

Pacific New Media

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Photoshop as a Design Tool

Photoshop has a series of tools—Type, Painting tools, Raster and Vector Shape tools, Layer Styles, and image editing and sizing tools—that allows it to be used as a design program for several purposes. It excels at creating one-page printed designs: book covers, greeting cards, flyers, etc. and creating mock-ups for web pages that can then be translated into Dreamweaver or other web authoring programs. Photoshop is fast and flexible at creating design pieces, however, when multiple pages or complex documents are needed for print, InDesign is a better choice. When a full web site is being prepared, Dreamweaver is often the program of choice, and most web designers are highly competent at turning your Photoshop mock pages into HTML pages.

The Type tool in PS deserves special mention. When you employ the type tool on any document, the Type tool becomes context-dependent, that is it changes according to your output. When you output to a laser or offset printer, the type tool creates postscript (vectorized) type (think MS Word) that can be scaled, font changed, etc. and still remain sharp. When you output to a digital ink-jet printer, or to a web site, the Type remains rasterized, that is comprised of pixels. This means you can create a document and the typography is rendered as a vector or raster at the time of output.

Creating Mock-up Web Pages

1.) In this exercise, we will create a webpage for Graceland.com. Go to PS File>New and create a new document. Since this is a website, we need to consider the size in pixels based on monitor displays. The standard rule of thumb for the active, live (where you will place content), horizontal space on a webpage is 960 pixels wide. We will create a document 1200 pixels wide (to allow for a border) and 1600 pixels high, 72 dpi, 8-bit color.

2.) Duplicate the background layer and Edit>Fill with a background color of your choice. I'm using a gradient from the top towards the bottom of two colors.

3.) Import photos into document. Use Edit>Transform>Scale (Holding down shift key to constrain proportions and to size as needed. Change opacity of background image and create layer mask to hide edges where needed. With the rectangular marquee tool, create a shape for your live text box on the lower 2/3 of the page. Fill with color as needed.

4.) Each piece of your design, you want on a new layer. Create a shape using the Vector Shape tool for a navigation bar or the Rectangular Marquee tool. Fill with color of your choice by Edit>Fill or the Paintbucket Tool. Place type, navigation headings, in your new box.

4. Create a Title for the page. Use the Type tool and choose the font and style. Go to Layer Styles at the bottom of the Layers palette or from the Layer menu. Add a drop shadow and any other layer effects that you may choose.

5. Add body text into live text box.



Photoshop for Print Layout

Many of the same features apply as did in creating the web page. The major difference is the need for a higher print resolution and the need to embed fonts that you may use, either into a pdf file or to “package” the fonts when sending to a printer. Photoshop contains several tools that are “borrowed” from Adobe Illustrator, that are designed for vector or postscript output, namely vector tools and typographic tools.

1.) Create new file; go to File>New. Change unit measurements from pixels to inches and create a 5X7 inch, horizontal card, use a resolution of 300 dpi, RGB color, 8-bit, white background. Although the printed version of this piece will be CMYK color space, remember we want to do our image editing in the largest color space possible and THEN convert to CMYK color.

We are going to create a flyer for Photoshop classes at Pacific New Media.

2.) Import photograph by dragging Background layer on to new document. Size as needed, using Edit>Transform>Scale.

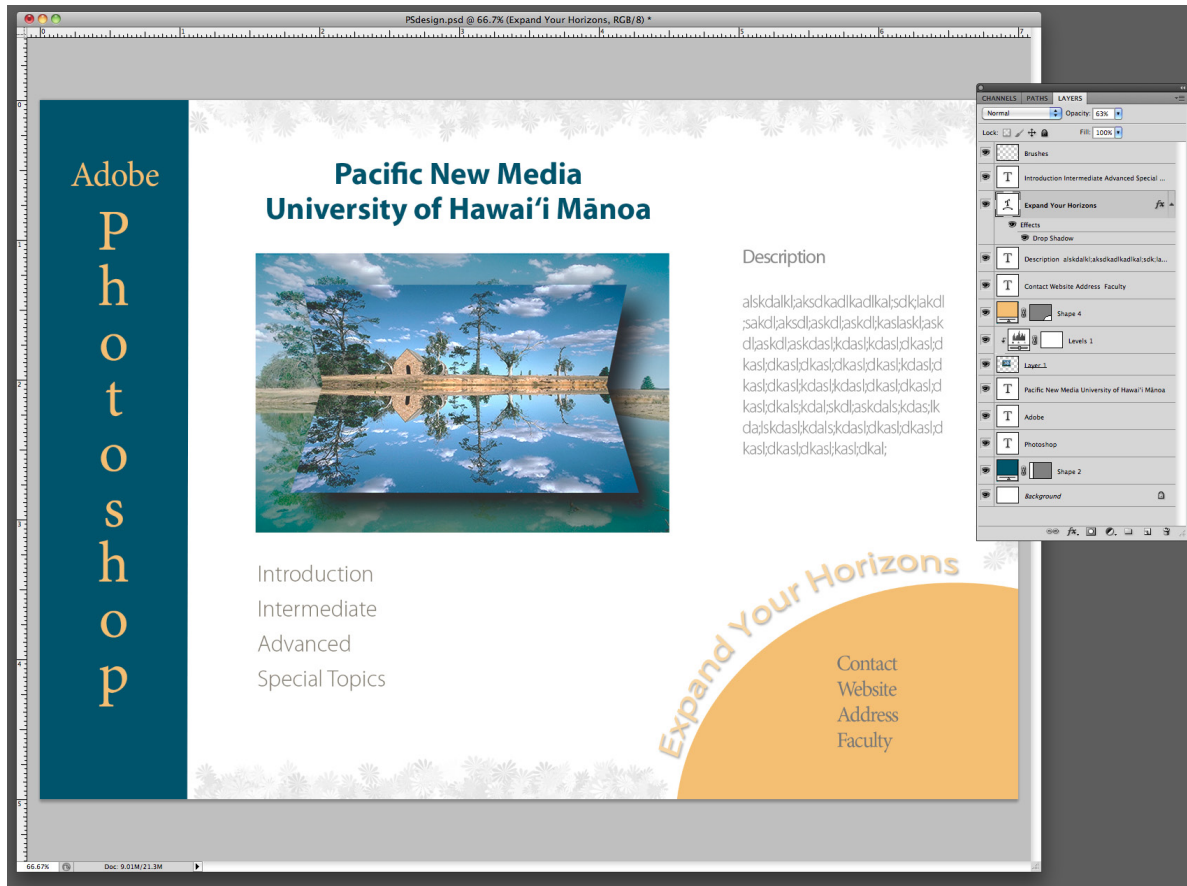
3.) Place EVERYTHING, text, shape boxes, etc. on their own layer. Once something is on a layer, it can be adjusted and moved as needed.

4.) Using the Vector Shape tool, create shapes for sidebar and bottom right ellipse. Vector Shape tool will use Foreground color and can be changed dynamically. Add text as needed. Use the character box, extreme right of the Type tool submenu for typographic changes, i.e. tracking, leading, etc. Use the Type Warp tool, right side of the Type submenu to place type on a path.

5.) Create adjustment layer for levels for photograph. Link to image by placing the cursor between the adjustment and content layer and option (alt)-click.

6.) Create ornaments using Special effects brush tool at a lowered opacity. To add the ‘okina, use option-right bracket on your keyboard. To add the correct macron in Hawaiian words, go to Glyphs in InDesign or Illustrator and copy/paste into PS.

7.) Convert to CMYK. Make color adjustments as needed.



Note: To edit Vector mask shapes—A Vector mask is a path, not a selection. To edit a path, go to the Path Palette and choose the working path. You can edit with the Pen tool or the Direct selection tool. In the case of a Vector mask, grey conceals and white reveals.

To edit the color of a Vector shape, merely select the layer and change the color in the Foreground color box.

To edit Type, you must first select the type (Just as in MS Word), and then apply any changes you want to make, i.e font, point size, color, typographic tools.