

## The GIMP

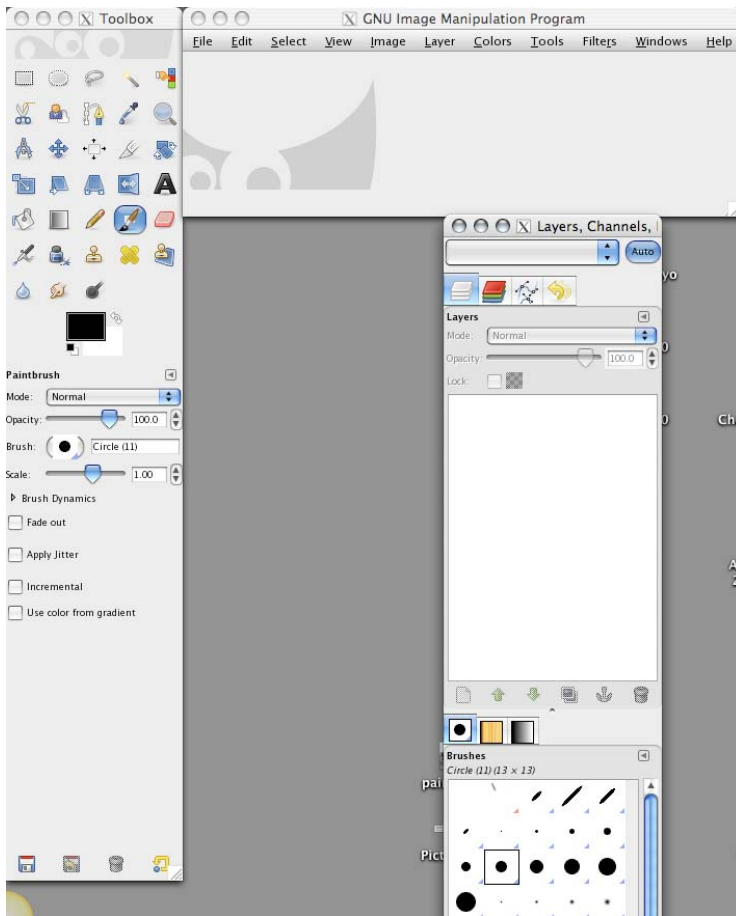
The GIMP, or GNU Image Manipulation Program, is a free and powerful image manipulation program that allows you to create and edit images. In many ways the gimp can be thought of a free Photoshop. It provides many of the same tools, features and even works with the same file types and more as Photoshop. In this guide we will learn how to create, open, save and close a file. We will also cover ways to adjust exposure and how to crop.

But to work with the gimp you first need to get the gimp. Load your Internet browser of choice and go <http://www.gimp.org>. Click on the download button.



After clicking on the download button, follow the appropriate set up for you operating system. If you followed the installation directions correctly you should be greeted with an extremely long program load screen. Thankfully it is usually only this slow the first time.

Another first time experience for most is the gimp's lack of a "sandbox" for the user to work in. (A "sandbox" refers to a box that holds all your windows, tool bars and palettes.) Once the program loads usually you will be greeted with something like this:



which does not make for the greatest first time experience. The beauty of this system is exactly what makes it look so scary- it is completely customizable. If you accidentally close one of your pallets or “docks” or you want to bring up one that is not showing you just click on the Windows tab at the top.

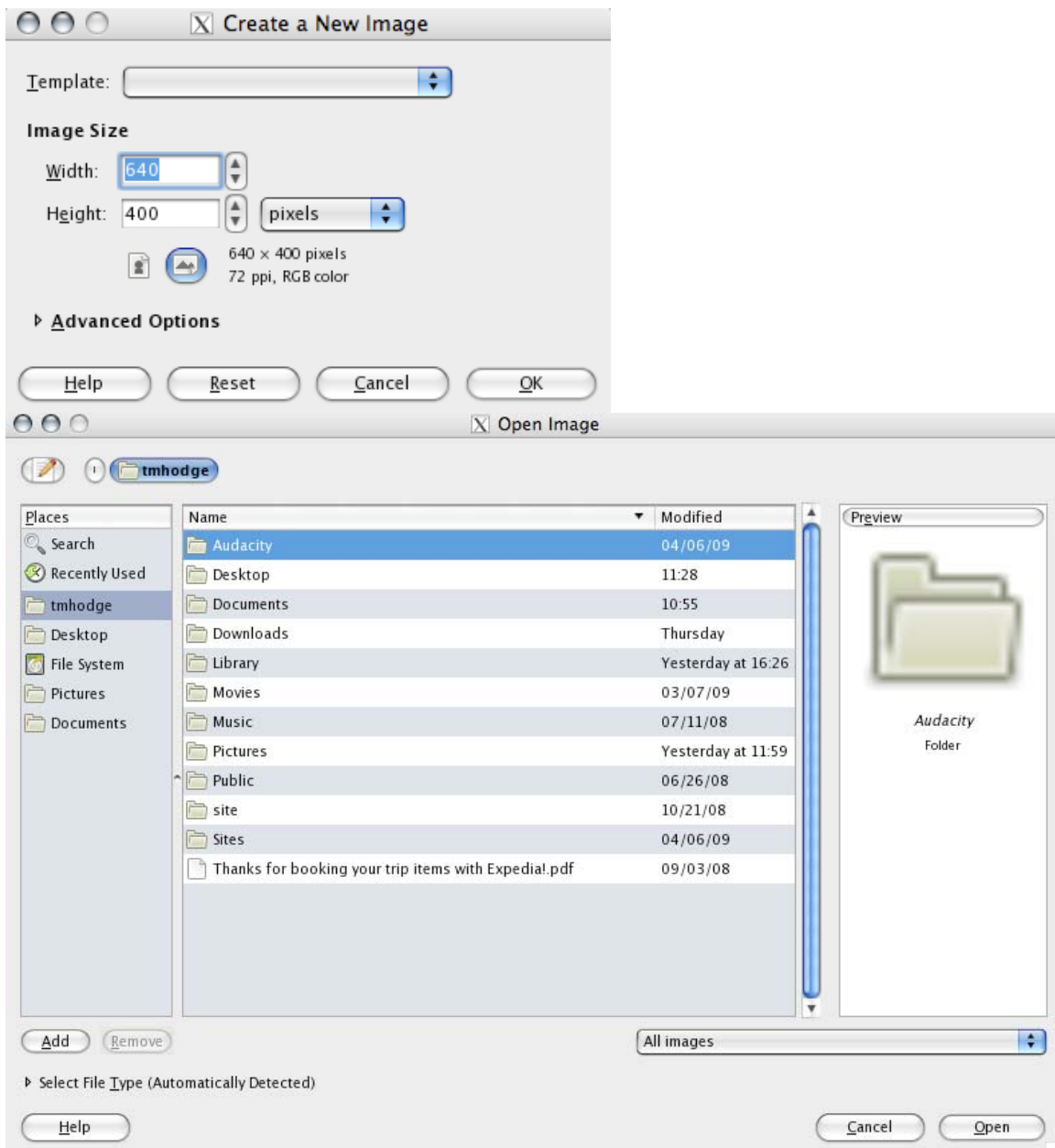
Once you have the layout set to your preferences there is no point in just admiring the gimp’s beauty--you need to start using it. In this case you have two choices: you can create a new file to work on or you can start working on a file that already exists.

--To create a file click on **File>New**.

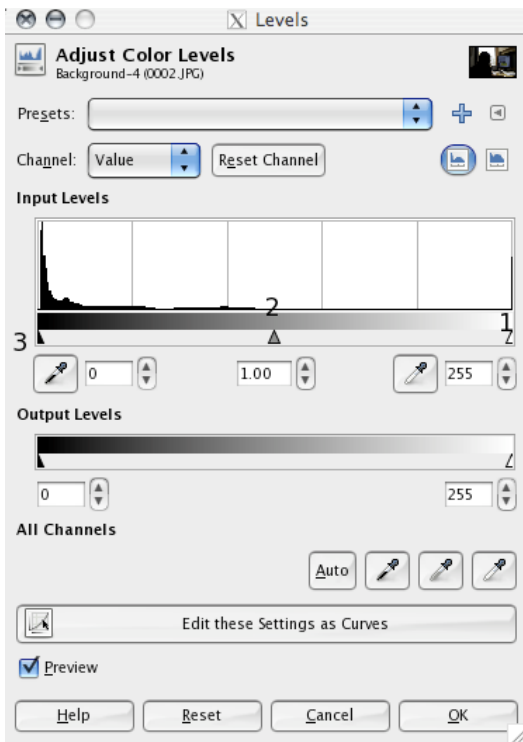
If you create a file you will be shown an option screen very similar to Photoshop’s.

--If you wish to open a file you already have, click **File>Open**.


If you open a preexisting file you will notice that the browser is very similar to what you are used to, perhaps without the same visual finesse that more expensive programs normally have.

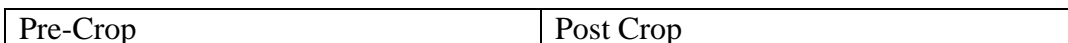


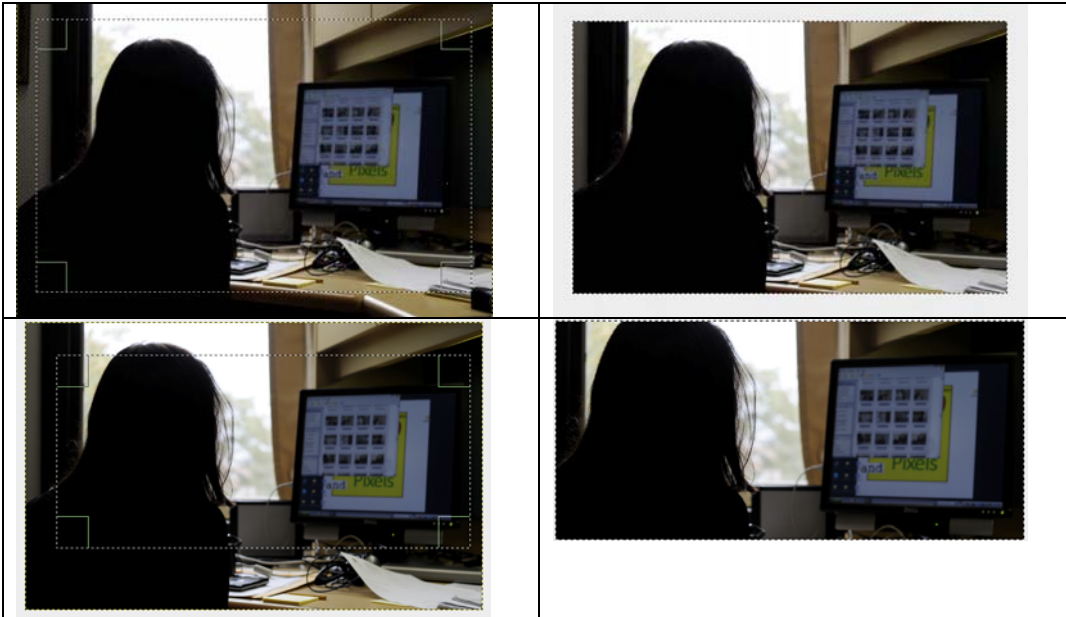
Let's say you opened a file and you like how the photo looks but the photo is a little dark. Say you have a silhouetted figure on the beach or in this photo a figure in front of a window. You can make a "global adjustment," meaning a change across the whole image, using the levels tool. You can access the level tools by going to **Colors>Levels**. The levels tool allows you to make specific changes to the highlights (represented by the white slider #1), the mid-tones (represented by the gray slider #2), and the darks (represented by the black slider #3).



When working with the levels tool you have to watch out for image breakdown in the form of noise (color splotches in dark spots on the image) or the image graying.

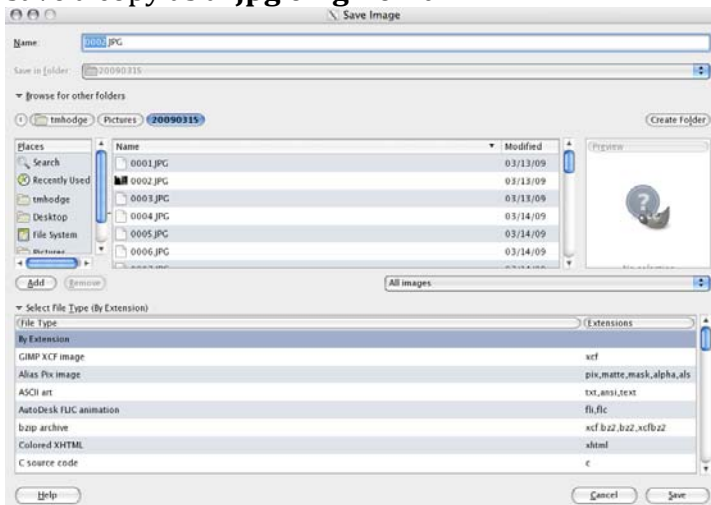
Sometimes when you have taken a photograph you want to get rid of extra stuff in the picture or you want to make the image a little more exotic. This can be done using the cropping tool in the gimp. Cropping in the gimp is a little more difficult than in other programs but not so difficult that it is not worth using. To crop an image you first need to select the area you are going to keep, using the selection tools. In this case I am using the rectangle selection tool ; however, you can use the other selection tools if you want a different shape. Then click on **Image>Crop to Selection** and it will crop the image down to the area you have selected out. More often than not, cropping out extraneous things in your photographs will make them better. This extra touch often draws the line between a pro and an amateur.





Now that you have done all this work you want to keep the new image you have created. So you have to save it. This is the same process you would use to save a word document or any other document you produce on the computer. **File>Save** would save your document as the same file name you all ready had and in the same location it is in. If you have a new document or if you have selected **File>Save as...** because you wanted a different copy or to save it as a different type of file you will see a browser similar to other programs that will allow you to choose where to save it and what to save the file as.

A word of caution-- the gimp's native file format, **.xcf**, does not work with any other programs so if you need to be able to edit the image in Photoshop make sure to save it as a **.psd** . If you want to share the image with people who don't have Photoshop, save a copy as a **.jpg** or **.gif** or **.tif** ...



If you don't see this just make sure to click the small arrows in front of **Browse for other folders** and **Select File Type by Extension**.