

CHAPTER 10: The Tools Menu

The Tools menu lets you display or hide the different palettes, set the antialiasing and drag updates for the tools, and set the cursor style.

Tools

The Tools command [Command-T] is a toggle command that displays or hides the Tools palette. Like most commands in this menu, a check appears by the command when the palette is open.

Clicking on the Zoom box in the top right corner of the title bar of all palettes shrinks them to a reduced version to save space.

See Chapter 2, The Tools Palette for a thorough discussion of the Tools palette.

Colors

The Colors command [Command-Y] is a toggle command that displays or hides the Colors palette, which is used to select and edit colors and patterns. The number of colors available depends on the image type of the current document: Millions of colors, thousands of colors, 256 colors or grays, 16 colors or grays or black and white.

See Chapter 3, The Colors Palette for a complete discussion of the Colors palette.

Paint Controls

The Paint Controls command [Command-U] is a toggle that displays or hides the Paint Controls palette.

See Chapter 2, The Tools Palette for a complete discussion of the Paint Controls palette.

Brush Options

The Brush Options command is enabled when you select the Brush, Air Brush, Blur, Sharpen, Stamp, Smudge, Lighten or Darken tools from the Tools palette. Selecting the command opens the Brush Options palette, allowing you to set several controls for a tool at one time. The Gradient, Spacing, Repeat, and Fade are common to all brush tools. The slider and top option vary with the tool selected—Opacity when the Brush or Stamp tools are selected;

Pressure when Smudge is selected; Flow when Air Brush is selected; Intensity when the Sharpen, Blur, Lighten or Darken tools are selected.

See Chapter 2, The Tools Palette for a discussion of the Brush Options palette.

Mouse Coordinates

The Mouse Coordinates command is a toggle that displays or hides the Mouse Coordinates palette. Double-clicking on the Pointer tool also toggles

this palette.

The pop-up menu lets you select measurement units in pixels, inches, centimeters, picas or points.

The X and Y numbers identify the cursor location, based on the ruler origin point (normally the upper left corner of the active window).

The second area indicates the percentages of colors at the cursor point. The colors shown depend on the type of image—RGB, CMYK, etc.

The third area indicates the width and height of any selections, measured in the chosen units.

The fourth area indicates the straight-line distance from the point where the mouse button was held down to the current cursor position. The angle of this straight-line distance is also indicated, measured in the chosen units.

Show/Hide Palettes

The Show Hide Palettes command [Tab] is a toggle that removes and restores any open palettes from view without closing them.

Antialiasing

The Antialiasing command is a toggle that eliminates jagged edges of text or objects by blending the sharp contrasts between the different colors. It is available only when the Shape Selection, Lasso, Magic Wand, Shape Object, Line, Paint Can, Text, Scissors or Bezier tools are in use. When you select Antialiasing for a tool, a check mark appears next to the command in the Tool menu.

Drag Delay

The Drag Delay command is a toggle that controls when pastes, object and line screen redraws are updated as you move or draw them. The normal setting (with no check mark next to the command in the menu) has no delay. With large or complex objects, the screen redraws may be slow. Activating the command shows only an outline of an item as it is moved and redraws according to the Preference settings.

Paint Dither

The Paint Dither command is a toggle that indicates when a document has been dithered.

Cursor

The Cursor command displays a hierarchical menu where a cursor style can be selected. The command applies to all tools except the Hand, Magnify, Dropper, and Text tools. Either Tool Icon or Crosshair views may be chosen.

The Brush Size is a toggle that displays an outline showing the size and shape of the current brush tool as it moves for finer control of brush stroke placement.

Custom Selection...

The Custom Selection... command opens a dialog box where a custom selection can be created. See Chapter 2, The Tools Palette for more information.