

Learn Adobe Photoshop CS4 by Video: Core Training in Visual Communication

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Learn by Video is part of a new series of “complete training programs” for Adobe applications. After watching a few videos I find the presentations quite thorough and in-depth. The product line was created and produced by video2brain in conjunction with Adobe and PeachPit Video on Demand. This is Adobe-approved courseware and as such is labeled as being “Official Training for Adobe Certified Associate Exam.”

The 120-page printed documentation is more of a table of contents and guide for the 19 hours of video segments on the DVD. I didn’t find it especially impressive.

It does include a workflow plan for creating a project from start to finish, containing a lot of useful information for graphic designers. There is also a section introducing you to the training interface and the authors. In the back of the book are charts of Keyboard Shortcuts and Graphic File Formats, and a Glossary.

The video training, on the other hand, is stellar! I just threw the DVD into my laptop’s drive and was presented with an easy to navigate browser.

The DVD contents are listed in the left panel, context sensitive quick-links and info about the training is in the right panel, and a “Welcome” video is in the center ready to be played.

Three tabs on the top left of the browser provide access to a listing of Training Content, Bookmarks, and Info. The Bookmarks tab

comes preloaded with video2brain selections, a rather extensive detailing of the many subjects covered in the 19 hours of training. The Info tab contains information about the people and organizations behind the production of this training tool.

In addition to the excellent videos, the DVD includes an assets folder containing all the project files you need to follow along with the lessons, a mobile folder with selected videos in formats for transferring to the 3gp or iPhone, and a ‘Learn PS by Video Supplement’ document in PDF format with step-by-step instructions and illustrations.

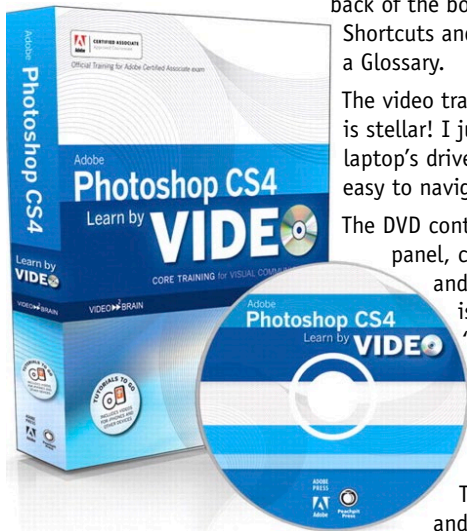
The training material is organized into ten sections as follows:

1. Getting Started with *Photoshop*
2. Image Editing Concepts
3. Importing and Organizing Images
4. Tools
5. Making Selections
6. Layers and Masks
7. Color Correction and Retouching
8. Working with Type
9. Preparing, Saving, and Printing Images
10. Color Management

Each section ends with review questions accessed through the Test Yourself link.

Although the recommendation is to start by watching all the videos from beginning to end and then to go back for a second viewing, I thought that I’d just jump right into a subject of interest to me. I started out by clicking on 4 > Tools and then the link to 4.2 > Interactive toolbar.

I clicked the icon for activating the Eraser, Background Eraser, or Magic Eraser. To repeat myself, the videos are just excellent and packed with information. I took the following notes for later use in applying my newfound skills. I was already experienced with using the basic Eraser, but was fairly unaware of the two additional tools.



“The Eraser tool is used to erase pixels in an image to a background color or to restore parts of an image to a previously saved history state by using the history panel and the “erase to history” option. Zoom way in to erase individual pixels. Control the results by modifying the options of brush size, hardness, opacity and flow (how fast a brush stroke spreads) as well as selecting a mode: brush, pencil or block.

“The Background Eraser tool erases areas of an image to transparency. The tool samples with a hot spot and deletes parts of an image based on the sampled color and the option settings. On the “Limits” list select which pixels to affect, Contiguous (sampled color & touching), Non-Contiguous (sampled color anywhere in image), or Find Edges (preserves sharpness).

“How you set the Tolerance determines how closely the range of colors to erase will fall with relationship to the hot spot. Put a tic next to “Protect Foreground Color” to prevent the erasure of a specified foreground color.

The sampling options allow you to specify whether to sample continuously as you move the cursor, use only the originally sampled color, or erase only areas containing the color specified in the Background Color Box.

“The Magic Eraser erases solid areas of an image to transparency with a single click based on a selected color, the Tolerance level, with the additional options of opacity level and whether or not to sample all layers.”

So as you can see, even the humble eraser tool is presented in a detailed and (what I found to be) interesting manner. The presenter covers basic and quite in-depth functionality and throws in a lot of creative innovation to inspire you to explore *Photoshop* and your own innovative potential.

This is the best video training tool I have come across. I didn’t have to install anything on my computer, the interface is well organized and easy to navigate, and the instructor and lesson materials are easy to watch and incredibly informative.

About: *Adobe Photoshop CS4 by Video:
Core Training in Visual Communication*

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Publisher: Adobe Press

<http://www.adobepress.com/bookstore/product.asp?isbn=0321634934>

ISBN: 978-0321634931

Price: \$59