

How to make PNG icons using ImageFX 4.5

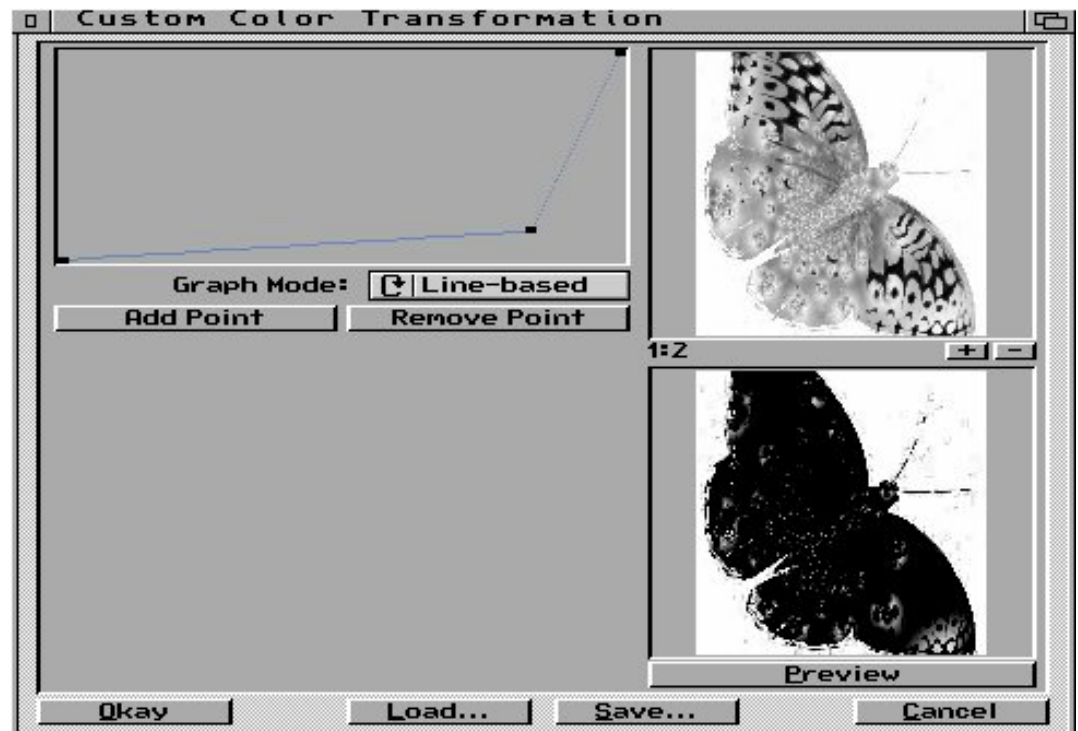
Load any image and decide which part will be solid or opaque, and which part transparent. The area that will be transparent will be Black in the alpha channel and anything White will be opaque.

you can use ImageFX's **Alpha menu -> Copy To Alpha**. And this will make a grey version of your picture. Go to the alpha buffer by clicking in the Alpha Menu: **Alpha -> Swap**. See, as you can see from the butterfly picture, it's all grey! However, unless you want your icon to be semitransparent - something that could work for certain images - you'll have to do a bit more work on the alpha channel.



While still in the alpha buffer selected, bring up the **Color -> Custom** window and using line-based curve, Pull down the middle point so the inside of the object is as dark as possible, while keeping the other part as white as possible. What this does is take the mid tones and pull them down to darken them. Be careful about what happens with the edges. You don't want to get them too soft and wonky. You can always go back and fix the edge details by hand.

If you want to learn more about color curves, take a look at my [article](#), "Everything you ever wanted to know about Color Curves"



Now, you'll have to go in by hand and picking the **freehand fill-in tool** with either white or black as your color go in and fix all the parts that are not black or white enough. When done don't forget to apply Color -> Negative so the correct parts are transparent (black).



Now, I'm lazy and instead of using the **Alpha -> Copy to Swap** I use the LumiEssence hook to make my alpha channel. You can only use this hook with ImageFX 4.5 and it can be downloaded from the ImageFX mailing list site. Go join at:

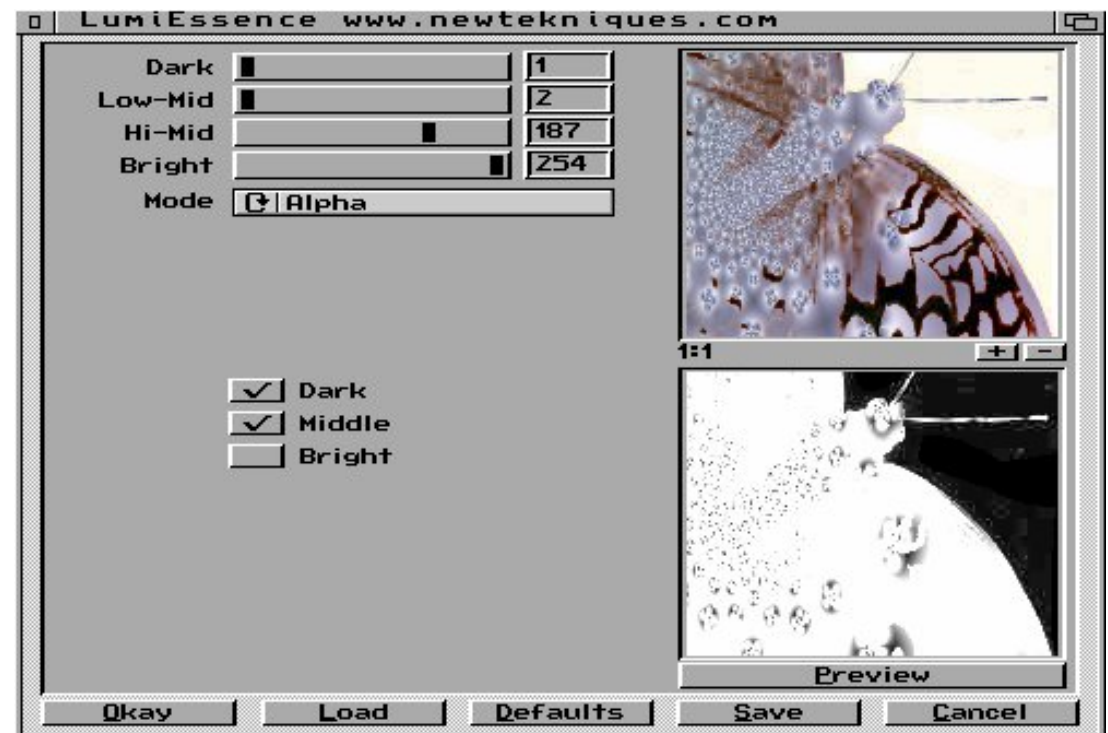
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/imagefx/join>

Once you've joined go

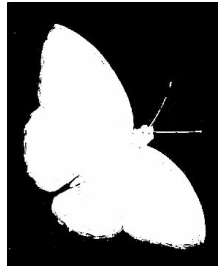
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/imagefx/files/hooks/LumiEssence>

in the files area and download the hook. Copy it to the hooks directory. And make sure the protection bits are Read, Write. Sometimes these things get wonky when they get copied to and from different systems.

Using this hook is very easy. Make sure the mode is "alpha" because that is what you want it to create. And you don't need to create an alpha channel before starting the hook. It will just make one in the process. **"Dark, Middle, Bright"** are the values it works on and it's best if no more than two of these are clicked. Then move the top sliders around until you get what you want - in this case the butterfly should be as light as possible and the rest should be as dark as possible. Once done you can Save your settings and click Okay. Then whatever little bits need to be painted by hand, do that as described above then (if necessary) use the Negative effect to make sure the background is black (transparent).



This is an extraordinary hook. Use it well! Check out my article: <http://www.novadesign.com/Newsletters/IFXC/IFX3.1.html> which explains how to use this hook with text and getting fabulous text effects! It's is fast and clean. I love this hook. It rulz!



Nice and clean alpha channel

Whatever you use, once your alpha channel is what you want, scale the image to a good size. 100 width is a large icon. they usually are half that size, but I have made icons that big. Just can't help myself.

Save as PNG and when the saver comes up click the **Save Alpha Channel**. The others are options, altho I don't know what an interlaced icon looks like.

After it's been saved you can now copy it and rename it "xxx.info". I like to keep a PNG copy of the file to mess with if needed later. IFX won't "let" you load a file called "something.info". I mean, you'd probably have to force it. As I'm lazy, I'd rather just have a copy handy. It's easier than renaming the file everytime you need to load it back in ImageFX.

