

Mr. Actions

Lesson 4

In this lesson I'm going to address one of the functions that Photoshop 4 is NOT able to action - gradients. There is a way to do it though by making use of the **Offset** and **Blur** filters.

The principle is simple - set the foreground and background to the first two colors (say red and yellow), fill the file with the foreground color and **Offset** it by a given amount. *When the foreground is offset, the background color is used as fill.* Then set the foreground and background colors again (say to green and blue) and offset again. Do this until you have the different colors going all the way across the file, then **Gaussian Blur** the whole thing and it's ready to use as a **Pattern** fill.

The action we're going to make here results in a rainbow gradient, but you can apply the same principle to make gradients with two colors or twenty.

The first couple of steps are the same as in the previous tutorials - clearing out the actions palette and naming/recording a new action.

Tip: Want to step through an action one command at a time? Just hold down the Control key while clicking on the Play button at the bottom of the actions palette. Each click moves you one step.



Start out by opening the ACTIONS PALETTE and clear out any actions by clicking on the black triangle at the top left of the actions palette, and selecting **Clear Actions**.



Next, start recording the new action by clicking on the same black triangle and DESELECTING **Button Mode**. Click the black triangle again and select **New Action** - the new action is now recording.

Change the default name for the action (Untitled-1) by double-clicking the first entry. This will call up the **Action Options** dialog box: simply fill in the name that you want to use - leave the rest of the settings on their defaults for this action.

First we're going to need a new file, so click on **File/New** to open the new file dialog box. How big you make the new file is up to you - for this example I've used my preference of 8x6 inches.

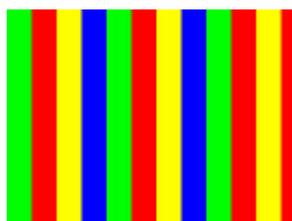
Now use the **Eyedropper** tool with the **Swatches** palette to set the foreground (red) and background (yellow) colors - for this action we're going to use only the four primary colors, which we'll repeat as necessary across the file.

Fill the whole file with the foreground color by selecting **Edit/Fill/Foreground Color**.



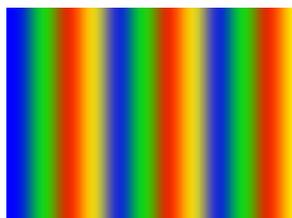
Next we need to offset the top (red) color, so choose **Filter/Other/Offset** and enter Horizontal: 50 and Vertical: 0 for the two values, and check the Set to Background box. This will push the foreground color 50 pixels to the right, and the background (yellow) color will appear as a 50 pixel stripe on the left as in this sample.

Now we want to switch the foreground and background colors, which we can do by clicking the little double arrow on the tools palette, then repeat the above offset process to get a red stripe to the left of the yellow one.



The above two steps are all there is really to making the basic gradient - set a background color, run the **Offset** filter, reset the background color, run the Offset filter. You'll end up with a file like this sample:

Next run the **Guassian Blur** filter on the file, and viola:



A gradient!

Click on the stop button to stop recording, and save your action. Use this action on its own or combine it with others.

To use your gradient as a fill, select the whole file and click **Edit/Define Pattern** to place the file on the clipboard. Now any selection can be filled by clicking **Edit/Fill/Pattern**:

Gradient

Gradient



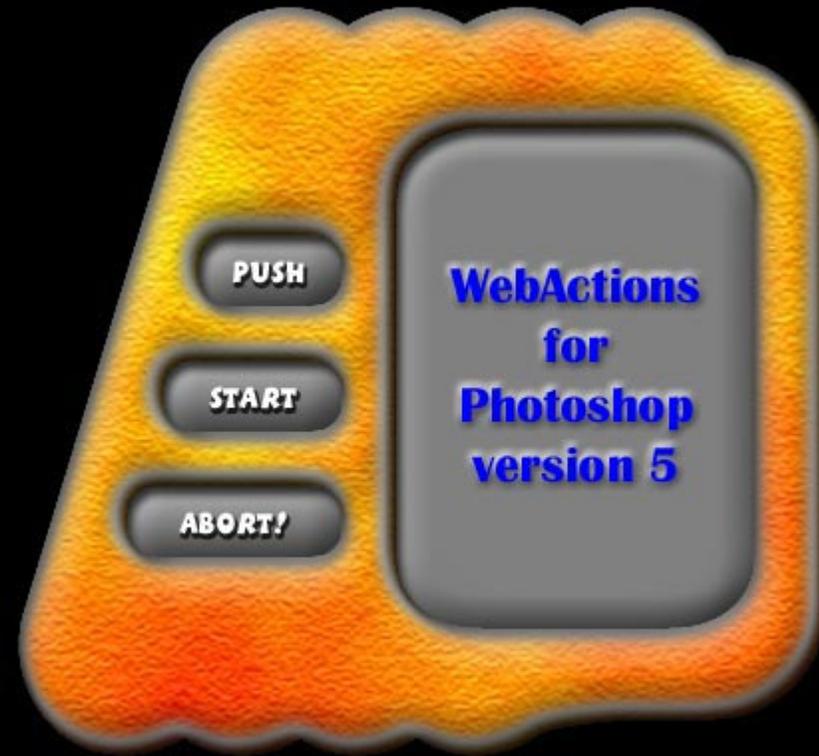
Curious about the new action features of Photoshop 5? Well the news is good - just think back to all the functions you couldn't do in Photoshop 4 (like the Gradients in this tutorial), and imagine that you can. That's Photoshop 5!

The control panel and graphics you see here were created in version 5, entirely from single mouse-click actions. From importing pre-made black & white Illustrator templates, to adding the gradients, applying the 3D-like effects and even the text. It's all done from **SINGLE** actions, with a **SINGLE** mouse-click!

One problem with version 4 actions was that of selections - there was no effective way to capture them. Now version 5 lets you capture absolute measurements, so that any shape selection can be recorded as an action command.

The new type engine too is a great improvement. Any text entries recorded in an action is now fully editable after the action is run.

Look out for new WebActions products for Photoshop 5 - now available from the i/us website at <http://www.i-us.com>



WebActions for Photoshop 5

WEB ACTIONS

This cool action tip was bought to you with the compliments of WebActions - purveyors of FINE Photoshop actions!

Visit our web site at <http://www.twics.com/~aptecyuk/home.html> for details on WebActions products.

Send comments, suggestions, spare change and funny jokes to us at aptec@twics.com

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NANU-NANU

