

Adobe Illustrator 3.0

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It has not been very long since I started reviewing software for AMUG and the Newsletter. **Adobe Illustrator 3.0** is the most exciting assignment (and perhaps the most challenging) I have attempted. I have used **Illustrator 88** solely to edit and revise disk labels on the Best of... software, and have made only occasional forays into creating anything original. So I am a real novice with any serious drawing programs. The other inexperienced souls out there will probably appreciate this, but the experienced or professional users may find their questions unanswered. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the Best of... table or call 838-4036 and I will try to find answers to your questions.

Getting started, I worked my way through the tutorial, skimmed through the Reference Manual, Color Guide and "Beyond the Basics" booklet. I hunted through all my Mac magazines (*MacWorld*, *Publish* and *MacUser*), catalogs (*MacWarehouse* and *MacConnection*) and newsletters (*Step-by-Step Electronic Design*, and *Before & After*) for articles about 3.0. I even borrowed a magazine (*Personal Publishing*) in my search for information. According to *Personal Publishing*, Illustrator 3.0 "makes forays into the realms of page-layout and presentation graphics." Kathleen Tinkel of *Step-by-Step Electronic Design* is very complimentary in her November 1990 review, saying the "the new Illustrator 3 feels as if it were designed by and for graphic artists."

Adobe lists the following as New Features: The new type tools let you enter text directly on-screen. With these new tools, text objects can be created with an almost unlimited number of characters. Type can be imported in several formats and you can also combine any mixture of type faces, sizes, styles, and colors in a text object. The type tools let you control tracking, kerning, word and letter spacing, horizontal scaling of characters, vertical shift for superscripts and subscripts, justification and hyphenation. Type can be placed on a curve and used to fill irregularly shaped objects. The program has the ability to flow type from one column or shape to another and wrap type automatically around objects in its path. "With the addition of the Adobe Type Manager software, which is included with the Adobe Illustrator program, you can create editable outlines from typefaces." (Adobe Type Manager 2.0 is bundled with Illustrator 3.0.) Type Manager not only smooths screen fonts, but 2.0 helps with ImageWriter output.

New Tools

(1) toolbox illustration

There is a whole collection of new tools that appear as pop-out extensions when you point to a tool and hold down the mouse button. There are two additional selection tools, the direct-selection tool for selecting anchor points or objects without ungrouping them, and the object selection tool which lets you automatically select an entire path when you select any part of it (you do not need to hold down the Option key). There are two zoom tools (in and out). In addition to the basic rectangle tool, there are three additional rectangle tools (centered rectangle, rounded-corner, centered rounded corner). These rectangle tools do not require the Option key or a dialog box (although those are still available). An additional oval tool (the centered oval/circle) lets you draw ovals from the center without using the Option key.

There are nine transformation tools: The scale tool and a new scale-dialog tool enlarge or reduce objects, uniformly or non-uniformly; the rotate tool and a new rotate-dialog tool rotate objects at any angle (360 degrees) clockwise or counterclockwise; the reflect tool and a new reflect-dialog tool create mirror images of objects along any axis (both positive and negative angles); a shear tool and a new shear-dialog tool slant (skew) objects in any direction (shear angles are calculated clockwise); and the blend tool creates intermediate colors, shapes, or both between two paths. The scale-dialog, rotate dialog, reflect-dialog, and shear-dialog tools let you specify parameters for scaling, rotating, reflection and shearing in dialog boxes without needing to hold down the Option key (although you may still use that method).

There are three new path adjustment tools. The add-anchor-point tool adds an anchor point to a path. The delete-anchor-point tool removes an anchor point from a path. The convert-direction-point tool changes an anchor point from a corner to a smooth point, or from a smooth to a corner point.

New Menus/New Commands

In addition to the new tools are new menu commands and options in the dialog boxes. There is a Move command in the Edit menu that brings up a dialog box for pin point accuracy in moving. The Arrange menu contains four new commands. The Make Guide and Release All Guide commands let you turn graphic objects into guide objects. These help you align design elements/objects. Set Cropmarks and Release Cropmarks commands (yeah!!) allow you to create crop marks in the program or to control the bounding box information generated for Adobe Separator (color separation).

The View menu contains three new commands. Preview Selection (to preview just a selection from an artwork document, rather than the entire document), Hide Unpainted Objects and Show Unpainted Objects (hide or show any objects that are neither filled nor stroked (outlined)).

The Paint menu is new and has two commands that let you create and release compound paths (“defining an object as a compound path allows to you create objects with holes in them”).

(2) compound path illustration

The Type menu is also new and contains the Style, Font, Size, Leading, Alignment, Spacing Options, Tracking, Link, Unlink, Make Text Wrap, Release Text Wrap, and Create Outlines commands.

There is a new menu for Graphs which contains the Graph Style, Graph Data, Use Column Design, Use Market Design, and Define Graph Design commands. These let you manipulate graphs and the data they represent, but more about that later.

The Adobe Illustrator 3.0 program lets you print drafts on non-PostScript printers. I have not, however, had the chance to evaluate the quality of the results. Do please note that the references do say “draft.” Also listed as new features are additional options in the Preferences, Save As, Page Setup, Paint Style, and Type Style dialog boxes. You can now create a startup file to store fonts, patterns, custom colors, and graph designs that you use frequently.

There is a feature listed for experienced PostScript users called the Adobe Illustrator EPSF Riders file. This file can be used to store PostScript fragments used to customize your documents. For example, you can insert a logo so that it appears on all documents. There is a cautionary note that this file should not be used if you are not experienced.

Page Layout

“Illustrator 3 may still be the more efficient way of producing a lot of ordinary work in a general design studio—pieces like folders, invitations, business reply cards, letterhead sets, small posters, covers and so on.” (*Step-by-Step*) There are three formats available. One gives you a layout of six single pages for tiling, and one is a single page (each surrounded by a pasteboard). The third format lets you stretch out over the entire imageable area.

You can create a path (a circle, for example) and fill it with text, which will wrap at the boundaries. The paths can be irregular in shape and can be linked. There are, however, no spell check or search-and-replace functions (large blocks of text should be prepared elsewhere and imported). Tracking and kerning are available along with direct width controls.

Enhanced Typographic Tools

Personal Publishing says “The program’s most wide-ranging improvements come in the area of type handling.” and Tinkel of *Step-by-Step* says “Illustrator 3 has most of the typographic bells and whistles of PageMaker, DesignStudio and QuarkXPress and then some.” Tinkel rates the “hung punctuation” as the greatest new addition to the typographic tools. From the professional level, I am sure she is right. This is the ability to set centered headlines with hanging punctuation (not calculated when centering).

Text on a path is a feature that a sophisticated graphics program can’t live without. My personal opinion is that being able to work with text directly on the page without switching back and forth between the document and a dialog box and being able to see the results as you work is the greatest improvement here. Just draw a line or shape, choose the text-on-a-path cursor, click on the line and begin typing. Kerning and tracking controls adjust to 1/1000 em. All the standard type controls are available, including size, leading, alignment and spacing. You can move type above or below its

baseline by specifying vertical shift. The horizontal scale of text in a text object can be adjusted by a value of 100 percent.

(3) horizontal scale illustration

The Create Outlines command in the Type menu lets you turn any text object or objects into a set of paths that you can edit and manipulate as you would a graphic object. A letter converted into an outline becomes a compound path. A compound path lets you see through a opening, or a hole, in the path. These outlines can be modified to create logos, masks and so forth. Your imagination and skill appear to be the only limits.

(4) black & white illustration

Graphs

Yes, Graphs! Illustrator 3.0 provides six new graph tools. You can choose from Grouped Column (the default), Stacked Column, Line, Pie, Area and Scatter Graphs. You create a graph by drawing a basic outline of the graph with one of the graph tools or by entering specific dimensions in a Graph dialog box, then either enter data manually or import data from other programs, files or graphs. The Graph Data window contains options for transposing data, for switching the x and y axes in scatter graphs and for adjusting cell column width and decimal precision. Using the Graph Style makes it easy to change from one type to another to experiment and decide which graph best illustrates your data. The Graph Style dialog window lets you choose the attributes for the graph you have chosen (*i.e.*, column or cluster width, axis orientation, drop shadows, legends, etc.).

(5) graph illustration

Graphs can be customized with graphics and color, or you can edit and enhance a graph using transformation tools. "...a graph is a grouped object that is related to its data. You must therefore select the parts you want to edit without ungrouping the graph: to do this, use the direct-selection tool. You can create custom markers or columns, and also use the designs included on the Gallery disk included with the program. You need to have a certain understanding of the relationships involved in displaying your data, but with that restraint, your imagination and skills are the only limits.

Graphics

Those of you with drawing experience would not need to do more than scan the sections on the drawing tools and descriptions. But I would most sincerely recommend your taking the time to glance over these sections. The new tools materially affect nearly every drawing tool available and you will be pleased with their ease of use and versatility. You can perform most functions in three ways — the tool boxes, the menus and the keyboard.

Layering is discussed in respect to Painting. The Adobe Illustrator program paints your work by applying successive layers of opaque paint to objects. The order in which the program applies layers of paint corresponds to the order in which objects are layered in your artwork. Also, the direct-selection tool does let you select objects and paste them in between the layers of existing groups. This was one of the very few aspects of 3.0 about which I heard criticism. Layering is an intricate and important function and I read/heard several comments to the effect that this was a weak point and, hopefully, the subject of future upgrades.

My loudest praise must go to Adobe's tutorial manual and samples/templates. As I said in the introduction, I started this review by working my way through the tutorial. I was neither bored nor intimidated. Nothing was assumed and the steps for each feature were logical and concise. I even got the hang of Bezier Curves. For those who are not up on all the graphics vocabulary, these are curves named after Pierre Bezier, that are defined mathematically by four control points. "These control points are the four direction points at the ends of the two direction lines that are tangent to each curve." (Huh? Believe me, the examples are more easily understood than these words.) All curves in Illustrator are such curves. The tutorial patiently walks you through all the drawing tools necessary to construct your graphics. Then "on your own" assignments are suggested and some questions with answers attempt to cover the most common problems encountered.

Becoming proficient with this program would take many hours, but you can get going very shortly after you finish the tutorial. A few of the procedures will take

repetition and practice. I was pleased the tutorial gave me several things I could do on my own. Normally, following the neatly outlined steps in a tutorial is one thing, but attempting something on your own is an altogether different adventure. There is a handy Quick Reference card with most of the procedures outlined briefly. I think I will just hang it on my wall.

Manuals

In addition to the tutorial, is the familiar User Guide. This is a thick one. Each section starts with short descriptions and definitions, then goes on to handle all the various attributes in detail. I'm sure there may be some sections that may never be read, but there are a few that will probably get a lot of use. There is a companion Color Guide which will be of use particularly to those who do professional graphics, preprint, desktop publishing and presentation graphics. It takes you through preparing your artwork, creating colors with Illustrator (process, custom, Pantone matching), working with a color monitor, overprinting, trapping separating (Adobe Separator is included) and other specialized techniques, and preparation of your files for use by an imagesetting service.

There is also a little manual entitled "Beyond the Basics", which is a catalog of advanced techniques and strategies for using the program. It is a collection of tips and techniques. If you are a seasoned Adobe Illustrator user, you can probably start working with some of these immediately. If not, a run through the tutorial and a bit of practice will put you in a better position to appreciate these. This little booklet is stuffed with ideas and tricks.

To Summarize

This a powerhouse program. I have only been able to give you a quick look at the features and improvements of Adobe Illustrator 3.0. It would be extremely difficult to give a truly detailed review of such a complex application, so I have tried to provide an overview of most of the functions (new and old). Adobe has set a very high standard for other related programs to match. It most definitely is not a lightweight. Being able to integrate serious graphics with page layout on the same screen is magnificent and I love being able to manipulate type without using text dialog boxes.

Another winner is the ability to create editable outlines from type that can be manipulated to create logos, etc. I believe Adobe has taken a giant step toward integrating graphics and text handling capabilities. This package is a must for any graphics professional, advanced desktop publisher or serious hobbyist. As I learned this weekend at the Graphics presentation given by Rick Burrell of Artistec (a true Mac expert) and Gary Fields (our own AMUG newsletter editor and graphics expert), Adobe has in Illustrator the only pure PostScript package on the market. Currently, Adobe Illustrator 3.0 lists at \$595 retail.