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Investigating Paint Shop Pro 7.0

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Edit your images with a professional finish in Paint Shop Pro 7.0.

When it comes to image editing, it doesn't matter whether you're a professional or a novice, you're going to find just about everything you need from a graphics software package in Jasc Software's Paint Shop Pro. This time-tested package is not only powerful, but also extremely easy to use due to its very intuitive user interface. In its latest incarnation, [Paint Shop Pro 7.0](#), Jasc has pumped up its award-winning image editing program with a host of new photo editing, painting, illustration, and Web design tools. Furthermore, you'll find that the program is sprinkled with all sorts of new features designed to make the application easier to use and increase productivity for both business and home graphics use.

In this article, I'll investigate some of Paint Shop Pro 7.0's new features and explain how they work. As I do, I'll pass on all kinds of interesting bits of information about Jasc Software and Paint Shop Pro 7.0.

Digital Photography Tools

With a dramatic increase in the use of digital photography, both at the professional and consumer levels, it's not surprising that Paint Shop Pro 7.0 comes with a whole set of new and improved tools for working with digital photos. What is surprising, though, is how easy it is to achieve professional looking results with the new tools in Paint Shop Pro 7.0.

For starters, Paint Shop Pro 7.0 comes with a slew of automated, intelligent photo enhancement and correction filters. You just open your photo, select the appropriate command and Paint Shop Pro 7.0 goes to work.

Paint Shop Pro 7.0 features the new Automatic Color Balance filter that will automatically enhance your photos by adjusting hues to compensate for unnatural looking skin tones or sky colors caused by poor lighting conditions. Simply pull down the Effects menu, and select the Automatic Color Balance command from the Enhance Photo submenu. When you do, Paint Shop Pro 7.0 automatically analyzes the photo, makes the adjustment, and then displays before and after previews in the Automatic Color Balance dialog box, as shown in [Figure A](#). And to help you get the perfect adjustment, the dialog box provides you with the ability to fine-tune manually the adjustments to your liking.

You'll find several other intelligent tools in Paint Shop Pro 7.0 that help you automatically enhance your photos. The Automatic Contrast Enhancement filter brightens or darkens an image that appears flat or washed out by balancing the lightest and darkest areas in the image. The Automatic Saturation Enhancement filter can also adjust the color of a photo to give you a more natural looking image. It even has a new option specifically for adjusting skin tones. Furthermore, the Auto Red-eye filter has separate controls for automatically removing the red-eye effect from images of people and animals.

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In addition to these enhancement filters, Paint Shop Pro 7.0 comes with a set of photo restoration features that allow you to fix up old photos that you've scanned. For example, you can remove scratches, restore damaged areas, and even liven up faded images.

Web Design Features

When it comes to working with graphic images for Web design projects, Paint Shop Pro 7.0 provides users with a new set of tools squarely aimed at streamlining the design process for Web graphics.

One of the most innovative of these design features is the Preview in Web Browser. Once you have an image that you want to add to a Web site, select the Preview in Web Browser command on the View menu. When you do, you'll see the dialog box, shown in [Figure B](#), and can select the size and format for the image as well as which browser, you want to use.

If you select a format other than BMP, you'll see an additional dialog box that allows you to set specific options that apply to that particular format. For instance, if you select the GIF format, you'll be able to select transparency options.

Paint Shop Pro 7.0 will then launch your browser and display the image as you've configured it. Underneath the image, you'll find information on file size, download times, and the color palette used. If you select multiple file formats, you'll see the image in each format and can easily compare the various file formats.

Other Web design features include the Image Slicer, which allows you to slice a large image onto multiple smaller images. You can use the Image Rollover Creator to easily create graphic images for Web sites that change when you move the mouse over top of them. In addition, the Image Mapper tool enables you to create quick and easy image maps for Web site navigation, while the JPEG/GIF/PNG Optimizer compresses and optimizes images for use on the Web.

Text and Drawing Tools

Building on the vector text and drawing tools first introduced in version 6, Paint Shop Pro 7.0 adds more powerful functionality to these tools, making it even easier to create shapes, lines, and text. You can now create your own or choose from a library of gradients, patterns, and textures and apply them to both text and shapes for some really interesting effects. In addition, all the brushes can be used to paint and draw gradients, patterns, and textures.

Using the Draw and Preset Shapes tools, you can now easily create as well as choose from a library of styled lines with dots, dashes, and arrowheads. Another handy option is the Export Shape feature, which allows you to add your custom graphics to the Tool Options palette. This option makes it easy to reuse custom buttons, logos, or any other graphic object you create.

Other Paint Shop Pro 7.0 features are helpful in the creation of custom graphics. For instance, you can now use the new snap-to grids and guides to position your graphics exactly where you

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want them. Also, vector objects can now be grouped, aligned, distributed, arranged, and resized using commands that are easily accessible from the Objects menu.

Wizard Note: If you're new to image-editing software, have no fear. In addition to Paint Shop Pro 7.0's intuitive user interface and extensive Help system, this new version comes with a Getting Started Guide. This 12-chapter book introduces you to the product and walks you through many of the most common tasks with hands-on tutorials. In addition, you'll find all sorts of tutorials, FAQs, and other support on the [FAQs & Helpers page](#).

Productivity Enhancements

In addition to all of the new graphics oriented features in Paint Shop Pro 7.0, you'll find a set of features that are designed to enhance productivity as you use the package.

To make performing repetitive operations easier, you'll want to take advantage of the Repeat Last Command feature. Another timesaving feature comes into play if you're working on several graphics projects at the same time. Called Save Workspace, this feature allows you to store your workspace environment and maintain separate sets of active tools, different toolbar arrangements, and even open images. You can then easily shift between projects by simply opening and closing your workspace and picking up right where you left off.

No matter where and how you work, you'll be glad that Paint Shop Pro 7.0 now has an AutoSave feature. This feature saves your work at regular intervals and prevents you from losing hours of work due to computer crashes or network problems.