



Corporate Flow



Illustration



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Quick and Easy Bevel and Cutout Text Effects

by Mike Doughty



Bevel and cutout effects are commonly used for 3-D text and in rollover effects on web pages. They are usually made with a pixel-based image editing programs. Still, they can be easily made with Canvas using vector or text objects thanks to SpriteEffects.

The technique used in this tutorial takes advantage of SpriteEffects and the way a text object can be used as a clipping path in Canvas without having to convert it to paths first. This will prove to be quite a time-saver on those late afternoon deadlines.

Step 1

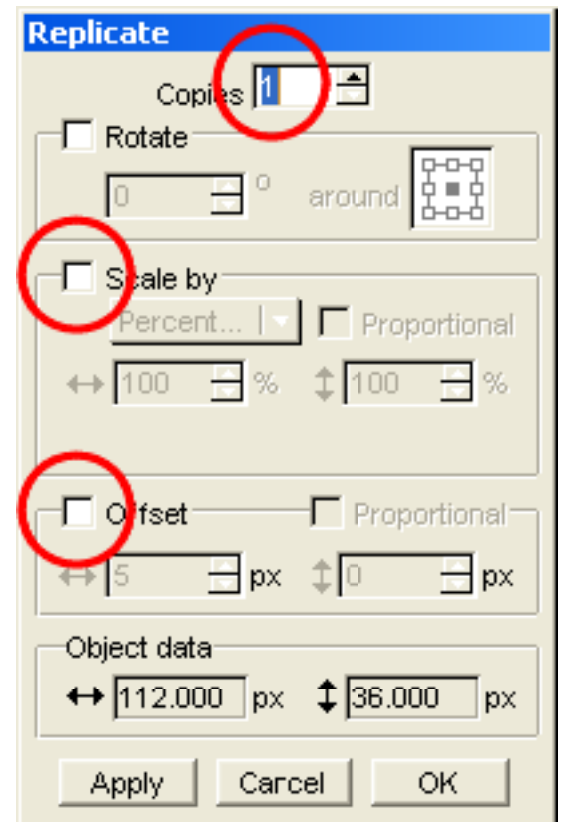
Create a new Canvas document (File>New). In the New Document dialog box, choose Points from the Document units pop-up menu, found at the bottom right. Click OK. Select the Text tool from the Toolbox and type some text into the workspace. Choose a heavy font for best results. In this case I chose 72 point Generic Tech.



For best results, we recommend that you use a heavy font.

Step 2

Now replicate the text object (Edit > Replicate). In the Replicate dialog box, choose "1" copy with Scale and Offset unchecked. This technique pastes an exact duplicate on top of the original text object.



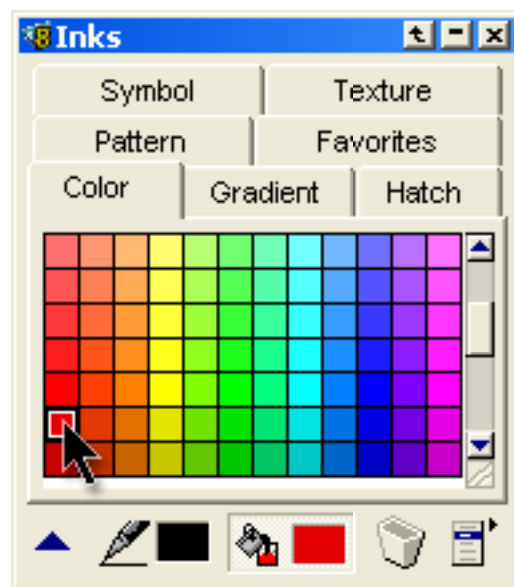
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Step 3

With the new top text object still selected, open the Inks palette and choose a fill ink. In this example I choose a bright red.

Note: Choosing a brighter color will yeild better results because it will create more contrast.



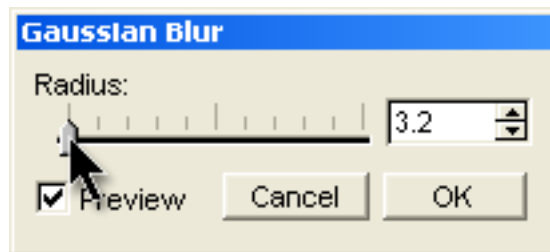
The two text objects should appear as one, similar to the example on the right.

The word 'BEVEL' is displayed in a bold, red, beveled font. The letters have a 3D effect with a dark red shadow on the bottom and left sides, giving them a raised appearance.

Step 4

Next, select the top text object and click Object > SpriteEffects > Add Effect > Blur > Gaussian Blur. In the dialog box, choose a radius of 3.2 pixels. Click OK.

Note: The amount of radius you choose will be dependent on the resolution of the SpriteEffect. The lower the resolution of the SpriteEffect, such as 72 used in this example, the bigger the impact of the radius. So 3.2 on a 150 resolution SpriteEffect would be a smaller blur.



After applying the Gaussian Blur, your text objects should look like this.

The word 'BEVEL' is displayed in a bold, red, beveled font, similar to the previous image, but with a soft, white-to-red gradient blur applied to the letters, making them appear slightly out of focus.

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Step 5

Now with the top text object selected, click the left and up keyboard arrows twice each to shift the top text object two points up and to the left.

Note: Make sure the zoom factor is set to 100% (actual size).



Step 6

The next step is to clip the two text objects to give them a clean edge. To do this, make an exact duplicate of the bottom text object and place it at the top of the stack and use it as a clipping path. Right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Macintosh) to access the context menu shown at right. We want to select the bottom text object. The objects directly under the point where the mouse was clicked will appear in the menu. Choose the bottom one in the stack.



Select the underlying text object

Step 7

With the bottom text object selected, click Edit > Replicate once again and use the same settings as before (one copy, no scaling or offset). Now marquee select all three text objects.



Drag your mouse from the top left to the bottom right to marquee select all three objects

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Step 8

Click Object > Clipping Path > Make, to make a clipping path. Finally group the object (Object > Group) to prevent them from accidental being moved apart from each other. That's the quick and easy bevel effect.

BEVEL

For the cutout effect, simply shift the blurred text object in the reverse direction as was done in the previous step 5. This time, shift it two points down and to the right.

CUTOUT



Follow the same steps to clip the text objects as it was done for the beveled effect. Replicate the bottom text object and place the copy at the top of the stack, then click Object > Clipping Path > Make followed by Object > Group. The difference between the cutout effect and the beveled effect is only in the direction the blurred object is shifted. There is an implied source of light coming from the upper left in both these effects. The beveled effect appears as if it is raised and the cutout effect appears as if it is sunken inwards. You can use these techniques to create images for two states of a rollover effect. You can also use them just by themselves.

CUTOUT