



Adobe Photoshop CC 2015.1 December update

Welcome to the latest Adobe Photoshop CC bulletin update. This is provided as a free supplement to the *Adobe Photoshop for Photographers* book to ensure readers are kept up-to-date with the latest changes in Photoshop.

This Photoshop CC 2015.1 update includes information about the main things that are new to Photoshop CC. The features described here will be accessible to all Creative Cloud subscribers using Photoshop CC. For a complete description of how to use these new Photoshop tools, with diagrams and step-by-step tools, I recommend you buy the *Adobe Photoshop CC 2015 for Photographers* book by Martin Evening.

Photoshop CC 2015.1

New user interface

Photoshop has a brand new interface, which has been introduced for a number of reasons. It at last provides unified themes across all the interface components including items such as filter dialogs, plug-ins and Script interface dialogs. As before, there are four color theme brightness levels to choose from. Therefore, if you prefer working with a dark color theme, all the dialogs in Photoshop will have a consistent appearance. The interface has a more modern look with rounded rectangle buttons and a discrete blue accent on selected fields (see Figure 1). The aim of this redesign has been to minimize the interface components that serve minimal purpose, while giving more emphasis to the elements that are most

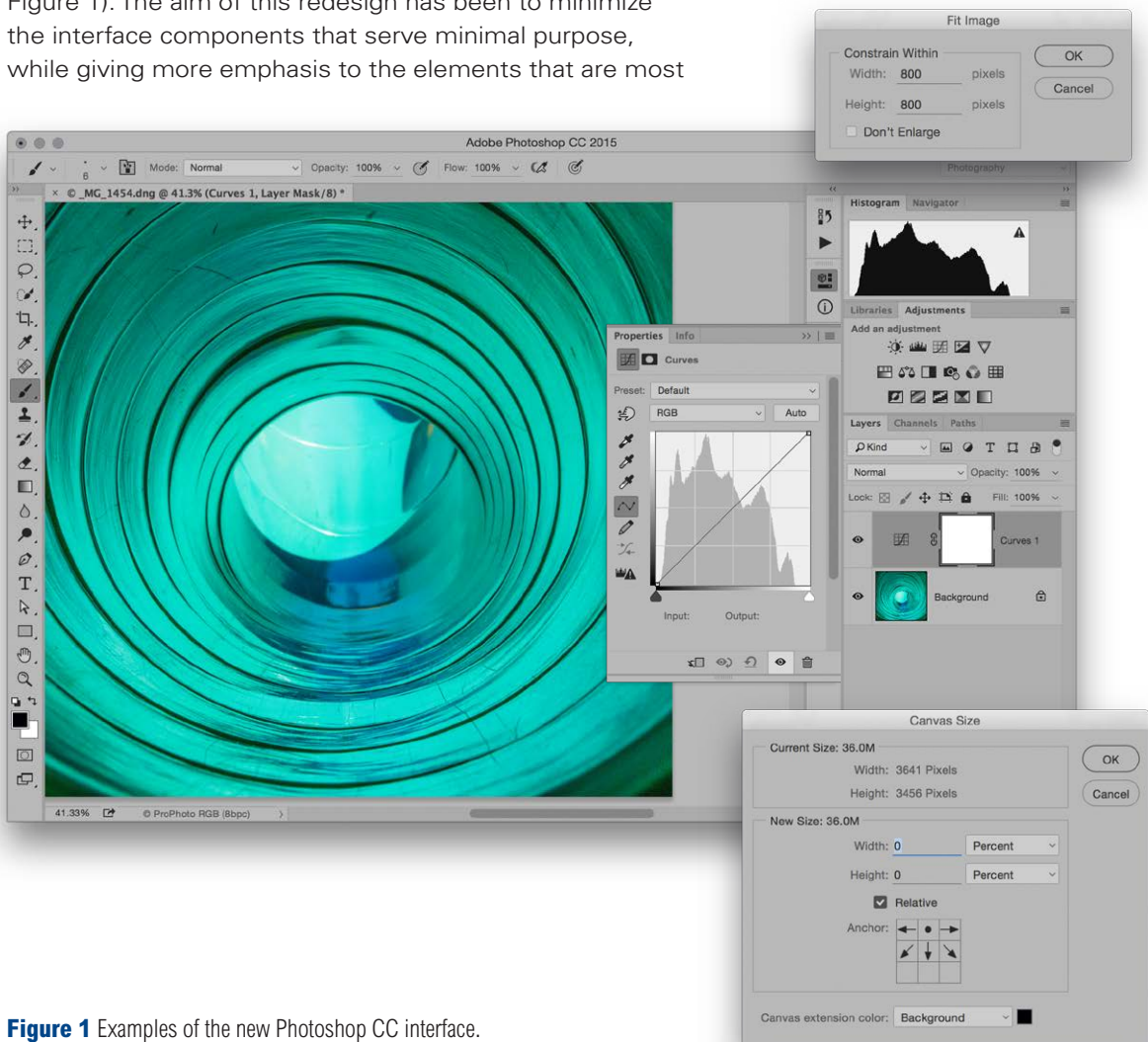


Figure 1 Examples of the new Photoshop CC interface.

important. For example, the field boxes where you modify the values have a stronger emphasis than the field label names. This helps direct the eye to where the user's attention needs to be focussed most.

Consideration has also been given to users working with touch-enabled devices, where the Large Tabs option in the Photoshop Workspace preferences will make them easier to select. Likewise, the swatch sizes in the Swatches panel (Figure 2) have been made larger. You will find that the Small-size swatches are now roughly the same size as the Large-size swatches were in previous versions of Photoshop.

New Start Screen/Recent files experience

When you first launch Photoshop you will see the Start screen workspace shown in Figure 3, where you have the option to select a recently opened file, access Library assets, or select a new document preset (see Figure 4). However, this is only seen if you are using Photoshop in Application Frame mode. To switch to this, go to the Window menu and select 'Application Frame'. Otherwise, all you will see when you launch Photoshop is your regular default workspace. Personally, I find the new Start workspace experience rather unsettling because it makes you wonder, when you first launch Photoshop each time, "where have all the Photoshop panels gone?" However, as soon as you open an image, via the startup screen, or via Bridge, the interface switches to the regular workspace

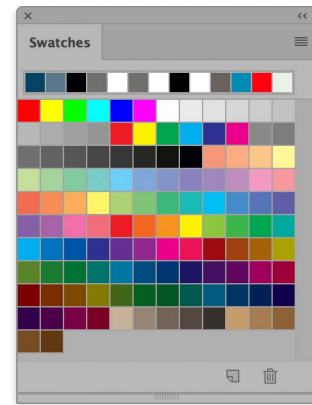


Figure 2 The Swatches panel with the Large Tabs option enabled in the preferences.

Generic icons

The most recently used files can be made to appear as a list with generic icons (as shown in Figure 3). This is probably a good thing for professional photographers who need to respect client confidentiality agreements.

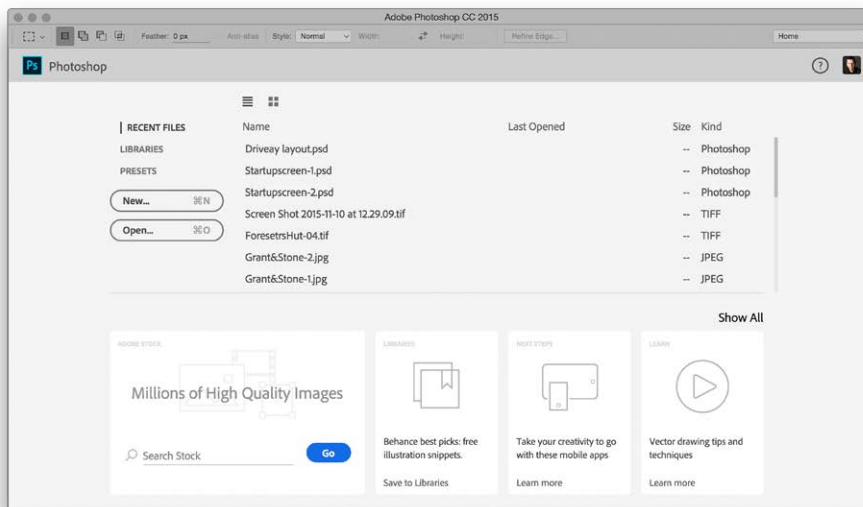


Figure 3 The new Start screen workspace in Application Frame mode.

configuration and the startup screen disappears. When you close all open files the start screen workspace reappears again. If the Start screen bugs you there is an option to disable this. Go to the Photoshop General preferences and deselect 'Show Start Workspace When No Documents Are Open' (see Figure 5).

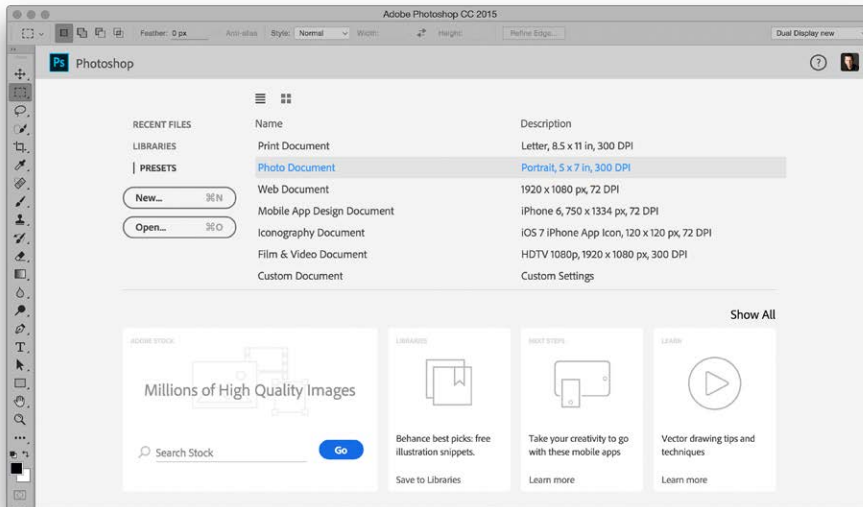


Figure 4 The Start screen workspace showing the new document presets.

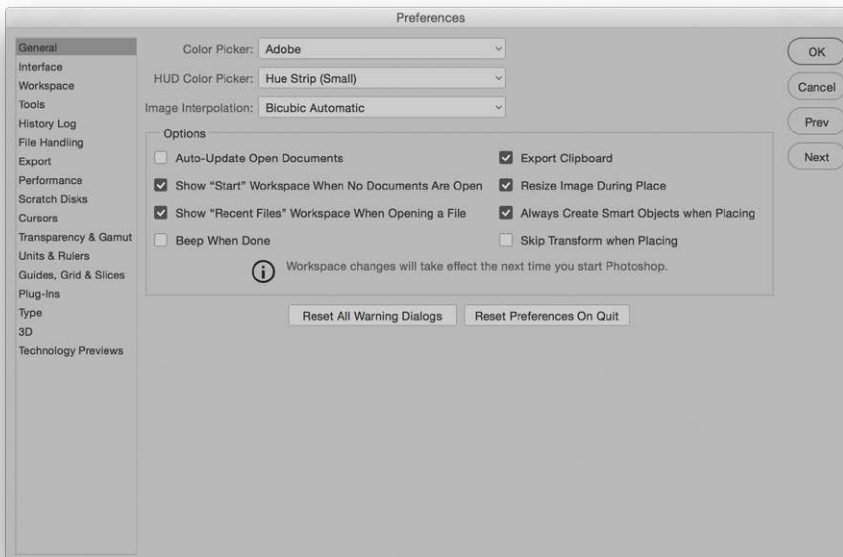


Figure 5 The General preferences.

Auto vacuum feature

As you open new files in Photoshop, you will sometimes see the New Library from Document dialog shown in Figure 7. This can be used to automatically batch pull the contents from a new document into a new Library. This dialog only pops up on screen whenever you open a document that contains relevant content, such as character styles, colors and layer styles. There is a Don't Show Again option at the bottom, but you can choose to bring it back again by going to the Libraries panel fly-out menu. Or, you can click on the Library from Document button (circled in Figure 6) to open the dialog shown on the right in Figure 7.

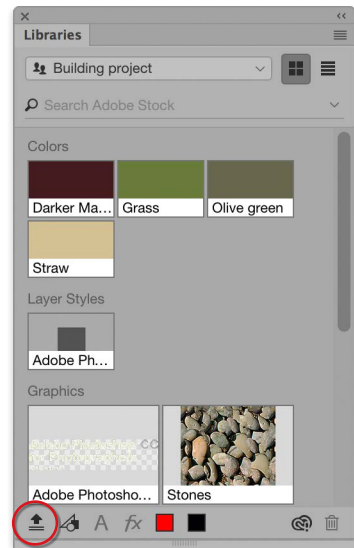
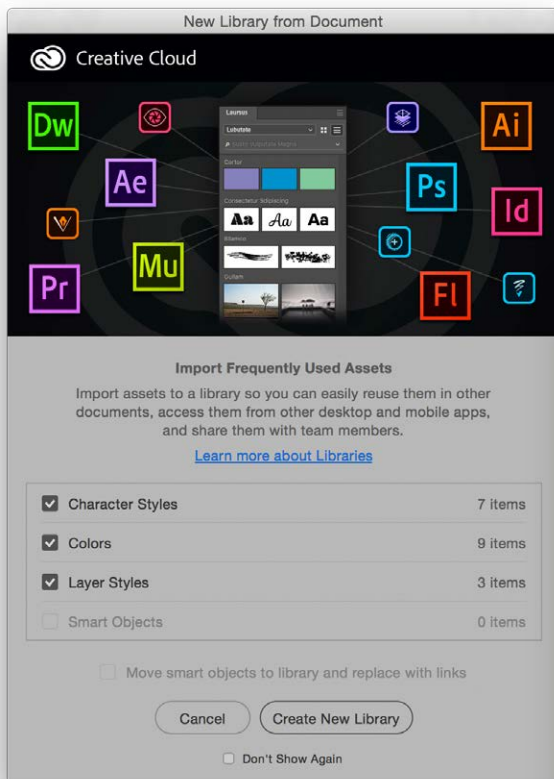


Figure 6 The Libraries panel.

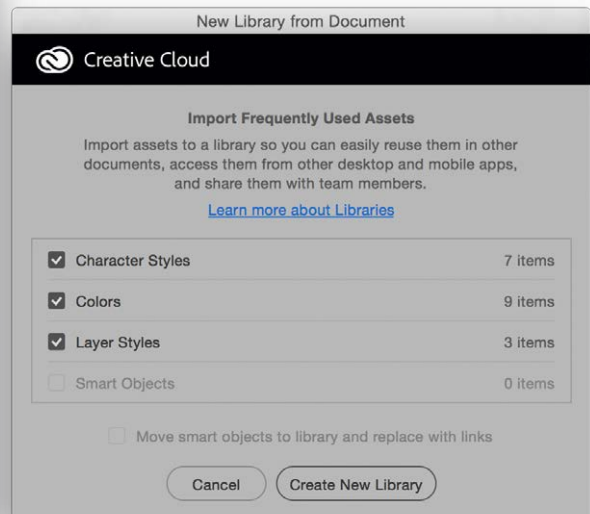


Figure 7 The New Library from Document dialogs. The one on the left appears automatically when opening files that contain relevant content. The one on the right opens when you click on the Library from Content button in the Libraries panel (Figure 6).

About 10-bit video and Photoshop

Macintosh users may have noticed that 10-bit video has been enabled in Mac OS X 10.11 (El Capitan) for the latest iMacs and Mac Pro computers. However, so far it seems this is only supported by certain programs, such as Apple Photos. There is no indication yet if Photoshop will be able to support 10-bit video.

Toolbar presets

You can now edit the Toolbar in Photoshop. To do this, go to the Edit menu and choose Toolbar... This opens the Customize Toolbar dialog shown in Figure 8, where you will see a list on the left of all the current Photoshop tools organized by their regular groupings. These are referred to as 'slots'. The Customize Toolbar dialog allows you to drag and drop tools out from the Toolbar section on the left to the Extra Tools section on the right. You can also drag and drop to reorganize the grouping of the tools within a customized Toolbar layout.

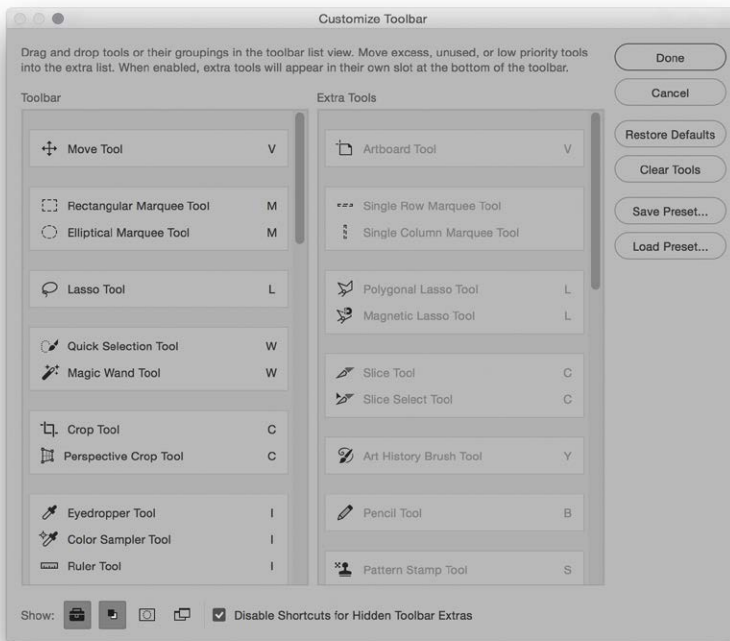


Figure 8 The Customize Toolbar interface.

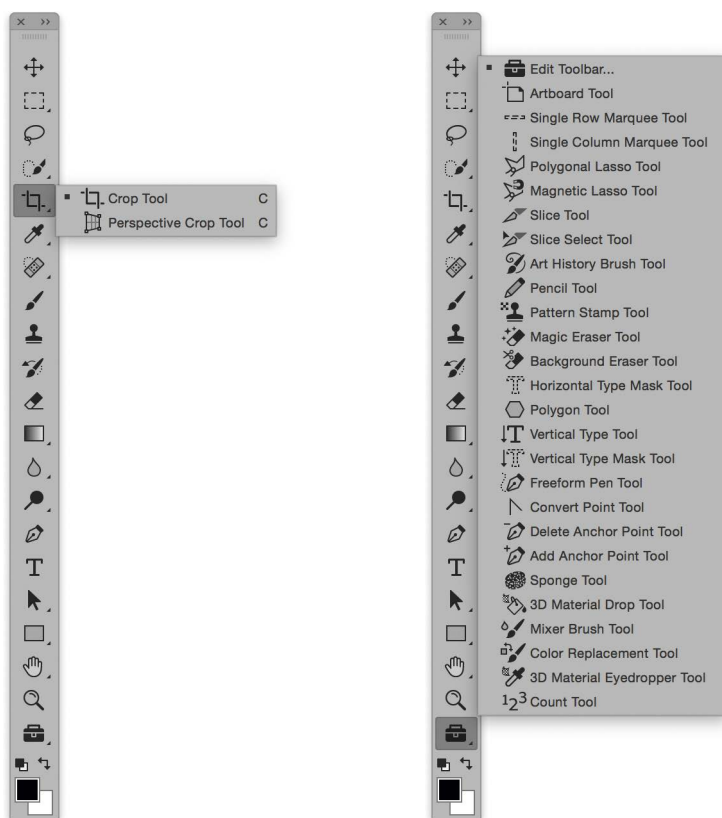


Figure 9 A customized Photoshop Toolbar (left) and overflow Toolbar items (right).

Figure 9 shows a customized reconfiguration of the Toolbar in which I removed the tools I felt were surplus to normal requirements for image retouching. For example, when editing photographs there is no use for the Slice and Slice select tools (which share the **C** shortcut as the Crop and Perspective crop tools). By moving both to the Extras section one can use the **Shift C** key to toggle between the Crop and Perspective crop tools, rather than have to press the **Shift C** key four times to cycle through all four tool options that share the same shortcut. If you click on the left-most 15 pixels you can retain all the tools in a group when moving (see Figure 10).

At the bottom of the Customize Toolbar dialog (Figure 8) are options to show/hide the non-tool widgets that appear at the bottom of the Toolbar such as the Quickmask mode options and Cycle screen mode options (these are shown disabled in Figure 9).

Toolbar shortcuts

Removing an item from the Toolbar also disables the shortcut. This can have unintended consequences if you remove things like the Screen view or Quickmask options in order to remove clutter from the Toolbar, you lose the shortcut as well.

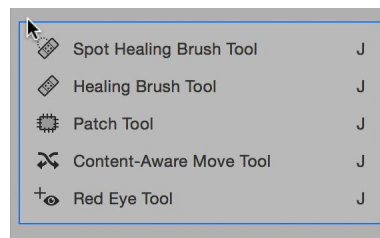


Figure 10 Click on the left-most 15 pixels of a list to retain tools in a group when moving.

Just below the Zoom tool is the Edit Toolbar widget, which if you click on it, displays the overflow Toolbar items as a flattened list (see Toolbar on the right in Figure 9) and also provides a shortcut to open the Customize Toolbar dialog.

Once you are happy with a configuration you can click on the Save Preset button to save a custom Toolbar configuration and also load presets via the same dialog. Alternatively, if someone sends you a Toolbar preset you can load it by dragging and dropping to the Photoshop application icon.

Export options update

The Export Options dialog (Figure 11) can be accessed by going to the File menu and choosing Export ⇒ Export As... This essentially provides an alternative way to export images or layer selections (via the Layers panel) in a way that is potentially faster and with fewer steps than using Save for Web (such as when using the Quick Export option).



Figure 11 The new Export Options dialog.

User interface refinements

The interface has been updated to include the ability to resize the dialog. The height and width controls of the Export As dialog now support navigation via arrow controls and scrubby sliders. The width, height and Scale dialogs are all linked so that when a custom value is entered to one setting the other two update automatically. The last used file format and other export settings are remembered when choosing File ⇒ Export ⇒ Export As...

PNG format user interface

Instead of having 'PNG' and 'PNG-8' file format options in the File Settings section, there is now just a single 'PNG' format option where you can select 'Smaller Size (8-bit)' to output using the PNG-8 format.

Color space option

There is a Metadata section where you can choose to export with None, or with Copyright and Contact information. In the Color Space section there is an option to 'Convert to sRGB'. Unfortunately this also strips the profile from the file when you export and, unlike the Save for Web method, there is no option to include or exclude a profile on export.

For exports that are destined to appear in a website there is a good reason to not include a profile since all Web browsers will assume sRGB in the absence one. This allows Web designers to economize on the file size by omitting the profile data from the file. But for nearly everything else it is essential a profile is included. This does therefore limit the Export Options to Web export use only. Files exported from the new Export Options will appear non-color managed if they are used for anything but a Web page layout. My recommendation is to use the Export Options with caution, or stick with Save for Web.

Touch interactions on Windows

Windows OS computers that feature touch screens such as the Microsoft Surface™ 3 and Surface™ Pro 3 computers are supported by Photoshop. In this latest release touch interaction on the canvas has been enhanced. Along with the existing two-finger gestures for manipulating the canvas view transformation, gestures have been added for moving back and forth through the document history states and for cycling between the three screen modes. The existing gestures plus the new ones are all listed in Figure 12.

Existing gestures	
Two-Finger Pan	The canvas view may be panned by moving two fingers in any direction on the canvas without changing the distance between them or the angle of the line connecting them.
Two-Finger Pan and Zoom	The canvas view may be panned and zoomed by moving two fingers toward or away from each other.
Two-Finger Pan and Rotate	The canvas may be panned and rotated by rotating two fingers around the center of the line connecting them.
Two-Finger Free Transform	To apply a free transform, rotate two fingers around the center of the line connecting them while simultaneously moving them nearer to or further from each other.
	Following on from the above, place two fingers on the tablet surface and keep them motionless for a moment. The canvas view may then be freely panned, zoomed or rotated.
Two-Finger Reset or Restore View	Double-tap two fingers on the tablet surface to reset view to an unrotated transform that nearly fills the document canvas. Double-tap with two fingers again to restore the view to its previous state.
New gestures	
Two-Finger Step Back in History (Undo)	To go back one step in the history, move two fingers rapidly from right to left.
Two-Finger Step Forward in History (Redo)	To go forward one step in the history, move two fingers rapidly from left to right.
Three-Finger History Scrub	To move in a continuous fashion through the entire history, move three fingers right or left on the tablet surface.
Five-Finger Cycle Screen Mode	Tap once with five fingers to cycle through the three application display screen modes (including the full screen mode).

Figure 12 A summary of gestures available when working with a Windows touch screen-enabled computer.

Updated Libraries panel

The Libraries panel (Figure 13) has also been updated to the new interface look. The Stock Photos button has been removed from the bottom of the panel and you will now find the Libraries panel has an integrated search box just below the library pop-up menu (circled in Figure 13). You can use the pop-up menu on the right to pick what it is you want to search. The default option is 'Adobe Stock', but you can change this to search the Current Library, or All Libraries. You will find this new addition is available in all Adobe Creative Cloud desktop applications that support Libraries.

Adding assets to the Libraries panel

As well as being able to drag layer assets between the Libraries panel and Layers panel, you can now also add Brush Presets by dragging them across. With Color Swatches and Layer Styles you used to have to select a swatch as the foreground color and click the color swatch button at the bottom to add it to a library. Now, all you have to do is just drag and drop to the Libraries panel. Similarly, you can drag and drop a Layer Style to add it to the Libraries panel.

Linked assets

Assets in Creative Cloud Libraries can now be linked so that when a change is made to a graphic or layer, it can update any document that uses that asset. You can therefore update assets across Photoshop, Illustrator or InDesign projects, wherever those assets are being used.

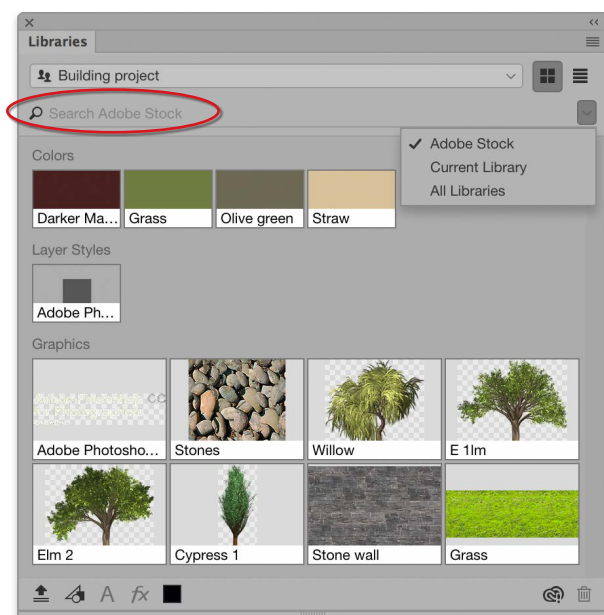


Figure 13 The new Libraries panel.

The return of the Oil Paint filter

The Oil Paint filter was first introduced in Photoshop CS6, but got removed when Photoshop was updated to 64-bit. However, the Oil Paint filter has now been brought back in Photoshop CC 2015.1. The main difference is it is now supplied as a built-in plug-in located in the Filter ⇒ Stylize submenu (as opposed to a modal filter dialog). Otherwise, the Oil Paint filter controls are more or less the same as they were before.

If you are having trouble accessing the Oil Paint filter it may be because you have a graphics card/system configuration that does not support OpenCL v1.1 or higher (most modern graphics cards should). Or, it may be because the image you are editing is not in RGB color mode.

Figure 14 shows the Oil Paint filter in action, where I applied it to a copied layer of a beauty head shot using the settings shown here. I added a layer mask to the filtered layer (filled with black) and then painted with white on the hair areas only to reveal. Basically, I was able to use the Oil Paint filter to create smoother-looking hair.

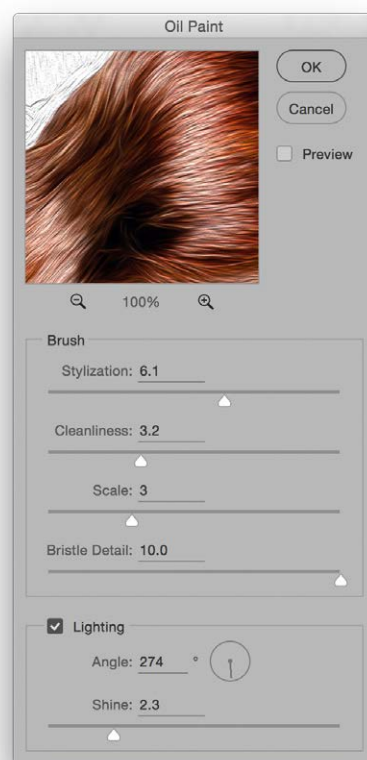


Figure 14 This shows the before version (left) and after version (right) using the Oil Paint filter.

Glyph Panel update

The Glyph panel (Figure 15) now features a 'most recently used' bar at the top of the panel. This can hold up to 25 different characters and is updated each time you select a new glyph from the panel with new glyphs being added from the left, displacing older, used glyphs as the limit is reached. The glyphs stored in this bar retain the associated font, so if you happen to select a new font in the Glyphs panel the 'most recently used' bar does not update the previously recorded glyphs based on the newly-selected font. You will also find that extra glyph characters are now accessible via this panel.

Diffusion slider for healing tools

The Healing Brush and Patch Tool (Normal mode) Toolbar options now include a Diffusion slider. This can be used to control how the pasted region adapts to the surrounding image. You will find that a lower Diffusion setting of say, 2 is ideal for images that contain a lot of noise or detailed texture. Higher values are best-suited for areas that contain smooth texture. You will also find that when the healing work is carried out on a separate new layer with All Layers, or Current Layer and Below selected, the healing blending results are improved when retouching close to the edges of a picture.

More compact 16-bit and 32-bit files

It is now possible to make 16-bit and 32-bit files more compact when saving them using the PSD format and with maximum compatibility turned off. How much you can save is dependent on the file content and how many layers there are in an image, but the savings can be quite dramatic.

There are downsides of course. Disabling maximum compatibility means such files won't be read by older versions of Photoshop that predate Photoshop CS6. Enabling maximum compatibility is also essential to maintain compatibility with Lightroom, or other third-party software that is normally able to read the PSD format.

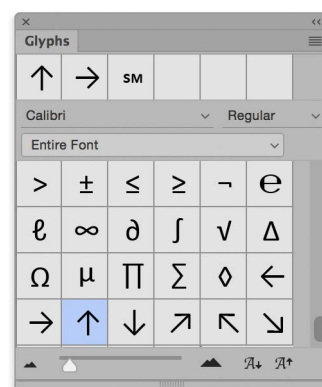
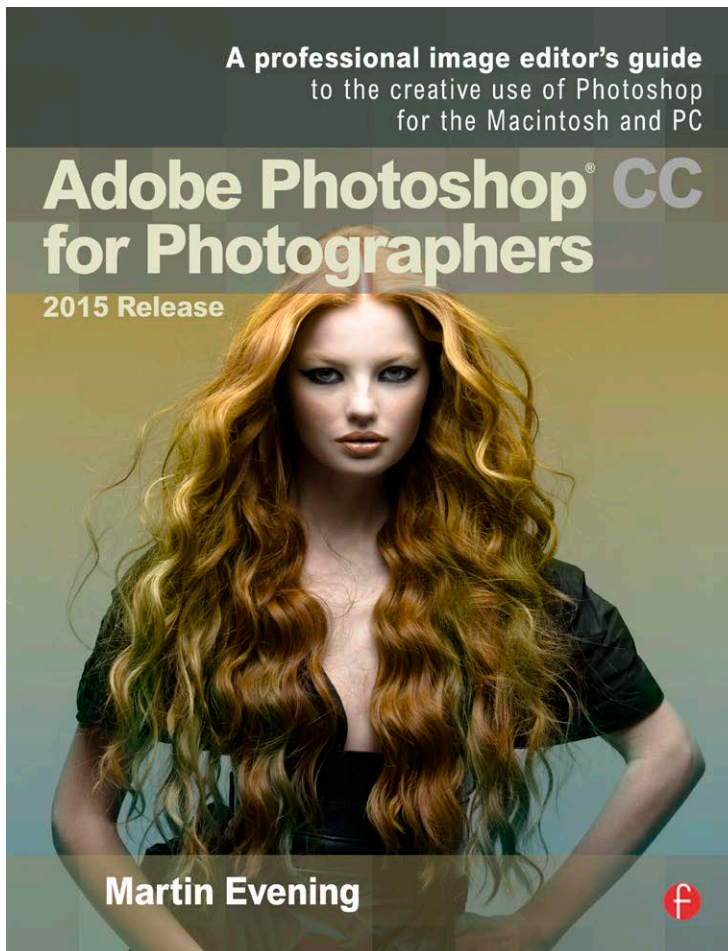


Figure 15 The Glyphs panel.



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