



Fundamental Photoshop

Little things make a big difference when working in Photoshop

BY BEN WILLMORE

Copy and paste: one of the foundations of electronic publishing. And as usual, Photoshop goes beyond the call of duty with its embellishments to this simple feature. Let's see how you can transform it from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

First off, you should know that when you cut or copy an image, Photoshop stores it in a special place called the Clipboard. Then, when you choose Paste, Photoshop will deposit the contents of the Clipboard onto a new layer directly above the layer that is currently active.

The image will remain on the Clipboard until you copy something else. That makes it easy to paste an image into multiple documents, but it can also cause memory problems if the image is quite large. If you're done using the information stored on the Clipboard, then you can free up some memory by choosing Edit>Purge>Clipboard.

If you ever notice that the Cut, Copy, or Clear choices are grayed out in the Edit menu, it's because you must first make a selection to indicate the portion of the image you'd like to work with. Photoshop usually copies from the active layer; if you'd like to copy all the visible layers, as if they've been merged together, be sure to choose Copy Merged.

When you choose Paste in Photoshop 6.0, you will occasionally be presented with the Paste Profile Mismatch dialog box. Most of the time you'll want to choose Convert so the appearance of the colors won't change. But, if the image you are pasting includes solid areas of color and it is destined for the Internet, don't convert the image, otherwise, Web-safe colors used in the image will shift to non-Web-safe values.

When you choose Paste, the contents of the Clipboard will be placed in the center of the document. You can specify a different position by making a selection before choosing Edit>Paste, then Photoshop will attempt to center the image in the selection. It will also be careful not to shove any of the



Convert the image if it will be used for anything other than the Internet, but for Web images, be sure to choose "Don't convert."

info beyond the edge of the document. That means you can make a tiny selection in the corner of your image to force Photoshop to snug the image into that corner when you paste.

When a selection is active, you'll also find a choice called Paste Into, which will crop the pasted image so it only appears inside the selected area. Photoshop will accomplish that by adding a Layer Mask to the layer that it creates. This is nice because you can switch to the Move tool and reposition the pasted information within the selection (this technique can also be used to create some interesting animations in Adobe ImageReady). Once you've positioned things to your liking, you can drag the Layer Mask (it's the second thumbnail picture in the Layers palette) to the trash to delete the hidden information. That will reduce your file size.

If you are familiar with Layer Masks, you know you can paste an image into the mask. In order to do that, the Layer Mask must be visible before you paste. You can toggle the visibility of a Layer Mask by Option-clicking (PC: Alt-clicking) on the Layer Mask thumbnail in the Layers palette.

Because the images you work with in Photoshop can be quite large, Photoshop's Clipboard is optimized for large, complex images. When you switch from Photoshop to another program,

the contents of the Clipboard have to be transferred to the operating system's Clipboard for use in other programs. If the content of the Clipboard is quite large, then it can overwhelm your operating system and cause it to run out of memory. To prevent memory errors, you can stop Photoshop from exporting the clipboard by going to Edit> Preferences>General (the prefs are under the File menu in 5.5) and turning off the Export Clipboard option. Then to get something from Photoshop to another program, save the image as a TIFF or EPS file for publishing, or use GIF or JPEG for the Web. Once you've saved the file, you should be able to load it into another program by choosing File>Place.

Or, if you really don't want to have a bunch of files cluttering up your hard drive, try using the Move tool to drag the image from your document into a document in another program. That's known as drag-and-drop and it sends the information directly to the other program, bypassing the Clipboard and avoiding lots of memory problems. This also lets you drag the image to a specific position in the other document, and if you're dragging between two Photoshop files, you can move more than one layer by linking them.

Once you become comfortable with all of Photoshop's copy and paste choices, you'll be able to avoid memory problems and have more control over your images. ■

Ben Willmore is the founder of Digital Mastery, a training and consulting company which presents the national seminar tour of "Master Photoshop in 3 Days." Ben provides hundreds of free Photoshop tips and tutorials on his Web site www.digitalmastery.com.



zip



zero



zilch



nil



nothin'



nada...

that's how much you'll pay for a one-year subscription of *Photoshop User* magazine!

That's right, because *Photoshop User* is the official magazine of the **National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP)**, and when you join, the free subscription is just one of many benefits you'll enjoy. To learn more about the NAPP, visit www.photoshopuser.com or call **800-738-8513**.



National Association of Photoshop Professionals
Because there's more to learn about Adobe® Photoshop® than there is time to learn
www.photoshopuser.com

Adobe and Photoshop are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems, Inc.