

Adobe's CS5

The new CS release has a raft of new features and, Adobe swears, is easier to use



Improved HDR processing in Photoshop brings the subtleties of real world light into digital images

End users like the 240,000 Australian Year 9 students already working with Adobe's Creative Suite were front of mind when the company put together the latest version of its ubiquitous graphics software suite.

Already the graphic arts and creative industries' staple, Adobe has sought to expand the appeal of its software into companies and institutions outside its usual catchment, like schools, with the new Creative Suite (CS) 5.

The accent has been placed on "discoverability", which means the software can be quickly learned and the often powerful features accessed.

New features and rethinks have been applied to old stalwarts like Illustrator, InDesign and Photoshop with many of the changes coming from suggestions from Adobe users, which is always a good thing. Here are some of the best.

Catalyst

Adobe's showpiece in this incarnation of CS is Catalyst, which allows the designer to work in a programme like Photoshop or Illustrator and repurpose the artwork for the web, without writing code.

The Catalyst product seeks to streamline the conversion of artwork into a web ready format without the designer and coder having to collude, eliminating the usual back and forth.

The beauty of it is that one file, regardless

of which program it was generated in, is used, placing absolute control in the designer's hands. You can view the item as a graphic or choose to view it as code from the exact file you have created and be sure that the item appears as was intended.

Interactive components are added by clicking on palette options and animation uses a simple to use time line palette, which will be familiar to users of Flash.

Early reviews of the software have been enthusiastic about the idea but have criticised the on screen layout and appearance, citing it as being overly clinical. Like most first attempts, there is probably some way to go with the Catalyst software, but once there the efficiencies and power that it will unlock for designers will be unprecedented.

InDesign

The simplification of InDesign is the big story with this latest release, new tools and smart innovations make it one of the easiest versions to use and learn yet.

Pictures are resized and manipulated by clicking on a widget within the images, which is a great time saving simplification.

The new Gap tool allows you to quickly adjust the spaces between boxes, performing the task while preserving picture dimensions and alignment.

In another efficiency, corner effects, which were hidden under menus, are accessible by clicking on points along a box's frame.

Making headlines and subheadings can be laborious, InDesign CS5, in a nice little time saver, lets the user automatically pull text across columns.

Text editing enhancements allow text change tracking within InDesign and multiple page sizes can be used in a single document.

Smart e-books can be generated easily in the EPUB format for mobile phones and e-readers like the new ipad from Apple using an export function. The new InDesign files are readily exported to Flash to add sophisticated interactive and animated elements for posting on the web.

Photoshop

It's been around for years and as the pre-eminent image manipulation device it's hard to think what could be added to a new version of Photoshop. But Adobe has been hard at work and has managed to create a few wows in this release.

Foremost is the revolutionary image intelligence behind Content-Aware Fill, which removes any image detail or object, examines the surroundings and seamlessly fills in the space left behind. Lighting, tone and noise of the surrounding area match perfectly, leaving



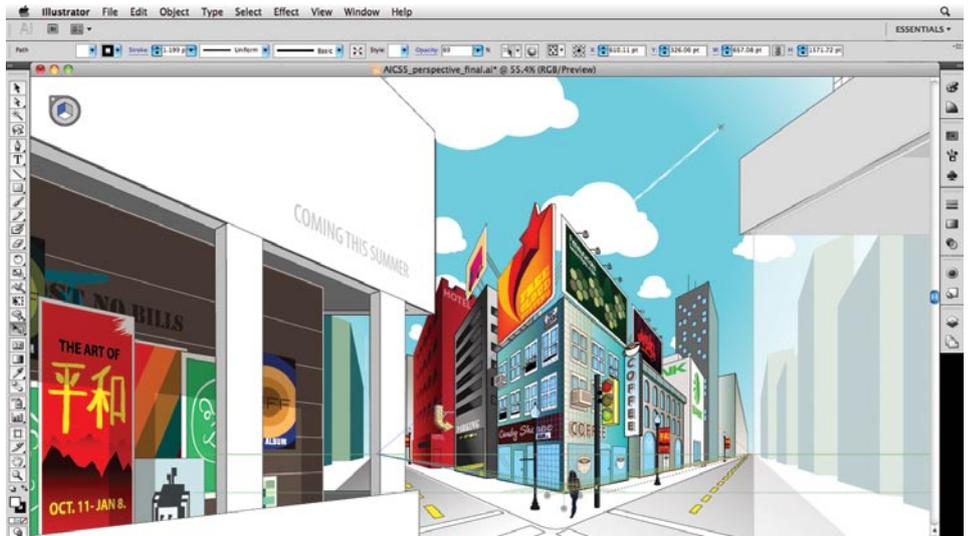
Where'd it go? "content aware fill" replaces the background behind removed items

an image looking as if the removed content had never existed. In existing versions of the programme, doing this convincingly would have tested the skills of professional users.

New Refine Edge makes nearly-impossible image selections possible. This innovative technology precisely detects and masks the trickiest types of edges, such as hair and foliage, while eliminating background color contamination.

A Mixer Brush that blends an infinite combination of colors onto a single paintbrush tip, and Bristle Tips that offer lifelike brush strokes are useful enhancements for illustration using the program.

Puppet Warp gives users the power to precisely reposition or warp any image element, making tasks such as straightening a bent arm in a photo a very simple process. It characterises the powerful, though simple-to-use additions to this version of Photoshop.



3-D design is a breeze in Illustrator CS5

Illustrator

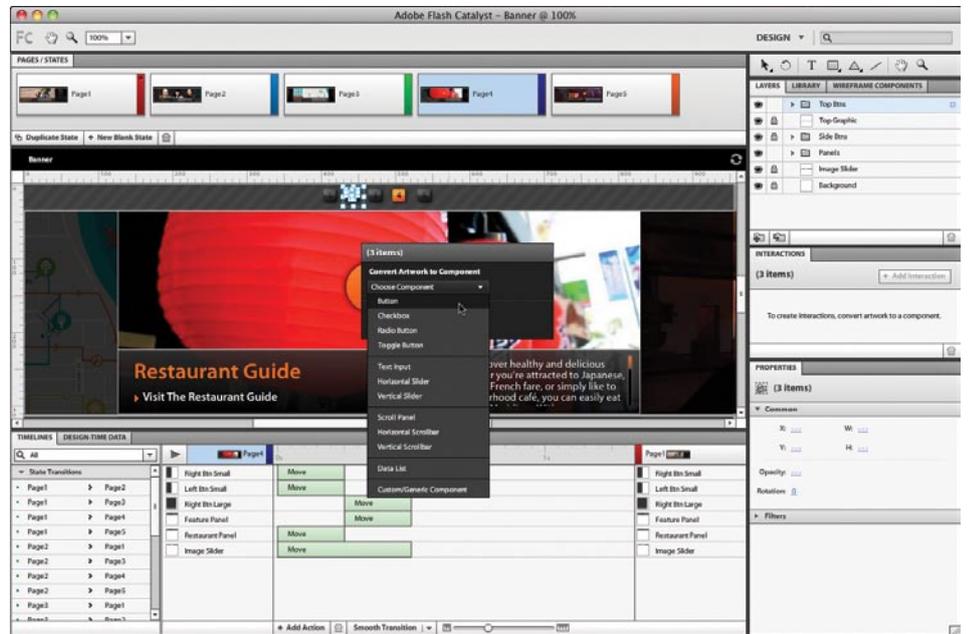
The new Illustrator makes drawing in 3-D a very simple process, combining that with a huge number of creative tools. Architectural applications are a natural for this programme, elements like windows can be copied and distributed across a drawing, being rendered into perspective immediately.

Enhancements to brushes allow further creative capacity and changes to the way strokes are handled offer a new level of flexibility and control. The new Bristle Brush, offers breakthrough control of painting. Designers can set bristle characteristics such as size, length, thickness and stiffness, as well as brush shape, bristle density and paint opacity, for life-like blending.

Users can control stroke width at any point along a path, align dashes to corners and path ends, add accurately placed arrowheads directly from the Stroke panel and control how brushes stretch along a path.

Multiple artboards in Illustrator CS5 encourage efficient ways of working. They can now be named, organised and viewed more easily. New capabilities for drawing behind and inside other objects enable fast creation of complex designs with automatic masking and layer control.

As more content will be re-purposed across several channels the new Illustrator lets you apply raster effects, such as drop shadows,



Add powerful interactivity to work generated in other programs with Catalyst

blurs, and textures, that maintain a consistent appearance across media, whether it be print, online or mobile.

Should I upgrade?

The trick with any new software release is to convince the public that the newer version is significantly different or improved for them to part with its folding stuff. The thinking that has gone into CS5 and the efficiencies included in

the software should make the decision less difficult.

Elements address the convergence of devices and the realisation that content needs to be publishable in several different ways.

For students, getting a handle on industry standard software should stand them in good stead once entering the workforce, as will the essential skill of enhancing information visually.