version

Adobe Dimensions®

3.0

New Feature Highlights

The easy yet powerful 3D rendering tool

When Adobe Dimensions software first appeared in 1992, it provided a unique feature in the world of 3D software: the ability to render 3D objects as resolution-independent PostScript®-language artwork that could be incorporated into any 2D PostScript illustration file. Now Adobe Dimensions version 3.0 enhances this capability by offering graphic producers and designers the choice of saving artwork in PostScript format or in raster image format. Adobe Dimensions 3.0 can even render artwork with both vector and raster information—another first in 3D graphics creation.

In addition to being the only 3D program to support both PostScript and raster image output, version 3.0 delivers a variety of other exciting new features and enhancements. For the first time, Adobe Dimensions is available for Microsoft® Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0 as well as for Apple Power Macintosh systems. A full 32-bit application, Adobe Dimensions offers a common code base and virtually identical user interface across its Windows and Power Macintosh versions, so users can exchange files and work smoothly in multi-platform environments. Now graphic producers and designers can add 3D effects to their print- or Web-based artwork easily and cost effectively using their software and hardware of choice.

Adobe Dimensions 3.0 also delivers production-quality 3D modelling, powerful editing controls, and smooth integration with other Adobe® products. The 3D modelling enhancements allow users to easily combine simple objects to create detailed 3D artwork, greatly expanding the variety of shapes users can create. Innovative new editing controls range from the ability to edit in different preview modes and align objects easily in a 3D space to an object browser for managing groups of objects. Version 3.0 also offers Adobe standard keyboard shortcuts, drag and drop of objects, and other features that make it easier for users to move among their favorite Adobe programs. Perhaps the most exciting addition to this software is the ability to import and wrap raster images around 3D objects.

The following section of this document provides background information about the 3D graphics category and the place Adobe Dimensions holds in this category. Subsequent sections explain the key new features in Adobe Dimensions 3.0 and outline what's included in the Adobe Dimensions package, as well as the program's system requirements, pricing, and availability.

Product Category Overview

Adobe Dimensions 3.0 is a 3D modelling and rendering program that allows graphic producers and designers to incorporate 3D effects into their 2D artwork and images with complete control. With Adobe Dimensions, users can:

- draw 2D images and then convert them to 3D by adding depth to them (called extruding) or by revolving them around an axis.
- import 2D paths from an illustration program, such as Adobe Illustrator®, and then convert the paths to 3D shapes.
- create basic 3D shapes, called primitives, using the program's drawing tools. Primitives include cubes, spheres, cones, and cylinders.

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After users create the 3D shapes they want, they can map 2D artwork onto those shapes. They can even import Adobe Photoshop® and other raster image files into the program and wrap them around a 3D object. With its flexible user interface and easy-to-use controls, users will find it straightforward to edit shapes or text, change colors, apply bevels, align objects, adjust lighting, apply surface properties, and more. Once users achieve the effects they want, they can render the 3D artwork in PostScript format for integration into an illustration program or a page layout program (users can then freely edit or resize the resolution-independent 3D artwork); or they can render it in raster format for use in a still image or film sequence.

Adobe Dimensions was originally developed as a 3D companion to Adobe Illustrator. Adobe designed the program to support 2D designers who occasionally want editable 3D artwork with the illustration quality, clean lines, and resolution independence of PostScript output. However, because Adobe Dimensions primarily serves the PostScript designer, it is not comparable to other 3D graphics applications, such as Fractal RayDream Studio, Specular Infini-D, or Macromedia Extreme 3D, which only produce raster output—nor is Adobe Dimensions analogous to high-end 3D programs, such as Autodesk 3D Studio or Strata Studio Pro, because it's primarily a tool for 2D designers on desktop computers. Basically, Adobe Dimensions is to RayDream Studio in the 3D world what Adobe Illustrator is to Photoshop in the 2D world—with the comparable benefit that users can now choose to output 3D artwork in raster format from Adobe Dimensions just as they can output 2D artwork in raster format from Adobe Illustrator.

Adobe Dimensions is the perfect tool for 2D graphic producers and designers who want a simple way to incorporate production-quality 3D effects into their artwork and images. Adobe Dimensions offers users more flexibility than raster-based 3D programs provide, plus a significantly easier learning curve. Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop users in particular will find that the program fits smoothly into their workflow.

Production-Quality 3D Modelling

Ability to wrap raster images on a 3D surface—With Adobe Dimensions 3.0, users can import Photoshop (PSD), TIFF, Windows Bitmap (BMP), and Macintosh PICT files and wrap these raster images on 3D objects. They can then rotate the objects and apply effects to them with ease.

Interpenetration of objects—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 can now combine two or more simple objects to build more detailed models, thus greatly expanding the quality and variety of shapes that users can create. Users can combine different individual shapes, such as primitives, extrusions, and revolutions, to form a wide range of interesting shapes. For example, a graphic artist could create a 3D logo in which a thunderbolt intersects a sphere. When the logo is rendered, the thunderbolt will appear to pierce the sphere. This new capability significantly enhances the modelling capabilities that Adobe Dimensions places at users' fingertips.

Flexible custom camera angles—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 expands users' choice of camera angles from 13 fixed camera angles to a virtually unlimited number of camera angles by providing camera slider controls that let users precisely determine where the camera is in relation to the object. However, Adobe Dimensions intelligently prevents users from positioning the camera too close to or pointing away from the object.

Powerful Editing Controls

Interactive editing in preview modes—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 introduces the ability to edit work interactively in different preview modes (Wireframe, Draft, Raster, and PostScript), whether users are working in the 2D or 3D window. Users will be able to scale, move, and rotate 3D elements, as well as apply color and lighting to objects in any preview mode. The Draft mode provides immediate feedback about how the final results will look. Users can also apply finishing touches to their final work in Raster and PostScript modes.

Object Browser—A new Object Browser simplifies how users manage the objects in their artwork, including primitives, bevels, and imported 2D paths or raster images. The Object Browser provides a single place for users to name, show, hide, lock, and unlock objects, as well as have easy access to mapped artwork, extrude bases, bevels, and rotation profiles. By hiding objects, users can isolate areas to work on and speed up screen redraw. Locking objects protects them from accidentally being transformed, moved, scaled, or rotated.

The Object Browser also lets users group and ungroup objects, as well as move objects from one group to another or from a group to an independent status again. Users can copy objects from the Browser and paste them into another Adobe Dimensions file, and they can delete objects. The Browser helps users work efficiently and effectively with the objects in their artwork.

Alignment commands—Aligning objects in three dimensions can be complicated. It requires visualizing a 3D environment while moving objects in the 2D environment of the monitor screen. Adobe Dimensions 3.0 offers several alignment commands that make it simpler and faster to align two or more objects in a 3D space. These commands include Align Object Centerpoints, Align Surface Centerpoints, Align Surface Orientation, and Align Surface Planes.

Constrained rotation—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 includes three new rotation tools that constrain object rotation to the x, y, or z axis to provide users with greater control in aligning objects. This new functionality improves on the trackball tool provided in Adobe Dimensions 2.0, which allowed users to use 2D mouse movements to move objects in an arbitrary 3D space. These three innovative new rotation tools significantly enhance the ease with which users can move objects in three dimensions.

Mask editing—In Adobe Dimensions, masks work similarly to masks in illustration and other software programs, allowing users to cover or hide parts of an object in 2D space. Version 3.0 includes two new commands, Make Mask and Release Mask, that make it a simple one-step procedure for users to convert a closed path into an object mask or convert an object mask into a closed path.

Smooth Integration with Other Adobe Products

Drag and drop of objects—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 lets you drag and drop objects from its window into any program that supports drag-and-drop operations. For example, users can drag 3D artwork into Adobe Illustrator, Adobe PageMaker®, and Photoshop, as well as into third-party programs. Users can even drag and drop raster artwork into Adobe PageMill™, which converts it to GIF format for display on the World Wide Web. In fact, users can drop 3D artwork into any HTML author that can convert raster images to these formats, making it simple to enhance a Web site with eye-catching 3D effects.

Adobe standard keyboard shortcuts—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 provides the standard Adobe keyboard shortcuts that have appeared in recent versions of Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and PageMaker. These shortcuts help users work more productively as they move among Adobe programs.

Complete feature parity across platforms—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 offers a common code base and virtually identical user interface across its Windows 95, Windows NT 4.0, and Power Macintosh versions, so users can exchange files and work smoothly in multi-platform environments. Graphic producers and designers are free to work with their software and hardware of choice.

New file import support—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 for the Macintosh imports files saved in native Adobe Illustrator, native Photoshop (.PSD), EPS, TIFF, and Macintosh PICT format. Adobe Dimensions 3.0 for Windows imports files saved in native Adobe Illustrator (.AI), native Photoshop (.PSD), EPS (.EPS), TIFF (.TIF), and bitmap (.BMP) format.

New file export support—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 for the Macintosh exports 2D files in native Adobe Illustrator, native Photoshop, EPS, TIFF, and Macintosh PICT format. Adobe Dimensions 3.0 for Windows exports 2D files in native Adobe Illustrator (.AI), native Photoshop (.PSD), EPS (.EPS), TIFF (.TIF), and bitmap (.BMP) format. When users export raster images, they can specify the width, height, and resolution in dots-per-inch (dpi) of the final output, just as they do in Photoshop. In addition, version 3.0 for both Windows and the Macintosh can now export 3D models using the QuickDraw 3D (3DMF) format, and then incorporate that 3D artwork into other 3D programs (this option applies to both the Macintosh and Windows versions).

Ease of use with a variety of Adobe products—Adobe Dimensions 3.0 works smoothly with Adobe's flagship print- and Web-publishing products—Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, PageMaker, and PageMill—making it simple to integrate it into any production process. Adobe Dimensions was developed to look and feel more like a 2D illustration program, so users would find it easy to learn the program. Users can also generate sequences to incorporate dazzling 3D effects into Adobe After Effects® and Adobe Premiere® projects quickly and effectively.

Software Package Contents

The Adobe Dimensions 3.0 software package offers exceptional value, including:

- a CD-ROM containing:

  —either Adobe Dimensions software for Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0 systems or Adobe Dimensions software for Apple Power Macintosh computers

  —tutorial and gallery files

  —bevel library

  —texture library

  —sample images

  —28 display typefaces from the Adobe Type Library

- *Adobe Dimensions 3.0 User Guide*

System Configurations

Windows 95/Windows NT 4.0

System requirements

- Intel486 or greater processor
- Microsoft Windows 95 or Windows NT 4.0 operating system
- 16 MB or more of RAM installed
- 20 MB of free hard-disk space for installation
- CD-ROM drive (3.5" disk set available for purchase)

Recommendations

- Pentium® or greater processor
- 32 MB or more of RAM installed
- High-resolution (24-bit or greater) Super VGA display card

Power Macintosh

System requirements

- PowerPC® processor
- Apple System Software version 7.5 or later
- 12 MB of RAM available to Adobe Dimensions (24 MB of system RAM)
- 20 MB of free hard-disk space for installation

Recommendations

- High-resolution, 24-bit screen display
- 16 MB or more of RAM available to Adobe Dimensions (32 MB of system RAM)

Availability and Pricing

In the United States and Canada, Adobe Dimensions 3.0 for Windows 95, Windows NT, and the Power Macintosh is expected to ship in the second quarter of 1997. The suggested retail price for the program is $199 (U.S.) for both Macintosh and Windows versions. Registered users of Adobe Dimensions can upgrade to version 3.0 for only $69 (U.S.). Customers in the United States and Canada who purchase Adobe Dimensions version 2.0 for the Macintosh after April 14, 1997 are eligible for a free upgrade to version 3.0.

French, German, and Japanese versions of Adobe Dimensions 3.0 are expected to ship within 30 days of the initial release. Information on other language versions, as well as all pricing, upgrade, and support policies for other countries, will be announced later.

For more information, customers can call Adobe at 800-833-6687.

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