

Photoshop Mastery

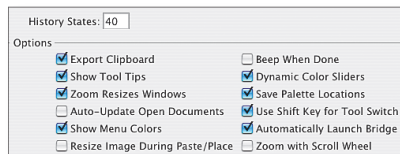
Taking Photoshop to the next level

■ BY BEN WILLMORE

Setting Up Photoshop CS2

Each time a new version of Photoshop is released, the first thing I do after installing it is change the Preferences and a few other settings so that Photoshop runs smoothly. Maybe some of these changes are appropriate for your situation.

Right after installing Photoshop CS2, launch the program and choose Preferences>General from the Photoshop menu (PC: Edit menu). The *History States* setting determines how many undos are available. The default is 20 and you can set it as high as 1,000, but I don't recommend that many, because Photoshop fills up your hard drive keeping track of the previous stages of your image. Instead, I prefer to increase it to 40, which is a good compromise. In the same dialog, I also turn on the Automatically Launch Bridge checkbox so that Bridge launches each time I open Photoshop.



Next, click on the pop-up menu beside the General field and choose *File Handling*. In this screen, change the Maximize PSD and PSB File Compatibility pop-up menu to Never. This means that all PSD file-format images produce smaller file sizes by saving only the layers that make up the image and by not including a flattened version of the image. (A flattened version is needed for programs that can open PSD files, but don't understand layers.) Be sure to test your files with all the programs in which you plan to use PSD images so you'll know whether the program can handle this File Handling setting (it doesn't affect JPEG, TIFF, or any file format other than PSD).

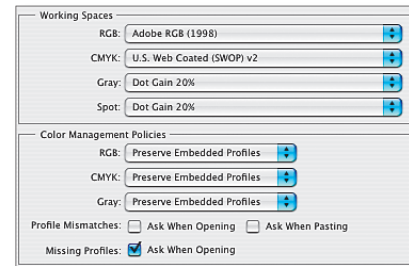
Then we'll choose Plug-Ins & Scratch Disks from the pop-up menu at the top of the Preferences dialog and change the

Scratch Disks setting. The Scratch Disk is a hidden file on your hard drive that keeps track of what you've done to your image so that you can undo multiple steps by choosing Edit>Step Backward or by deleting states in the History palette. The default uses your Startup disk only, which is the drive containing your computer's operating system. For many users (including me) this is the smallest drive on the computer—and it's often nearly full. If Photoshop runs out of space on the drive, you'll get a message that the scratch disk is full, preventing you from doing any more work in Photoshop. So...if you have more than one drive attached to your computer, set the Second, Third, and possibly Fourth pop-up menus to your other drives so that Photoshop will use those drives once the first drive is full. Click OK when you're finished with the Preferences settings.



Now that we've dealt with the essential Preferences, the next step is *Color Settings* (Edit>Color Settings). In this dialog, set the RGB Working Space to Adobe RGB (the default setting of sRGB is okay if you primarily create graphics for the Web). Next, turn off the two Profile Mismatch checkboxes so that Photoshop won't warn you about color-related issues unless it's really necessary (that's when an image doesn't contain a color profile). Now, even though we've told Photoshop not to warn us when there's a profile mismatch, it will still display a warning, but offers a Don't

Show Again checkbox that you can turn on the first time it shows up. Click OK to close this dialog.



The following changes will help produce better results when performing color correction using the *Eyedroppers* in Levels or Curves. First, choose the Eyedropper tool (I) and set the Sample Size pop-up menu (up in the Options Bar) to 3 by 3 Average, which causes the Eyedropper tool to sample a small area instead of looking at a single pixel. Next, choose Image>Adjustments>Curves, double-click on the Set White Point eyedropper at the lower right of the dialog, and in the Color Picker dialog that appears, change the R, G, and B fields to 240. These settings will retain detail in any area that's clicked on with that tool. Click OK in the Color Picker and the Curves dialog, and click the Yes button to save the settings. Finally, Quit Photoshop to save all the changes you just made into Photoshop's Preferences file. ■

Ben Willmore is the author of Up to Speed: Photoshop CS2 and Photoshop CS Studio Techniques, and co-author of How to Wow: Photoshop for Photography. Currently, Ben is on tour with his "Photoshop for Photographers" seminar. To find out more and get a bunch of free tips, visit www.wherisben.com.

