

Actions

The Actions palette first appeared in Photoshop 5. When you create an Action, Photoshop starts to record what you do to your image, so you can apply those same steps to other images.

The Actions palette will only record things that have the potential of changing the look of your file. If you'd like to include other commands, such as zoom in, or hide rulers, then choose Add Menu Item from the side menu of the Actions palette, and choose the command you'd like to record from any of Photoshop's menus.

After creating an action, you can Command-double click (Macintosh), or Ctrl-double-click (Windows) on one of the steps in an action to apply just that step.

To decipher what a particular action is doing (they usually go so fast, and don't update the screen), choose Playback Options from the side menu of the Actions palette and then choose Step by Step before playing the action.

Or, if you want to really pick apart an action, click on one of the folders in your actions list, hold the Option and Command keys (Macintosh), or Alt and Ctrl keys (Windows) and then choose Save Actions from the side menu of the palette. That will allow you to save all the sets of your actions as a text file that you can later open in any word processor.

Droplets

Photoshop 6.0 has taken Actions to the next level by introducing Droplets, which automate your processes even further. Note that Droplets are not appropriate for effects which are applied to only a portion of your image, such as feathered edges. Because of the advanced automation of Droplets, whatever action is performed will be applied to the entire image. This is why they are especially good for saving image.

To create Photoshop Droplets:

1. First, follow the directions for creating an Action. All Droplets must be based on Actions.
2. Next, go to File > Automate > Create Droplet.
3. Choose the location to which you want to save your Droplet. It is very convenient to save them on your desktop, so they are readily available.
4. Under Play, select the set in which the Action you will be using is located. Then, select the Action.
5. The Destination section gives you the opportunity to pre-select where you would like to save your finished image. To specify a folder, select "Folder" under Destination, and then click the Choose button to navigate to the proper folder.
6. Once you have finished your selections, click on OK. Your Droplet will be saved.

To use a Droplet, simply drag your image file over the Droplet. Photoshop will automatically open, and the Action will be performed.

You can also drag multiple images, or entire folders of images, over the Droplet and the images will open one by one and the Action will be performed