

MEMO

Date: Jan 18, 2013
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Leading Software Maniacs
Subject: Adding a Drop Shadow Update to Taking
Great Screen Captures

Background

The article entitled *Taking Great Screen Captures* includes six steps to produce high-quality screen captures for both eBook and print. Final images have a border, but no drop shadow which can look bad (especially with .png files on eBooks and even “smudgy” in PDFs for print. The tools that I recommend using are Adobe Photoshop and Techsmith’s incredible SnagIt (Mac or Windows).

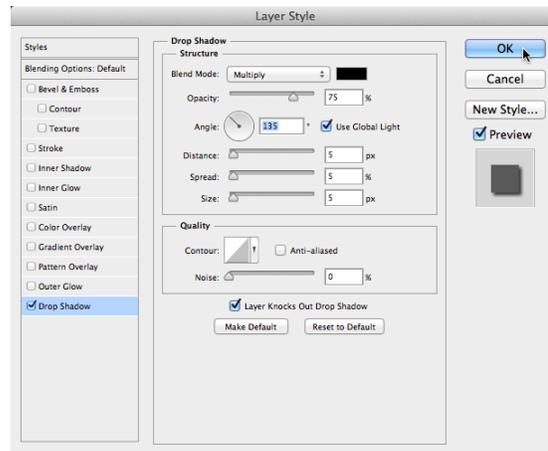
But what about using your screen capture on the Web or Microsoft Office?

There’s nothing like having a screen capture stand out with a nice drop shadow under it—especially if you have a dark background.

Adding a Consistent Drop Shadow

Using the final .png file created in Step 5 of *Taking Great Screen Captures*, open it in Photoshop. You’ll notice that by following the previous instructions the image will be set to 96 dpi with a 1 pixel 50% gray border. So let’s add a transparent border.

1. Copy the single layer into a new layer thus duplicating your screen capture.
2. Select All.
3. Extend the canvas by 10 pixels to the right and to the bottom.
4. Disable the original layer – there should be transparency showing to the right and bottom of your screen capture.
5. With the new layer selected, choose the Drop Shadow Effects found on the Layers style palette (the Fx symbol at the bottom).
6. Apply the following Effects settings:



Blend Mode: Multiply

Opacity: 75% (this may be too dark: I'd recommend 40% for most cases)

Distance: 5 px (must be less than the extra 10 pixel width you added to the canvas size)

Spread: 5 px

Size: 5 px

7. Click OK.
8. Inspect the result. Your screen capture should have a nice semi-transparent drop shadow, your original layer should be hidden and the new layer shown.



9. Now, save the new screen capture in your Exports folder. I suggest using the following file convention:

Main Window Buttons Only - Final DropShadow (96ppi, Mac).png

[“DropShadow” is one word]

Note: You can perform a similar set of steps with the print resolution TIFF, keeping in mind that the canvas should be extended by 20 pixels and the drop shadow Effects should be doubled from 5 to 10 pixels.