

PHOTOSHOP CS3

Worth the cost to upgrade?



Kevin Slimp

Institute of
Newspaper Technology
articles@kevinslimp.com

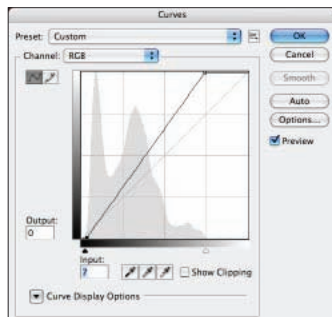
I try to offer some variety in my columns, but sometimes it's hard. Most of the e-mail requests I receive are related to Acrobat (PDF files), Photoshop and InDesign. All Adobe products. It's hard to remain objective when most of the software released for our industry seems to come from one company. I can't put it off any longer. Photoshop CS3 deserves its own review.

A lot of you downloaded the free trial of Photoshop CS3 last year, when the free beta upgrade was released for Photoshop CS2 users. However, most folks in our business haven't had the opportunity to see what all the fuss is about. Let me tell you, there is plenty to fuss about. I plan to limit our discussion to three features in Photoshop CS3 that are sure to become favorites of paginators and photo editors.

Improved Curves

Most photo editors can adjust Levels and Curves in their sleep. They know to bring the highlight and shadow end points in using Levels, then adjust the midtones using Curves. Using both tools is handy thanks to the histogram included in the Levels adjustment window.

Levels might be history thanks



A histogram is now built into the Curves adjustment window.



Original RGB image (left); image converted using Mode>Grayscale; image converted with help of Black & White tool.

to the histogram now available in the Curves adjustment window. Now Photoshop users can bring the end points in using Curves, without visiting Levels first. The Curves histogram shows up in light gray underneath the adjustment Curves. Users who want to adjust the highlights and shadows, lighten the midtones, then create an "s" curve to create contrast can do all this in Curves.

Controlling B&W Photos

Photo editors have created all kinds of ways to convert photos to grayscale in Photoshop. A lot of photo editors convert images to Lab colors, selecting the Lightness channel to convert to grayscale. Most simply select *Image>Adjustments>Grayscale*.

Photoshop CS3 introduces the Black & White tool. Adobe must have had newspapers in mind when they developed this tool, because it's perfect for many of the challenges we face.

The Black & White tool, found under *Image>Adjustments*, lets the user adjust individual color channels in an image while viewing its representation in grayscale. To test this tool, I took a photo of my son at his birthday party. When I converted the image to grayscale using *Image>Mode>Grayscale*, it was difficult to see the difference between the green and blue balloons. Using the Black & White tool, I was able to lighten the green balloons and saturate the blue balloons to get the results I wanted. Sure, I could have done this in earlier versions of Photoshop, but it

would have taken more tools and more time. This tool alone justifies the cost of an upgrade.

Yes, You Can Create Animated GIF Files

Sure, I could create animated files in earlier versions of Photoshop. An animation is a sequence of images, or frames, that is displayed over time. Each frame varies slightly from the preceding frame, creating the illusion of movement or other changes when the frames are viewed in quick succession. Just think of the rotating ads on your newspaper Web site and you know about animation.

Prior to CS3, I had to create my artwork in Photoshop, then move to a separate application (by clicking on a button at the bottom Photoshop's tool bar), to create a sequence of frames which eventually became an animated GIF file. In the CS3 version, I can do all my work in Photoshop. While this might not seem like a big deal to folks who have been creating GIFs all their lives, I found creating these files much more intuitive using Photoshop CS3.

What's This Mean To My Newspaper?

Yes, it's true we could accomplish these tasks in earlier versions of Photoshop. The nice thing about the CS3 version is that you can do them much more quickly and without a long learning curve. Newspaper photo editors are busy people; finding time to learn

new tools can be a problem. But these tools are very intuitive in CS3 and you will be using them in no time. And, for those using Intel-based Macs, the latest version of Photoshop runs considerably faster than the CS2 version.

The cost to upgrade to Photoshop CS3 varies, depending on the software you already have. Visit <http://www.adobe.com> for more information.



Creating animated files is easier, thanks to the simplified interface in Photoshop CS3.

Read more of Kevin's columns at www.kevinslimp.com. See Kevin speak in person at one of the following upcoming locations:

Denver, Colorado • June 22

Biloxi, Mississippi • June 23

Nashville, Tenn. • June 28-29

Fargo, North Dakota • July 18-19

Kevin speaks at conferences and provides live, on-site consulting, for newspapers throughout the industry.

To contact Kevin about coming to your office or conference, email him at kevin@kevinslimp.com.

