oys for Christmas creative types!
Extensis PhotoText 2.0 - by Karl-Peter Gottschalk

t has been a big year for graphics software developer Extensis, Inc. The new version of Intellihance is about to come out this month and it is a doozy, the photographic image enhancer plug-in we have always needed.

Before that we had PhotoFrame 1.0, the upgrade to Mask Pro, and the 4th version of Portfolio, one of the two contenders for best media database program along with Cumulus. And of course the hardy old perennial of the vector graphics world, Illustrator and FreeHand plug-in Vector Tools 2.0, is still going strong and is still one of the 2 such toolsets you cannot do without. The other is MetaCreation's KPT Vector Effects 1.0. <http://www.metacreations.com>

Extensis also released a new version of PhotoTools, their plug-in set for Photoshop that is now firmly aimed at Web developers with all the embosses, bevels, shadows and buttons effects that one could wish for. Version 3 of PhotoTools brought us an excellent texture generator tool with a clean and simple interface in PhotoTexture, but it dropped what was perhaps the very best aspect of PhotoTools 2.0, its PhotoText type creation tool.

A word processor within Photoshop

PhotoText bestows on the Photoshop pixel graphics environment all the features of a low end word processor. Open it within Photoshop and the resizable window pops up showing you a zoomable preview of the active layer. At the top of the window are all the type entry and manipulation tools you have come to expect in a rather good word processing program or a vector graphics type tool: tracking and kerning, leading, character size and width adjustment, and character styles from plain to bold and including Outline, Shadow, All Caps and Small Caps.

A pop-up box right of screen allows you to create, edit and apply customised Style settings to your type. There are the usual alignment options: Left, Right, centre and Full justification. Down the left side of the window is a colour pop-up with presets and access to the system colour picker, a switch to turn aliasing on or off, and the regular Photoshop Text, Move, Zoom and Eyedropper tools. Best of all is that every character is editable individually, obviating the need to jump into Illustrator or FreeHand if you want to do some serious type manipulation.

Last of all is that PhotoText allows you to save text for reuse and rediting, as a text file in its own format. So as you assemble a series of Web pages you can build a folder of PhotoText text files to enable you to edit and apply them at any time. This in itself is a major time and productivity enhancer.

Go download it now

At a price nobody can argue with, and a feature set that Adobe could and should have given us in the otherwise excellent Photoshop 5, nothing should be stopping you from hitting Extensis' Web site right now and grabbing a copy of the stand-alone PhotoText plug-in.
When you are there, consider downloading some of their other fine graphic tools:

PhotoTools
PhotoFrame
VectorTools
Intellihance Pro
Mask Pro
Portfolio
QX-Effects
QX-Tools
PageTools
PhotoAnimator

Take the time-limited demos for a spin, and when you fall in love with them, purchase is only a credit card transaction away. As for the PhotoText 2.0 stand-alone plug-in application, thank you for listening, Extensis.
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