

iPhone app

**iBomber 2****Price** £1.79 from the App Store**URL** [bit.ly/a7HHgX](http://bit.ly/a7HHgX)

**Verdict** Take to the skies with this highly addictive and good-looking arcade-style game that makes full use of the iPhone's accelerometer.

**Bomber 2 is the sequel to the successful iBomber** from developer Cobra Mobile.

Again, you're in the cockpit of a bomber sent on hazardous missions in a bid to wipe out specific enemy targets. There are 12 new missions to choose from, ranging from destroying enemy bunkers to sinking a super battleship, with each having a different set of objectives.

The game is viewed through the bombsights as you fly over enemy territory, and clicking on the red button releases your load. Meanwhile, the enemy will try to shoot you down with an array of military hardware. With the bombsight in the centre of the



◀ The game's missions range from destroying the launch site for the V-2 rocket to sinking the enemy's super battleship.



screen, you control your aircraft by tilting right and left. To increase your aircraft's speed, you tilt forwards while tilting back decreases it. The controls are easy to get to grips with and you can set the sensitivity to suit your needs.

You're armed with an unlimited supply of bombs, although you can pick up a variety of specialist weaponry with the help of power-ups. New for iBomber 2 are depth charges, torpedoes, artillery support, blanket bombs and fighter support in the form of two spitfires. A nice touch here is that you can now hold off using these until just the right moment.

The graphics are highly detailed and it's easy to lose a considerable amount of time as the gameplay draws you

in. If you liked iBomber, you'll see this as a must-have app. For those who might dither over the purchase, there's a lite version, so you can at least try before you buy this highly addictive game.

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**Canon 5D Mark II: Basic Controls****Price** £14.99 from the App Store**URL** [bit.ly/c08Vqt](http://bit.ly/c08Vqt)

**Verdict** There's a lot of video here on the Eos 5D Mark II, but the cost is too high considering that there's an app for the camera's advanced controls with the same price tag.

**T**he first thing you notice about Canon 5D Mark II: Basic Controls is the price. At £14.99, it's not an inexpensive purchase. The next thing you notice is that, at 214MB, it's not a quick download, either. This is due to the amount of video, as this isn't just a digitisation of the text manual for the Canon Eos 5D Mark II like the Handi 5Dmk2, but an app version of Blue Crane Digital's training DVD.

As such, it's a straight translation of the DVD edition, complete with reference to having your remote handy so you can pause the DVD player, and there's over 90 minutes of video. On starting, you have

just two choices: Play all or Select Chapter. The chapters are fairly short and are based around topics such as Aperture Value, ISO and White Balance. The explanations are succinct, but with just the right level of information, and it's handy to see the camera's controls being manipulated so you can do the same on your own. Nevertheless, the benefit of being able to view the video in the field to remind yourself of a certain control is a real boon.

Other apps look at different camera models, with the Canon Eos 7D, Nikon D90 and the D5000 already covered, as well as apps for those manufacturers' flashguns. Annoyingly, there's another app for the Eos 5D Mark II's advanced controls, which means that if you want detailed coverage of this camera's system, including flash, you would have to spend over £50.

If you're already an Eos 5D Mark II owner, you're unlikely to benefit from watching the

entire video from the beginning, which makes this app only of real interest to absolute novices of not just the Eos 5D Mark II but also of photography.

**Jon Lysons**



► Fortunately, the presenter isn't on screen for much of the video, with the real benefit being the ability to see the controls set on the camera, so you can do the same on yours.

## Filter effects

Mystical Tint  
Tone and Color 2

**Price** \$249 (about £150); upgrade \$129 (about £78)

**Contact** Auto FX Software + [autofx.com](http://autofx.com)

**Needs** Any version of Mac OS X + 1GB Ram + 75MB hard disk space + Photoshop 7 or later optional

**Pros** Wide selection of filters + Easy to use + Some very handy effects

**Cons** Ugly interface + Some effects produce over-the-top results

**Verdict** Easy-to-use and filter-packed Photoshop plug-in that also works as a standalone application.

**T**here's no disputing that Photoshop is a hugely creative application with the ability to manipulate an image in almost any way. Nevertheless, there's always room for improvement – hence the vast number of software firms creating plug-ins to enhance its already-powerful set of features. Auto FX Software is one such company and among its range of products is the Mystical Tint Tone and Color 2 suite of filters.

What makes Mystical stand out from most Photoshop plug-ins is it also operates as a standalone product, so you don't actually need Photoshop to use it. Moreover, at a mere 75MB download, Mystical isn't going to impact on your broadband usage, either. Installation is equally simple: you only have to negotiate a couple of dialogs to take you through the process. It's at this stage when you're given the choice of also installing the application as a Photoshop plug-in, and it's compatible with all versions from Photoshop 7 through to CS4. Once installed, Mystical is easy to find in Photoshop's menu bar under Auto FX Software > Filters. Clicking on this takes your photo outside of Photoshop.



▲ It may look rather spartan, but Mystical's interface is easy to get to grips with and has some useful effects.

First impressions of the application are somewhat unexciting, with grey being the dominant colour and the familiar Mac OS X menu bar being ditched in favour of a minimalist interface. However, the upside of this spartan interface is that it only takes a few moments to find your way around, with just a few buttons to click on. Clicking on Select Effect pops out a side menu to reveal Mystical's 60 filters, grouped into nine separate categories that range from Color and Tonal Effects to HDR Filters and Portrait.

'The upside of this spartan interface is that it only takes a few moments to find your way around. Clicking on Select Effect pops out a side menu to reveal Mystical's 60 filters'

Mystical is thankfully light on palettes, with just two open at most times – namely the Layers palette and the Brush palette. The effects on offer range from Smooth Skin and Enhance Eyes to Color Bleach and Black and White. Select one of these filters and it's immediately applied to the image, and with the name displayed in the Layer palette with its controls displayed to the left. You can then add a second and third filter to the image to

see their combined effect. You can also turn them on off and in the Layer palette to see which one or combination works best for your image, as well as reorder them to see how they affect your image. This is an excellent way to experiment with the effects. You can adjust the opacity of the filters with the Opacity slider, which determines how much of the original image's colour is shown through the filter – for example, an opacity of 75% allows 25% of its colour to show through.

Once you've found a filter or a set of filters that work for your image, it's time to selectively apply them, and this is where the controls come in to play. There are two key tools: Erase Effect and Brush On. The Erase Effect tool, a red brush with a minus sign, removes the effect from the original image; the Brush On tool, a green brush with a plus sign, selectively applies the effect to an area of the image. These are reasonably straightforward to use, but not particularly smooth in operation, although you can fine-tune them in the Brush palette.

If all this sounds a little like too much like hard work, you have the option of applying a predefined effect, called a Layer Preset, of which there are more than 300. Click on the Select Layer Preset button and a dialog opens with the presets grouped again into the nine filter categories. Each preset is represented by an image with the applied effect – just roll your mouse over it to see how it looked before, and then select one, click OK and it's applied to your image.

In our tests, we found Mystical very easy to operate. However, some of its filters worked better than others. Deepen Tones produced a very pleasing effect when applied to a portrait by adding a little bit of extra colour to the model's face, but some of the HDR effects produced results that, frankly, scared us. We found we achieved the best results by using the effects that applied a more subtle result.

On the whole, Mystical works well, but competent Photoshop users will already have the skills necessary to produce many of the effects it can generate. If you don't, though, Mystical is well worth a serious look, if only for the sheer range of effects it has to offer.

Jon Lyons



▲ As you can see from the before (left) and after (right) images above, it's easy to make dramatic changes.