Free & Open Source Tools: Visual Design

INKSCAPE

Great For: Vector graphics, cartooning, creating icons, web graphics, logo design, creating UI mockups, bitmap tracing, ...

Cool Features: Tablet support, tile clones, object cloning, bitmap tracing, bitmap embedding, calligraphy tool

Get it from: http://www.inkscape.org/ Available for Linux, Mac OS X, WIndows

Proprietary Equivalents: Adobe Illustrator, Macromedia Freehand, Corel Draw, Adobe Streamline

THE GIMP

Great For: Bitmap graphics, photo editing, creating animated gifs, batch image processing, filters, bitmap size crunching

Cool Features: Tablet support, scanner support, python-based plugin system, layer modes, built-in toilet paper template

Get it from: http://www.gimp.org/ Available for Linux, Mac OS X, WIndows

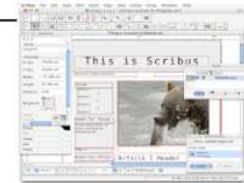**Proprietary Equivalents:** Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Fireworks

SCRIBUS

Great For: Desktop publishing, newsletters, flyers, posters, books, pamphlets, text layout, print design, PDF creation

Get it from: http://www.scribus.net/ Available for Linux, Mac OS X, WIndows, OS/2

Proprietary Equivalents: Quark Xpress, Adobe Page Maker, Adobe InDesign

KRITA

Great For: Digital painting, photo manipulation

Get it from: http://koffice.org/krita Available for Linux

Proprietary Equivalents: Corel Painter

BLENDER

Great For: 3-D modeling, 3-D animation, shading, rigging, rendering

Check out: http://www.elephantsdream.org, an animation created with Blender

Get it from: http://www.blender.org/ Available for Linux, Mac OS X, WIndows, OS/2

Proprietary Equivalents: Autodesk Maya, 3D Studio Max, Soft Image

OTHER TOOLS

Agave   Color palette creator and manager; http://home.gna.org/colorscheme/; Linux only; similar to ColorSchemer Studio

ImageMagick   Command-line batch image processing tool; http://www.imagemagick.org; Linux, Mac OS X, and Windows

Fyre   Creates computational artwork based on chaotic functions; http://fyre.navi.cx/; Linux and Windows

K Icon Editor   Bitmap icon editing tool; http://kde.org/; Linux only

F-Spot   Photo library management tool; http://f-spot.org; Linux only (requires Mono)

gLabels   Label and business card creation tool; http://glabels.sourceforge.net; Linux only

Dia   Diagramming tool; http://www.gnome.org/projects/dia; Linux, Windows, OS X