



Adobe Photoshop CC 14.1 update

Welcome to the latest Adobe Photoshop CC bulletin update. This is provided free to ensure everyone can be kept up-to-date with the latest changes that have taken place in Photoshop CC.

This bulletin describes the latest changes to the main Photoshop program. 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 for Photographers* book.

Performance improvements

Photoshop's performance has been improved in this release, offering better crash prevention when using the GPU through improved GPU detection and disabling. There has also been improvements to the stability of the content-aware feature.

Generator: generate assets from layers

This new feature uses a customizable JavaScript-based platform and can be used to automatically create derivative files from the master image you are working on. To get set up you'll first need to go to the Photoshop Plug-ins preferences (shown in Figure 1) and check the Enable Generator box.

This launches Generator so it is always running in the background. Following that you'll need to enable Generator for each image document you are working on. To do this, select File ⇒ Generate ⇒ Image Assets. This initiates Generator for the selected file and the setting remains sticky the next time you reopen the image. Once you have followed these steps you can use layer naming to determine how derivative files will be created.

Generator overhead

Enabling Generator does imply some additional overhead. However, since Generate Assets must be selected on a document basis it seems that this only applies when it's active on an open document.

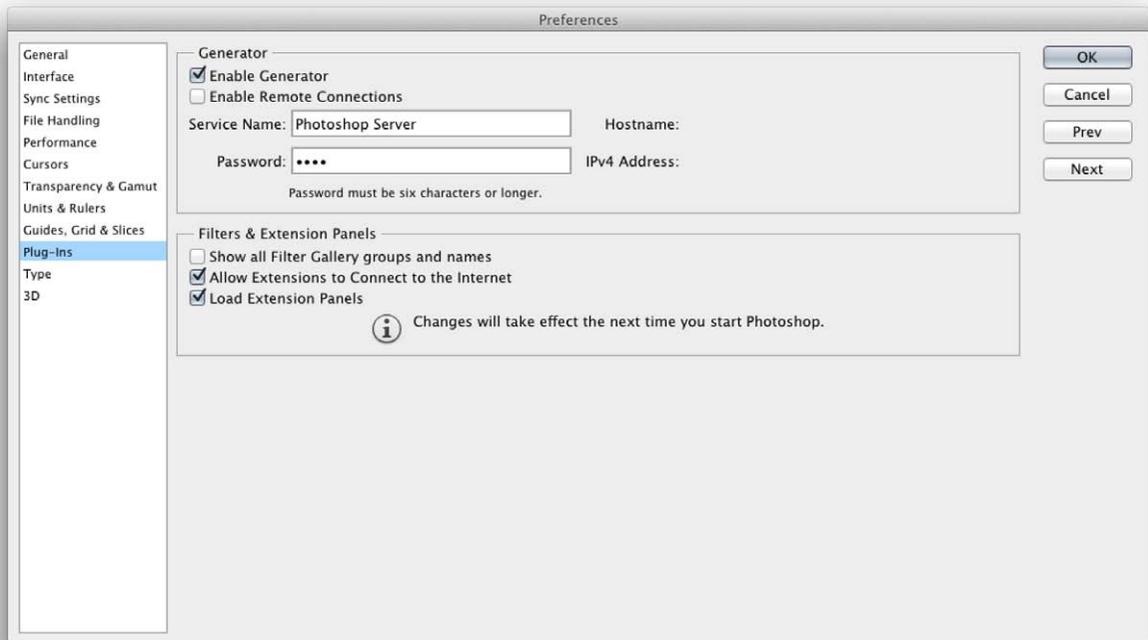


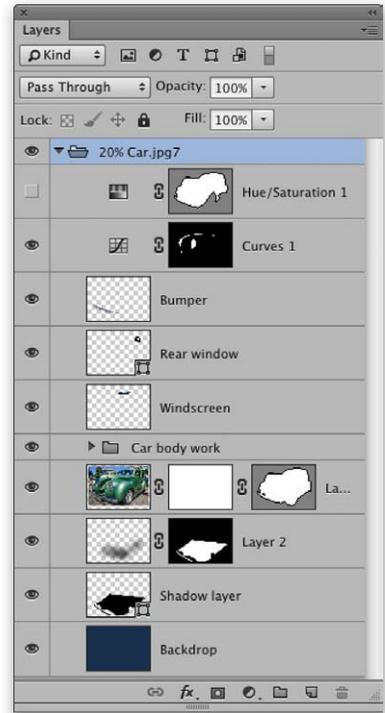
Figure 1 The Photoshop Plug-ins preferences.

Generator uses the layer or layer group naming to determine what derivative files are created and, more specifically, its attributes: such as the file format used, the quality setting and image size. Basically, you define the desired file output by the way you name the layers. For example, adding a file format suffix, such as *.jpg*, *.png*, or *.gif*, lets you indicate the file format you want the derivatives to be saved in.

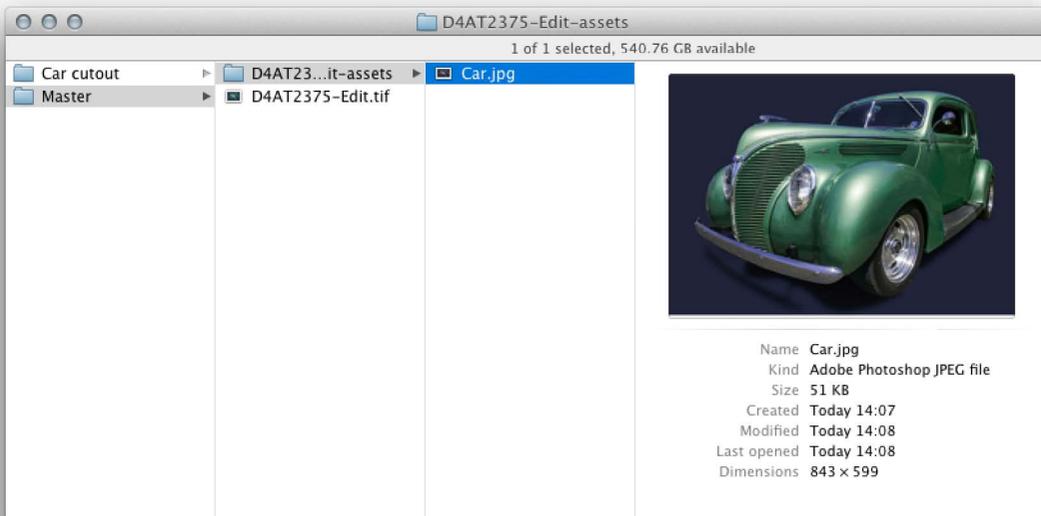
You can specify more precisely how the file is to be saved. If you add *.png* to a layer name, it will (by default) create a PNG 32 file. But if you wish, you can specify other PNG formats such as: *.png8*, or *.png24*. With JPEG you can specify the desired image quality setting (from 1–10) by adding a number. The default JPEG quality setting is 9, so adding *.jpg6* creates a JPEG file saved using a 6 quality setting. Or, you can specify the JPEG quality more precisely as a percentage, such as *.jpg55%* to save a JPEG that uses a 55% quality setting. With the *.gif* tag this saves a basic alpha transparency GIF and there are no other options that can be specified using Generator.

Extended tagging

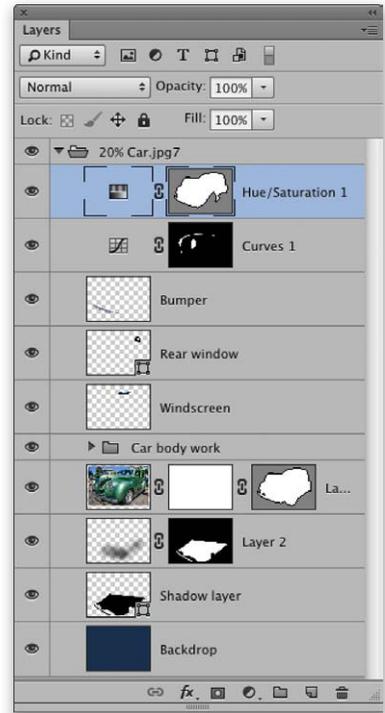
Other tags can be used to specify size by adding one of the following tags at the beginning of the layer name. To adjust the size by percentage type in a percentage scale value, such as *25%* or *33%* at the beginning of the layer name. To adjust the size to fit within specific dimensions, enter the units like this: *600 x 400* can be used to specify creating a file that fits within a 600 x 400 pixel size (Generator uses pixel values unless otherwise specified). So, you would need to add *in* (for inches), *cm* (for centimeters) and *mm* (for millimeters). Tags can be separated by commas when naming a layer to indicate that more than one type of file should be generated (but each tag must be properly formatted with a valid file extension). For example, naming a layer *20% garden.png, 10in x 8in garden.jpg8* will create a 20% scaled PNG, plus a 10 inch x 8 inch JPEG file saved using a quality 8 setting.



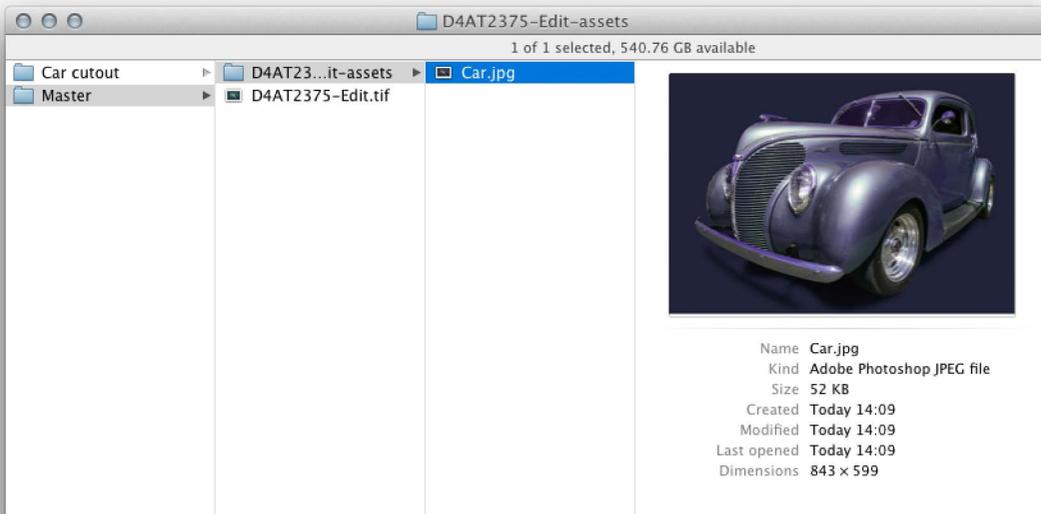
1 Here is an open image document where in the Plug-ins preferences I had checked Enable Generator. With the document open, I went to the File menu and chose Generate ⇒ Image Assets. I arranged all the layers into a single layer group and named this '20% Car.jpg7'. The naming used here specified this should create a JPEG file resized to 20% the original image's file size and save using a JPEG quality setting of 7.



2 Because Generator was enabled, this automatically created an assets folder identified using the file name of the original image. Inside this you can see it had generated a reduced size JPEG version of the master image.



3 I then selected the masked Hue/Saturation layer below and clicked on the eyeball in the Layers panel to enable the adjustment. This changed the color of the car from green to mauve. There was no need for me to save the image as the change automatically updated the JPEG image stored in the accompanying assets folder.



4 To check this was the case, I once again visited the file's assets folder and saw the JPEG version had been updated to show the car with the new, changed color. After generating all the relevant assets, I then saved the master file for possible further editing at a later time.

Summary of how Generator works

Let me summarize what happens in the background when using Generator. Whenever you work on a brand new image and File ⇒ Generate ⇒ Image Assets has been activated, assets are initially saved to a generic assets folder on the desktop, most likely named: Untitled-1-Assets. Whatever assets have been generated will be present in this folder. Once a master file has been saved though, an assets folder is created alongside the parent file inside whatever folder directory you chose to save the file to. This assets folder will use the same name as the file it relates to. The original desktop assets folder (which was temporary) will then disappear. All subsequent edits made to the open image will continue to generate updated assets, regardless of whether the master file has been saved to update the parent file.

Generator uses

Generator is a feature that should be of interest to a lot of different Photoshop users. The preceding example shows a simple use of generator in which a low res JPEG version of the composite image was created. This would continuously get updated as the file was worked on. A practical use for this type of workflow would be having instant access to a low res, composite version of the image you are working on, ready to email to a client.

I would say this feature was devised mainly with multimedia designers in mind. Using Photoshop CC 14.1 in conjunction with the Edge Reflow CC program, designers can use Generator to work on a master file in Photoshop and generate Web asset files that are automatically updated in real-time. I have also read about designers at The Engine Co, who used Generator to write a plug-in for their Loom gaming engine. This allowed them to update the user interface for a game in Photoshop while it was being played. As described on page 3, the system is pretty flexible too and can allow designers to generate Retina resolution assets to accompany regular resolution versions, again, all in real-time.

Adobe Edge Reflow CC

Adobe Edge Reflow CC is a new Web tool that can be used to create responsive Web designs that adapt content to different screen sizes. Using Edge Inspect CC, it is possible to extract the CSS code from an Edge Reflow project to work on in other code editors, such as Dreamweaver.

Filters

There are now 24 more filters that work in 32-bit mode.

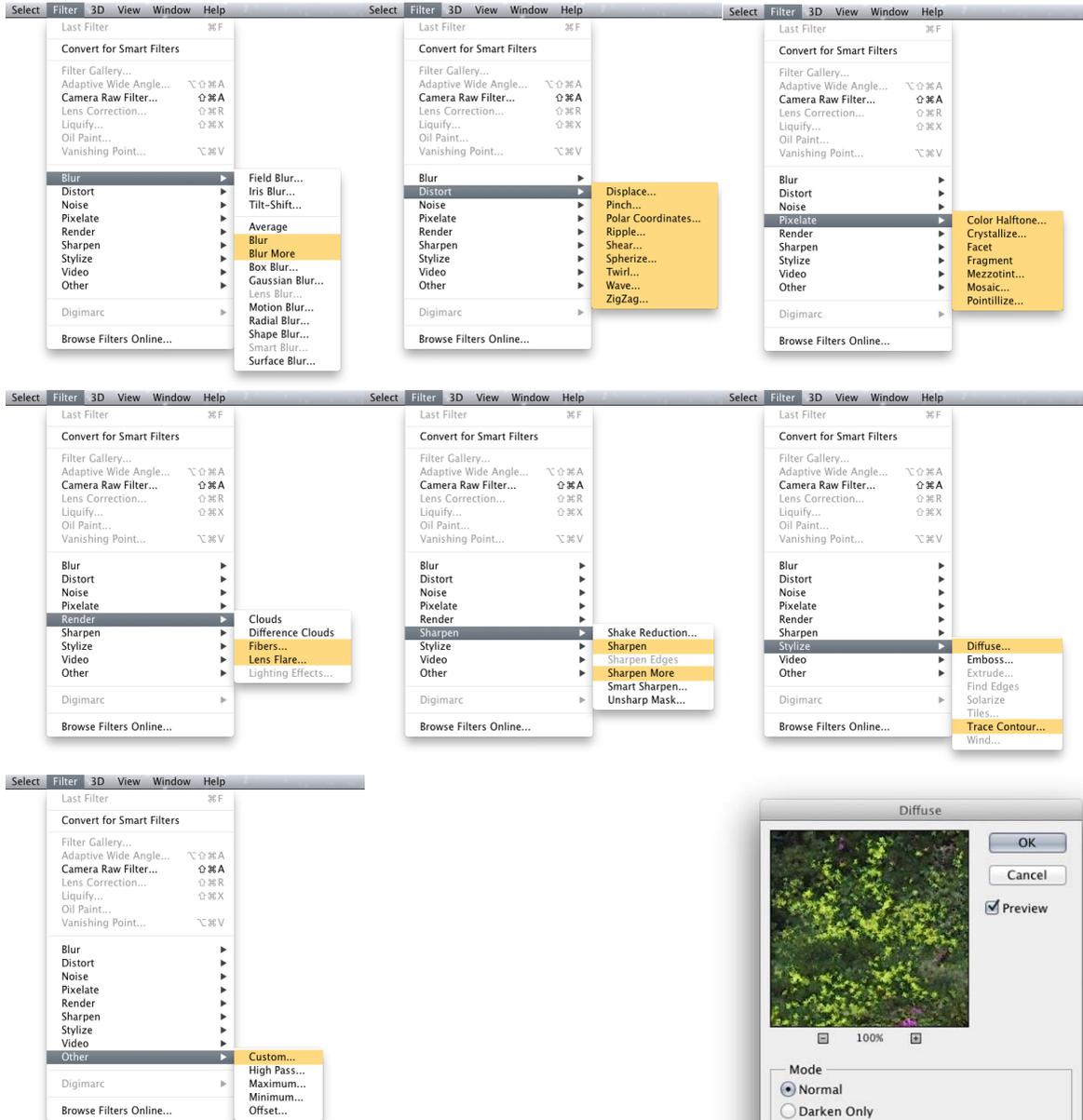
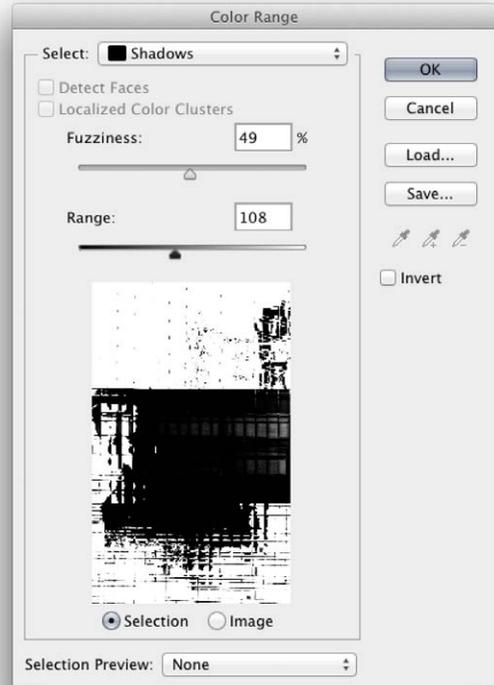


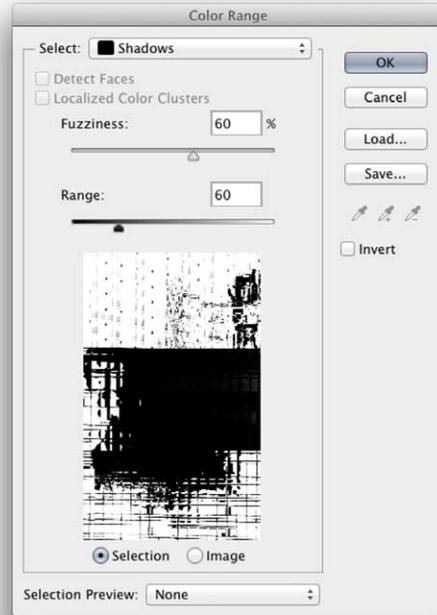
Figure 2 The filters highlighted above are now available when editing in 32-bit mode. Blur: Blur, Blur More; Distort: Displace, Pinch, Polar Coordinates, Ripple, Shear, Spherize, Twirl, Wave, Zig-Zag; Pixelate: Color Halftone, Crystalize, Facet, Fragment, Mezzotint, Mosaic, Pointilize; Render: Fibers, Lens Flare; Sharpen: Sharpen, Sharpen More; Stylize: Diffuse, Trace Contour; Other: Custom. Note when using the Diffuse filter in 32-bit mode, the Anisotropic option is grayed out.

Color Range

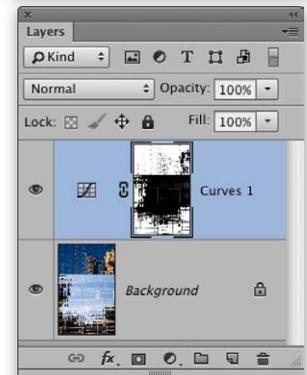
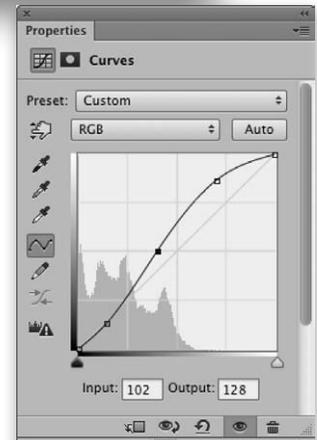
Color Range improvements offering greater control of Highlights, Midtones, and Shadows selections. Now, instead of being restricted to the use of 'hard-coded' value ranges, the exact range of tones and the partial selection of surrounding tones can be customized. In the case of the Highlights and Shadows selections there is a single slider with which to adjust the extent of a highlights or shadows selection. In the case of the Midtones you have two sliders at your disposal to fine-tune the midtone range.



1 I opened the image shown here in Photoshop, went to the Select menu and chose Color Range... To start with I selected the Shadows option from the Select menu. Shown here is the default setting, which is the same as the previous, hard-coded range value used in Color Range. To reset the sliders here to the defaults, **alt Shift**—click on the Reset button.

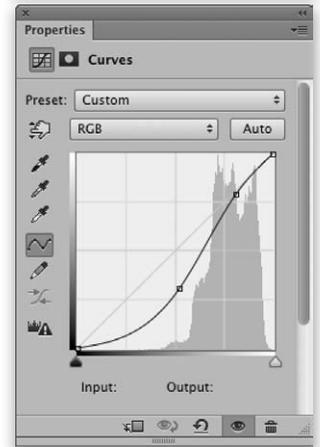
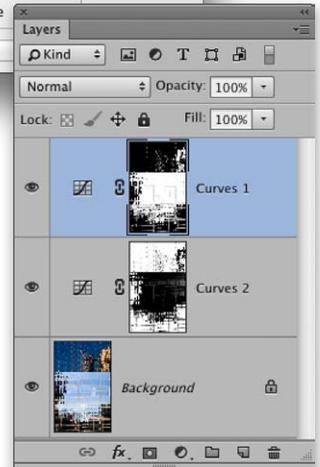
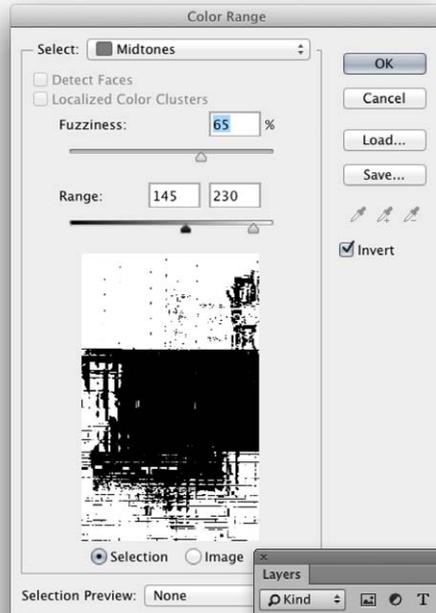


2 Using Photoshop CC 14.1 it is now possible to edit the Fuzziness and Range values for a Shadows, Midtones or Highlights selection. In this instance I adjusted both sliders to fine-tune the shadows selection. With the selection active, I added a Curves adjustment layer and applied the lightening curve shown here to lighten the shadows.





3 I then went to the Select menu again, chose Color Range... and this time selected the Midtones option from the Select menu. I then adjusted the Fuzziness and Range sliders to fine-tune the Midtones selection. After that I added another new Curves Adjustment layer, this time applying a darkening curve to create the final version seen here.



Layer selection

There is a new option in the Option bar for the path selection and direct selection tools that allows you to select All Layers/Active Layers (see Figure 3). The All Layers mode retains the original Photoshop CC behavior. However, when Active Layers is chosen, the path selection tools will only be able to affect the layers that are currently active in the Layers panel. The steps shown on the following page help explain this more clearly.



Figure 3 This shows the Options bar for the path selection tool and the new pop-up menu offering a choice of All Layers/Active Layers.

Previously in Photoshop CC, when using the path selection or direct selection tools you could double-click on a vector path as a shortcut to switch to an isolation mode filter view of just that layer in the Layers panel. You could then double-click again on the path to toggle and revert to a full layer view again. This can still be done when you are in All Layers mode, but not, if you have Active Layers selected. Flipping between these two modes can also be assigned a keyboard shortcut in the Tools section at the bottom of the list (see Figure 4).

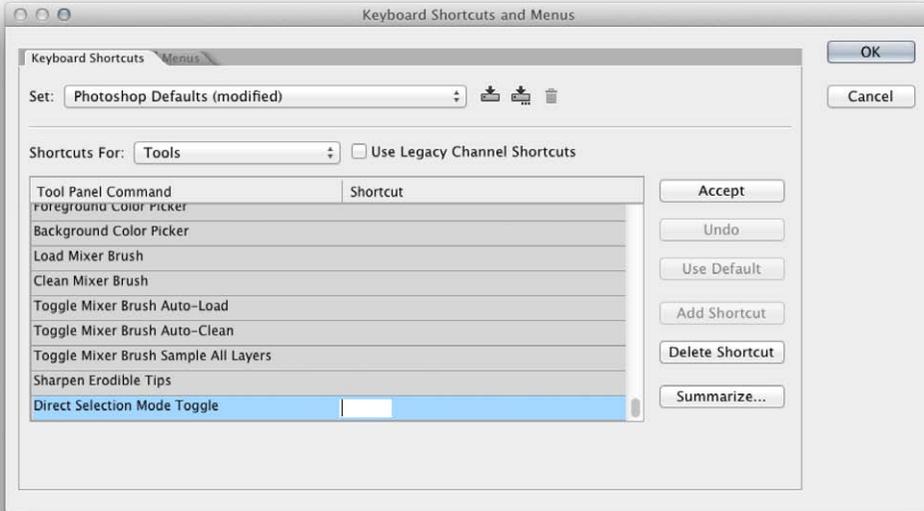
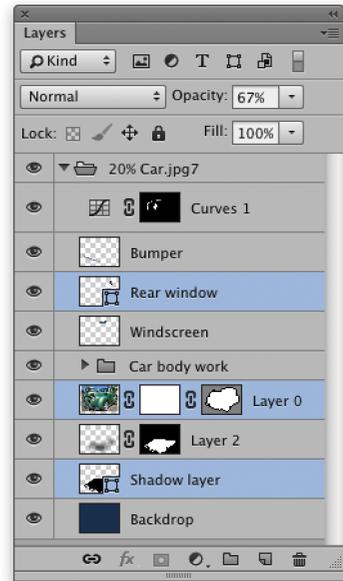
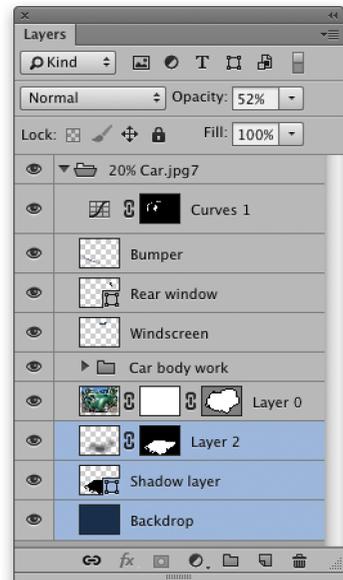


Figure 4 If you go to the Edit menu in Photoshop and choose Keyboard Shortcuts... this opens the dialog shown here. If you select Shortcuts For: Tools and scroll to the bottom of the list you can assign a shortcut to toggle the new All Layers/Active Layers behavior.



1 In this example the All Layers option was selected in the path selection tool Options bar. When I marquee dragged across the whole image with the path selection tool all the vector path layers became selected and with it also the layers in the Layers panel associated with these paths. This was regardless of whatever layer selection might have been in place.



2 In this next example, just the three layers at the bottom were made active in the Layers panel. I set the path selection tool Options bar to Active Layers mode and marquee dragged across the whole image again. This time only the vector paths associated with the active layers in the selection made in the Layers panel became selected and the Layers panel selection remained unchanged.

Selecting path anchor points

Refinements have been made to anchor point selection when working with the direct selection tool. As can be seen below in Figure 5, if you have a path selected with multiple anchor points activated, a mouse-click on an anchor point with the direct selection tool will make that single anchor selected and all the other points deselected. Previously, when you clicked with the direct selection tool the anchor point selection would be preserved. You can still retain this behavior. Let's say you make a selection of a few anchor points and wish to move them. What you do is click and hold with the mouse and drag. The anchor point selection will then be preserved. It is just when you single-click on an anchor point that it deselects all the anchor points.



Figure 5 If you have a path with multiple anchor points active and the direct selection tool is selected, if you click on a single anchor point this will be selected and all the other points deselected.

Properties panel

There is a new option in the Properties panel fly-out menu that allows you to control showing the panel on shape layer creation. I don't think the Adobe new feature notes make it exactly clear what is meant by this. It means, when it is checked (as shown below in Figure 6), the Properties panel will open (if it's hidden) whenever you create a new vector shape layer.

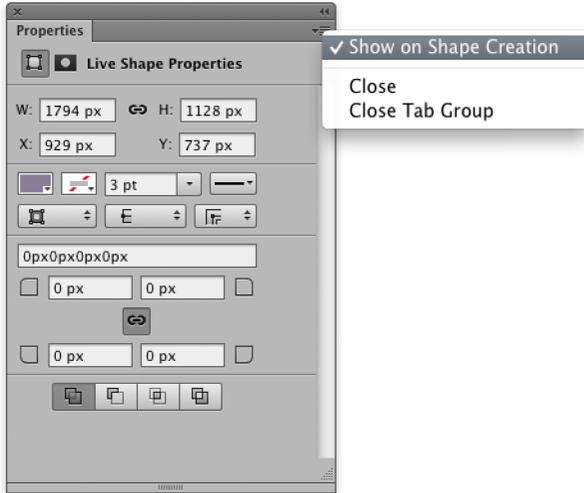


Figure 6 When 'Show on Shape Creation' is checked in the Properties panel the Properties panel will open by default whenever a new shape layer is created.

PSDX support

There is now native read-only support for the PSDX file format. This now makes it easier to read files that have been created on a tablet or mobile phone device using Adobe Photoshop Touch.

Photoshop/Behance integration

Behance is a networking site for creatives, allowing them to share their work and is also integrated with Creative Cloud subscriptions. According to the latest Adobe press release, Behance is now available for more languages, but they have yet to announce which specific languages have been added. For now, we'll need to wait till Adobe provides more information.

Camera Shake Reduction filter

The Shake Reduction filter (which was new to Photoshop CC) has been updated to provide retina display support for Macintosh users, although all users should notice improved performance when working with large displays.

There is now a checkbox to disable artifact suppression, which can speed things up when working with this filter. Figure 7 below shows examples of this user interface enhancement.

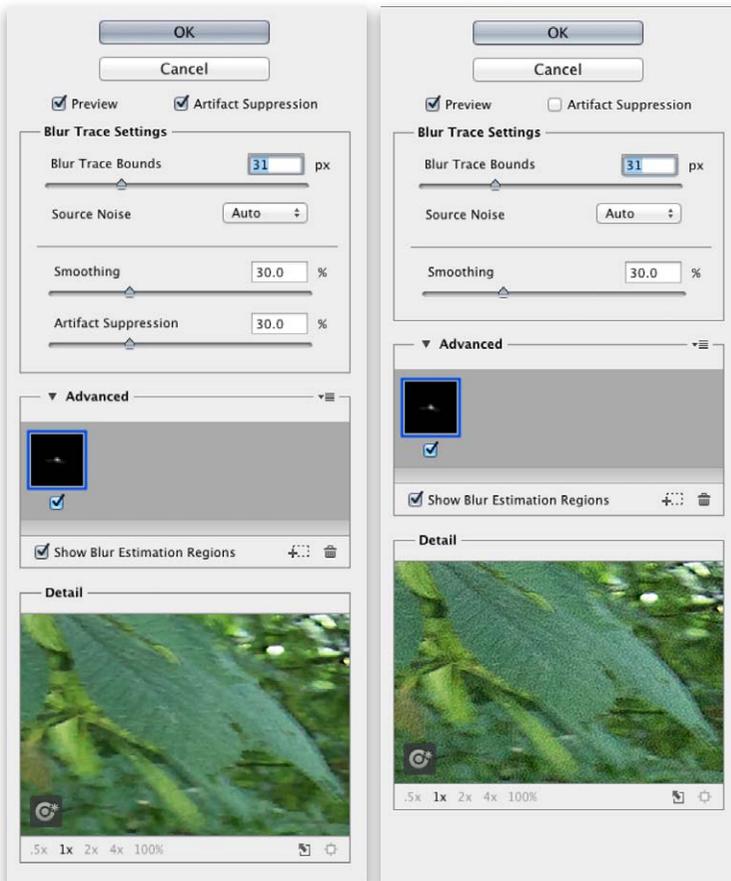


Figure 7 When using the Camera Shake Reduction filter there is now a checkbox at the top of the panel controls that allows you to disable the Artifact Suppression. When checked, this hides the Artifact Suppression slider.