

Using Masks: The Basics

Much like a mask you may have worn trick or treating in your youth, the purpose of a mask is to hide or disguise parts of an image. When using PSP, you can apply a mask directly on the image you choose or on a different layer or layers to add unique effects to your project.



A mask can add a unique frame to an image, blend or fade your image into your chosen background or another image and in some cases, add a hint of texture.

If you are new to PSP in general, this page will help explain how masks work.

PSP version and tools used

I've only used versions 5-7 of PSP, so I can't attest to earlier versions of the program.

This screen shot illustrates where you will find the masks menu in

PSP7. Versions 5 and 6 should look similar.

For now, we are going to skip the menu items.



So, how do masks work?

A mask simply is a grayscale image that when applied to a 16 million color image creates different degrees of transparency. The sections of a mask that are pure black (HTML code #000000) will hide those portions of the image. Sections that are pure white (HTML code #FFFFFF) will preserve the full color of the image. The varying shades of gray in between will create a faded effect.

Tips for Using Masks in Paint Shop Pro

1. First make certain that your image is already set at 16 million colors. Go to colors, increase color depth, 16 million colors. If everything is grayed out, then your image is already set at 16 million colors.
2. It doesn't matter if your image is the background layer or if you have promoted it to a layer, but I usually promote my image to a layer anyway.
3. A mask will adjust itself to the same size of the image you are working on and depending on what the dimensions of the mask are compared to the image you are editing, your mask could end up looking distorted. Try to use landscape (width is greater than height) masks on landscape images and portrait (height is greater than width) masks on portrait images.
4. You can use the PSP browser to browse your acquired masks. That way if you have several masks that are named photoedge1, photoedge2, mark_1, mark_2, etc, you'll have an idea of what the mask looks like before you use it. You will find the typical masks folder under program files/Jasc Software Inc/Paint Shop Pro 7/Masks, if you are using PSP7. If you are still using an earlier version, you may not find the Jasc Software Inc folder in your program files. You should see a folder labeled Paint Shop Pro with the version# you do have.

More to come!

This tutorial originally located at
http://www.geocities.com/pixel_tickler/mask_basics.htm

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