

Paint Shop Pro 7 -- 10th Anniversary Edition

Product Review by Alan Baker

- **Product Information**

Name: Paint Shop Pro 7 -- 10th Anniversary Edition

Manufacturer: Jasc Software, Inc. -- Eden Prairie, MN -- (952) 930-9800

Cost: Jasc: \$109 in box; \$99 downloaded CDW: \$92.11 **Egghead:** \$99.99
(upgrade rebates are available at each source)

What is Paint Shop Pro? Jasc® Paint Shop Pro™ 7 contains many tools that you need for creating, editing, and retouching your images. For many years now, this software appears to be the one of choice for web developers and those who need a step-up from a basic photo editing software, such as those that come bundled with scanners and digital cameras (ie, Adobe *Photo Deluxe* and Microsoft *Picture it!*). At first glance, this package seems to be much the same as those packages. However, when you start actually using it, you will find that there are many more standard effects and tools for the more serious image editor. To get the full value of this software, I think that you need to be a serious user, although the basic functions are strong and easy to use.

- **Requirements**

Component	Minimum	Recommended
Processor	Pentium or equivalent	300Mhz Pentium or better
Operating System	Windows 95/98/NT4/2000/ME	
Hard Drive	75MB	
System Memory	32MB	128MB
Drives:	CD-ROM	
Monitor/Display:	256-colors and 800x600 resolution	32-bit and 1024 x 768 resolution
Pointing Device:	Mouse or tablet	

- **Installation**

The installation utilizes the common InstalShield™ tool and it went smoothly, as did the “uninstallation” process. Like many software packages, the user can select a ‘custom’ installation, and pick the parts of the product to be installed. I chose the ‘typical’ installation and the default installation options. I chose to have the installation process place icons on my desktop and then used those to launch the Paint Shop application and to access the included Product Tour.

- **Features**

The Anniversary Edition was reviewed, which includes:

- Paint Shop Pro V 7.0
- JASC Animation Shop
- JASC Media Center Plus
- Add-in and plug-in special effects filters and transitions (from developers Alien Skin, Flaming Pear and Virtual Painter)
- Tutorials (in PDF file)

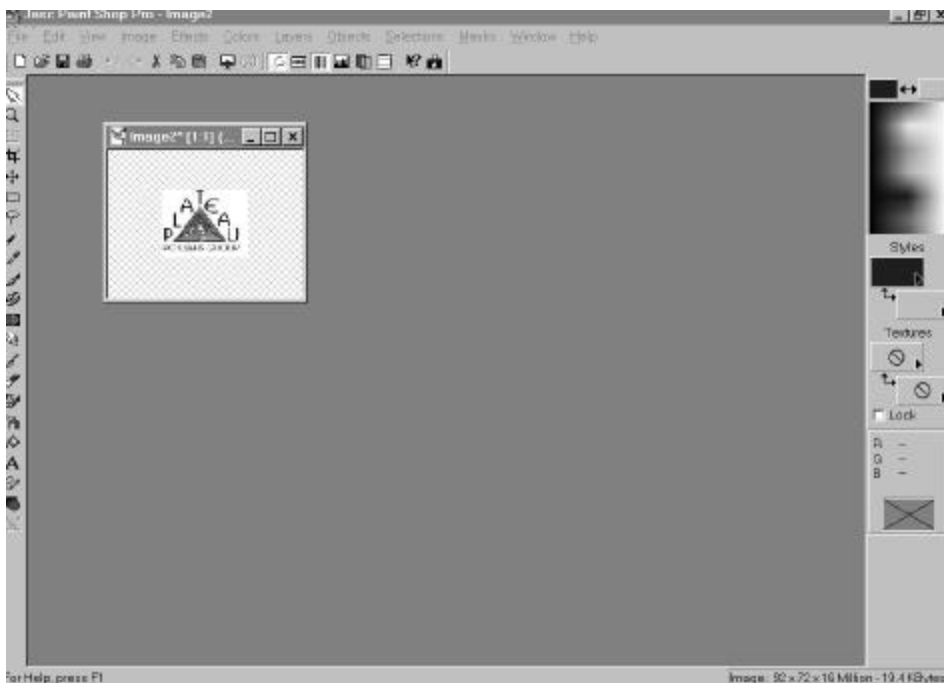
The “What’s New” information indicates that this version change is not just a minor change, and many new and valuable features were added.

➤ **Paint Shop:** The main application does a ton of things. Fortunately, the folks at JASC have included a Getting Started Manual that is organized not by the software function (ie, Edit, File, View, Image Effects, etc) but by user-oriented functions. This manual's Table of Contents main topics, shown below, should give you a good idea of the kinds of things you can do with this software (the remarks in parentheses are mine):

- **Enhancing and Printing Photographs** (eg. Rotate, Crop, color correction, red eye removal, scratch removal, drawing on a photo)
- **Stitching Photographs** (making a panorama from several adjacent photos)
- **Making a Photo Collage** (or how to make a picture of your pet dog with the head of Aunt Amy)
- **Correcting a Dark Photo** (color, contrast, saturation)
- **Selecting and Applying Effects to Images** (textures, picture frames, weird and artsy looks)
- **Creating and Using Picture Tubes** (allows a set of raster or vector images to become a single image which then can be easily used to modify other images)
- **Using Adjustment Layers** (a micro approach to enhancing a photo)
- **Using Vector Objects and Text** (creating graphic images for the Web or making your own font set)
- **Creating Screen Captures:** (copying all or parts of your PC screen and saving that as an image – I used it to get the window image shown below)
- **Slicing and Mapping Images for the Web:** (making a navigation bar for a Web page)

There is also support for direct connection to many different makes/models of digital cameras, which will speed up the process of getting those files into Paint Shop Pro.

All of this work is done using the same interface; an example of the main screen is below:



➤ **Animation Shop** is an additional piece of software that is closely integrated with Paint Shop Pro which allows you to create a single image file that contain many “frames” like a movie film. When the image file is loaded (for example, viewed on a

web page) the frames are played-back like a miniature animated cartoon. It comes with several “effects” (i.e., Rotate, Fade to gray, zoom in / out) that are easy to apply and the effects of which can be previewed. The preview is very valuable and it allows the user to do “trial runs” without first having to take the time to process the animation file itself. I loved playing with this tool and only wished for more effects. My favorite was creating a morph from one picture to the other (for example a caterpillar to a butterfly). Besides the effects themselves, there are controls for the length of the “movie” and the time between images. The result of a saved animation is an “animated gif” file that can be used like any other image file.

- **JASC Media Center** is a management and publishing program for media files. You use Media Center Plus to organize your media files so that they are easier to find and use. One advanced feature is the ability to create a “photo album” and publish it in html code for the web. The general concept involves these elements:
 - An **album** is a collection of thumbnails.
 - A **thumbnail** is a small graphical representation of a media file.
 - A **media file** is an image, sound, or animation file.
- **Tutorial** this .pdf file is a great freebie and covers some advanced topics. The first chapter is “Advanced Color Theory”, for example.
- **Documentation** The software comes with:
 - Readme.doc file
 - Getting Started Guide (146 pages)
 - Bonus Pack Highlights
 - Reference Guide (502 pages)
 - HTML Help files for Paint Shop Pro, JASC Animation Shop and Media Center
 - Context help from the Help Menu
 - Tutorial with 10 lessons
- **Product Support** is primarily provided via their support web page at <http://www.jasc.com/support2.asp> where there is a good knowledge base.

They can also be reached via phone at: (952) 930-9171 -- Monday - Friday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm (US Central).

- **Other Information of Interest** I found that Paint Shop Pro has a significant Internet culture, evidenced by many available tutorial tips, add-ins and plug-in sites. I checked a few of them and found them helpful. Also, there are many books available for users of all levels of this product at the on-line bookstores. It is nice to use a software application that is used by lots of others who actively support their fellow users.