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A Great Photoshop Alternative

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Gimp is a great free image manipulation program much like Photoshop. Here is a YouTube link to a 13+ minute video of a basic beginners’ guide that I found very helpful: Q8C0LJPpr64.mp4. It is entitled ‘How to Use Gimp (A Beginners Guide)’ and produced by TechGumbo. According to the instructor, Gimp is one of the top five best free Photoshop alternatives and his favorite.

The video begins by showing where to go (gimp.org) to download Gimp and walks you through the whole download process. Then it goes over the layout you should see when you start Gimp: the primary window in the center, the toolbox on the left and the layers window on the right.

The instructor starts a new project by creating a new image from the file tab at the top. He shows how to scale it down (resize it) and add a background color.

Gimp works with layers, which is a new concept for me. Changes are made on individual layers which become part of the whole exported image at the end. If a change has to be made, you can go back to that particular layer which has what you want to change. You create a new layer from the right layer window. The video shows how to create text in a new layer by going to the toolbox, selecting the text tool, then selecting a different text color and changing the text size. It shows how to use the move tool to move the text anywhere in that layer.

If you don’t like what you produced, you can go back to a previous step or steps by going to the Edit tab at the top and choosing Undo Move Text Layer which will undo the last operation or using the shortcut, ctrl z, until you get back to the step you want.

The instructor creates an oval in a new, second layer, by selecting an ellipse tool from the tool box; other options are the rectangle tool or circle tool. He also shows how to use the blend tool in the background to show a color variance in the background.

In this video there are three levels: the background image, the layer with the text and the layer with the oval drawn on it.

When you are done, its time to export the created image by going to the File tab and clicking on Export As and exporting the image in the file type you want, png or jpg being the most popular. Even though you work with each level separately in Gimp, they become one image upon exporting.

If you choose the Save As option in the File tab and also save the image as an .xcf file type, you can retrieve and work on the image later and make changes in the different layers. It seems to me to be a good idea to also save an .xcf file.

So there you have it, a very good, basic beginners video introduction to Gimp. There are other You Tube videos you can find by searching for Gimp that will show you how to do specific things, such as rounding corners in a photo. If you’ve ever wanted to do photo editing, but hesitated because of the cost of Photoshop, this Gimp tutorial is just what you may need.