

The Open-Source Illustrator

With the popularity of adobe tools and ever present .ai file, outside the Open-source community, we value the program that is a paid one. There is also a massive stigma around free programs, they are condemned as unprofessional or at least, less professional than if one was to claim to be an expert in the Adobe Suite. But why does an open source tool that can match the functions of an expensive tool, fall short for the attention of Designers?

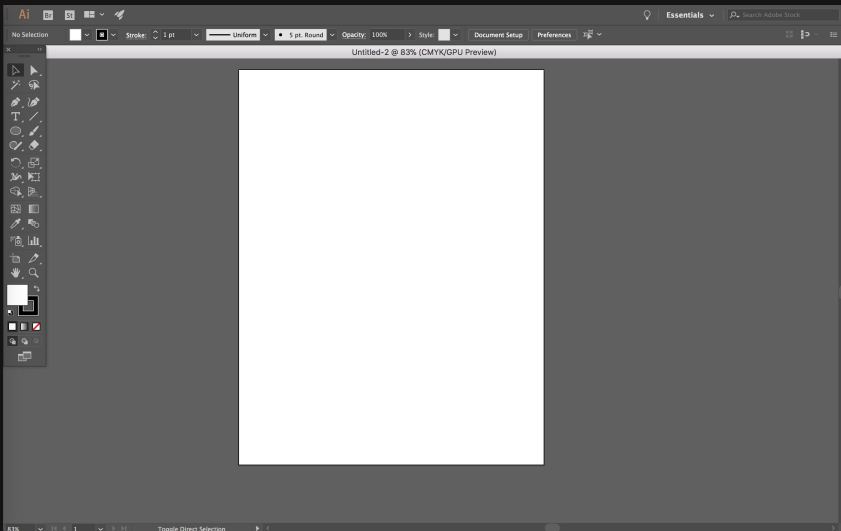
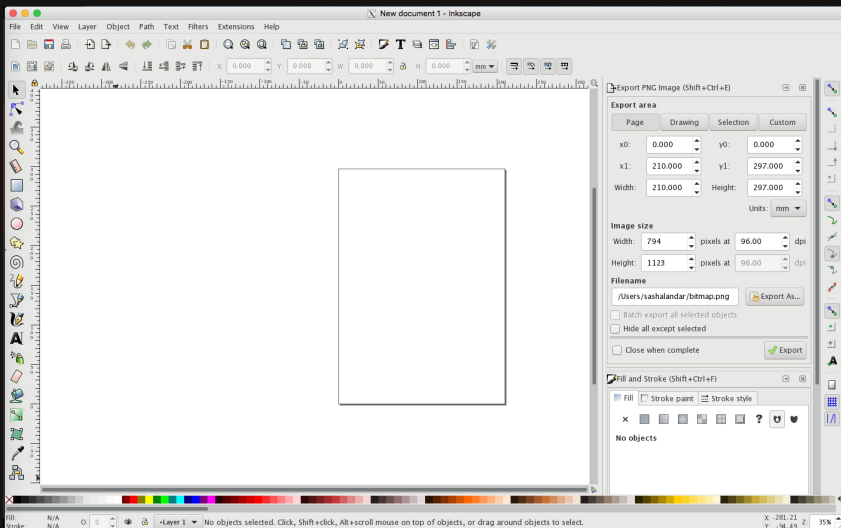
Personally, I dont understand why people training or working as Professional graphic designers do not learn to use some non-Adobe products. While many of us have familiarized ourselves with Open-Source softwares, most workplaces and schools do not utilize the free tools, or let alone teach them. Students and professionals alike would benefit if they become fluent in Inkscape, Gimp, Notepad, etc.

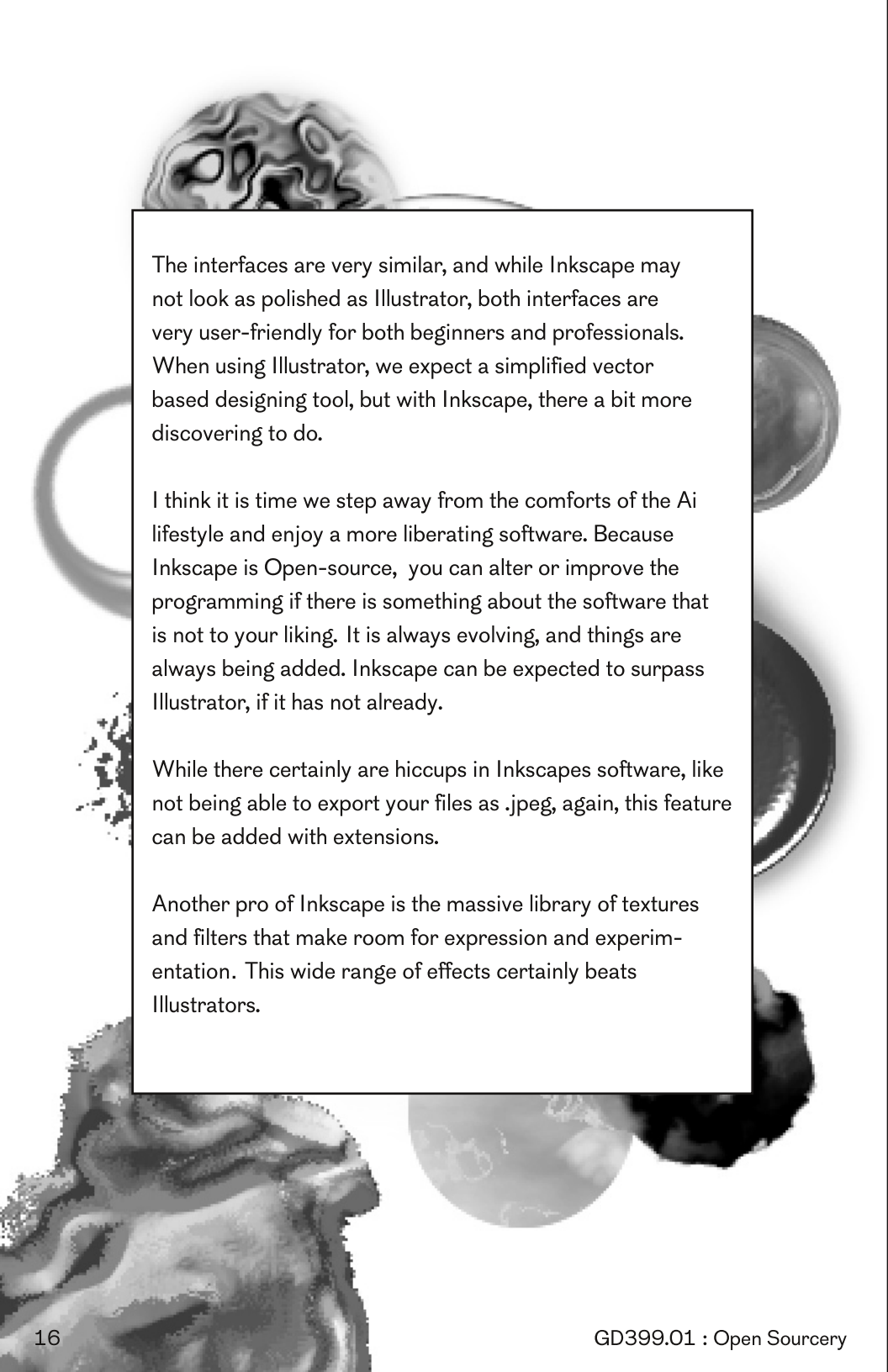
Not all professional work requires the use of Illustrator. For example, someone working freelance and is not required to share editable files could be just fine using Inkscape or many of the other SVG applications, as the result is the same.

While I do understand why agencies use a certain, single program to simplify and expedite the workflow among their in-house personnel. Illustrator being more feature rich would help in that decision as well. Also, there is the importance of using Illustrator when the client requests the source files from their projects. Although this just provides them with the ability to sidestep you when they decide to make changes to your work.

I guess I am just hostile to the suggestion that we have to use the same programs because the professionals say we should, especially when the final product will be delivered in .png,.svg, .pdf, .jpeg, etc. format anyhow. In reality, the request for source files is the only reason for why I have ever needed to work with Adobe products above other versions of raster or vector softwares.

There are obviously differences in keyboard shortcuts as well. Do not expect to command-z in Inkscape. Using the Control key in Inkscape vs the shift key in Illustrator to manipulate your shapes is one of many differences, but is not a disadvantage of any sort. It's all in the matter of how willing you are to learn new short cuts, or locate them on the tool dash, as Inkscape puts in the effort to lay all of the necessities out at hand.



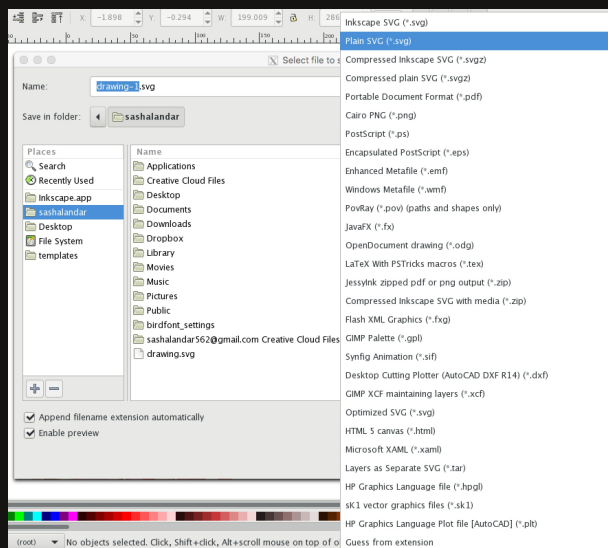
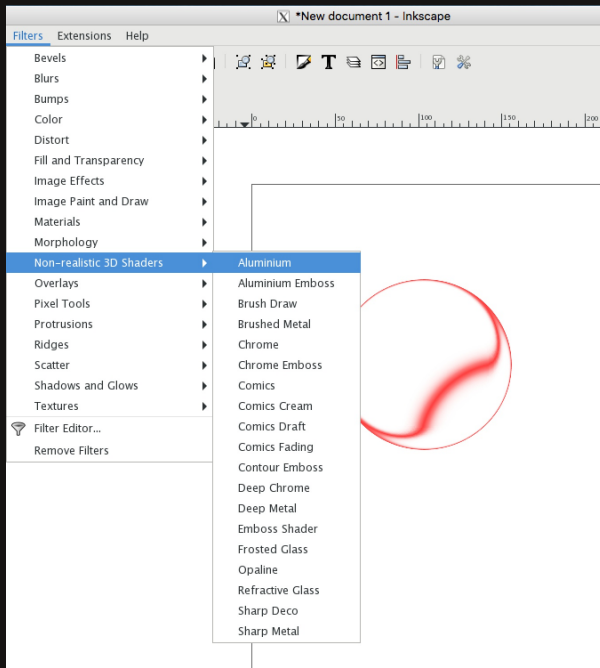


The interfaces are very similar, and while Inkscape may not look as polished as Illustrator, both interfaces are very user-friendly for both beginners and professionals. When using Illustrator, we expect a simplified vector based designing tool, but with Inkscape, there a bit more discovering to do.

I think it is time we step away from the comforts of the Ai lifestyle and enjoy a more liberating software. Because Inkscape is Open-source, you can alter or improve the programming if there is something about the software that is not to your liking. It is always evolving, and things are always being added. Inkscape can be expected to surpass Illustrator, if it has not already.

While there certainly are hiccups in Inksapes software, like not being able to export your files as .jpeg, again, this feature can be added with extensions.

Another pro of Inkscape is the massive library of textures and filters that make room for expression and experimentation. This wide range of effects certainly beats Illustrators.



Maybe it is time to throw off the shackles of the evil capitalist oppressors and use an Open-Source software.