Image Magician

Tips & Tricks

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Creating A Ghost

Adding a faint instance of a person (ghost) to the background of your image is very simple. Once again PaintBrush for Windows comes to the rescue. First load the image containing the individual you wish to turn into a ghost into Image Magician. Using one of the copy tools, select and copy the individual. Select "Open Image" from the toolbar then choose "New", a blank canvas will load. Set the density on the toolbar to "2" then click in the middle of the canvas to paste a faint image, if to dim use the arrow keys to slightly shift the image then click again. Note that you must be very careful not to move the mouse while doing this or the two copies being pasted will be offset to far, this may require a little practise. When the density of your ghost looks about right save your image as "temp.bmp" to prevent accidently loosing it. Now close the professional tools then click on the white background using the right button to select white. Select the pen tool setting it's size appropriately and erase all colored areas that you do not want to transfer to the finished image, just leave the ghost then save the image. Now start PaintBrush for Windows and load the ghost image you had just saved. Select and copy the ghost then load into PaintBrush the image you want to paste the ghost into. From the menu select "paste" then dragging the ghost, position it in it's final place of rest (pun intended). You may have to practise a bit before you get good at it but after a couple of times you'll get the hang of it.

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Varying Density

Image Magician does allow you to set the density of a copy and paste operation from the toolbar, however the settings are very coarse. So what do you do if you want a density somewhere in between, well you can either wait for the next version to arrive of you can try, for an example, the following: Set the density on the toolbar to "2" then choose one of the selection tools and copy the desired area. position the selection rubber band then click the right mouse button to paste the faint image. Now, being very careful not to move the mouse use the arrow keys to shift the image slightly then paste again. If you do happen to move the mouse at all you will find that the offset between the two paste operations will be to great. You just need to keep that mouse under control. Expect to see finer control of density in the very near future, it rates high on the list of priorities.

Your Trip To Paris?

You can talk all you want about those high tech image applications, but when you get right down to it you know who does it best? Image Magician, wrong, believe it or not it's PaintBrush for Windows. Why is because you can actually see exactly where you are pasting to. There are a couple of other applications out there that will do this also, for between two to three hundred dollars, use PaintBrush instead. It's easy load your picture into PaintBrush then erase to white the background around you. Select and copy your picture now with a white background, then load the Paris image. Choose paste from the menu and position yourself in the image. Simple and it sure beats a long flight. The one snag you may run into is pallet shift when doing this if the color pallets of both images don't match. I'll be doing some development work in this area in the near future so we won't have to go out and spend the big bucks to accomplish the task.

Blurring A Region

Blurring an area of your image is relatively simple in Image Magician. First set the density on the toolbar to "2" then choose one of the selection tools and copy the area to be blurred. Now, being very careful not to move the mouse use the arrow keys to shift the image slightly then click the left mouse button to paste the copy in the slightly offset position. By varying the density, offset and number of paste operations performed you can control exactly the density and how much blurring is performed.

Removing Defects, Lines & Labels

Retouching The Background:
To start with, if your image has a uniform background containing a single color click on the background to select that color using the right mouse button, select the pen tool then set the brush size to something large, say "24". Now using the pen tool erase as much of background lines, labels, and defects as possible. If the background of the image is uniform, but contains several colors, try using the wand tool, set to an appropriate size, clicking on spots or tracing lines to remove them. If your image does not have a uniform background at all then you will need to repair the background employing the techniques below for retouching the subject.

Retouching Intersections:
The next step is to select the dropper tool and set the brush size to something more appropriate for detail work, say size "4". Be sure the density setting is still set at it's default of "1". Carefully studying your image you will note that some spots and lines may appear over sharply defined edges of the subject, it as the intersections of these defects with the sharply defined edges of the subject that we must repair before continuing. As an example, lets say that you have a horizontal line which must be removed which crosses over several vertical sharply defined edges of the subject. First of all, using the dropper tool, position the cursor approximately one brush size above or below the horizontal line, centered on one the vertical sharply defined edges of the subject, click the right mouse button to pick up color then center the dropper directly over the intersection clicking the right mouse left mouse button to effect the repair. Now that wasn't so hard, was it?

Retouching The Subject:
You may think that this would be the hardest task to accomplish, but you will generally you will find it the easiest thanks to the wand tool. Start by selecting the wand tool, set the brush size to the smallest possible setting which will allow you accomplish the task at hand, say size "4" and make sure the density is set at "1". To remove spots, center the wand over the spot and click the left mouse button. To remove lines, center the wand over one of the lines endpoints and while holding down the left mouse button carefully trace it's path to the opposite endpoint. You may find that occasionally you may have to go back over the path you traced and drag some pixels around a bit with the wand to do a perfect job. At times starting in the middle of a line and tracing outwards towards it's endpoints will produce better results while at other times you may try just clicking along a lines path so as not to drag pixels while you're tracing. There are no hard fast rules using the wand tool, there are literally dozens of techniques which can be used and in time you will develop a greater level of skill and technique.

Highlights and Shadows

The easiest way to either darken or lighten highlights and shadows is to use the dropper tool set to brush size "8" or greater and the density set to "2". For example, to darken a shadow or highlight, position the dropper over a darker region then click the right mouse button to pick up color. Move the dropper over the shadow or highlight to be darkened, then while holding down the left mouse button, apply the color to the shadow or highlight at the reduced density. To lighten a shadow or highlight pick up color from a lighter area.
If the edges of your shadows and highlights develop sharp edges use the wand tool, dragging from within the shadow outwards to feather the sharp edges.

Horizontal & Vertical Lines

Perfectly sized and spaced horizontal and vertical lines can be produced easily using the square tool. Simply create a very short or narrow square rubber band so that it resembles a line, then position the rubber band at the proper location and click the right mouse button to draw to the image. If you watch the position indicator up on the toolbar you can draw additional evenly spaced lines by simply moving, say "20" pixels and clicking the right mouse button again. Continue moving to the next position and clicking to draw the next line until you're finished.

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Snaked Text

You can create text that is seemingly flowing from one point to another by holding down the mouse button and dragging rather than simply clicking as you would normally do to draw 3-D text to your image. Great for those special effects like your customized Windows 95 "Clouds" screen where you could create your name seamingly swooping down out of the clouds.

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All submitted material is subject to editing

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Creating New Images

Image Magician was designed as an image editing/retouching application. It would not have been difficult to include yet one more popup dialog to allow you to be a little more creative than simply providing a blank 480 x 640 canvas, however everything added consumes both screen space and memory both of which are to valuable to be wasted. There are many other image applications which are far more suitable to creating an picture from scratch including PaintBrush for Windows which, for as simple as the software is, can accomplish very quickly and easily most simple tasks. PaintBrush doesn't consume a great deal of your computer's resources and when running along side Image Magician can provide you with most of the additional features you may need including, creating and sizing new pictures, large block copy and paste operations, transparent copy and paste, flip, mirror, skew, color replacement, and on and on. All that you need to remember is that both PaintBrush and Image Magician use Windows Clipboard, it will pay to study their help files to gain an understanding of all the power this brings you.
Now getting back to creating a new image. There are basically two things to consider when you create a new image, first it's size and second it's color pallet. The first consideration, size is easy, in PaintBrush open a new file, from the menu choose attributes and set the size (pels means pixels), save the new image as either a 16 or 256 color bitmap (.bmp), ie "new.bmp". The second consideration, color pallet is not quite so simple unless you wish to use Windows default pallet. If however you desire a far greater range of blue tones for example you will need to first load an image which contains those tones then erase the image and save as "new.bmp". Even though the image has been erased it's color pallet will still be there so that if you load the image in Image Magician you will be able to draw using all those colors.
It is highly probable that enough of you want more control over the creation of new images and even the ability to manipulate color pallets it will eventually be included, so if you want it be sure to let me know, your input really counts.

The Sample Icons and Pallets

You will find in your "IMGMAGIC" directory or the directory that you installed Image Magician in a number of sample icons (*.ico), icon pallets (*.icp) and a bitmap named "workshop.bmp" which may prove useful as examples to create your own icons and icon pallets. After the first time you start Image Magician three basic subdirectories will be created for you, from Windows File Manager select and copy all the (*.ico) files to the "c:\imgmagic\icons" directory, all the (*.icp) files to the "c:\imgmagic\pallets" directory and the "workshop.bmp" file to the "c:\imgmagic\pictures" directory. In this way you will always retain the original files so you are free to play around with and edit the copies. The "workshop.bmp" was created in Windows PaintBrush using the WingDings font, from this I copied and pasted into IconWorks the individual astrology icons saving them as individual icons. The individual icons were then loaded into pallet shop, arranged into an icon pallet and saved as "astro.icp". Total time for creating the new pallet was under just 15 minutes using this technique. Of course, if you choose you can create icons right from scratch in IconWorks, this is just a simple demonstration of how to get the job done for some of less artistically inclined individuals.

Save as JPG, GIF, PCX, PNG

To save your image in a format other than a BMP such as JPG, GIF, PCX or PNG you will require one of the other Windows image editing applications I have previously mentioned such as Microsoft's PaintBrush or JASC's PaintShop Pro. To save an image currently displayed in Image Magician to one of these other formats simply press the [Ctrl] + [C] key combination from within Image Magician to copy the image to the clipboard then start the other application and use the [Ctrl] + [V] key combination to paste the image into its editing window. From the other application's file menu select 'Save As', choose the format then enter a file name and save the file. Don't forget, this works both ways, you may copy and paste from Image Magician to the other application or from the other application to Image Magician. If you do not already have one of these other applications which support the file type you wish to save to, visit my web site for a link directly to the authors of some the really great shareware image applications to review and download their application.

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Printing an image

To print your image you will require one of the other Windows image editing applications I have previously mentioned such as Microsoft's PaintBrush or JASC's PaintShop Pro. If you do not already have one of these other applications which support printing an image, visit my web site for a link directly to the authors of some the really great shareware image applications to review and download their application.

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