

photodesk

Quick Start Guide



PhotoDesk: Quick Start Guide • © Chris Terran 2023 • All rights reserved
Version: PDQ manual 100-040-RC02, Thu 9 March 2023 02:34:28 PM

PhotoDesk • © X-Ample Technology BV. 2020+ • All rights reserved



Introduction

photodesk

This short *Quick Start Guide* gives a brief overview of PhotoDesk and describes some common operations on images:

- Loading and saving
- Resizing, rotating and cropping, and an introduction to selections
- Basic processing – brightness and contrast, sharpening and blurring
- Simple painting, drawing and adding text

We cover only the most basic use of the program – there are a very large number of features not even mentioned here, such as:

Layers and channels

Masks and gradients

Textures, styling and colour processing

All the FX facilities, including the powerful Cloning effect

See *PhotoDesk: A Manual* for comprehensive documentation.

PhotoDesk supports interactive help, which is very useful when starting out – ensure the RISC OS *!Help* application (in *Apps*) is loaded and enabled.

If you're new to RISC OS, here's a summary of using the mouse:

- The *left-hand* mouse button is called **Select**, and is the main way to choose items and options, and to apply effects.
- The *central* mouse button, or pressing the wheel, is called **Menu**. The menu that appears will vary according to where the button is pressed – it is *context-sensitive*. It's similar to pressing the right-hand button under Linux or Windows.
- The *right-hand* button is called **Adjust**, and will usually modify the effect of the **Select** button in some fashion. For instance, using **Adjust** on a scroll button in a window will reverse the effect – it will scroll the window up rather than down, or left rather than right. And using **Adjust** on a scroll bar lets you scroll in both directions, to pan over an image. Applying an action with **Adjust** will usually keep a dialogue open for further actions; this also works, very usefully, for menus.

The **Adjust** button is extremely useful in PhotoDesk: it performs an *undo* using the current tool.

PhotoDesk is an *image editing program*. It can read and write various types of images, including JPEGs from digital cameras, and can perform a large number of operations on them. It can also be used for creating artworks from scratch, using a variety of *tools* and *effects*.

The tools include an *airbrush*, which applies colours and effects using a spray-gun-like method. There are many types of brushes and ways to use them. There's also a *magic wand*, which can flood-fill areas, and a set of *drawing tools*, used for making shapes, creating line art and applying text.

Effects include simple colour application, modifying contrast and brightness, embossing, texturising, sharpening and blurring, and many others including 'artistic' effects like water-colour.

Here are some important or useful things to know about PhotoDesk before you start:

Undoing

PhotoDesk has a *single-level undo*. It does not have a 'history' feature. This has implications for complex projects or experimentation – you should save regularly, using a versioning approach to filenames.

Type **F8** or select **Undo** from the canvas menu (click **Menu** over a PhotoDesk image) to revert to the previous version of an image.

Take care – some operations cannot be undone.

Fixing

Fixing an image means defining a rewind point for the undo facility. You fix an image with the **Space bar**. This updates the thumbnail in the **Clipboard**.

Once an image has been fixed in this way, all prior information is lost. Any future **Undo** operation will revert to this version of the image.

Modes

PhotoDesk works in two modes: *illustration* and *montage*.

Illustration mode is for general painting, drawing and image processing.

Montage mode is for making and moving selections, cropping and distorting.

Switch between modes with the third icon from the right in the toolbar, or type **F5**. Each mode has a slightly different set of tools and effects available.



Click on the **Scissors** icon in the toolbar or type **F5** to enter montage mode.



Click on the **Palette** icon in the toolbar or type **F5** to enter illustration mode.

Zooming



The **Magnifying glass** icon in the toolbar is the *zoom* tool. Zooming doesn't affect the image, just the way it's displayed.

Click **Select** on the tool, and you can drag out a rectangle on the image to get a close-up of the enclosed area. The toolbar returns to its previous state.

Double-click **Select** on the tool, and the image is shown at 1:1 scale.

Type **F7** or double-click **Adjust** on the tool, and a small dialogue opens letting you set the zoom level. This has buttons for some common zoom settings such as half and double scale.

Full screen

Type **Ctrl-Tab** and PhotoDesk enters *full screen mode*. All other windows are obscured and PhotoDesk's toolbar becomes free-floating. Type **Ctrl-Tab** again to return to the normal display.

Moving the mouse pointer to the bottom of the screen pops up the iconbar, giving access to hardware and other applications.

Type **Tab** to hide or reveal PhotoDesk's own dialogues and windows. This works in the normal display mode too.

Getting started

photodesk

Run the *!PhotoDesk* application, and it will install on RISC OS' iconbar at the bottom of the screen. Find an image file on your computer – any JPEG, for instance – and drop it on the icon. It will open in a new window, as shown. This is the *canvas*.

The *image* ① is surrounded by a grey *border* ②, which cannot be drawn in, with a *caption* ③ underneath showing some image information.

Under the window is the *toolbar* ④, which is PhotoDesk's main control centre. Under that is the *status bar* ⑤, which shows the current operation and other useful text.

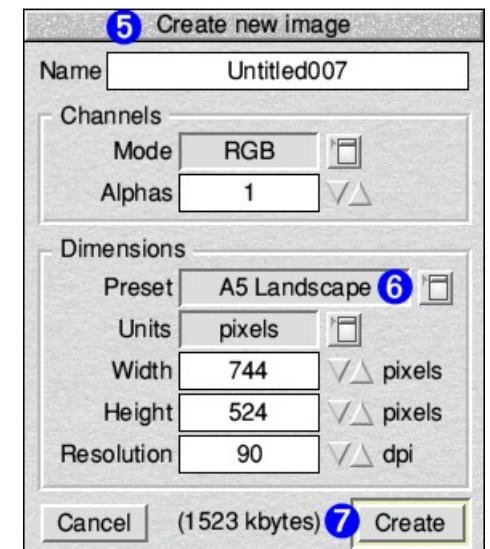
The *effects* ① are *gradient*, *colouring*, *masking*, *image processing* and *special effects*. The *tools* ② are the *airbrush*, *paintbrush*, *drawing tools* and *wand*. In general, choose an effect, and apply it with any of the tools. (NB: Most special effects work differently.) The icons for the current effect and tool are highlighted.

When you load an image another window also appears, titled *Clipboard* ①. This isn't related to the RISC OS global clipboard – it shows all the images ② currently loaded into PhotoDesk, and some memory usage information ③. Double-click on an image to open it. Closing an image window does not remove it – it stays on the clipboard.

Click **Adjust** on PhotoDesk's iconbar icon to open the clipboard at any time.

To create a new image, click **Select** in an empty grey area ④ of the *Clipboard*, or on PhotoDesk's icon in the iconbar.

The *Create new image* ⑤ window opens. Click on the **Preset** menu icon ⑥ to choose a size, and then **Create** ⑦ – a new blank window opens.



Saving

photodesk

PhotoDesk can save files in a variety of formats and it's important to choose the correct one.

To save an image in its current format, type **F3** or go to **File>Save>** ① in the canvas menu. Change the filename if required and drag the icon ② to a Filer window, or press **Return** if there's a full path.

If the file already exists you'll be asked for confirmation.

To remove an image from PhotoDesk, select the **Remove** option ③.

To save an image in a different format, type **Ctrl-F3** or click on **File>Save as...** in the canvas menu.

Click on the **Menu** icon ① next to the format name to get a list of formats available; choose one, and the extension will update. Here we're saving a Photoshop format file as a JPEG.

Change the filename if required and drag the icon ② to a Filer window, or press **Return** if there's a full path.

Again, if the file already exists you'll be asked for confirmation.

Here is some general advice on file formats:

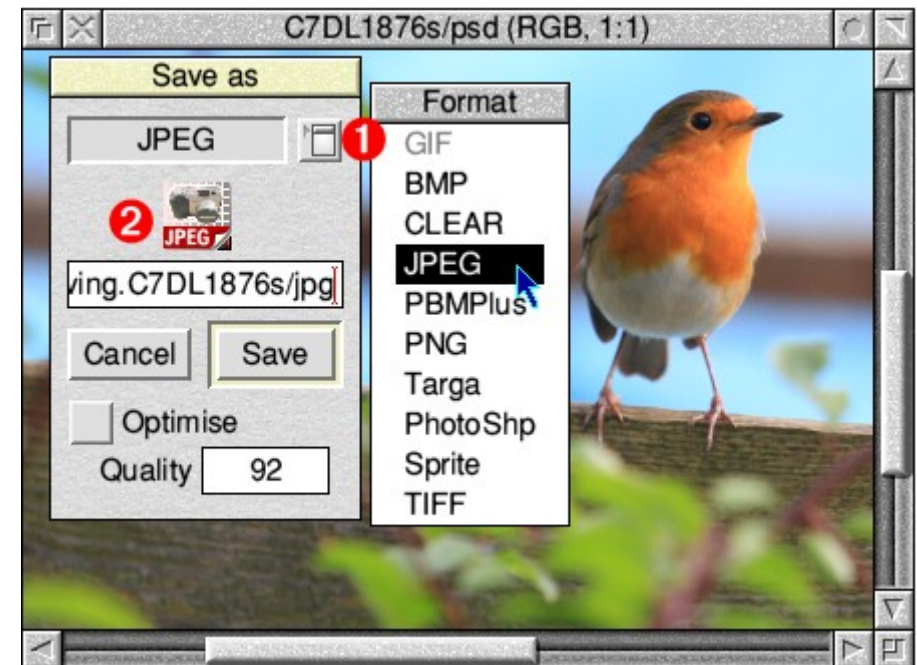
PhotoDesk can automatically add filetype extensions (these appear in RISC OS as *name/ext*).

When you're working on a project, use the Photoshop format (filename extension */psd*). This is *lossless*, and includes all image information on channels and layers – see *PhotoDesk: A Manual* for full details.

As there's only a single-level undo, it can help to add a version number to the filename and increase it on every save operation.

Only save as a JPEG for final versions.

PhotoDesk does not preserve *EXIF information* – embedded photographic and location data in JPEGs – so always work on a copy.



Resizing

photoshop

To change the size of an image – for a web page or email, for instance – type **Ctrl-S**, or select **Image>Resize...** from the canvas menu.

You can make an image larger or smaller, and set the new size either by its new dimensions, or by providing a scaling factor.

Select **New size** ① to give the exact dimensions. If you want to keep the image's proportions the same you should select **Maintain current aspect ratio** ②.

You can type the new size into the **Width** and/or **Height** boxes ③.

If **Maintain current aspect ratio** ② is ticked, changing one will update the other, otherwise you can set them separately.

Alternatively you can resize the image by selecting the **Scale by** ④ option.

You can type a scaling factor into the text box, which can be a fractional (eg 2/3) or decimal (eg 1.5) value. The scaling can be applied to either or both dimensions – so to make an image taller but keep the same width you would select **Vertical only**.

In either case, click on **Resize** ⑥ to update the image.

To revert to the original dimensions, type **F8** or select **Undo** from the canvas menu.

The *Interpolation* section ⑤ sets the quality. Normally this would be **Bi-cubic** to get the best result.

The screenshot shows the 'Resize image' dialog box in Adobe Photoshop. It contains the following elements:

- Current size:** 3303 kbytes
- Width:** 761 pixels
- Height:** 889 pixels
- H res:** 90 dpi
- V res:** 90 dpi
- New size:** 3303 kbytes (annotated with ①)
- Maintain current aspect ratio:** Checked (annotated with ②)
- Locked units:** Checked
- Width:** 761 pixels (annotated with ③)
- Height:** 889 pixels (annotated with ③)
- Scale by:** 1/2.0 (annotated with ④)
- Both axes:** Selected
- Vertical only:** Unselected
- Horizontal only:** Unselected
- Interpolation:** Bi-cubic (annotated with ⑤)
- Bi-linear:** Unselected
- Nearest neighbour:** Unselected
- Cancel** and **Resize** buttons (the 'Resize' button is annotated with ⑥)



Rotating

photodesk

To rotate an image type **Ctrl-R**, or select **Image>Rotate...** from the canvas menu.

If an image is just the 'wrong way up' – as sometimes happens with digital camera photos when the camera was held vertically – select the **Fixed** ① section and one of the **Three buttons** ② to turn it sideways or upside down. These rotations do not degrade the image in any way.

Click on **Rotate** ③ to perform the rotation.

To rotate by any other amount, choose the **Arbitrary** ① section. Enter the angle in the **Text box** ② – you can use decimal values for precision – or use the **Arrows**.

As the small diagram indicates, you can enter negative values which rotate clockwise, or positive values which rotate anticlockwise.

There are two ways to rotate an image in this fashion. If you select **Lose corners** ③, the resulting canvas will be exactly the same size. Parts of the image will be lost, and newly empty areas will be filled with white – the central robin shows the effect.

Selecting **Resize to fit** ④ will change the canvas dimensions so the original image is all visible, in rotated form; again, empty areas become white. The right-hand robin shows the result. The dotted red border shows the size of the image.

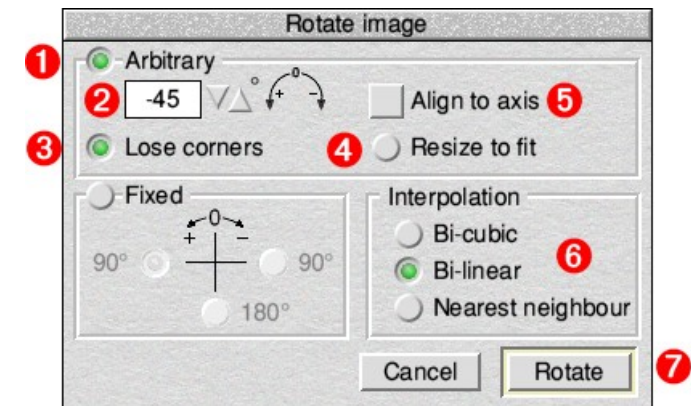
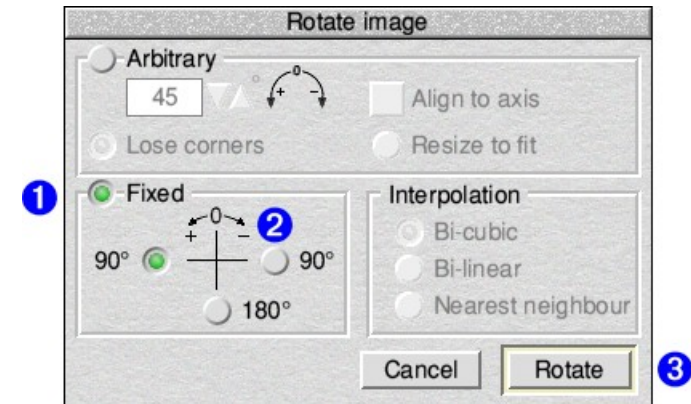
The **Interpolation** section ⑥ sets the quality. Notionally this is **Bi-cubic** for the best result, but we've found that **Bi-linear** gives slightly better quality.

Click on **Rotate** ⑦ to perform the rotation.

The **Align to axis** ⑤ option can be used to fix a common problem with photos: a misaligned horizon, when the camera wasn't quite level. Click on the box, and the image pointer will change to a **Pencil**. Click on the horizon at one edge of the image, then double-click on the opposite edge's horizon. This sets up the correct angle.

Click on **Rotate** ⑦ to straighten the picture.

Type **F8** or select **Undo** from the canvas menu to undo any rotation.



Chirrup!



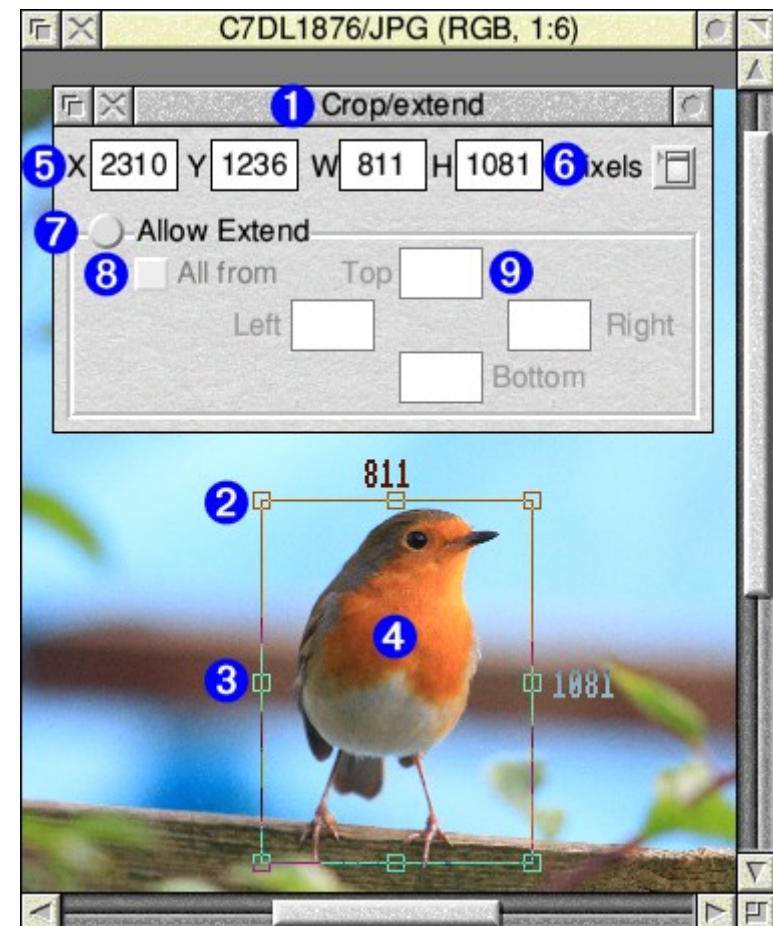
Lose corners



Resize to fit



photodesk



Brightness and contrast

photodesk

Adjust the overall brightness and contrast of an image with the **Gamma** effect.

Click on the **Image processing** ¹ icon in the toolbar – the bar chart – or type **Ctrl-P**.

Often this effect is applied using the **Wand** ² with **Whole image** ³ selected – which applies an effect to every pixel in an image -- but you can use any of the tools. For example, to 'paint' the effect on parts of the image, use the **Paintbrush** with a suitable brush size – see *Painting and drawing* below.

In the **Image processing** dialogue ¹, select **Gamma** ².

The **Eye** ³ is the *preview* icon – click on it and the image will show the effect described in the text box ⁴, here 'Increase contrast'.

There are a number of preset effects, accessed from the **Menu** icon ⁵. Try them out – remember that choosing with **Adjust** keeps the menu open.

You can vary the impact of the effect with the **Strength** or **Opacity** sliders, though this isn't shown in the preview.

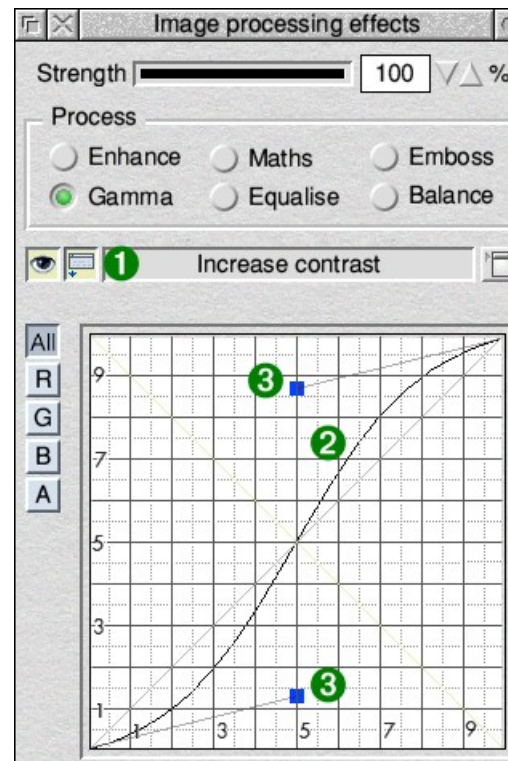
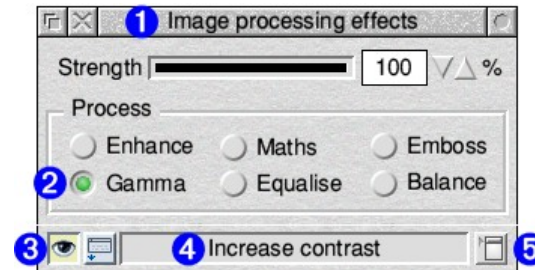
Click **Select** on the image to apply the effect with the chosen tool.

If you have the preview ³ on, the first click just removes the preview. Click *again* to apply the effect.

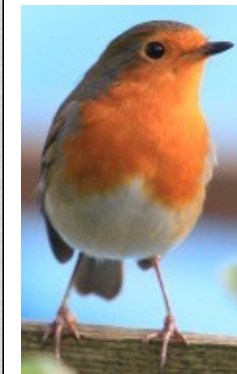
Undo with **F8** or **Adjust**.

You're not limited to the presets. Click on the **Details** ¹ icon and the dialogue will expand to show a *gamma curve* ² with a pair of blue *control points* ³.

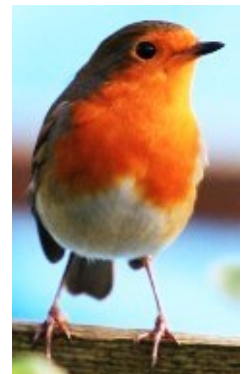
Drag these around to vary the slope of the curve. If **Preview** ³ is selected the main image will show the effect.



Before



After



Sharpening (and more)

photodesk

You can apply various sharpening – and softening, or blurring – effects to an image.

Click on the **Image processing** ¹ icon in the toolbar – the bar chart – or type **Ctrl-P**.

We'll use the **Wand** ² again with **Whole image** ³ selected, as in the *Brightness and contrast* section above. You can use any tool, of course.

In the **Image processing** dialogue ¹, select **Enhance** ².

Click on the **Details** ³ icon, and the dialogue expands to show a *preview pane* ⁴ containing a full-size portion of the image. Drag this around to show a different part of the image. Click on the **Eye** ⁵ and the preview pane shows the result of the effect.

There are a number of preset effects, accessed from the **Menu** icon ⁷ and described in the text box ⁶. Here I've chosen 'Sharpen (fine)'. Try the others out – remember that choosing with **Adjust** keeps the menu open.

You can vary the impact of the effect with the **Strength** or **Opacity** sliders, and this is shown in the preview.

Click **Select** on the image to apply the effect with the chosen tool.

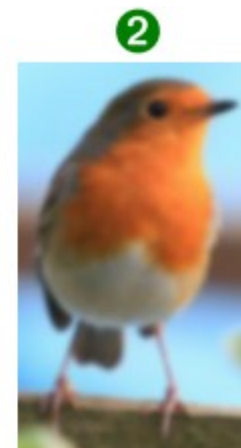
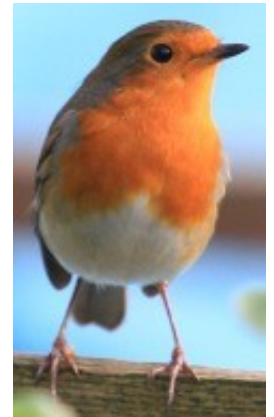
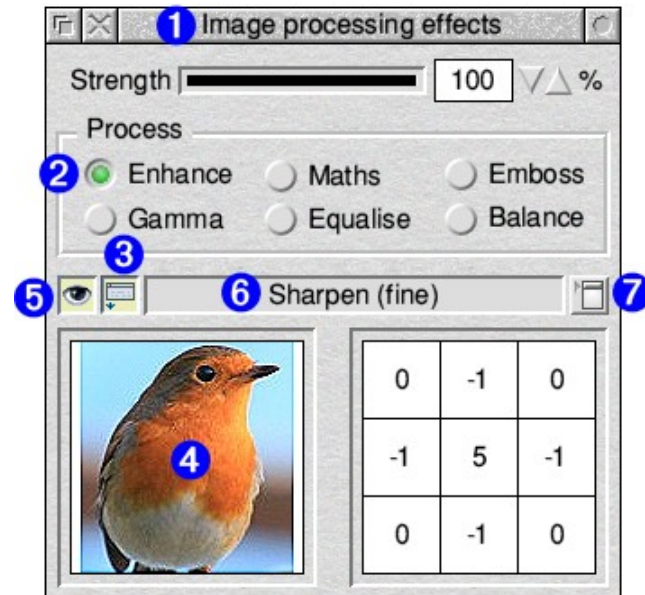
The original robin is shown to the right of the dialogue, and below it are three examples of different preset effects (overdone for illustration purposes – beware of excessive sharpening):

¹ is **Sharpen (fine)**, as in the dialogue. PhotoDesk has other sharpening effects in the **FX** section, giving much more control.

² is **Smoothing (Gaussian)**, applied four times. Again, the **FX** section has many more blurring effects, but this is the usual way to apply a small softening effect to an image.

³ is **Make negative**, which inverts the colours of an image.

See *PhotoDesk: A Manual* for more details – and exactly what that array of numbers means.



Painting and drawing

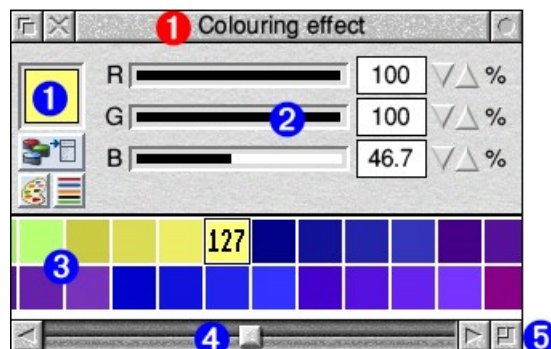
photodesk

To paint or draw you need a canvas – see *Getting started* – and a colour:



Click **Select** on **Colours** ① – the paintpots – in the toolbar to open its dialogue ①.

The large square ① is the *current colour* – a pale yellow here – which will be used when you apply a tool. Change this with the RGB sliders or arrows, enter values ②, or double-click **Select** on the current colour to open the system colour picker.

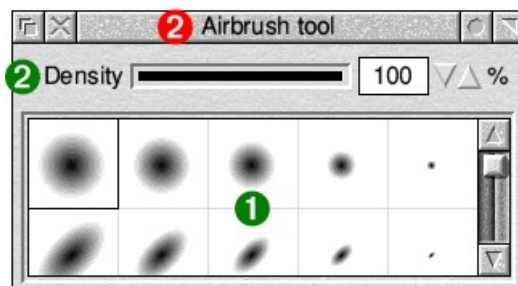


The small squares below form the *palette* ③, which contains 256 colours. Click **Select** on one to make it the current colour. See more colours with the scroll bar ④, or expand the window ⑤. You're not limited to these colours – it's just a store. Store the current colour by dropping it on a palette square.

The **Colours** dialogue has a **Menu**. Select **Find...**, which opens a Filer window of PhotoDesk's palette files. Drop one of these on the dialogue to use it.

Choose a tool such as the **Airbrush** ②, whose dialogue has various brushes ① you can use – scroll to see more. Try painting with different colours and brushes to see the effect.

Vary the strength of the colour with the **Density** slider ②. 'Unairbrush' with **Adjust**.



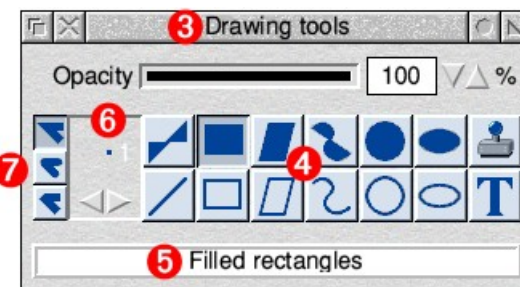
Here are some examples of brushes and effects:



You can put lines and various shapes on an image using facilities similar to the RISC OS *Draw* application.

Select the **Drawing tools** ③ in the toolbar, or type **Ctrl-D**. This dialogue shows a number of shapes ④, the top row filled and the bottom row outlined. The selected shape is highlighted, and described in the text box ⑤.

You can change the *line width* ⑥ with the arrows, and the type of *corner join* ⑦ (sharp, round or bevelled). So to draw a filled rectangle with rounded corners, choose a largeish line width and the central rounded join option.



Select a colour as for painting, and a shape.

To draw a rectangle click on opposite corners. For lines and curves, click on each point and double-click or press **Return** to finish. For a circle, click on the centre then the radius. The other shapes work in a similar fashion.

PhotoDesk has fairly limited drawing facilities, but you can *import* any Draw or ArtWorks file – just drop the file on the image. See *PhotoDesk: A Manual* for full details.

Adding text

photodesk

Text can be added to an image. You can use any font installed in your system.

Once you've added some text to an image, it can only be edited as a graphic, not as text.

Select the **Drawing tools** ① in the toolbar, or type **Ctrl-D**. This dialogue ① contains the facilities for placing text.

Click on **Colours** ② – the three paintpots – so you can select a colour.

In the **Drawing tools** dialogue ①, click on the large **T** ③, which is the *text* icon.

If you can't see the lower section of the dialogue, click on the *expand window* icon ② in the top right corner.

Click **Select** in the preview box ⑥ and type some text. This starts up with 'PHOTODESK' – type **Ctrl-U** to delete it.

Change the font using the pull-down menu ④.

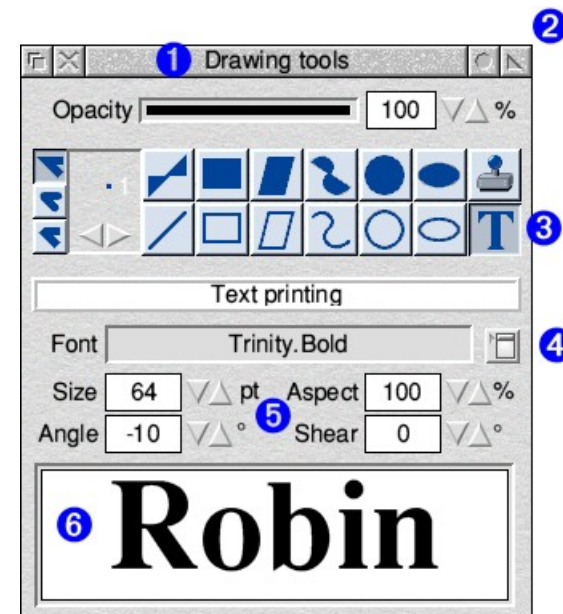
You can set the details of the font in the section below its name ⑤. Change the font's *Size*, *Aspect* ratio, *Angle* and *Shear* to suit. (*Aspect* stretches or contracts a font; *Shear* gives it a slope, positive or negative.) Type a value or use the arrows.

The *Size* and *Aspect* are shown in the dialogue's preview, but not *Angle* or *Shear*. Any colour selected is also not shown.

Click **Select** in the image, which gives a fuller preview, showing any *Angle* and *Shear*.

Position as required – you can modify the text details or colour if required, and change the **Opacity** to blend the text in – and click **Select** again to place the text in the chosen colour.

Undo with **F8** or **Adjust**.



Selections

photodesk

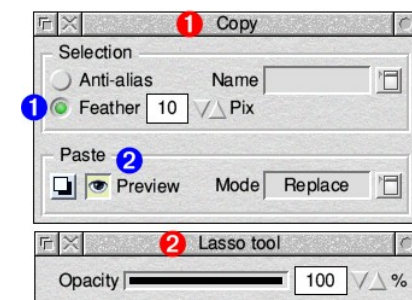
Making and using selections is a complex subject, and is comprehensively covered in *PhotoDesk: A Manual*. Here we'll just run through a simple example.



Enter **Montage** mode – the scissors icon – and select the **Copy** ① effect and the **Lasso** ② tool. Both have dialogues, the **Lasso** just an **Opacity** slider.

In the **Copy** dialogue ①, select the **Feather** ① option and enter 10 – this gives a smooth fade-out to any selection you make, so it blends in. Make sure **Preview** ② is highlighted.

In the image, hold down **Select** and draw a rough outline around the robin with the **Lasso**:



This creates a *selection*, marked by a 'crawling ants' effect. It's slightly larger than the original lassoed area due to the feathering. You can pick this up and drag it anywhere – even into another image. Careful – if you click anywhere *outside* the selection, it'll be cancelled.

This is only a *preview* – nothing's been drawn yet. If you wanted to actually draw the selection where you've moved it, you'd click on the **Tick** ③ in the toolbar.

But we won't do that. Instead, type **Ctrl-C** or click **Select** on the **Clipboard** icon ④ in the toolbar.

This places a copy of the selection in a new window, just big enough to hold it – see right.

And now you can modify the selection in any way you choose – resize it, rotate it, process it in any way you want.

What we'll do is *flip* it. From the new image's canvas menu select **Image>X flip**. It becomes mirrored – and so does the selection in the *original* window.

Now just drag the original selection a little to the right, and click on the **Tick** ③.

And he's got a new friend:



This only scratches the surface. You can modify the transparency when the selection is placed (with the lasso's **Opacity**), change the way it blends with the background, save the selection, invert, smooth, grow and shrink it, add a shadow, and more. And you can also use the **Drawing tools** and the **Wand** to make or modify selections.

You can find all this, and much more, in *PhotoDesk: A Manual*. ●

