

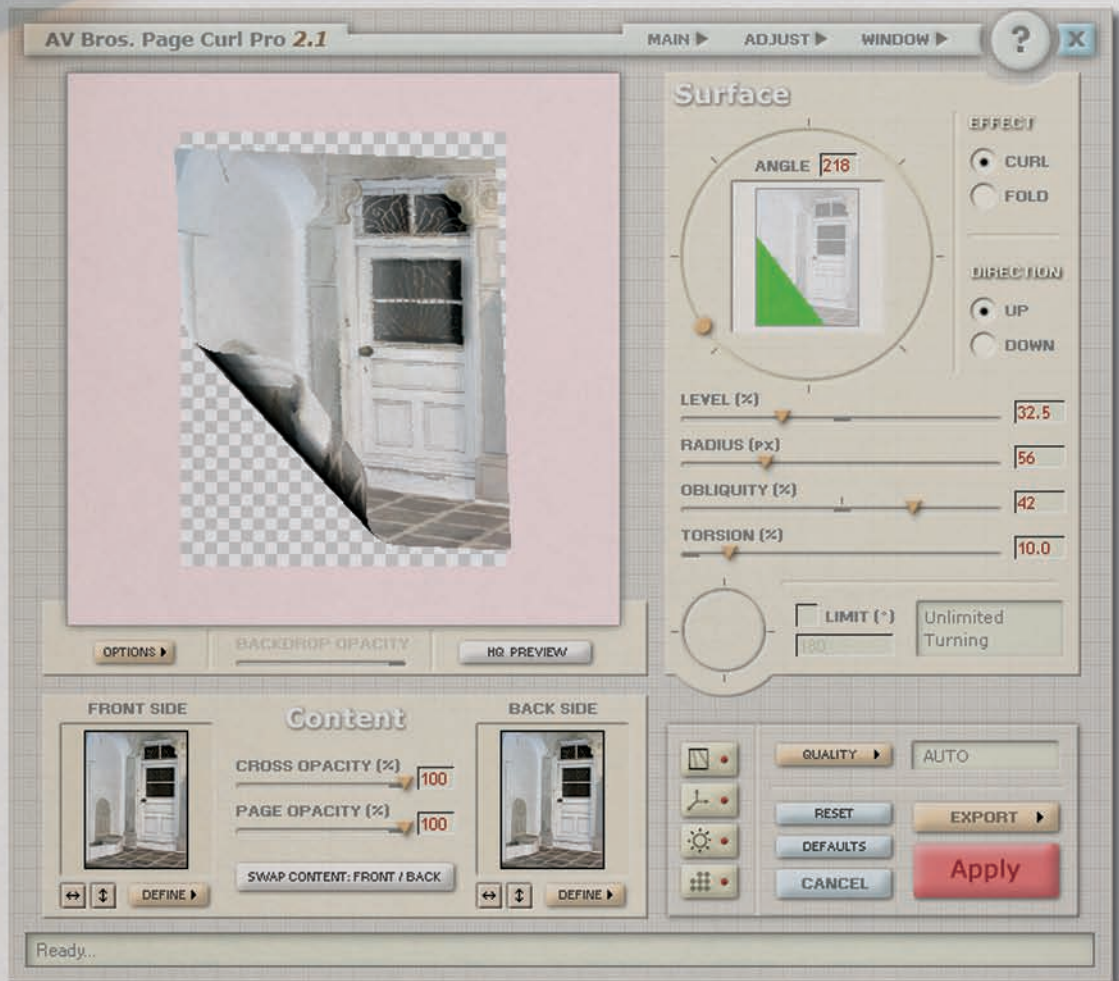
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Page Curl

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Coming from a background in graphic design and fine art, I've always looked for ways to add that extra something that makes a project really stand out. In the world of two-dimensional print and web design it is sometimes hard to imagine what our designs may look like if they were standing in front of us, off the computer screen. Page Curl has the amazing ability to subtly or drastically add that extra flare that will definitely make your design be noticed.

Immediately the example pictures on the AV Bros. web site made me want to dive into Page Curl and see what it was all about. With examples such as pages seamlessly flowing in the wind and crumpled blueprints, my mind was instantly excited at the possibilities this Plug-in offers. I did some research and also found examples of the Page Curl Plug-In that incorporated animation with pages folding right before you. Choosing between a curl and a fold may seem like a rather limited palette at first, however, once the Page Curl palette is entered it is easy to see your choices are limitless.

The initial palette will start you with a single curl on the layer you have selected. This can easily be changed to a fold, change the fold direction up or down, or you can change the placement of the curl on the layer to any position you like. Options such as level, radius, obliquity, and torsion all give you control over how the curl or fold is acting and what the final product will look like.

You have to remember that because you are adding a curl to your image, the backside of that image will now be visible. Not a problem for Page Curl. Single colors, tiles, and even the original layer itself can be selected as the backside of the image. Giving your image a backside will greatly increase the realistic look and make things flow much smoother. After all, how many objects in the real world have a backside that looks like a piece of blank paper?

The additional palettes of Page Curl give you even more control over the image. Bringing up the bends palette will allow you to add curls or folds to your image. Adding additional curls can give your image a flowing wave appearance, while folds will place a rough crease in the image. These can be added at will, however, if your folds or curls overlap, the overlapping area will be noted with a red section in the main palette. Page Curl will automatically resize the curl to the maximum available length at that particular placement.

Lighting your newly curled imaged can be a daunting task at first. Thinking in three-dimensional terms will help you place your lights and add that extra dimension this Plug-in creates so well. You have the option to choose lighting for both the front and back of your image. Double clicking on the front or back sphere will create an additional light source. The results of the lighting palette can be very dramatic. Feel free to play with this and get things looking just how you like. You can always select a light source and delete it if you wish.

Transforming the image in 3-D space also allows you to lay the image down or stand it on its side. The 3-D transform palette lets you control the rotation angle and even the perspective of the image. I found through my own experiments that I preferred using free transform within Photoshop for this task. It allowed me to better orient the image in relation to the other layers in the file. The one draw back of the Page Curl main palette is that you cannot see the other layers of your image, only the one you are working on. However, this feature could prove useful while working with a single-layered image.

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If at this point you don't feel you have enough options to control your curled page, there is still one more palette for you to explore, the bump mapping palette. From this palette you can add extra texture and depth to the image. The bump map is a grayscale image used on either side of your document to add texture. Any existing channel such as red, green, or blue can be used. If using a channel doesn't sound appealing, you can also use any external image file you wish. Once the source of the bump map is applied you can edit the level of the texture, its blurriness, and even flip the map horizontally or vertically.

The possibilities of this Plug-in are endless. Dive in and see for yourself what you can add to your designs. It can be used with many of the standard imaging applications such as: Photoshop, ImageReady, Fireworks, and many others. At the AV Bros. web site (<http://www.avbros.com>) you can browse through images and see exactly what this Plug-in can do. A free demo is also available at <http://www.thepowerxchange.com> to let you try before you buy. ❌