seeing the effects on your artwork in real-time). If you've ever felt challenged to find the perfect set of colours or to quickly capture the feel of a process-colour image in just a few spot colours, this is what you've been waiting for.

• Excellent export capabilities to Flash – Illustrator files come into Flash with all anchor points, gradients, clipping paths, layers, groups and object names intact. Illustrator symbols become Flash symbols. Copy in

Illustrator can be set as regular text, dynamic text (i.e. controlled by an external data file), or input text (input by the user) when it's imported into a Flash file. For Flash developers working with files created in Illustrator, these new features are enormous time-savers and are worth the upgrade price by themselves.

Handy little items • New Eraser tool – Remove parts of an object quickly by dragging the pressure-sensitive, variable-shaped eraser over what you want to disappear; a fast way to create complex, organic shapes in your work.

• Templates for video projects, smart phones or PDAs, and other mobile devices – If your work is going to end up on a smart phone or HDTV, these templates will make sure you get the dimensions right.

• Isolation Mode – Double-click on any group of objects with the Selection Tool and everything else in the file is temporarily locked to avoid any unintended changes. This is very useful for complex files.

Photoshop CS3

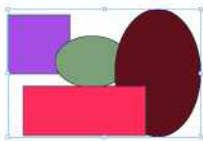
It's hard to improve on the gold standard for image processing software. Yet Photoshop CS3 manages to do it with a streamlined interface, increased speed across the board, non-destructive editing with smart filters, improved selection and colour correction tools, and powerful new compositing options.

Three big new features • Smart Filters – The new Smart Object layers are a significant improvement over the previous Adjustment layers. They give you complete freedom to work with an image without risk.

• Quick Selection Tool – This is my favourite new capability. With it, you just drag over the parts of the image you want to select and Photoshop takes it from there. It intelligently selects for you so there's no need to laboriously outline the parts you want. Once it's selected, a new set of Refine Edge commands make it quick and easy to fine-tune the image.

• Auto layer alignment and blending – Say you've got three different shots of a small group of people, but none of them have good expressions on all of the faces. To fix this now, you'd probably try some tricky cut and paste to get the best expressions into one shot, which is pretty tedious. With Photoshop's new auto layer align and blend tools you can do it in a minute, smoothly masking the parts of each image you want to use (or hide).

Handy little item • Dynamic Filters – Virtually all filters are now dynamic so you can see the effect on the entire image as you make adjustments.



Illustrator CS3's new Live Color dialog box allows you to quickly change the overall colour scheme of a file with a real-time preview

