

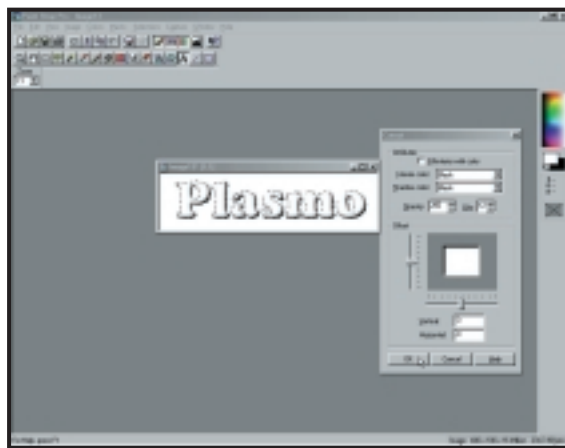


In full effect

Ken McMahon has some textual tricks to **set your words ablaze**, or put them up in neon lights...

Text effects have become ubiquitous. On the Internet you can't go far without bumping into type that's had anything from a neon glow to molten metal poured over it. It's easy to go over the top with text effects, but – as a glance at the cover of this or any other magazine and most adverts will confirm – even a humble drop shadow can give type a visual lift.

Both bitmap and vector packages now offer single-click text effects and there's a wealth of plug-ins to turn tame type into whacky wording. But, as you'll see, you can quickly produce stunning text effects using basic tools. Here I've included step-



Applying negative cutout to get the raised plastic effect

mode from the pulldown menu on the layers palette to colour dodge. Apply Gaussian blur, setting the pixel radius to around three.

Duplicate the blurred text layer and – making sure the preserve transparency box

slightly so it looks like the flames are rising out of the wording. Next, apply the ripple filter on medium with a value of around 200. Lastly, duplicate the red text/flame layer and change the colour to orange using Image, Adjust, Hue, Saturation (Ctrl & U), then offset the orange flame layer to get the best effect. Finally, add a levels-adjustment layer and gradually adjust the input-level slider until the background is completely black.

Photoshop: Neon text

Create a new document in the same way as for the fiery text. Then type in your chosen words using a suitable font – outline, rounded and script fonts work well for neon, I've used Mistral. Load the font outline as a selection, by control-clicking the type layer in the layers palette, then create a new channel called neon glow and stroke the selection with a two-point white path. Deselect (Ctrl & D) and apply Gaussian blur with a radius of around one to two pixels, although this depends on the font. Pull up the curves dialog (Ctrl & M) and adjust the curve to a sine wave shape.

In the layers palette, turn off the original type layer, create a new layer, load the selection from the neon glow channel and fill it with whatever colour you like.

Paint Shop Pro: Chrome text

To get that chrome lettering effect, create a new document 400 x 100 pixels. Choose

a white background and select 16.7 million colours as the image type. Make sure that antialias and floating are checked. Select the text tool and type your text in the dialog box using a suitable font – I've used Copperplate –

It's easy to go over the top, but even a humble drop shadow can give text a visual lift

by-step instructions for producing five simple yet quite striking text effects, three in Paint Shop Pro 4.15SE, which was on the PCW, December 1999 cover disc, and two in Photoshop 5.5. You can adapt them to produce variations on a theme and, if your editing package has scripting support, record them so that you can apply the same effect to other text in an instant.

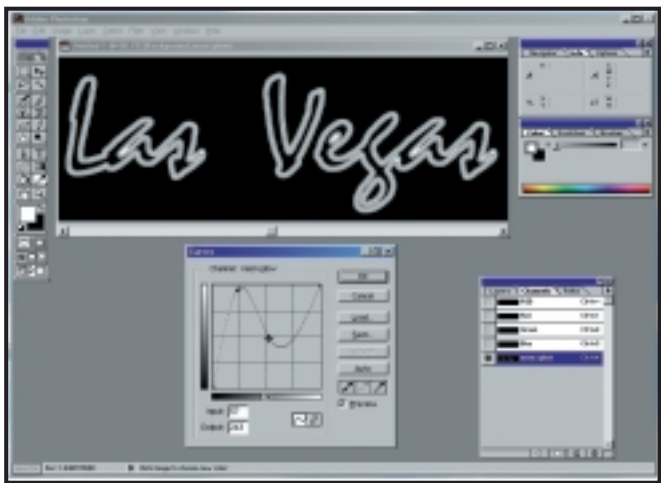
Photoshop: Fiery text

Make sure the background colour is set to black and create a new document 400 x 100 pixels, with contents background colour checked. Create a new layer and fill it with 75 per cent black. Using the text tool, type in your text using a suitably fiery font and set the colour to white. If necessary click the faux-bold check box to give the characters extra weight. Render the type by selecting Layer, Type, Render Layer and set the blend

is checked – fill it with red. Uncheck preserve transparency and apply the motion blur filter to the layer with an almost vertical angle and a value of around 40 pixels, then move the layer up



Keep a fire extinguisher handy for this one!



Adjusting the curve for that neon effect

3D plastic treatment. This document was created at a size of 900 x 900 pixels.

The bomb was first rotated by 330 degrees and the cutout settings were opacity 255, blur eight and

it will need to be around 36 points.

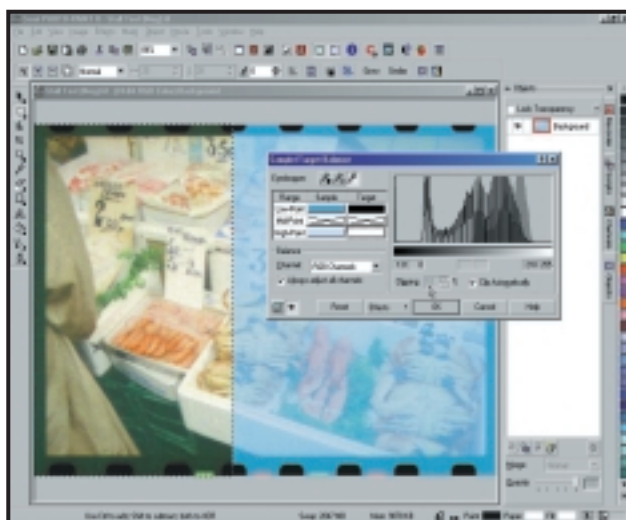
From the Image menu, select Special Effects, Hot Wax coating and apply it three times. Then press Ctrl & H and apply a feather of four pixels, before applying the Hot Wax coating twice more. Finally, from the Image menu, apply Normal Filters, Sharpen more two or three times. Bear in mind that the number of applications of the filters and the degree of feather you need will depend on the size and resolution of the file.

Paint Shop Pro: 3D text

To give words a 3D plastic look, first create a new document as for the chrome example and type in your text. Choose a heavy typeface with rounded edges – I've used Cooper black. From the Image menu choose Special Effects, Cutout. Uncheck 'fill with colour', set the opacity to 80, blur to 12 and the vertical and horizontal offset both to minus three, then click OK. Apply the emboss filter, from the Image, Special Filters menu and add colour using the colourise dialog box (quick key: Shift & L). Finally, select Special Effects, Drop Shadow – colour black, opacity 125, blur 25, with vertical and horizontal offsets both at four.

Icons from symbol fonts

By applying effects to characters in symbol fonts you can quickly create striking icons to populate web pages or printed publications. The bomb icon (see above) is the uppercase M character from the webdings font that has been given the



Eliminating the negative blues in PhotoPaint 8

both offsets at minus five. Incidentally, once you've created the type selection, you can save it under Selections, Save. You can then reload it if you accidentally deselect it, or you can change the settings – such as choosing a different colour. Also, if you want to create type for both print and web use, you can produce it at a high resolution and then sample it down.



Orange filters

I get a lot of queries about scanning techniques, but Tony Almond wrote in with a particularly interesting one:

'As you know, colour negatives have an orange-coloured filter in them (why, I am unsure). I scan these on an HP flatbed scanner, using a slide adaptor and I've tried dealing with the image using several packages (currently PhotoPaint 8).

'I cannot successfully convert the

image into a properly-coloured picture. Because of the orange filter in the film, reversing the colours gives everything a blue tint that I can't readily remove!'

Tony can't find the answer online or in any of the manuals he has consulted. He's especially interested in getting better results with the CanoScan FS2710.

The orange mask is actually there to prevent fading of the dyes in the negative from exposure to light. As Tony has discovered, inverting the colours inverts the mask as well and you get a blue cast. There are a variety of scanners which can correct for the mask during the scanning process, including Linotype's professional flatbed range, The Nikon Supercoolscan

2000, the Agfa DualScan T2000XL and the CanoScan FS2710. Even my humble Umax Astra 1220S, which uses VistaScan v2.4.3, has a negative option.

If your scanner doesn't have this option all is not lost. You can get good results by resetting the black and white point in the inverted image. Scan the negative as you would a transparency then, in PhotoPaint 8 select Image, Transform, Invert. Next select Image, Adjust, Sample, Target Balance. Using the black eyedropper, click in the

rebase area of the negative, or on any point of the image you know should be black. Use the white eyedropper to select the white point in a similar fashion. Click on the Low Point Target swatch and click the more button in the Select Colour dialog. Enter values of zero in each of the R, G and B boxes. Do the same for the High Point Target swatch, this time with values of 255 for each of the RGB components.

It's much simpler in Photoshop. Just press Ctrl & M and click on the relevant shadow and highlight area using the appropriate eyedropper.

CONTACTS

Ken McMahon welcomes your feedback on the Graphics & DTP column. Contact him via the PCW editorial office, or email: graphics@pcw.co.uk