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Type and Background Effects

PART ONE

TYPE fads are just like fashion. They've got short fuses and are completely at the mercy of a fickle public. Twenty years ago if you designed a headline that looked like it was made from scratched and eroded type, you might get an award. Today you're lucky if anyone even notices.

Let's face it, we're jaded. Pick up any newspaper or magazine and you'll see a staggering profusion of type effects. That means you've got a tough job; you've got to come up with a type style that not only grabs the reader, but also does the best possible job of enhancing your message and organizing its content. And if you're using a background, you want to make sure that you've got one that perfectly complements your text. I can't help you with your design, but I can help you master the tools you'll need to create some awesome type and background effects.

But before we set sail on our typographical adventure, a word of caution: Throw caution to the wind. No matter how many type effects you see out there, there are still a million more yet to be imagined. With text, there are no boundaries.

THE NEW & IMPROVED TYPE TOOL

Given Photoshop's past limitations with text, the new Type tool is nothing short of amazing. But (but!) even though the new version is light years ahead of its predecessor, Photoshop still creates text characters in the same way it did in the past — out of pixels. These pixels have a certain size. And if the pixels are too large, the text will appear jagged when it is printed. Remember, the resolution of a document determines how large the pixels will appear when they are printed.

On the other hand, text created in illustration and page layout programs are not made out of pixels, they are created from objects. As objects, they can be printed without jaggies on almost all printers.

So, even though the Type tools have become much more user friendly and productive, I would still create text in Photoshop only if I was not able to create the desired effect (such as 3D chrome or liquid type) in other programs, or if I were going to use it for on-screen display (such as multimedia, video, or the Web). If I just wanted some solid text on top of a photo, I would save the Photoshop image as a TIFF or EPS file, load it into my page layout program, and add the text in that program.

With version 5 of Photoshop, Adobe has completely rethought the way text is created and manipulated in Photoshop. With the newly designed tools, you can mix multiple typefaces, fine tune tracking, kerning, leading, and baseline shift almost like a page layout application.

And best of all, you can now do it with special type layers that retain their formatting characteristics and can be edited at any time.

ENTERING TEXT

To add text to your document, choose the Type tool (the one that looks like a solid "T") and click anywhere on the image. Photoshop will present you with the text entry dialog box. The bottom of this dialog box is where you can enter and edit the text you want to add to your image. If you enter a



NOTE

Photoshop offers you two text tools, vertical and horizontal; but you don't have to limit yourself to text at 90° increments. After you have created a type layer, you can choose **Edit>Transform>Arbitrary** to rotate your text to any angle. No matter which angle you choose, the text will still be fully editable. In fact, you can even choose **Edit>Transform>Skew** without losing the editable quality of the text.

text in the main image window, which makes it much easier to work with than with previous versions.

EDITING TEXT

The top of the type dialog box offers a wide range of choices for editing text. But, before you start messing with these settings, you'll need to highlight the text you would like to edit. You can do this by dragging across a range of text, or typing **Command-A** to select all the text.

Size — There are two ways to measure how large the text will become, in pixels or in points. The pixels option is resolution dependent, meaning that the height of the text in pixels will depend on the resolution of your image. More often than not, I prefer to measure text in points because I can use the same setting in multiple documents and know that the text will appear the same size when printed regardless of the resolution of the file it is used in. The only time I use the pixels option is when I need to match the height of some existing text that I have measured in pixels. To be honest, it isn't very often that I pay attention to the actual size settings; instead, I glance at the document to see how large the text is compared to the rest of my document. To quickly adjust the size of the text in increments of two, highlight the text and type **Shift-Command->** or **Shift-Command-<**. To change the size in increments of ten, just add the **Option** key to these keyboard commands.

Kerning — If you need to tighten up or loosen the space between two letters, click between the letters, then turn off the **Auto Kern** checkbox. Now you can change the **Kerning** setting to increase or decrease the amount of space between those letters. To quickly change the **Kerning** setting in increments of 20, type **Option-Right Arrow** and **Option-Left Arrow**. You can also add the **Command** key to these keyboard commands to increase the kerning setting in increments of 100.

Color — To change the color of the text, click on the color swatch to bring up the standard **Color Picker**. This setting controls the color of all the text in the dialog box so you don't have to highlight a range of text before changing the setting. If you want a letter or word to have a different color, you'd have to create a separate **Type** layer. Each **Type** layer can contain only one color; so for every color you want to use, you'd have to create another **Type** layer.

Leading — To change the vertical space between lines of text,

long passage of text, unfortunately Photoshop will not automatically break it into multiple lines. Instead, you have to act as if you are using an old-style typewriter and hit the return key to force information to the next line. But with the new version of the **Type** tool, you actually get an on-screen preview of your

you'll need to change the **Leading** setting. If you leave this setting empty, Photoshop will automatically calculate its own setting and keep it hidden from you. It does this by multiplying the size of the text by 120%; so, 100pt text, for example, would have an automatic leading setting of 120. If you don't like the auto setting (leaving it blank), you can type in your own setting. To quickly change the leading in increments of two, highlight the text, then type **Option-Up Arrow** or **Option-Down Arrow**.

Tracking — To add or remove space between all the letters in a range of text, highlight the text, then change the **tracking** setting. Or type **Option->** or **Option-<** to change the **Tracking** in increments of 20. To change the **Tracking** setting in increments of 100, just add the **Command** key to these keyboard commands.

Baseline — To shift one or more letters up or down, highlight the letters, then change the **Baseline** settings. To change this setting in increments of two, type **Shift-Option-Up Arrow** or **Shift-Option-Down Arrow**.

Anti-Aliased — This checkbox will cause the pixels on the edge of the text to blend into the image and create a non-jagged edge. I usually leave this option turned on unless I have a specific reason to turn it off (see Figures 1 and 2).

TYPE LAYERS

The addition of **Type** layers in Photoshop 5 is one of the most welcome changes Adobe has ever made. After you add text to your image, the text will appear on a special **Type** layer. This layer is special because you can double-click its name to re-edit the text. Photoshop will not permanently convert the text to pixels until you choose **Layer>Text>Render Layer**. Not only that, but Photoshop allows you to do a whole bunch of stuff to the **Type** layers without having to permanently convert them to pixels. Let's take a quick look at your choices.

Apply most of the Edit>Transform functions

Add Layer Effects

Add a Layer Mask

Before you can apply a filter or perform adjustments to the text, you have to convert the **Type** layer into a normal layer by choosing **Render Layer** from the **Layer>Text** menu. You just have to keep in mind that after you have used this option, you will no longer be able to edit the text. Photoshop will no longer think of it as text, in fact, and will treat it as if it were a regular scanned image.



FIGURE 1. Anti-Aliased off.



FIGURE 2. Anti-Aliased on.



TYPE MASK TOOL

The Type Mask tool (which looks like a dashed-outline of the letter “T”) is used for creating selections in the shape of text. This tool works just like the normal Text tool except that it does not give you an on-screen preview and it does not create a Type layer; you get a selection instead. I can honestly say that I never use this tool. I don’t really like it because I can’t see what I’m doing on screen when I’m creating the text. Instead of using the Type Mask tool, I usually use the normal Type tool (so I can get an on-screen preview); then I Command-click the name of the Type layer and drag its name to the Trash icon. Doing this gives me the same result as using the Type Mask tool, but provides me an on-screen preview. That’s much better than fumbling around blindfolded.

Now that you’ve seen the options that are available when creating text, let’s get into the fun stuff and start creating type effects. I’ll break the effects into three sections: Part 1 will cover effects that use Layer Effects. It is important to know that the effects in this section are the only ones that allow the text to still be edited. Part 2, “Basic Filter Effects,” uses filters and basic effects by enhancing a Layer Effect or by distorting the text itself. Part 3, “Photo-realistic Filter Effects,” will use filters to their full advantage and create photo-realistic type effects. So without further ado, let’s get started.



FIGURE 3. Outer Bevel using In setting.



FIGURE 4. Outer Bevel using Out setting.



FIGURE 5. Inner Bevel Type Effect.



FIGURE 6. Emboss Type Effect.

LAYER EFFECTS

Let’s start off with text effects that are attached to a Type layer. First and foremost, it’s very important to remember that with the Type layer you get the added benefit of being able to edit the text after you have applied the effect. And because the effects are made by using the Layer Effects, they don’t require much memory and should not increase the file size of your image too much. Layer Effects allow you to create some great effects such as edge embossing, extruded or indented type, inner shadows, and beveled type. To add a Layer Effect to the currently active layer, choose one of the options from the Layer>Effects menu.

INNER SHADOW

An Inner Shadow will make it look as if you poked a hole in the image and put a sheet of colored paper behind the hole. To apply

this effect, be sure a Type layer is active; then choose Layer>Effects>Inner Shadow. In the dialog box that appears, you can specify the mode, opacity, angle, distance, blur, and intensity of the shadow.

After adding this effect, you might need to change the Opacity setting to lighten the shadow. I usually set the angle to the upper left (somewhere between 120° and 135°), then play with the Distance and Blur settings until the shadow looks appropriate for the text I’ve chosen.

BEVEL AND EMBOSS EFFECTS

The Bevel and Emboss Effects all use the same set of options. The default settings for highlight and shadow will usually produce acceptable results. As with most type effects, I usually set the angle to the upper left (between 120° and 135°); this determines where the light source is coming from. The Depth and Blur settings determine how strong the effect will be and the Up and Down radio buttons determine if the text will appear above or below the surface of the image. The Style menu at the bottom of the dialog box determines what type of effect you’ll end up with.

An Outer Bevel will add a highlight and shadow under the text. This will make the text appear as if it is raised above the surface of your image (see Figures 3 and 4).

The Inner Bevel effect can produce a simple 3D effect. Out of all the controls, the Blur setting is the most critical to achieving a satisfactory result (see Figure 5).

The Emboss Effect looks similar to applying both the Inner and Outer Bevel Layer Effects at the same time. This will give you 3D type that appears to be extruding from the surface of your image (see Figure 6).

Those are the basic Layer Effects that I use to create simple type effects. At first, they might seem limited. But, you can do much, much more with these effects if you trick Photoshop into not displaying the solid text that is in the Type layer. Let’s take a look at the possibilities.

TV TYPE

What the devil is TV type? Well, you know when you flick on the TV set and the networks have their ever-present logo embossed into the lower right corner of the screen (like when you’re recording old reruns of Gilligan’s Island and you’re constantly reminded of which network you stole it from?)—that’s TV type. Whether you love it or hate it, most people want to know how to create it. We’re going to use a Layer Effect to create the edges of the text, but we don’t want the middle of the text to be a solid color; we want it to be transparent, instead. To achieve this, you’ll need to choose 50% gray before entering the text (or you can change the color within the text dialog box itself). To make sure it really is 50% gray, click on your foreground color and set the HSB settings to 0, 0, and 50. Next, open the Layers palette and set the blending

NOTE

You can also move a shadow (or other effect) by dragging anywhere within the main image window. As you're dragging, watch the Layer Effects dialog box to see exactly what's happening to the angle and distance settings.

mode of the text layer to Hard Light. This should make the text disappear (only shades brighter or darker than 50% will show up). Next, add a Layer Effect by choos-

ing Layer>Effects>Bevel and Emboss. You should only need to mess with the bottom set of controls (that is, unless you've already screwed up the top ones). I like to set the Style pop-up menu to Outer Bevel, set the Angle to 135, then play with the Depth and Blur settings until the image looks good (see Figure 7).



FIGURE 7. TV type effect.



FIGURE 8. Indented type effect.



FIGURE 9. Finished indented type effect.

swatch to black and set the Mode to Multiply. Then, to get an even fill, set the Blur setting to 0 and choose Center from the bottom of the dialog box. Now you should be able to change the darkness of the text by adjusting the Opacity setting (see Figure 9).

SOFT-EDGED INDENTED TYPE

As in the previous effect, this one will make the text appear as if it is slightly below the surface of the image but with a soft edge. To create this effect, change your foreground color to 50% gray before entering the text, then set the blending mode of the Type layer to Hard Light. Now, choose Layer>Effects>Bevel and Emboss, and set the Style menu to Outer Bevel to create the soft edge (see Figure 10).

To make the text appear as if it is truly pushed into the image, you'll need to darken the inside of the text. You can accomplish this by changing the pop-up menu at the top of the Layer Effects dialog box to Inner Glow and turning on the Apply checkbox. To darken the area, you will need to change the color swatch to black and set the Mode to Multiply. Then, to

get an even fill, set the Blur setting to 0 and choose Center from the bottom of the dialog box. Now you should be able to change the darkness of the text by adjusting the Opacity setting (see Figure 11).

EXTRUDED TYPE

To create this effect, you'll need to change your foreground color to black before entering the text, then set the blending mode of the Type layer to Multiply. Next, choose Layer>Effects>Bevel and Emboss, and set the Style menu to Outer Bevel. Now adjust the Depth setting until the text has the desired depth, and then change the Blur setting until the text no longer has a flat-topped look (see Figure 12).

EDGE EMBOSS

With this effect, we'll add a shadow and highlight to the inner edge of the text. To create this effect, you'll need to change your foreground color to white before entering the text; then set the blending mode of the Type layer to Screen. Next, choose Layer>Effects>Bevel and Emboss, and set the Style menu to Emboss. Turn the Depth setting all the way to 20 and use a low Blur setting so the edge does not look too blurry (see Figure 13).

To add a shadow to the upper left edge of the text, change the pop-up menu at the top of the Layer Effects dialog box to Inner Shadow and turn on the Apply checkbox. Set the Blur setting to a low number like three, then experiment with the Distance setting until the shadow you are adding appears only near the edge of the text (see Figure 14).

With all the effects we just created, you can double-click the name of the Type layer to edit the text, and the effect will also update. Next issue we'll explore more involved effects which will either not update when you edit the text, or will require you to convert the Type into a normal layer. **G**

Ben Willmore is the founder/president of Digital Mastery, a U.S.-based training and consulting firm; details on courses and services at www.digitalmastery.com.



FIGURE 10. After applying the first step of the Soft-Edged Indented Type effect.

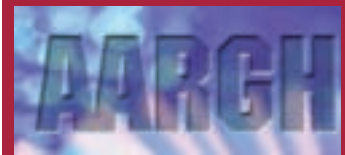


FIGURE 11. Finished Soft-Edged Indented Type effect.



FIGURE 12. Result of Extruded Type effect.



FIGURE 13. After first step of Edge Emboss effect.



FIGURE 14. Result of Edge Emboss effect.