

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4

Corel launches an all-in-one package for digital artists and designers

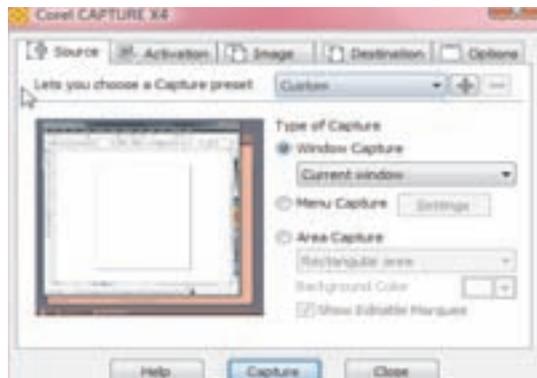
Manufacturer: Corel
Web: www.corel.com
Price: £387/\$429 (£176/\$199 upgrade)
Spec: Windows XP or Windows Vista
512MB RAM, 275MB hard disk space
Pentium III 800MHz processor or AMD Athlon XP
1,024 x 768 or better monitor resolution

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 is a complete package aimed at digital designers and incorporates a number of useful programs. There are four main applications included: CorelDRAW X4, Corel PHOTO-PAINT, Corel PowerTRACE and Corel CAPTURE. Supporting programs are included too: the Barcode Wizard helps you generate barcodes for your work, the Service Bureau Profiler prepares work for professional output, the Duplexing Wizard optimises work for double-sided printing and Bitstream Font Navigator is a font manager. Of course, you're not paying over £300 for these smaller applications, so we'll focus on the big four.

CorelDRAW is similar to Adobe Illustrator and Adobe InDesign in one, being a vector-illustration and page-layout application. The interface is standard and easy to navigate, so you can be up and working on documents in no time at all. The whole suite, including CorelDRAW, has been updated to provide enhanced support for Adobe Photoshop CS3, so you can easily use this as part of your standard workflow.

One useful feature of the CorelDRAW graphics suite is the ConceptShare option, which is an online collaboration tool, helpful if you are working with others from all over the world. In terms of page layout, there are more than 80 templates if you don't want to start from scratch on a project. If you like to work from a blank document, then you'll find the new independent page layers and the Duplicate Page command incredibly useful. With loads of learning tools and an online community site associated with the program, there is always help on hand.

Next up in the suite is PHOTO-PAINT, which is the package's image-editing application, specifically designed for use in a graphics workflow. However, as we already have Photoshop,



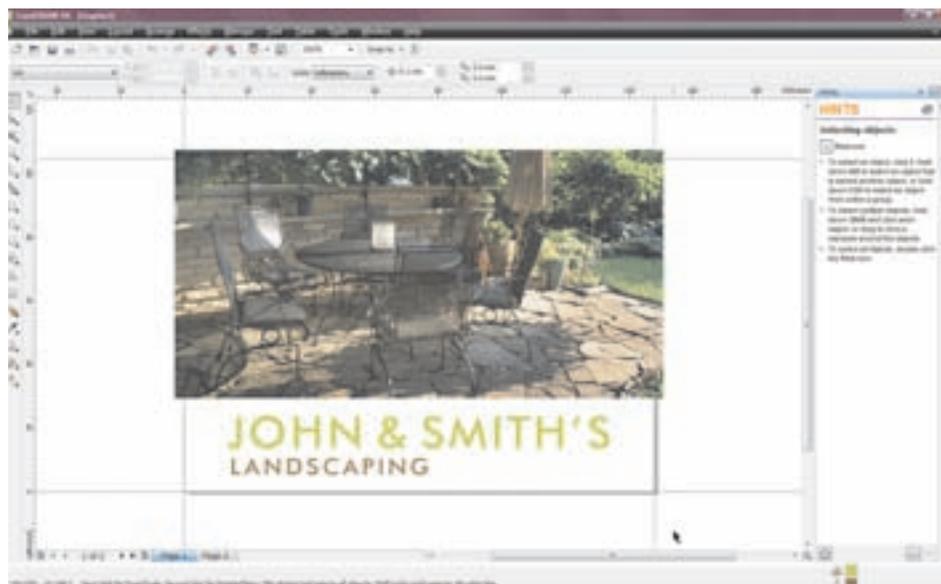
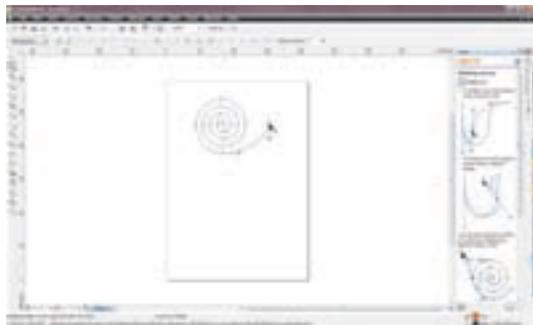
CREATE WITH CAPTURE: The Capture function is very useful if you want to create Photoshop tutorials for your website, for example

there is little here to make us excited, as everything we can do here, we can already do. Though this makes it slightly redundant, the tools are good and they work well.

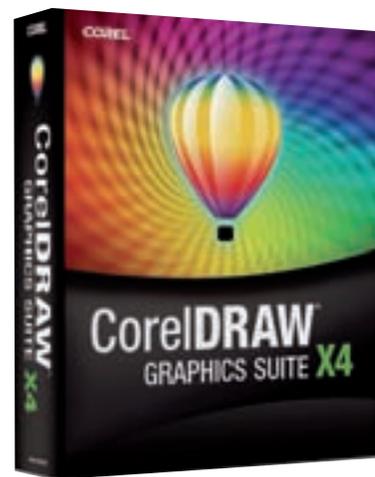
PowerTRACE is an interesting addition, used to quickly and easily trace bitmaps and then convert them into editable vector images. Finally, CAPTURE is a screen-capture program, which is highly useful for things like creating tutorials. It is easy to use and can capture any Windows process with one click.

This suite has always had a reputation for being a tool for a small business or for marketing departments, but in this incarnation, Corel has really pushed the boat out in trying to get creative professionals on board too. The included handbook has loads of tutorials and advice from professional artists and there's a lot of useful documentation, such as the quick guide to the fonts, symbols and clipart and photos in the package, not to mention a handy shortcuts guide.

There are some downsides, though. First, Macs are not supported, which is a shame when most of us work on one. Second, the highly useful ConceptShare is a subscription-based service, so there is additional cost involved. ■



ADOBE ALTERNATIVE: The CorelDRAW part of the package is a great alternative to Adobe Illustrator for drawing vector images for incorporating into digital projects



QUICK ON THE DRAW: Corel's Graphics Suite package comes with everything you need for design projects

Summary: This product is a complete package for graphic designers. You probably won't use the PHOTO-PAINT X4 function when you've got Photoshop, but you can switch files between the two, and the other programs in the package are very useful.

Rating: **4/5**

BUILD WITH BUILT-IN TEMPLATES: There are a number of built-in templates on offer that you can use to create particular projects

PANTONE Goe System

Maximise colour coordination across your design workflow with PANTONE's new innovative system

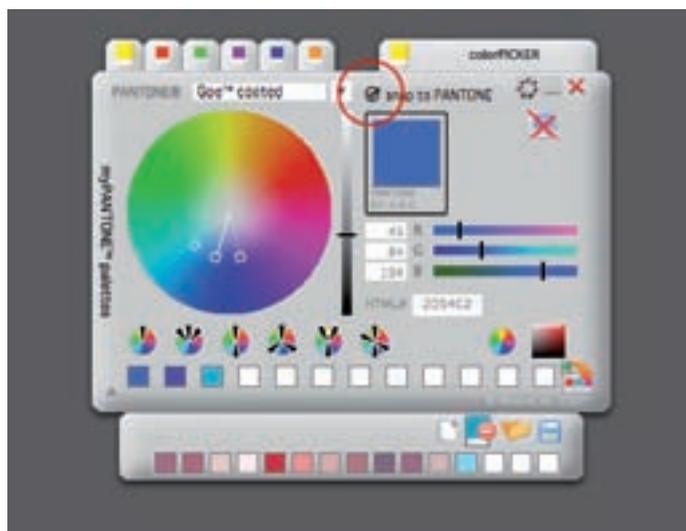
The PANTONE Goe System is the first completely new colour inspiration and specification system for the graphic arts industry since the introduction of the PANTONE Matching System 45 years ago. A creative consumer's dream, this product ticks all the boxes. It has style, sex appeal and, most importantly, it doesn't compromise its expert functionality.

PANTONE Goe provides the personal touch desired by all creatives. Everything comes organised and easily digestible, and listening to the cries from consumers, the PANTONE Goe System has upped the number of tones on show. Now with a massive 2,058 chromatically arranged colours, demands have been well and truly answered. The GoeGuide supplies an intuitive numbering system, relating the appropriate mixers to create digitally and sequentially numbered pages, to make location-finding effortless.

Recreation and function are fused within the GeoSticks. In the form of two sets, due to the volume of colours presented, GeoSticks present themselves as adhesive tabs or 'chips', which seems an extreme advantage when facing the necessity for coherent communication between designer, client and printer. Couple these with the PANTONE palette cards and creatives are encouraged to produce, archive and share neat colour palettes with minimum fuss. There's space for up to five different chips and notation, which serve to make the PANTONE Geo System that little bit more precious.

However, for all its valued material values and aesthetics, it offers much more constructive virtues, as the PANTONE Geo System accommodates its own myPANTONE palettes software. This software promises to expand existing software into a new realm of colour, something that it delivers through several exemplary functions.

A personal favourite of ours is the imagePALETTE builder command. This option allows users the ability to upload imagery and then choose a maximum of 12 related colours, set in the Selectors option, from the composition. This intuitive action allows users to then activate the Add All Colors to Palette option, which will place all tones in the working palette beneath. These can then be saved and imported into your preferred digital creative software (such as Photoshop) and loaded in the Swatches palette, great for digital painting.



STICKY SITUATION (LEFT): 2,058 colours in the PANTONE Goe System are available in a two-volume set of adhesive-backed colour chips, allowing designers to peel them off and place them wherever they want

CRAZY ABOUT COLOUR (BELOW): While not a replacement for the PANTONE Matching System, PANTONE Goe works in concert to provide a larger gamut of colour ideas



ON THE GOE: Visit www.pantone.com to upload and share palettes, post comments, rate your favourites, download them and access exclusive colour trend forecasts

The colorPICKER command allows users to select hues from the colour wheel and provides standard slide bars to fine-tune tone. More innovative features allow users to then activate the Snap to PANTONE option, which will modify colour selection to the nearest PANTONE hue. Other commands include myPANTONE palettes, akin to the Color Libraries command in Photoshop's Color Picker option in the way that it helps create shareable digital palettes for every project.

The colorBLENDER allows users to choose from gradients between a start and finish colour with up to 64 transitional steps, while the myPALETTE reader command provides larger views of your swatches. A nice little touch allows you to double-click examples to reveal RGB numbers and HTML hex codes (a web designer's dream!), as well as apply names and notes.



COLOUR COMPLETION: The PANTONE Goe system has been attentively designed to extend the range of colours in multiple formats that are easy to locate and identify

Specifications

Manufacturer: PANTONE
Web: www.pantone.com
Price: £250/\$499 (complete system)
Req: Artfully designed GeoCube packaging
Chromatically arranged GeoGuide
2,058 colours
Two-volume set of adhesive-backed colour chips
PANTONE palette cards to share and archive neat palettes
myPANTONE™ palette software with six innovative sectors

Summary: The PANTONE Goe System is ingenious in its simplicity, offering users the ability to quickly familiarise themselves with intuitive operations that promote envision and exploration.

Rating: **5/5**

MoGo Mouse X54

Designed for users on the go, just how efficient is the MoGo X54?

Manufacturer: MoGo
Web: www.newtonperipherals.com www.mogostore.com
Price: £35.39/\$69.99
Spec: Specifically designed to work with ExpressCard/54-equipped laptops USB Bluetooth adaptor or embedded Bluetooth 2.0 EDR compliant Ten metres working range Eight to ten hours' battery life Under an hour charge time 14g weight

The MoGo X54 is a neat and nifty piece of hardware: not only does it function as a wireless, four-button control with scroll mouse, but also as a media remote, controlling software such as iTunes or Windows Media Player.

Another benefit of the MoGo X54 is its size. Discreet yet extremely capable, this wallet-sized mouse can go everywhere you and your laptop go. It's made for accessible storage, slotting into your laptop's ExpressCard/54 slot. This is where the hardware gets interesting, as this will in turn charge the device, so there's no need for batteries either.

The mouse goes through a number of hibernation states to conserve energy. If left for ten minutes inactive, for example, or if the Bluetooth signal becomes unavailable, the mouse will 'fall

asleep'. These factors alone make the MoGo X54 an extremely positive economic option, priced at £35.39/\$69.99.

This hardware is also an ergonomic delight. Regarding its dimensions, it's perhaps surprisingly comfortable to use and comes standard with a kickstand, allowing it to be transformed from flat metallic card to portable mouse. The indented finger pad is loose and responsive, and easily adaptable to the user with its similar feel to a desktop mouse.

As stated, users can switch between multi-mode operations. It is well equipped to control volume and changeover commands with the built-in centre scroll bar. Its state-of-the-art laser engine delivers absolute precision and functions over a 30-foot radius away from your computer.

Its dimensions do raise a concern over durability, and to some the asking price may be expensive, but such a precious commodity should be treated with due care. All in all, the MoGo X54 seems an all-singing, all-dancing, compact computer accessory. ■

ENERGY-SAVING: *The wireless and energy-saving capabilities of the MoGo X54 are a major advantage over other battery-operated wireless mice*



Summary: Affordable, transportable and enjoyable to use, the MoGo X54 is one of the wireless mouse industry's most innovative products, making on-the-go computing as effortless as you could possibly want.

Rating: **4/5**



GrafiLite Natural Lighting System

A conveniently compact and efficient product by Colour Confidence

Manufacturer: Colour Confidence
Web: www.shop.colourconfidence.com
Price: £60.00/\$118.89
Spec: Specially formulated natural lighting Portable with space-saving design Neutral, mid-grey viewing unit and mat Optimum 2000 Lux illumination brightness 230V GrafiLite Lamp with 13W TrueColor Technology Tube UK/EU universal plug

The Colour Confidence GrafiLite desktop daylight simulator is a product that promises to deliver accurate natural lighting. Perhaps not the most multifaceted of products we've reviewed, this hardware is focused and dedicated to producing efficient results for its intended market.

Certainly suitable for designers and photographers, the GrafiLite Natural Lighting system is easy to assemble and straightforward in approach. It addresses the issue of colour distortion that can occur at the proofing stage in ambient lighting. Indoor and artificial light can bias your design, and

GrafiLite combats this by providing buyers with a product that gives a feel of natural light through its unique illumination, produced from a formulation of rare earth phosphors.

These GrafiLite tubes should last you for up to 10,000 hours, providing an economic as well as ergonomic product solution. The GrafiLite is quite compact, so it really doesn't steal much space for those with a smaller work area. Its small footprint and compactible design make it easy to store. It also comes equipped with a foldable handle, which will make manoeuvring secure.

This product comes standard with a neutral viewing mat, which provides photographers and designers with a surface for viewing images that will in no way affect their appearance or incur prejudiced image assessment. However, you will notice that this comes at a standard size, and to get the full benefit of seeing the effect applied to the whole image, your photos need to be reduced to a size no more than 8 x 12".

This factor does make it hard to determine the suitable user for this product. Seemingly functioning for high-end users yet also for enthusiasts, we'd advise it would be suitable for small studio photographers or even designers at a proofing stage. ■



IMPROVEMENTS: *Another notable factor of the product we should mention is that there's no on/off switch. Why? Beats us*

Summary: This is hardware that does exactly what it says it does, and well. It promises ergonomic and economic efficiency with no frills. It's sound all round, but without being really exciting.

Rating: **3/5**

Canon PowerShot A470

A chunky PowerShot compact camera perfect for all the family

Manufacturer: Canon
Web: www.canon.com
Price: £109/\$129.99
Spec: 7.1 megapixels, 3.4x optical zoom
14 easy-to-use shooting modes
2.5" LCD screen
Motion and Face Detection technology
Red-eye correction
DIGIC III and iSAPS
VGA and LP movies
Powered by AA batteries

This issue we're looking at two contrasting compacts: the super-slim Casio EX-S10 (reviewed below) and the Canon PowerShot A470, which is most definitely not slim.

When you first take it out of the box, you are reminded of early digital cameras – chunky with minimal buttons and an uncluttered Mode dial. However, the design is refined and the 7.1 megapixels are thoroughly modern.

From the outset, it's obvious this is a family camera rather than one for a photography enthusiast. It's colourful, with a choice of bright and chirpy casings (we had the blue one in for review), with a telescopic zoom reaching 3.4x optical. On the

back is a 2.5-inch LCD, which is perfectly clear for composition and playback, plus the standard controls.

There are few shooting options available, with only Auto, Manual and Scene selections. And don't get excited over the Manual mode – there are no real controls and it simply opens up white balance selection, exposure compensation and colour effects. There is a Macro option on the d-pad, which is great for taking texture shots and the quality of these is pretty good.

In fact, we have no complaints when it comes to image quality at all. We tried using the digital zoom alongside the optical zoom and were surprised to find the usual degradation not present. Sure, it's not quite as crisp as shots taken without the zoom, but if you're only going to be using them at a standard size, they're more than fine.

The main problem is that using this camera makes you yearn for more options. You grow out of it so quickly – but only if you're interested in progressing your photographic skills. If you just want good, easy shots, it's not a bad option. ■



FAMILY FUN: Chunky and coming in a choice of fun colours, this definitely isn't a camera for serious snappers

Summary: It's chunky and easy to use, which is great if all you want is quick snaps, but it doesn't look like a professional camera and it doesn't act like one either.

Rating: **3/5**

Casio EXILIM Card EX-S10

Another model from the Casio stable, this time offering 10.1 megapixels in the smallest casing ever

Manufacturer: Casio
Web: www.casio.com
Price: £219.99/\$249.99
Spec: 10.1 megapixels
Compatible with SD, SDHC, MMC and MMCplus
11.8MB built-in memory
Maximum image size of 3,648 x 2,736
3x optical zoom and 4x digital zoom
36 BESTSHOT scene modes
15cm-infinity focus range

Cameras seem to be diminishing in size at the moment, and the new EX-S10 from Casio is no exception. It is just 15mm thick (13.8mm at the thinnest point) and it seems almost impossibly small when you hold it in the hand.

This throws up the question about image quality. After all, a camera of these diminutive dimensions can only hold a tiny sensor, and cramming 10.1 megapixels onto one of these must surely mean trouble. Casio has thought about this though, and the S10 incorporates a newly developed 1/2.3-inch CCD to alleviate the problem. We took the camera out and about in a range of shooting conditions, and are pleased to report that image quality is good and there is no evidence of artefacts creeping in.

The zoom lens is 3x optical and this folds neatly into the camera. With this small range, there is little to worry about when it comes to barrel or pincushion distortion either, with crisp images from edge to edge.

Composition is easy too, with a 2.7-inch LCD – surprising given the small size – and a high-contrast ratio for improved viewing. It is also as bright as Casio claims, and the wide viewing angle is a bonus if you want to check your images.

There is all manner of technologies wedged inside this camera, including an Auto Shutter function, which fires the shutter as soon as the camera or subject movement stops, when the subject smiles or when your face fills the frame in self-portrait. This is a little gimmicky (though it does work), and probably won't find many uses among digital artists.

If it's textures that you want, then the Macro mode is perfectly adequate, and all other shooting modes make great reference shots for photomanipulation projects. All in all, another good compact from Casio. ■



SUPER-SLIM: On release, the S10 was the world's thinnest 10.1-megapixel camera

Summary: Some might not like the slim style of this camera because it can feel delicate in the hand, but the amount of technology pushed inside is a real surprise.

Rating: **4/5**

Logo-Art: Innovation In Logo Design

Sample international design delights with another successful book from Rotovision

Manufacturer: Rotovision
Web: www.rotovision.com
Price: £20.00/\$39.50
Spec: Stunning showcase of global innovative logo design
Interviews with leading designers and art directors
Six chapters covering a range of related industries
Over 160 full-colour pages with instructive annotations

Logo-Art is a book that looks fantastic inside and out.

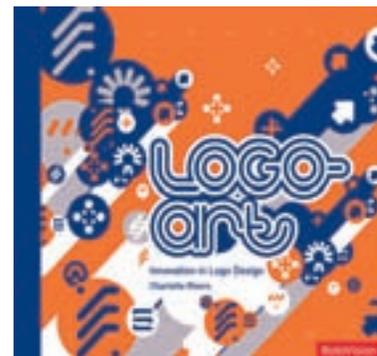
With its funky tactile card cover and brash neon colour, jam-packed with contemporary, exotic and downright sexy designs, it's a real aesthetic tour-de-force. It even keeps that new book smell long after exposure for that personal touch, making it all the more a must-have for the enthusiast creative.

Its interior matches its initial attraction, with a range of design solutions including contributors such as No Days Off and Pandarosa. Creative readers of this title will obtain an insight into contemporary practice and gather both expressive and practical inspiration. With each case study presented with Client and Design agency details, there's a point of reference for aspiring creatives to research and contact. There is also a

continental flavour to this title, with contributors from across the globe including Australia, UK, USA and Europe, offering evidence of the growing popularity of this art form.

Each chapter provides examples supplied from the collections of the world's most innovative designers, as well as providing examples of both 2D design and 3D context. Creatives can explore the advantages and rituals of such design circumstances – and these are just as insightful, even if not concerned specifically with logo design.

The chapters within this title are also dedicated to individual design sectors, so readers can easily focus on and digest every topic and example raised. Categories include Lifestyle and Fashion, Design and Photography, and Charities and Services, among others. Another nice touch is the included interviews that provide insight from the design world's leading authorities. Ariel Aguilera from Pandarosa and Paul Reardon from Peter & Paul are among good company. ■



EXPERTISE: Logo-Art examines the use of colour, artwork and typography to achieve successful design outcomes



Summary: This is a title that's both informative and attractive. Case studies are sure to educate, and the design on show is as varied and unique as it is inspirational.

Rating: **4/5**

Logo Design

Crisp and attractive, an absorbing read

Manufacturer: Taschen
Web: www.taschen.com
Price: £24.99/\$49.34
Spec: Over 2,000 samples from 30 countries
Spread across 384 full-colour pages
Introduction by Jörg Zintzmeyer
13 in-depth case studies
Nine industry-related chapters

As focused and forthright as its title probably suggests, Taschen's Logo Design seems to be more an edifying catalogue of sorts, concerned with reference rather than relation. This is, however, not a criticism.

The title presents in-depth case studies, some of which profile leading design and branding authorities. Included is an introduction by world-renowned corporate identity consultant Jörg Zintzmeyer, revealing the authority of the information available to consumers in this title. Other case studies concern important historical issues such as the revolution that was DKNY, a brand fantasy, and more recent topics like the re-design of established national newspaper *The Guardian*. Such subjects make for rich, insightful analysis.

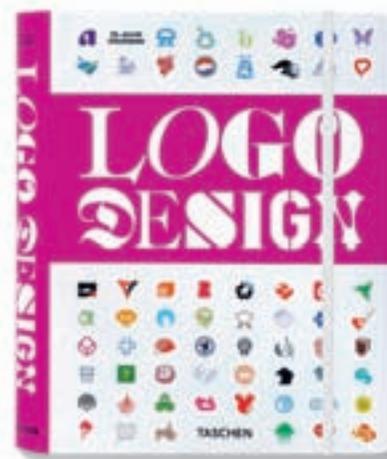
From here on in, readers are left to indulge in the 235 laid-out pages of contemporary designs. This is not as bogged down as it may seem, because each section is defined,



revealing the logos' 3D context. These include contemporary sectors that echo similar titles – Creative Industry, Fashion and Apparel, Media, etc.

Each example is presented and numbered with reference to the title's index, found at the back of the book. This allows readers to easily locate a preferred designer's sample or vice versa, discovering new agencies and directors through personal paged favourites. With over 2,000 samples from 30 countries, inspiration is once again key in this title.

Pages are ergonomic in design, easy to digest, and each example is presented with clarity and space to maximise its visual effects. This makes for a book that's aesthetically pleasing to the eye when it comes to the business end. However, some sort of insight into the rituals and ideas behind such projects and samples, in the form of annotation, would have made the title that little bit extra special and more friendly. ■



SERIOUS STUFF: With a prescribed visual approach, this title will really appeal to the academic and professional designer

Summary: An educated and high-end title that presents some interesting history and contemporary studies, and attractive design samples. Perhaps a tad formal when presenting samples.

Rating: **4/5**