



Corporate Flow



Illustration



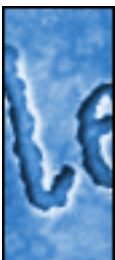
Image Editing



Automation



Web



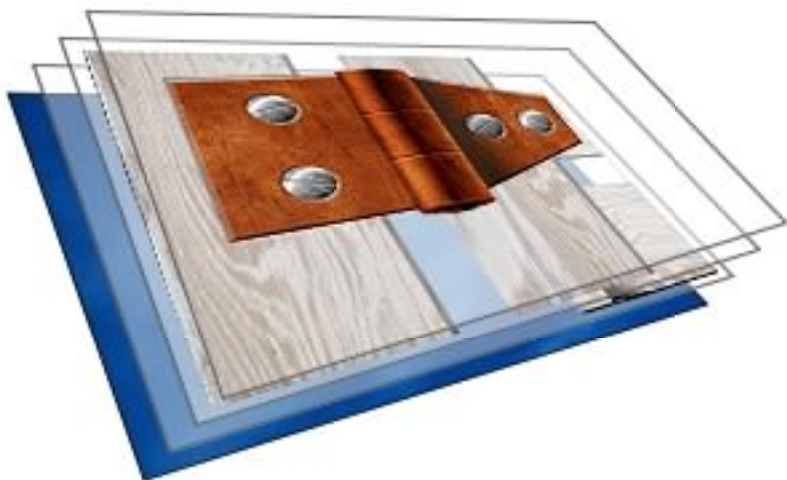
Text Effects

Canvas Tips and Techniques



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Creative Department**

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Working with Layers

Have you ever been impressed by a design or illustration and asked yourself, "Wow, I wonder how they did that?" Chances are the answer to your question can be summed up in one word... Layers.

Seasoned graphic design pros use layer technology daily; however, exactly what are "Layers" and how can the "Layering" process be put to use?

Take a few minutes and follow along in this Canvas tutorial to discover how to create your own exciting images and designs. We will show you how to easily create some very cool illustrations for your next print or Web project.

By their very nature, a graphic design project can become complex and difficult to control. Vector and text objects need to be created and effects need to be applied to each. Also, photos may need to be scanned, imported, placed, and enhanced. Graphic professionals use Layer technology to keep a handle on the design process. Think of layers as a powerful organizational tool as well as a design technology.

A layer is simply an invisible "container" in which objects can be placed in a document. All Canvas documents will always contain at least one layer. It is important to note that when working on multi-layered illustrations, each layer is completely independent and separate from the other. There are no limits to the number of layers that you can create. However, remember that the file size of your document will grow as you add new objects and layers to your Canvas creation.

Using the various layer controls and features you will quickly learn how you can easily organize and control each text, vector, or image object that will be contained within the document. Any of these objects can be created and placed within its own independent and completely separate layer. Doing so means that you have the freedom to apply design effects to any element, edit text, or import and enhance photos without being concerned about inadvertently effecting other components of your project.

To further aid the design process, layers can be independently "turned-off," or made invisible; therefore, you can concentrate on a specific segment of your document without being distracted. Yet, at any stage of the design process a layer can be made "visible," so that the combined effects with other layers can be examined.

Layers can also help you work efficiently by allowing you to name and organize objects that can later be displayed, printed, and copied individually.

Step 1

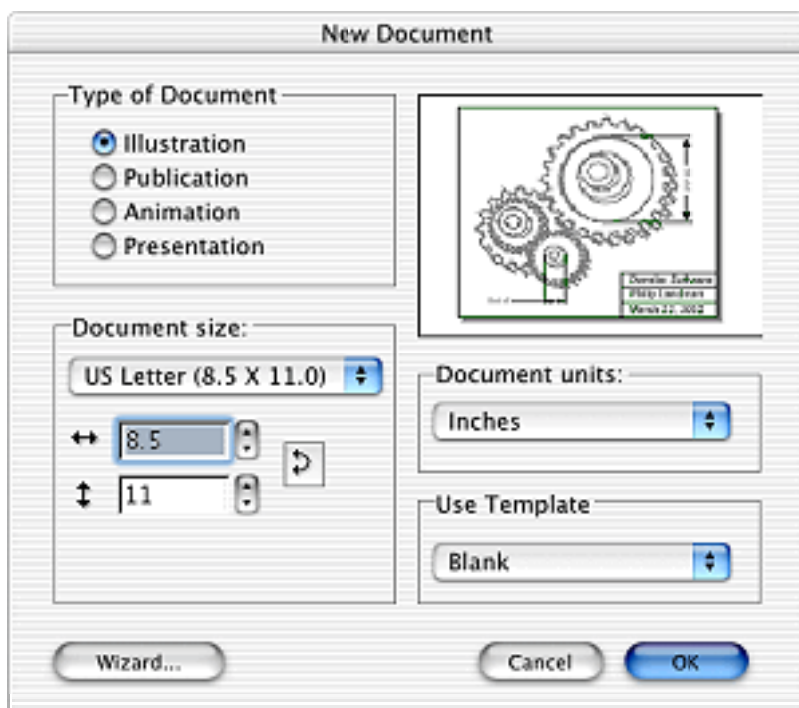
Preparing the Document

Begin by opening a new Canvas Illustration file. Choose File > New.

When the New Document dialog box appears, select Illustration as the Type of Document and US letter (8.5 X 11.0) as the Document size. Click OK.



Note: Remember to choose the Document Type based upon the needs of your project. As this project deals with illustrations, an Illustration file type would be the best choice.



Step 2

Viewing the Layers

Next open the Document Layout palette (Layout > Document Layout). Notice that Sheet 1 is already contained within the palette.

The Document Layout palette functions as the "Control Center" of your Canvas document. Take a moment to view the various controls of this important interface. Don't forget that you can dock this palette to free up workspace visibility.

Below is a brief explanation of each feature. A single click will turn on or off each item.

Visibility (👁️) Click on this icon to turn on and off visibility. **Note:** You can not turn off the visibility of the selected layer.

Locked (🔒) prevents you from mistakenly making changes to a layer.

Printable (🖨️) indicates that the items on this layer will print.

Color Override (🌈) allows you to temporarily assign a color to vector or text objects on that layer.

New Page/Sheet (📄) automatically creates a new page within the existing document.

New Layer (📁) creates a new layer within the selected Page/Sheet/Slide.

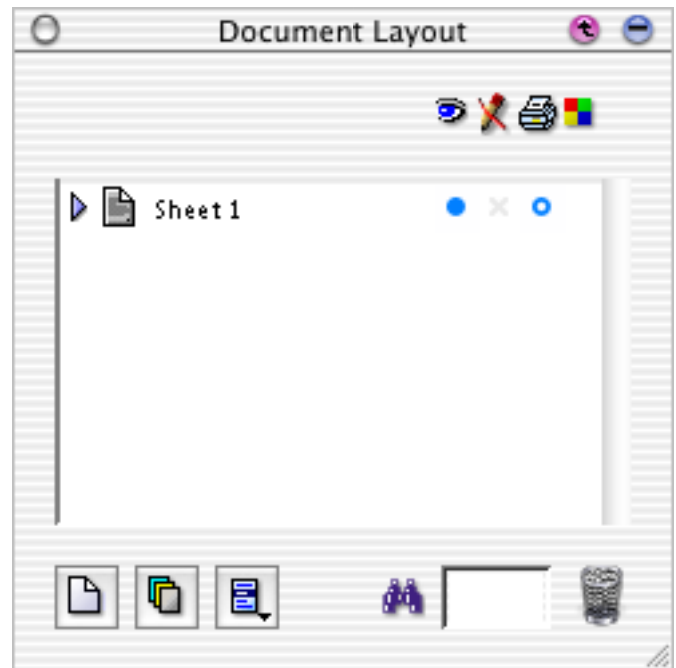
Menu (☰) displays the Document Layout palette's additional menu options.

Search (🔍) allows you to select a layer by entering its name.

Trash (🗑️) allows you to delete a Sheet or Layer. Simply select and drag the layer to the trash can icon. Remember, you can "Undo" should you need to.

Expand/Collapse (⊕ ⊖ Windows, ▸ ▾ Mac OS) allows you to expand or collapse the view of a Sheet or Layer to reveal the items inside.

Each object, page, slide, or sheet can be given a unique name. To do this, double-click on the listed "Sheet 1" to open the Options dialog box. This interface allows you to enter a new name for the selected sheet.



Working with Layers (Continued)

For our example, we will name this sheet "GPS" since our illustration will be of a handheld GPS unit. A GPS unit is an electronic device that receives and displays satellite signals which aid navigation.

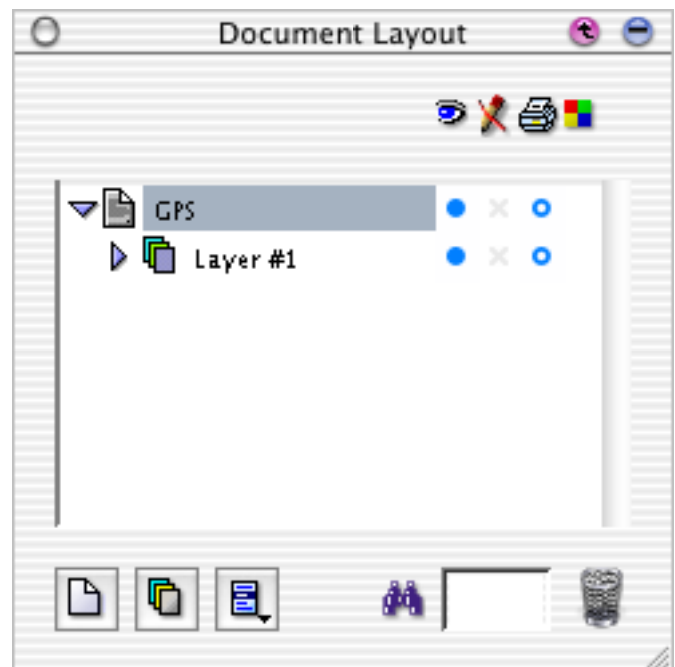
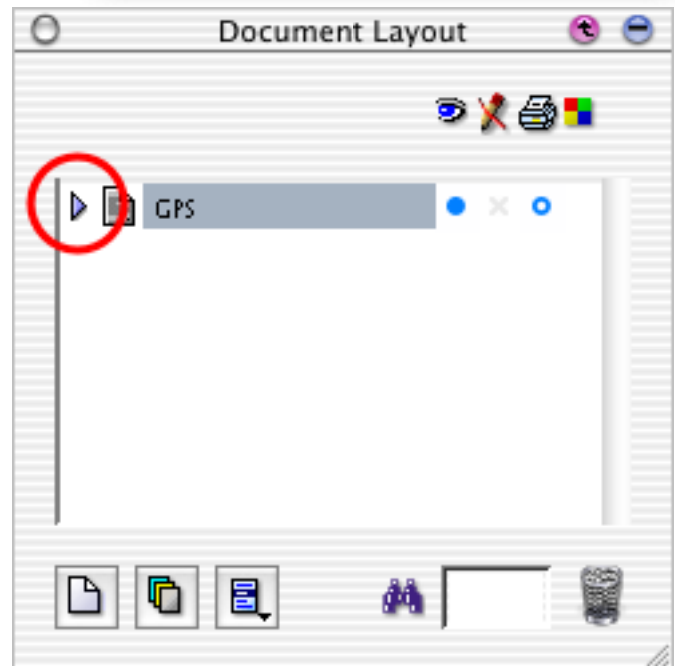
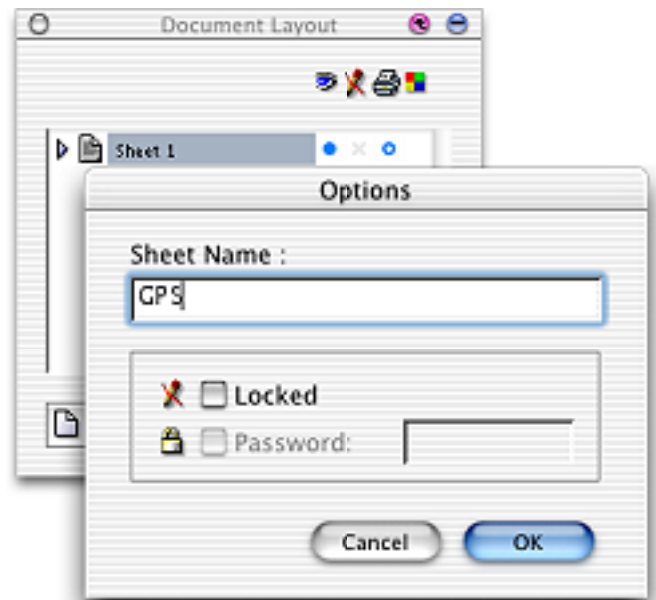
Once you have entered the new name, click OK to return to the Document Layout palette.

Notice that you can Lock and Password protect the sheet. Large multi-page design projects are often accessed by other design team members. Therefore it may be advisable to lock a sheet to prevent unauthorized editing.

Now, you will see the name which you entered during the previous step.

Next, expand the sheet and view the layers inside. To do this you must click on the icon just to the left of the "GPS" sheet.

Once open, you will be able to observe the different layers that are contained within the Canvas document.



Working with Layers (Continued)

As we mentioned previously, when working on complex illustrations, it is advisable to create additional layers. Creating new layers allows you to establish and organize separate sections of the illustration.

This specific layer will contain the objects that will make up the main body of our GPS illustration. To make each layer easier to recognize we are going to give each one a unique name.

From the Document Layout palette, locate and double-click on the listed "Layer #1" sheet. When the Layer Options dialog box appears, type in the word "Body" and click OK.

Notice that this dialog box contains several additional options.

The following is a brief description of each:

Hide: The hide option can only be changed in the Document Layout palette list. In the Options dialog box, the hide option is not available because the currently selected item cannot be hidden.

Grayed: Selecting this option will "Gray-out" or desaturate each object that resides on the layer.

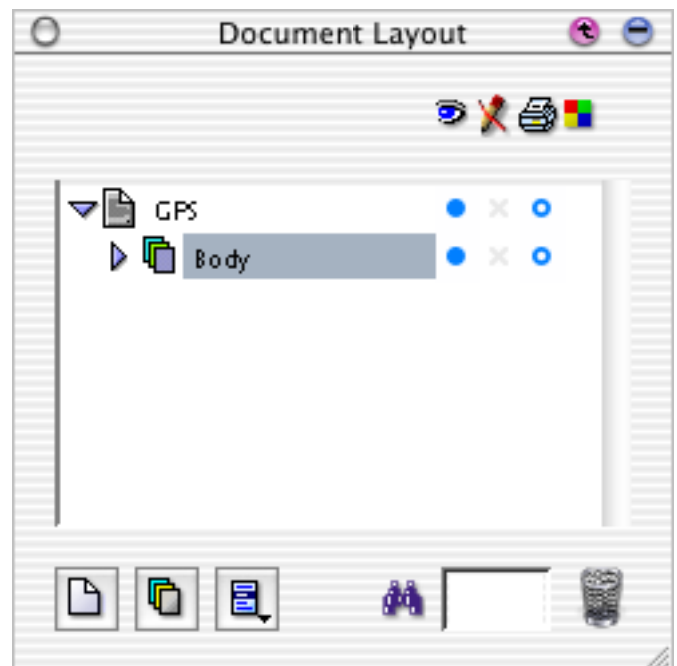
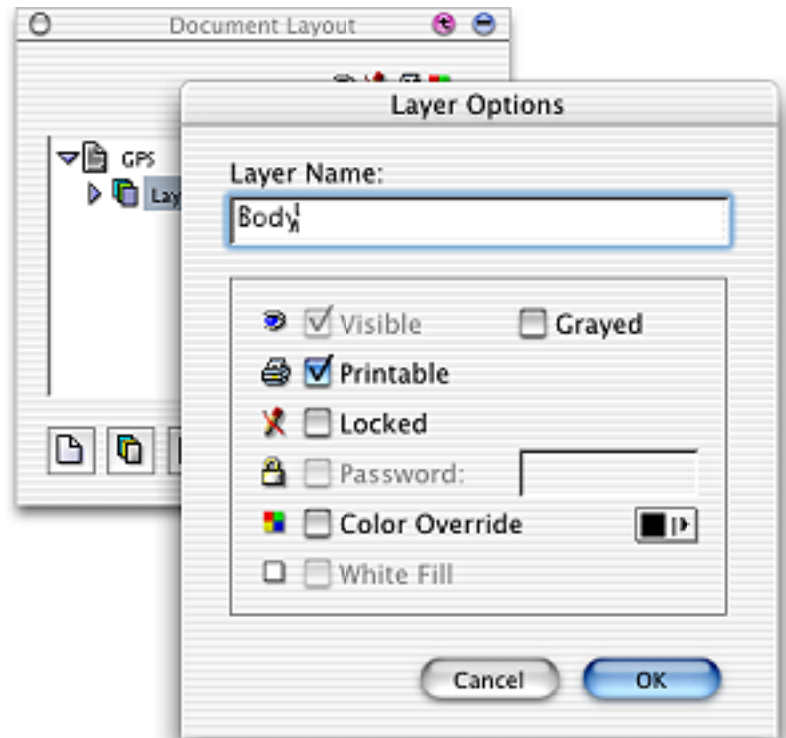
Locked: Select this option to prevent changes to a page's layers.

Password: Allows you to assign a password when the Locked option is selected.

Printable: When turned on, this control indicates that all of the items on this layer will be printed.

Color Override: Allows you to temporarily assign a color to vector or text objects on that layer.

When the Layer Options dialog box closes, you will see the name you entered as the layer's new name, in this case "Body".



Step 3

Creating Objects

Now with the layer properly named, we are going to start drawing the main casing (body) of our GPS unit. To do this, we will use the Auto Curve tool located in the Toolbox. To use the Auto Curve tool, just click along the path you want to create. Canvas' Auto Curve tool will automatically create the smooth curves.

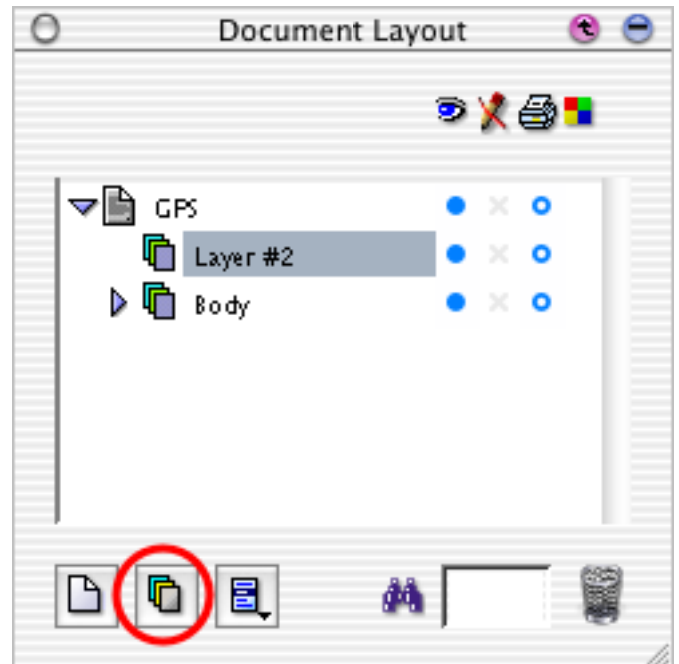
To learn more about the Auto Curve tool or any of Canvas' other drawing tools, [click here](#).



The completed GPS unit's housing is displayed on the right. Notice we used a yellow-orange color to give it a weatherproof, outdoor appearance.

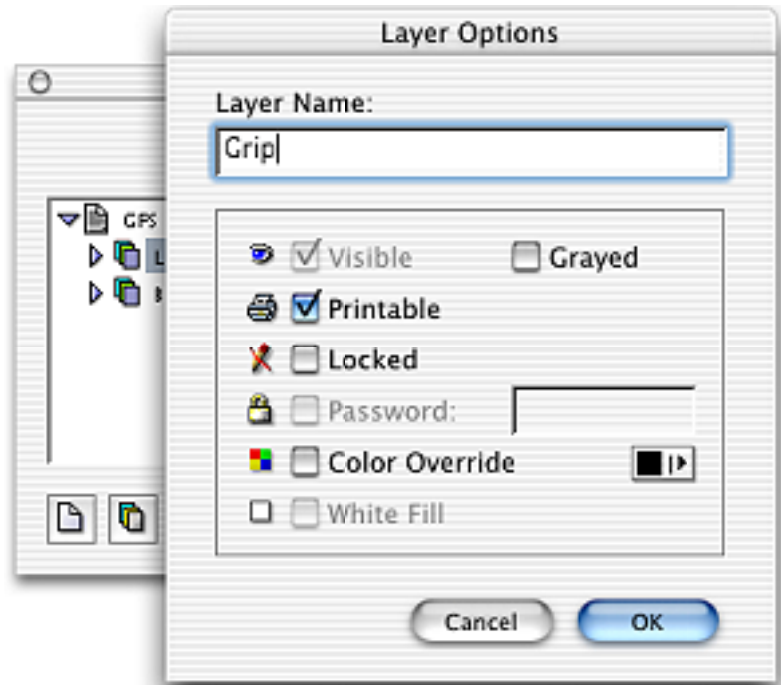
Next, we will repeat the steps we used to draw the housing to create a rubberized grip area along the sides of the GPS. To keep the illustration organized, we are going to first create a new layer by clicking on the New Layer icon.

When the new layer appears (Layer #2), double-click on it to bring up the Layer Options dialog box.



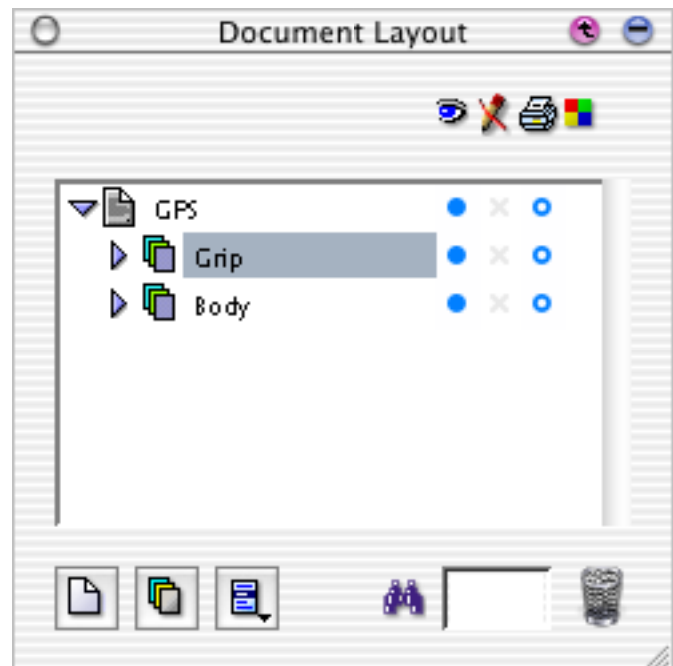
Working with Layers (Continued)

With the dialog box, open enter the text "Grip" and click OK.



You will now see "Grip" as the layer's name in the Document Layout palette.

Before you continue, be sure you have the "Grip" layer selected.



Working with Layers (Continued)

Again, we will use the Auto Curve tool to draw the grip area of the GPS unit.



Here is the completed left side grip.



Working with Layers (Continued)

We will use the same techniques to draw the right side of the GPS grip (see example).

With the different objects on separate layers, we have the option of turning on and off the visibility of any layer. This is extremely useful in cases where you need to go back and rework one particular object without anything impairing your view.



Step 4

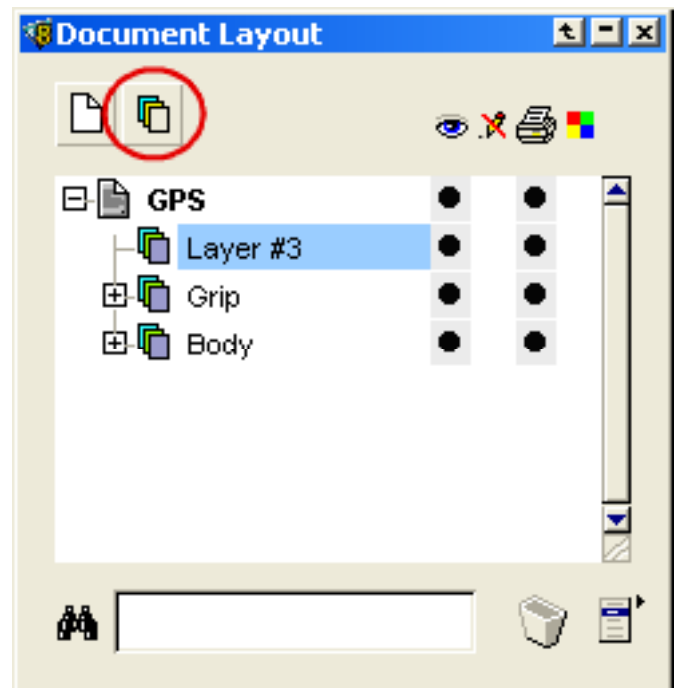
Moving Layers

Sometimes you may find it necessary to move or reshuffle the layer order. In this example, we will create a new layer, create a shadow, and move the shadow layer to the bottom of the stack.

To create a shadow layer, we must first create a new layer by using the New Layer icon like we did previously.

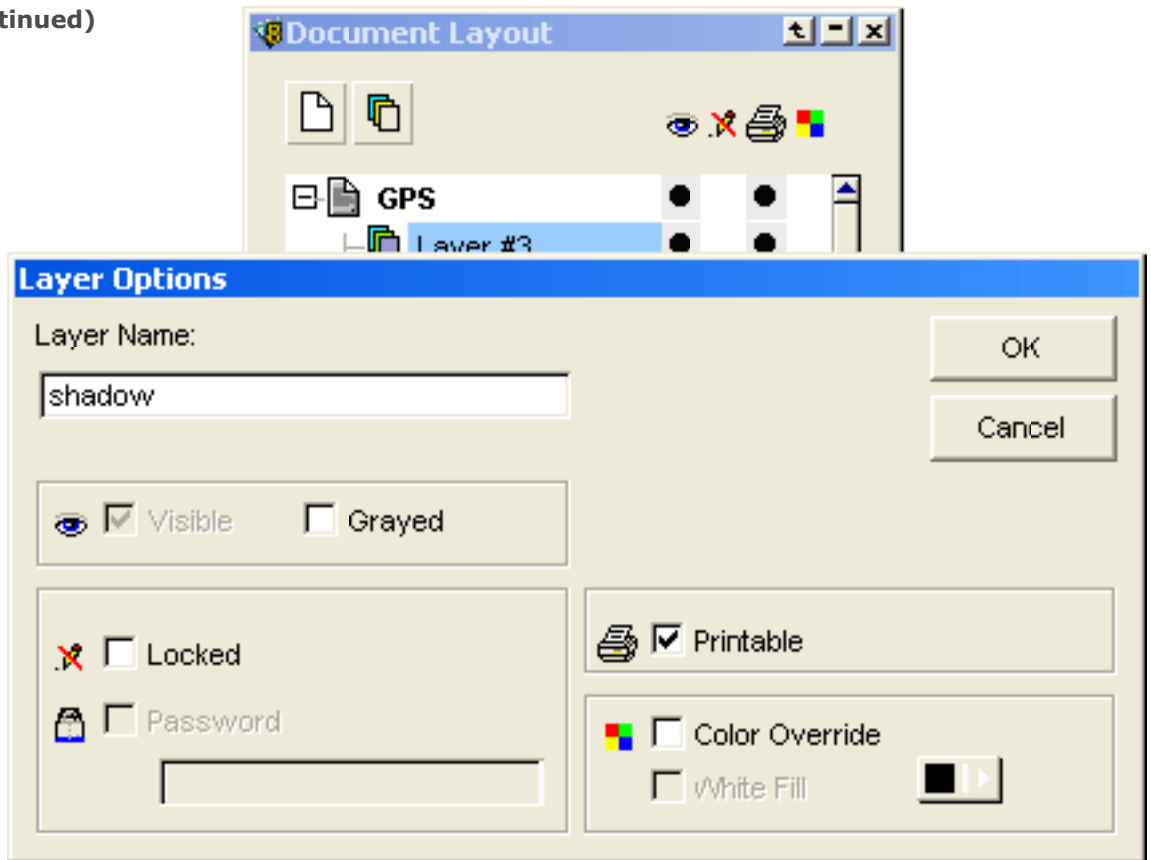


Note: Normally creating a shadow is one of the last things you would do; however, for this tutorial, we will add a shadow at this point in time.

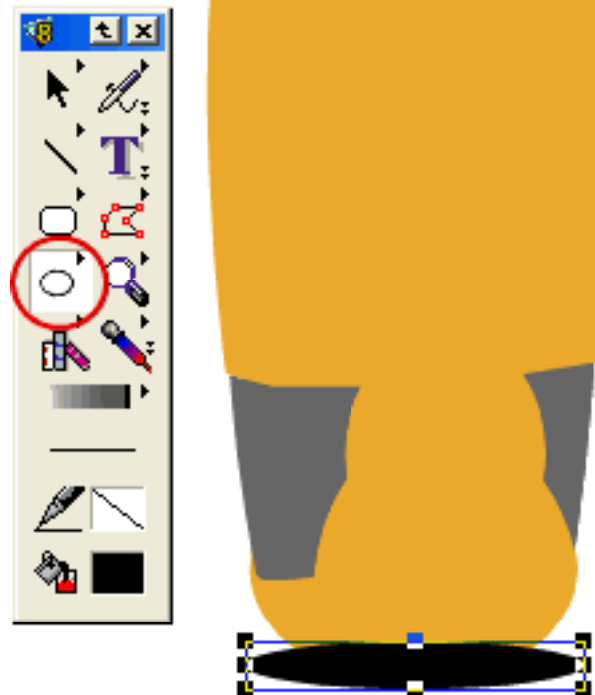


Working with Layers (Continued)

When the new layer appears, double-click on it to bring up the Layer Options dialog box. Enter "shadow" as the Layer Name and click OK.

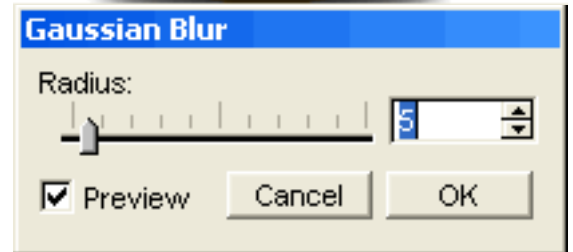


With the newly created shadow layer selected, select the Oval tool and draw a small, flat, black oval just below the GPS handset.



Working with Layers (Continued)

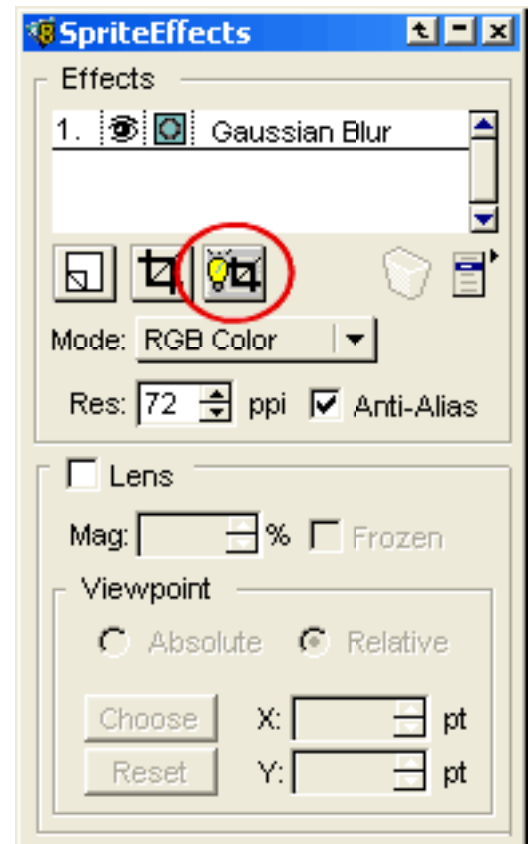
Next, select the oval and open the Gaussian Blur dialog box (Object > SpriteEffects > Add Effect > Blur Gaussian Blur) and give it a blur of 5.



After applying the Gaussian blur, we noticed that the edges of the blur appear to end abruptly as seen in our example.



This is easily fixed by using the Smart Crop option in the SpriteEffects palette (Object > Sprite Effects > Show Palette). Select the shadow object and click the Smart Crop button to smooth out the edge of the Gaussian blur.

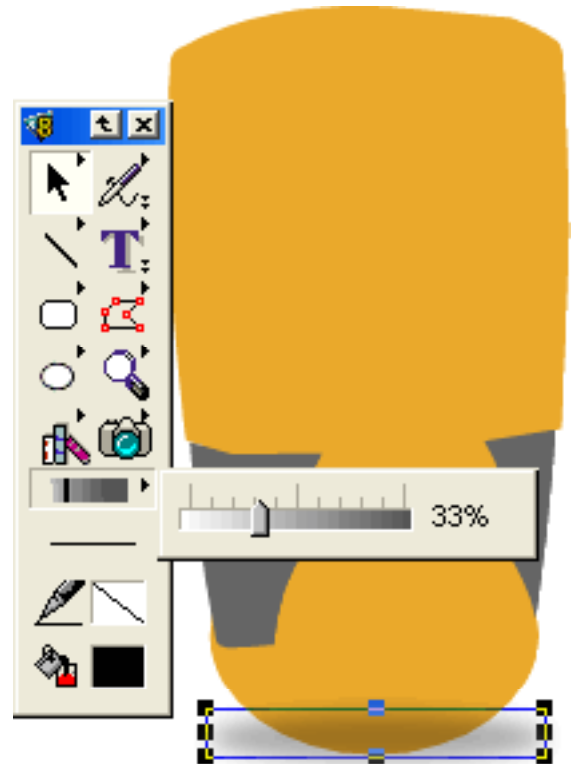


Working with Layers (Continued)

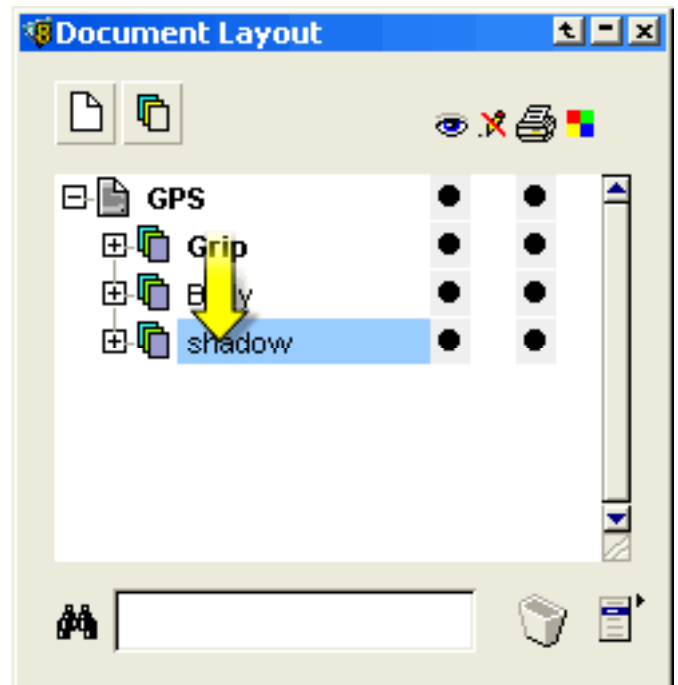
Our shadow is nice and smooth now; however, it is too strong and still needs to be shuffled behind the "Body" layer.



First, we are going to open the Transparency Slider from the Toolbox with the shadow selected and move the slider down to about 33%. This will make our shadow almost transparent.



Next, we turn our attention to the Document Layout palette. Move the "shadow" layer below the "Body" layer by simply clicking the cursor on it and dragging it into place.



Working with Layers (Continued)

The shadow will now appear behind the "Body" object.



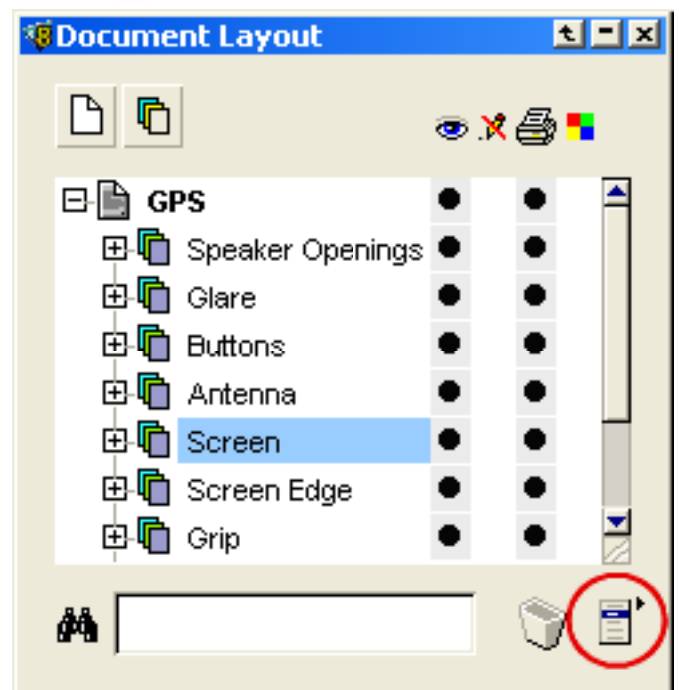
We continue to draw the remaining parts of the GPS unit using the techniques we used in the previous steps until we have the completed drawing.

Step 5

Getting to Know the Document Layout Menu

Looking at the Document Layout Palette, you could see that we have neatly organized our drawing with the different parts of the GPS unit on different layers.

Layers have additional options available through the Document Layout menu. The menu can be accessed by clicking on the menu icon located on the bottom of the Document Layer palette.



Working with Layers (Continued)

Below is a listing of the the different options available in the Document Layout menu.

Expand All: Expands all the Sheet and layer views to reveal everything inside.

Collapse All: Collapses all the Sheet and layer views.

Add Sheet: Adds a new sheet to the current document.

Add Layer: Adds a new layer to the current Sheet.

Add Grid Layer: Adds a Grid layer. Grids help you position objects precisely.

Add Guide Layer: Adds a Guide layer. Guides are non-printing lines to which objects can be aligned.

Duplicate Layer: Duplicates a selected layer.

Share Layer: Links a layer to additional pages in a document. Note that since the shared layers are linked, if you modify a linked layer all of the linked layers will change.

Unshare Layer: Converts a linked layer into a regular, non-shared layer on one page.

Link Master: Links masterpage to the current page. Note that Canvas illustration files do not use masterpages.

Unlink Master: Converts layers of a masterpage into a regular layer of the current page.

Delete: Deletes a selected Sheet or layer.

Merge Layers: Merges two or more layers into one.

Options: Displays Layer Options dialog box (see Step 2).

Palette Options: Brings up the Palette Options dialog box, this allows you to select and modify the options available to you in the Document Layout palette, see below.

Visible: Adds or removes the visibility option from the Document Layout Palette.

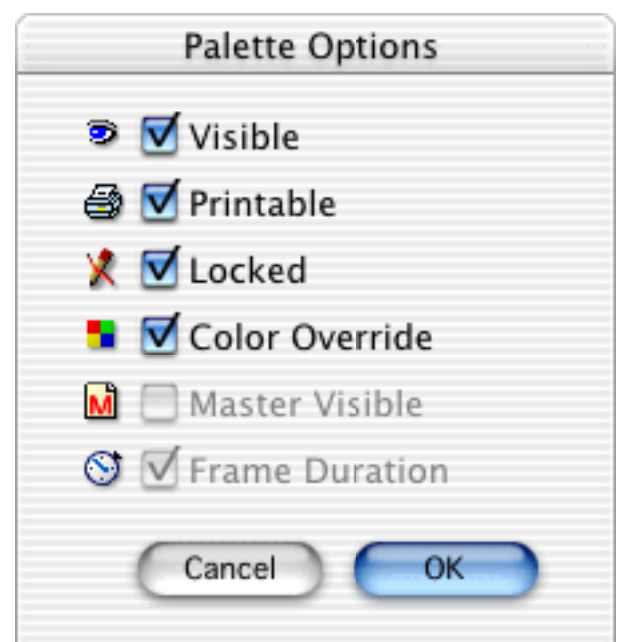
Printable: Adds or removes the Printable option from the palette.

Locked: Adds or removes the Locked option from the palette.

Color Override: Adds or removes the Color Override option from the palette.

Master Visible: Click to show or hide masterpages in a document.

Frame Duration: In Animation documents, this option will display a column that shows the duration of a frame in hundredths of a second.



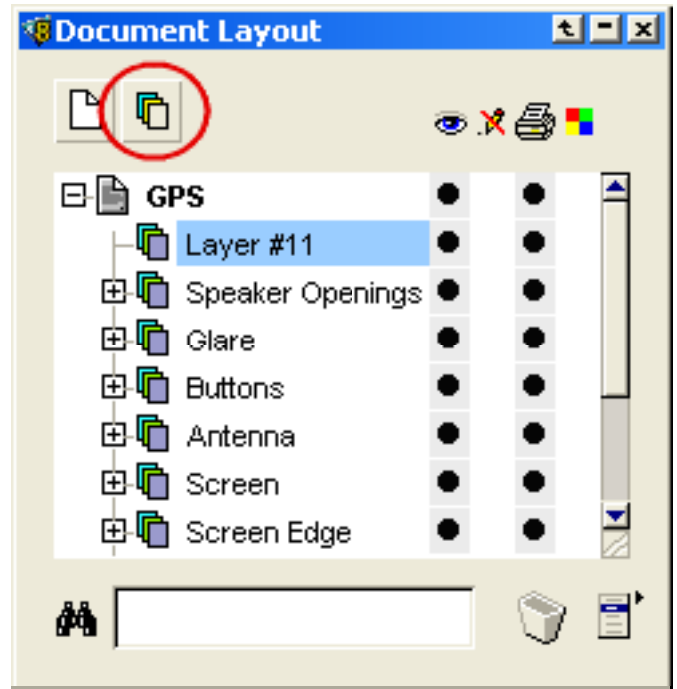
Step 6

Additional Layer Features

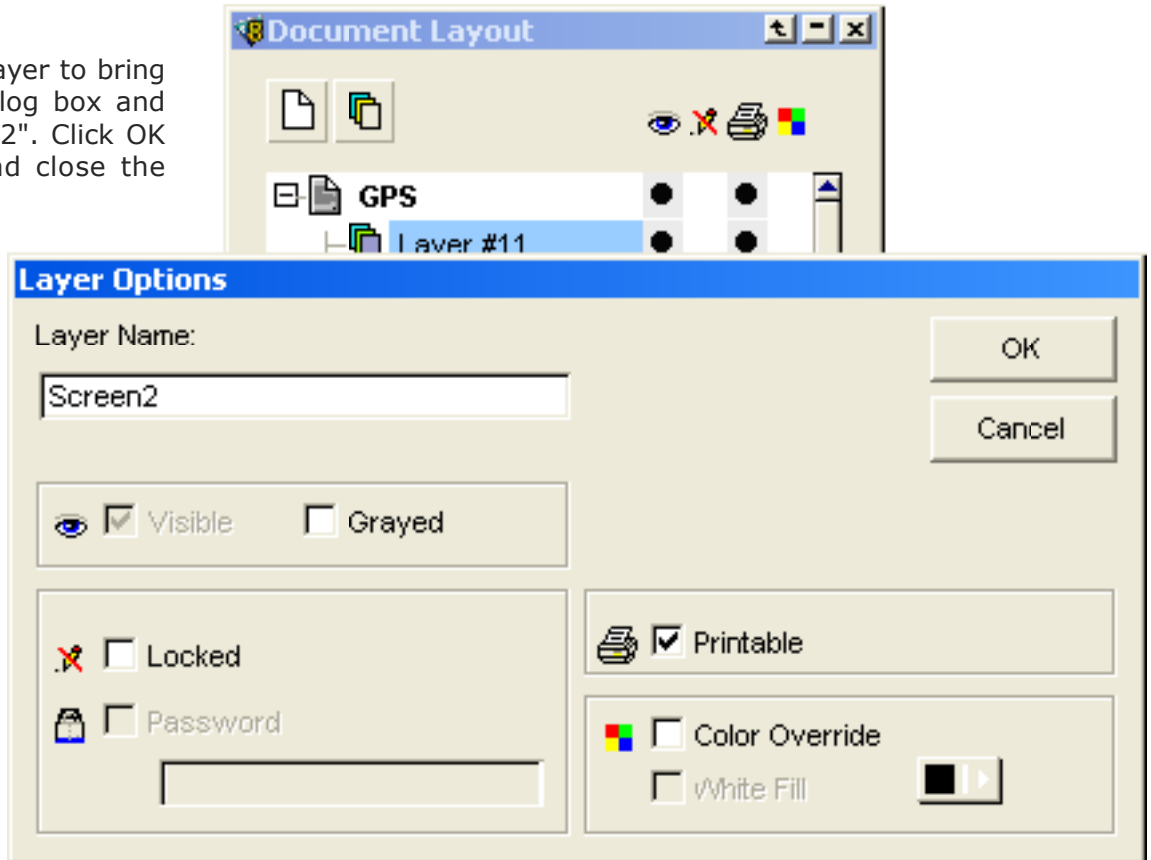
In this step, we will go over some additional layering tricks and features.

One use of layers is to create alternate versions of an illustration. Using our GPS example, we will create an alternate green screen on a different layer that we could then display by turning on and off the visibility of the layer.

We start by creating a new layer. We do this by selecting the New Layer icon in the Document Layout palette.



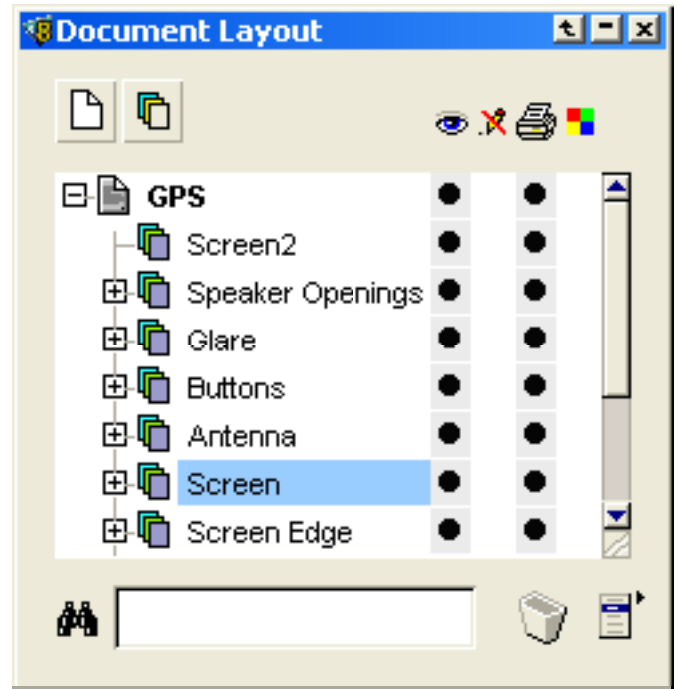
Double-click on the new layer to bring up the Layer Options dialog box and rename the layer "Screen2". Click OK to accept the change and close the dialog box.



Working with Layers (Continued)


Next, click on the layer called "Screen" that contains the objects that make up the blue GPS screen.

We are going to copy the objects from the original "Screen" layer to our new "Screen2" layer to save time.



With the "Screen" layer selected, drag the Selection tool diagonally across the layer to select everything on that layer.

A shortcut you could use is to press Ctrl + A (Windows) or Command + A (Mac) to select everything on the current layer.

 **Tip:** To select all objects on all layers at once, you could hold down the Tab key while dragging the cursor across the entire illustration or you could press Tab + Ctrl + A (Windows) or Tab + Command + A (Mac). This is useful if you need to move an entire illustration to center it in the work area. You would use the key combinations listed above to select all the objects and then use the arrow keys to move the objects around together.

You may also select items on layers other than the one you are currently on by pressing the Tab key and using the Selection tool to pick the objects.

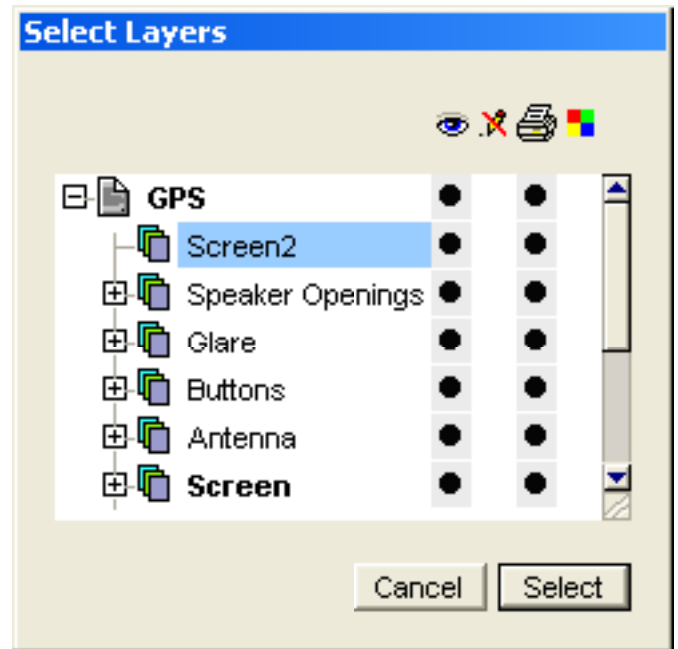


Working with Layers (Continued)

With the screen objects selected on the "Screen" layer, choose Object > Arrange > Copy to Layers. The Select Layers dialog box will appear (see example on right). In this dialog box, you will choose the layer to which you want to copy the objects. You can even choose to copy it to more than one layer.

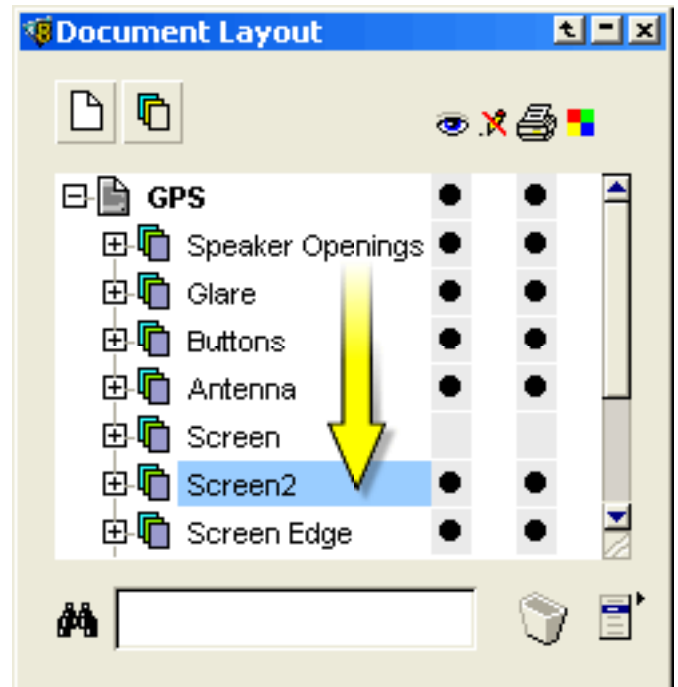


Tip: Choosing "Objects > Arrange > Send to Layers" will move the objects from their current layer to the layer you select.



Now that the screen objects are copied to our "Screen2" layer we are going to move it down below "Screen" layer so that the "Glare" and other layers are still in front of it.

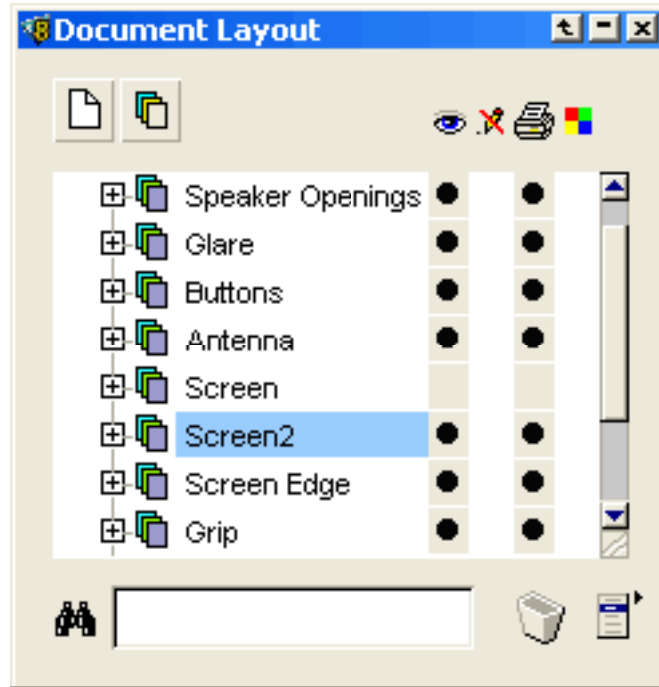
We are also going to deactivate the Visibility icon of the "Screen" layer so we can see and work on the "Screen2" layer.



Working with Layers (Continued)

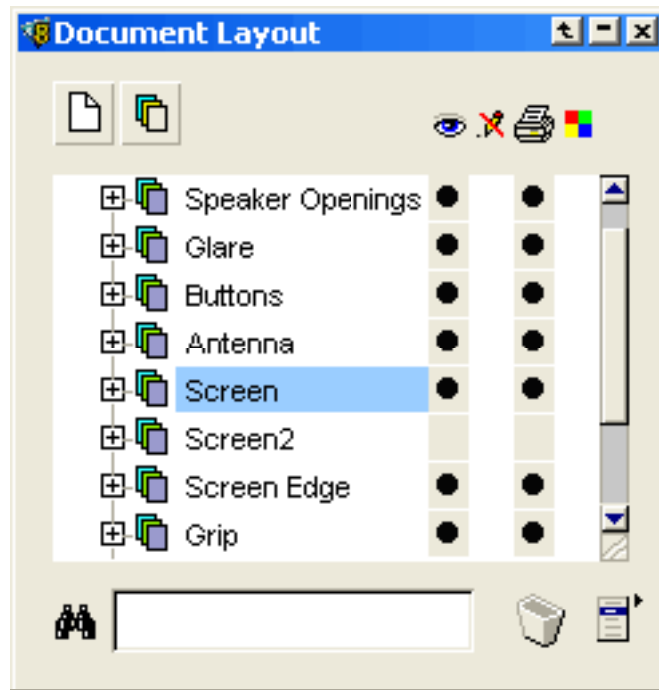
Using the Fill Ink palette, we changed the "Screen2" layer screen objects to a bright green while keeping the "Screen" layer hidden.

On the right, you could see the result of our changes.



Now, you could toggle between screen colors by simply hiding layers.

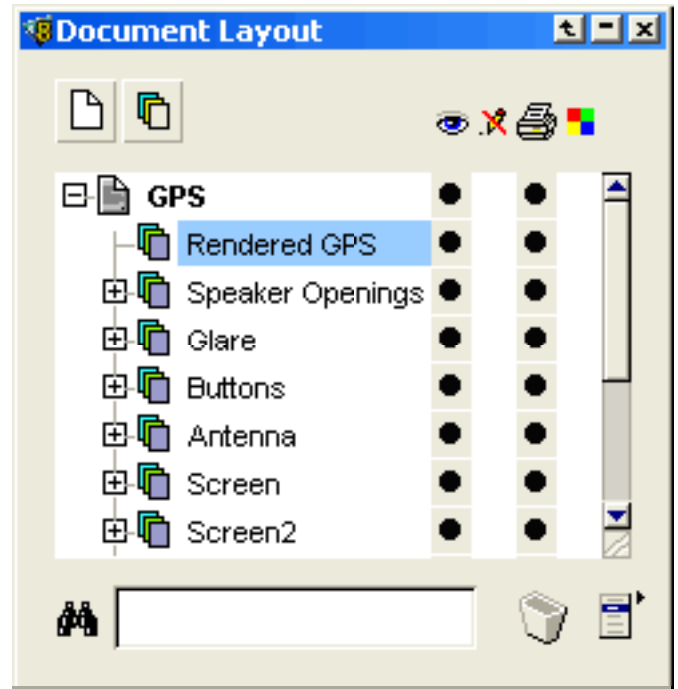
In this example, we went back to the blue screen by hiding the "Screen2" layer, which holds the green screen and making the original "Screen" layer visible.



Step 7

Rendering Multi-layer Illustrations

When rendering multi-layer illustrations, it is best to create a new layer for it. Using the techniques we learned in this tutorial, let's create a new layer and change it's name to Rendered GPS. We will leave the layer on the top of the layer stack this time.



Next, with the new "Rendered GPS" layer selected, choose the Camera tool and drag it to cover the entire illustration. Click your cursor on the inside of the area to be rendered to bring up the Render Image dialog box.



Working with Layers (Continued)

Once the dialog box appears, enter your settings. Be sure to select the Anti-Alias checkbox to keep the edges of your rendered illustration from appearing jagged. When you are done, click OK.

With the rendered image on a separate layer, you don't have to worry about objects getting mixed up or not being able to select a certain object. If you need to revise your illustration, you only need to hide the "Rendered GPS" layer.

