Illustrator CC: What's New?

noble desktop

CC 2017 (Illustrator 21) Released November 2015

Redesigned File > New Dialog

- **File > New** has been completely redesigned. It's no longer a traditional dialog with menus, instead using tabs for different types of documents and thumbnails for the various presets.
- A main new feature of this dialog is the ability to browse and download pre-made templates.
- We find this dialog to be very slow. Adobe is aware and hopefully it will be improved in a future release.

Updated Interface

- The interface and icons have been updated.

Zoom to Selection

- When using the Zoom tool or keystrokes, Illustrator now zooms towards the selected art.

New Type Objects are Filled with Placeholder Text

- When you create a new type object it will initially be filled with lorem ipsum. The placeholder text will be selected, so you can type the desired text without even having to hit delete.

Live Font Preview

- Select one or more type objects and open the font list in the **Control** panel and **Character** panel. As you hover over the font names you'll see the selected type objects preview the fonts in real time!

Finding the Right Font

- At the top left of the font list of the **Control** panel and **Character** panel, you can filter fonts by Serif, Sans Serif, Script, etc.
- At the top of the font list of the **Control** panel and **Character** panel you can find fonts that are visually similar to the selected font by clicking the **Apply Similar Filter** button ≈ .

Pop-Up Alternative Glyphs

- After selecting a character, you may see an underline below it. Mouse over the character to see alternate glyphs (which you can click on to choose).

Improved Pixel Snapping (Pixel-Perfect Art)

- A new **Object > Make Pixel Perfect** option will snap your selection to the pixel grid.
- At the top right of the Options bar (at the top of the screen) there is a new toggle button for **Align art to pixel grid on creation and transformation** . Click the arrow to its right for more advanced options.

Hidden Character Keystrokes

- There are now keystrokes for en space, em space, thin space, superscripts, subscripts, discretionary hyphen, and non-breaking space. You can find them in **Type > Insert Special Character** or **Type > Insert WhiteSpace Character**.

CC 2015.3 (Illustrator 20) Released June 2016

New Web Export

• **Export for Screens** dialog: (**File > Export > Export for Screens**) lets you export artboards or artwork with various options.

• **Asset Export** panel: (**Window > Asset Export**) lets you collect assets for easier export.

• **Save for Web** has been moved into **File > Export**. It has been marked as Legacy because the new export methods are where Adobe will focus their attention and new features from now on.

Live Shapes Enhancements

• Polygons retain their Live Shape properties after being modified (scaled, sheared, reshaped, etc.).

• Look in the **Transform** panel for Live Shape properties.

• If a polygon has been modified (such as stretching a triangle), a new **Make Sides Equal** button will appear in the **Transform** panel.

CC 2015.2 (Illustrator 19.2) Released November 2015

New Live Shapes

• Shapes (such as polygons) are now live, so you can interactively change how many sides they have, how round their corners are, etc. Most shape tools have been updated to make editing shapes easier!

New Shaper Tool

• Use gestures to create simple shapes such a circles, polygons, lines, etc.

• Scribble on top of overlapping areas to merge them into a single shape. (Start outside the shape to remove that section from the overall shape.)

• You can select and adjust shapes while using the **Shaper** tool, so you don't have to change tools as often.

Dynamic Symbols

• You can now modify the appearance (stroke, fill, opacity, etc.) of individual symbol instances (use the **Direct Selection** tool). This lets you have a master symbol that controls the overall appearance, but you make various instances look different. You can also scale, rotate, mirror, and skew instances of a symbol.

SVG Improvements

• New SVG Export: In addition to **File > Save As,** there's a new way to create SVG via **File > Export.** You can also choose **File > Export Selection.**

• The new export writes cleaner SVG code for smaller files.

Miscellaneous

• Smart guides now indicate when you are drawing a perfect shape (such as a square or circle) without having to use a keystroke.

• The Creative Cloud Charts (Preview) has ended. It is no longer part of Illustrator.

noble desktop

CC 2015 (Illustrator 19) Released June 2015

Miscellaneous

- **10x greater zoom magnification:** The max is now 64,000% (was 6,400%).
- **10x faster zooming & scrolling:** Illustrator now uses supports graphics cards (GPU) for faster performance (and animated zoom).
- **GPU vs. CPU Preview:** When switching between Outline and Preview modes, you can now use the CPU or GPU to create the preview. The GPU should be faster, but it may look different. If you have any display issues, switch to the CPU preview (in the **View** menu).
- **Auto-File Recovery:** If you crash, relaunch Illustrator and your work can be restored. By default it saves recovery data every **2 minutes,** but you can change that in **Preferences > File Handing & Clipboard.**

Creative Cloud Charts (Preview)

- The charting feature in Illustrator has not seen any changes in a long time, but now there is a preview (beta version) of the new feature called **CC Charts.** It's just a preview of what Adobe's working on, so it's not complete and may change in future versions.
- Using CC Charts is different than other Illustrator features you're used to, because some work is done in Illustrator, and the rest in a web browser. Data is input in the web browser, and design is done in Illustrator.
- Creative Cloud File Sync must be enabled for CC Charts to work. If it's not, you won't be able to edit a chart (the progress icon will go around, but nothing will happen). That's because the chart asset is added to your CC Library. Check the sync status at the bottom of the **Libraries** panel (mouse over or click the Creative Cloud button).

Adobe Stock

- Adobe is now selling stock photos and illustrations (they purchased Fotolia). Images can be purchased individually or via subscription plans. Choose **File > Search Adobe Stock** to go to **stock.adobe.com**

CC 2014.1 (Illustrator 18.1) Released October 2014

Color

- **Adobe Color CC:** Formerly called Kuler, **Adobe Color** is a cloud-connected service used to mix and share color themes. Found in **Window > Color Themes.**

Automatic Sizing Area-type

- Never see overset text again! Area-type frames have a new handle on the bottom (in the middle). Double-click that handle and the text frame will automatically adjust its height based on the text inside. Add or remove text and the text frame will automatically adjust!

New Tools

- **Join Tool:** Drag over the intersection of lines and Illustrator will join and clean them up. If needed it will shorten or extend lines as needed to create a better join.

Illustrator CC: What's New?

- **Curvature Tool:**
  - This tool lets you draw curves without having to understand the way the Pen tool's bezier curves work.
  - With a line selected, use the **Curvature tool** to drag the line and change the curve.
  - Double–click a point to change it between a curved and straight corner.

Creative Cloud Libraries

- Creative Cloud Libraries let you store colors, brushes, text styles, graphics, and vector images in a single place that is available across multiple Adobe apps (such as Photoshop and Illustrator). You'll find it in **Window > Libraries.**

- Want to share a library with coworkers? At the top right the **Libaries** panel, go into the panel menu and choose **Collaborate.**

CC 2014 (Illustrator 18) Released June 2014

Better Rounded Rectangles: "Live Shapes"

- Rounded rectangle corners now properly maintain their roundness! They no longer become distorted when resizing the rectangle. You can also numerically set the corner radius in the **Transform** panel.

- When drawing a rectangle (rounded or not) the **Transform** panel will open so you can set options such as size and the new corner radius options (size, corner type, etc.).

  You may not want the **Transform** panel to automatically open every time you create a rectangle. To disable this behavior, at the top right of the **Transform** panel, go into the panel menu and uncheck **Show on Rectangle Creation.**

Pen Tool & Anchor Points

- **Pen Tool Preview:** A new preview lets you see the path before you make the next point. This works like the same option found in Photoshop. You can turn this on or off in the **Preferences** dialog's **Selection & Anchor Display** section. At the bottom, you'll see the option for **Enable Rubber Band for Pen Tool.**

- **Unequal Anchor Points:** While drawing a curve, hold **Command** (Mac) or **Control** (Windows) as you drag to keep the handles paired, but unequal in length.

- **Re-Pair Anchor Points:** Corner points have two handles that are not paired. Moving one side does not affect the other. In previous versions of Illustrator, when you changed a corner point back into a smooth point (so the handles are paired again), the shape of the original curve was changed. In CC 2014, when using the **Anchor Point** tool , hold **Option** (Mac) or **Alt** (Windows) and click on one of the handles to make the anchor point smooth again (the handles become paired). The handle you click on will move, but the other handle will remain unchanged. This helps maintain the original curve's shape.

- **Path Segment Reshape Update:** Not everyone liked the new Path Segment Reshape behavior that was introduced in the January 2014 release. To revert to the earlier behavior, go into the **Preferences** dialog's **Selection & Anchor Display** section and check on **Constrain Path Dragging on Segment Reshape.**

Miscellaneous

• **Welcome Screen:** A new welcome screen appears when no files are open. To disable this screen, switch from the **Create** tab to one of the other tabs **(New Features, Getting Started,** or **Tips & Techniques).** Scroll to the bottom right and check on **Don't Show Welcome Screen Again.** (It can later be found in **Help > Welcome.**)

• **Changes to Snap to Pixel, Point, Grid:** Anchor handles no longer snap to a grid or a point. Adobe says this offers finer control while editing paths. For example, you may want points and objects to snap to a pixel grid, but not the anchor handles.

  This new behavior applies to snap to document grid or snap to point, not just the pixel grid. While we agree that anchor handles snapping to the pixel grid was sometimes problematic, it's sometimes nice to have the option of snapping anchor points to a grid. We have not found any preference or control over this, so it seems that anchor points can no longer snap to a grid. They do still snap to guides though.

Improved Typekit Integration

• When opening a file that is missing fonts, Illustrator will look on Typekit to see if it's available and offer to activate (sync) it for you.
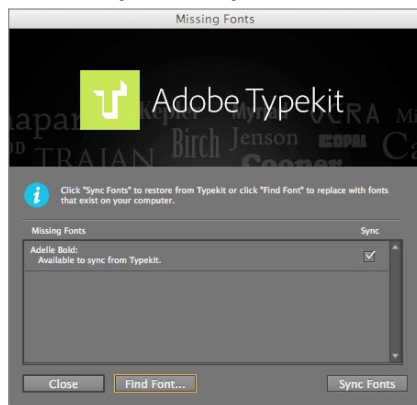
CC 2014 (Illustrator 17.1) Released January 2014

Live Corners

• We're excited to finally see this feature in Illustrator, and done with such flexibility!

• Easily change the shape of corners. Change all the corners or specific ones. You can make them rounded, inverted round, or chamfer (as shown below).
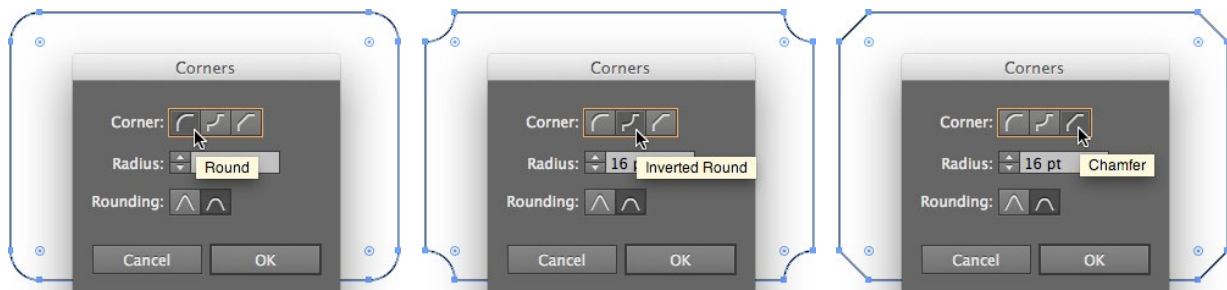
• Live corners work on any shape, not just rectangles. You can even change multiple objects at once!

- The **Rounded Rectangle** tool now uses live corners, so you can edit the corner radius any time.
- Here are a few ways to edit the live corners:
  - Select your object(s) with the **Selection** tool , then switch to the **Direct Selection** tool ( ). You should see the Live Corners widgets (which look like dots) in the corners. Drag any widget to edit the size of the corner radius. This also works if you select specific points with the **Direct Selection** tool ( ).
  - Double-click a Live Corners widget to numerically edit the settings (as shown above).
  - Select your object(s) with the **Selection** tool , then switch to the **Direct Selection** tool . In the Control panel at the top of the screen edit the **Corners** amount. This also works if you select specific points with the **Direct Selection** tool .
  - **Option–click** (Mac) or **Alt–click** (Windows) on a Live Corners widget to cycle through the three corner styles.
  - While dragging a Live Corners widget, press the **Up** or **Down Arrow** keys to cycle through the corner styles.
- As you drag the Live Corners widget, the corner will become red when you have reached the maximum size.
- You can hide the Live Corners widget with **View > Hide Corner Widget.**

Improved Pencil Tool

- The **Pencil** tool has been reworked and can now create simple, smooth curves that don't have a lot of anchor points. It also works more intuitively, allowing you to continue and end paths easily without having to hold keystrokes.
- Double-click the **Pencil** tool to see its options. Drag the **Fidelity** slider to the far **right (Smooth)** to get the simplest curves with the fewest anchor points. Draw with the **Pencil** tool and when you release, the line will become smoother, simpler, and have fewer points than previous versions of Illustrator.
- The **Pencil** tool can now continue a path more easily. Mouse over the end of the path. You'll see the continue-path cursor and can start drawing a new segment of the path.
- To draw straight lines constrained to 45° or 90° angles, hold **Shift** and then draw a segment. You'll see the straight-segment cursor while doing so.
- To draw straight lines that are not constrained, hold **Option** (Mac) or **Alt** (Windows) and then draw a segment. NOTE: This means the **Smooth** tool is no longer available by holding **Option** (Mac) or **Alt** (Windows) while using the Pencil tool.
- To merge two paths, select them both. Using the **Pencil** tool , draw from the end of one path to the end of another. When you see the path-merge cursor you can release the mouse.

Path Segment Reshaping

- The **Convert Anchor Point** tool is now simply called the **Anchor Point** tool and has gained a new ability to easily shape curved and straight lines.
- To change a straight line into a curved line, use the **Anchor Point** tool and drag the middle of a straight line segment. (Drag anywhere in the line segment except on an anchor point.)
- You can also use the **Anchor Point** tool to edit a curved segment. (Hold **Shift** to keep the curve symmetrical.)

Illustrator CC: What's New?

Change The View of Perspective Drawings

• When the Perspective Grid was first introduced we were surprised to discover that changing the Perspective Grid had no effect on attached artwork. Luckily that has been fixed. Artwork can now be adjusted when you alter the horizon line and vanishing points. (This is available for two- or three-point Perspective Grids only.)

• To change the grid and have the artwork change with it:

  – Add artwork to a Perspective Grid.

  – Select the **Perspective Grid** tool to make sure the grid is visible.

  – Lock the Station Point on the Perspective Grid **(View > Perspective Grid > Lock Station Point).**

  – Change a vanishing point or horizon line and the art will change along with it.

Typekit Integration

• In the font menu you can choose to show only the Typekit fonts. There's also a button to **Add Fonts from Typekit** for easy access (it takes you to typekit.com).
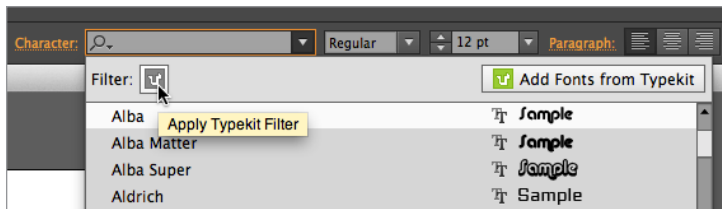
Miscellaneous

• When resizing Artboards, you can now resize from the center point by holding **Option** (Mac) or **Alt** (Windows)**.** Hold **Option–Shift** (Mac) or **Alt–Shift** (Windows) to resize proportionally from the center.

• The **Swatches** panel has new icons to switch between **Fill** and **Stroke.**

• The **Swatches** panel has new buttons to easily switch between **List** and **Thumbnail** views.

• The **Transparency** panel now has a slider instead of a list of numerical values.

• The **Layers** panel now remembers which layers are open or closed, even after closing and reopening files.

• **File > Place** now has a default keystroke: **Cmd–Shift–P** (Mac) or **Ctrl–Shift–P** (Windows)**.**

• When saving SVG files there is a new **Responsive** option (if you don't see it click **More Options**). Check this to remove the absolute width/height so the artwork will scale proportionally.

• You can create custom Tool panels in **Window > Tools > New Tools Panel.** Drag your preferred tools from the main Tools panel into the custom panel.

Prior Updates

Sync settings using Creative Cloud

• You can now sync Preferences, Brushes, Swatches, Workspaces, etc. across all your computers using your Creative Cloud account.

• Choose **Preferences > Sync Settings** and choose what you want synced.

Share Your Work on Behance

• You can upload your images to Behance directly from within Illustrator using **File > Share on Behance.**

Multiple File Place

Like InDesign, Illustrator can now place multiple files:

• Go to **File > Place.**

• Choose multiple files by selecting one, then **Shift–click** another file to select a range of continuous files, or **Command–click** (Mac) or **Control–click** (Windows) a specific file to just add that one.

• After clicking **Place** to close the dialog, the cursor will be loaded with all the graphics. Use the arrow keys to switch between them and choose the one you want to place first.

• Click on the artboard to place the file at it's original size, or drag to set a custom size.

Images in Brushes

• **Art, Pattern,** and **Scatter** brushes can now contain pixel-based graphics. The brushes will act like ones containing vector-based art, allowing you to reshape and edit them.

• Using pixel-based art in brushes will allow you to create more natural and organic-looking design elements than you would be able to using only vector art.

Touch Type Tool

• As it's name implies, the **Touch Type** tool does work with multi-touch devices, but they are not required to use this new tool. Choose a single letter in some text and you can move, scale, or rotate it without having to break it out of the main text area.

On-Art Free Transform Tool

• To get the most out of the **Free Transform** tool, you used to have to know keystrokes. When you select the tool, you'll now see a new toolbar with four icons in the document's window. Click on the various icons to change the way the **Free Transform** tool works.

• Touch-screens are now supported with this tool.

OS Gestures Support

• If your device and OS support gestures such as pinch to zoom, Illustrator now supports them.

Illustrator CC: What's New?

Pattern Brush: Automatic Corner Generation

To create a good **Pattern Brush** you used to have to create swatches for the line portions as well as corners. Now Illustrator can generate the corners automatically for you, so you only need one swatch for the line portions. Of course you can still provide custom drawn corners if you prefer, but having the option to let Illustrator create these for us can be a huge help and time saver.
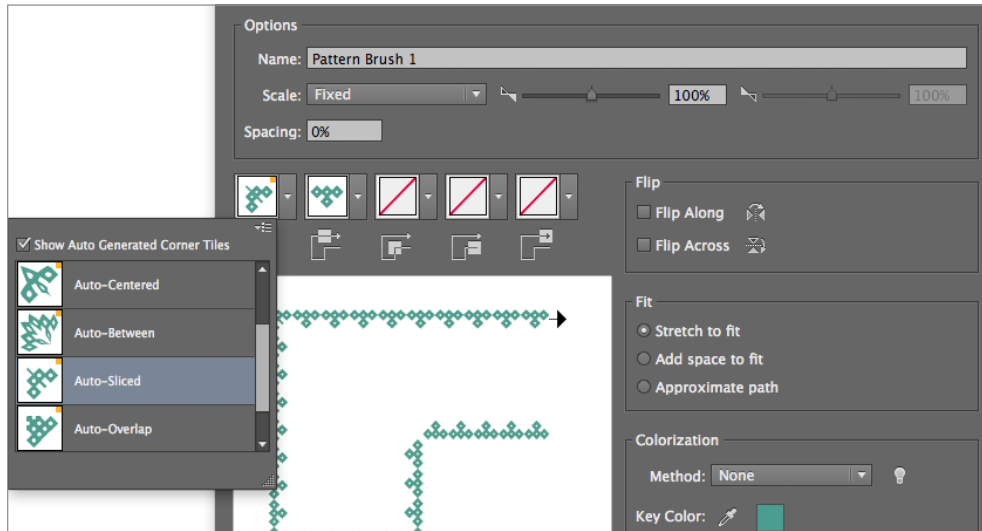
Generate CSS code

• A new **CSS Properties** panel **(Window > CSS Properties)** lets you copy CSS code for selected elements.

• Unless you change the default settings, you must name elements in the **Layers** panel. The name you give each element will be used in the CSS. If you name an element with a standard HTML tag (such as h1, p, nav, etc) it will create a CSS tag rule, otherwise it will create a class.

Copy & Paste SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics)

• Instead of having to export an SVG file (which you can still do), now you can copy art in Illustrator, switch to a code editor and paste SVG code! Browser support for SVG is getting better, so this is exciting for web developers!

Searching Swatches & Colors

• The **Swatches** panel search (**Swatches** panel menu > **Show Find Field**) has been improved. Instead of highlighting the swatch it thinks you're trying to find, it starts hiding swatches that don't match the search, only showing correct matches. It provides more flexible search options (such as finding by color value like **m=25** instead of name only) as well as a better way to see the swatch you wanted to find.
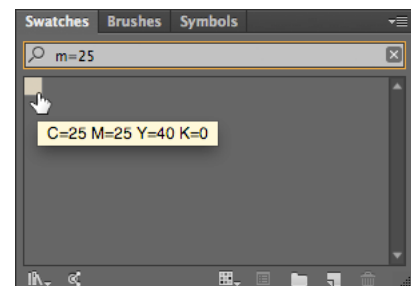
- In the **Color Picker** (double-click a **Fill** swatch), there's now a search field at the bottom.
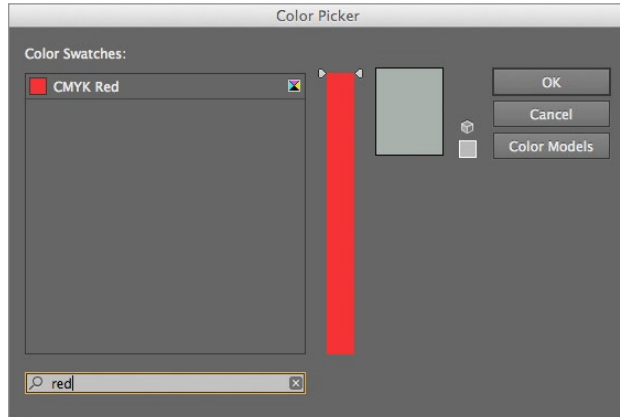
Package & Updates Links Panel

These were technically added in an earlier Creative Cloud release, but you may not be aware of them.

- **Package** (like in InDesign): To collect all links, files and fonts used in an Illustrator file, choose **File > Package** and follow the prompts.

- The **Links** panel **(Window > Links)** can now unembed graphics. Select a file in the **Links** panel and in the panel menu ▾☰ choose **Unembed.**

Guides

- You can now double-click on the ruler to create a guide at that specific location.

- Hold **Shift** as you double-click on the ruler and the new guide will be snapped to the nearest mark on the ruler.

- You can create a pair of intersecting horizontal and vertical guides by holding **Command** (Mac) or **Control** (Windows) and dragging from the intersection of the rulers to where you want the guides in the document.

Miscellaneous

- Converting between **Area Type** and **Point Type** (and vice versa) is now easier. Just **double-click** the circle to the right of the text.
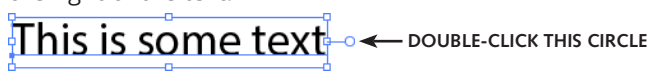
- The font menu has been revamped. There are now two search modes (shown below). **Search First Word only** acts like previous versions of Illustrator. **Search Entire Font Name** is new (and the default) and when you search for a font, it live filters down the list of fonts to make it easier to find the font you're looking for.
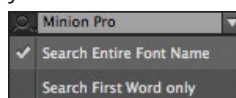
- In the **Separations Preview** panel there's a new checkbox for **Show used spot colors only.**