

# GIMP: A DESIGN APPLICATION REVIEW

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## What is GIMP?

The GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP) is a completely free and open-source application used to edit images, create graphic designs, and provide a space for original artwork to be created. GIMP is a multi-platform app that is capable of running on GNU/LINUX, OS X, Windows, and more. The most recent version available for download is version 2.10.14 and I ran this app on my 2014 MacBook Air.

### Current Stable Version

The current stable release of GIMP is 2.10.20 (2020-06-07).

We think your OS is OS X.

Show downloads for [GNU/Linux](#) | [OS X](#) | [Microsoft Windows](#) | [All](#)

### GIMP for macOS

Note: the currently available package provides GIMP 2.10.14 and has not yet updated to the latest version, GIMP 2.10.20. We're working on that, please check back later.



The download links above will attempt to download GIMP from one of our trusted mirror servers. If the mirrors do not work or you would rather download directly from our server, you can get the [direct download here](#).

Figure 1-GIMP website

## First Impressions

I was able to download GIMP with no issues and there were helpful pop-up prompts along the way. I was first overwhelmed when I opened the app because I have never used any design software previous to this.

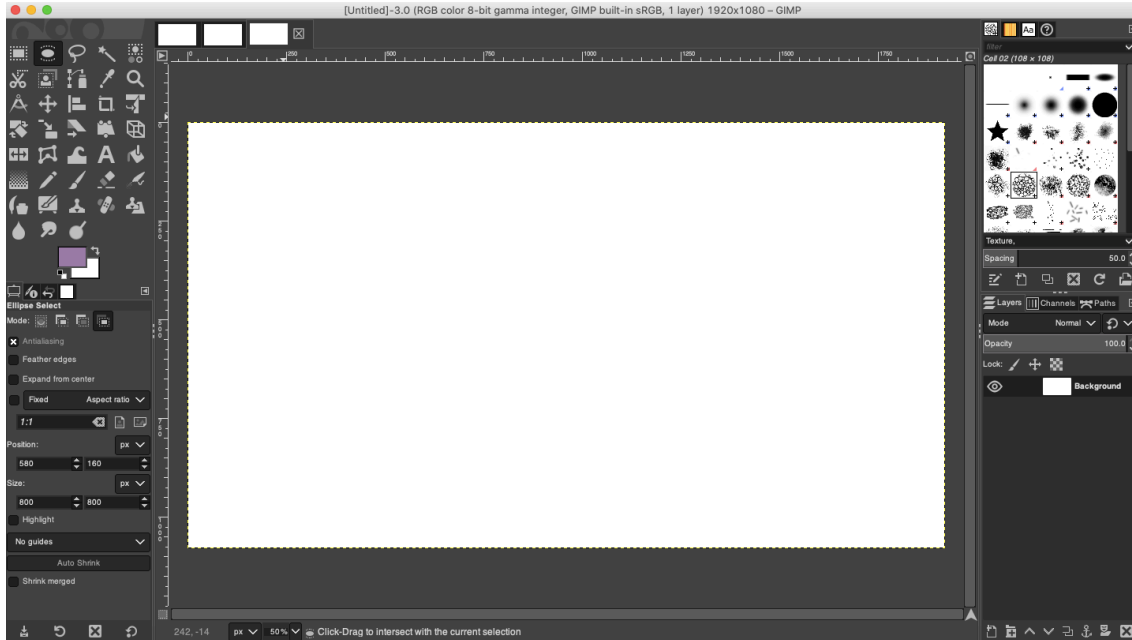


Image 2- Start up page

All of the icons and options were intimidating, but with a short YouTube tutorial I was able to grasp the concept of the general layout and identify which icons did what.



Image 3-Tool bar

## Functionality and Limitations

I would describe GIMP as both user friendly and non-friendly. The reason I say this is because I have never worked on a design program before; therefore, I struggled with this the entire time. I was constantly looking up videos on YouTube to explain how to do an action and what buttons did what. However, after reading users reviews, it appears that many designers, illustrators, and artists love using GIMP. This gives me the impressions that, if given the correct exposure and training, I, too, could successfully navigate GIMP and create wonderful graphics.

I attempted to create a basic graphic design using the app. My goal was to create a logo of some kind, so I created a fake JMU organization that needed a logo. I named it Dukes after Dark. I began with a new document and began adding simple shapes.

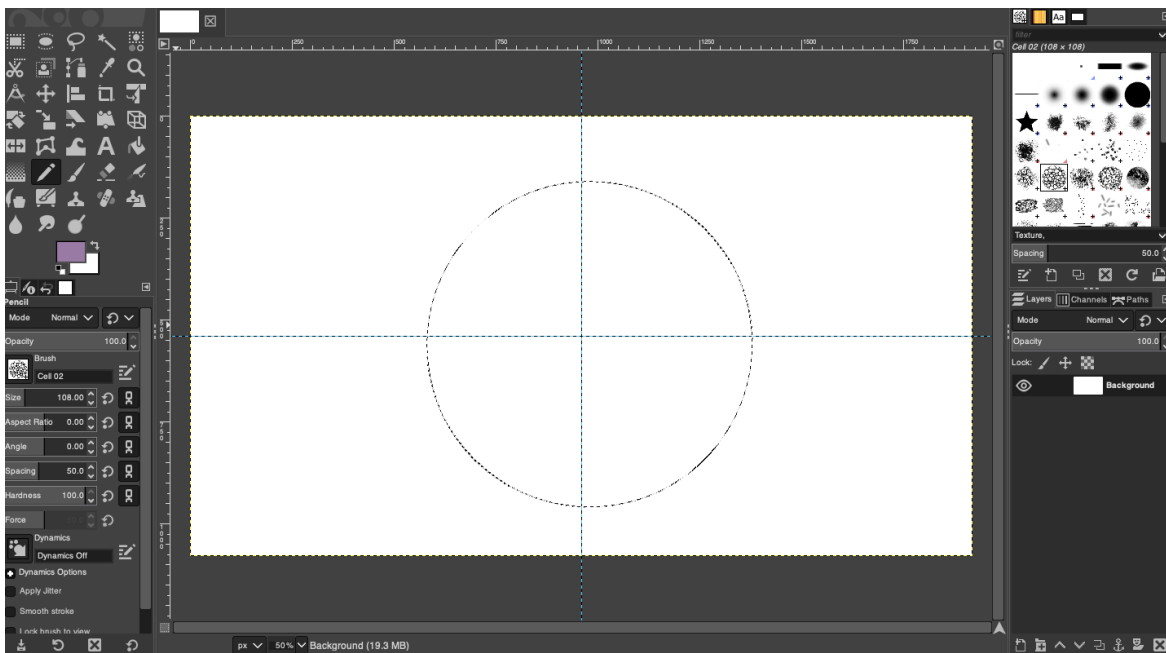


Figure 4- First shape

Create shapes was simple; all you needed to do was choose your shape from the tool bar and drag to your desired size. GIMP also has features that allow you to manually type in a specific size. As shown in figure 4, I also made it so I had equal sized quadrants on the page so that I could easily align shapes and text.

I then wanted to add colors and create layers for the logo. This will create dimension and allow for color contrast. Things instantly began to get challenging for me past creating a simple circle. GIMP gives you the ability to choose colors by using a scroll bar on a rainbow, which isn't the greatest when you want very specific colors and themes. GIMP also allows user to enter an HTML code, however. Advice from a tech expert led me to a website called Coolors.

Coolors is a neat website that generates color palettes for you and gives you the HTML code. It will generate a palette of five colors for you and you can lock in colors you like and then continue through cycles of other colors.

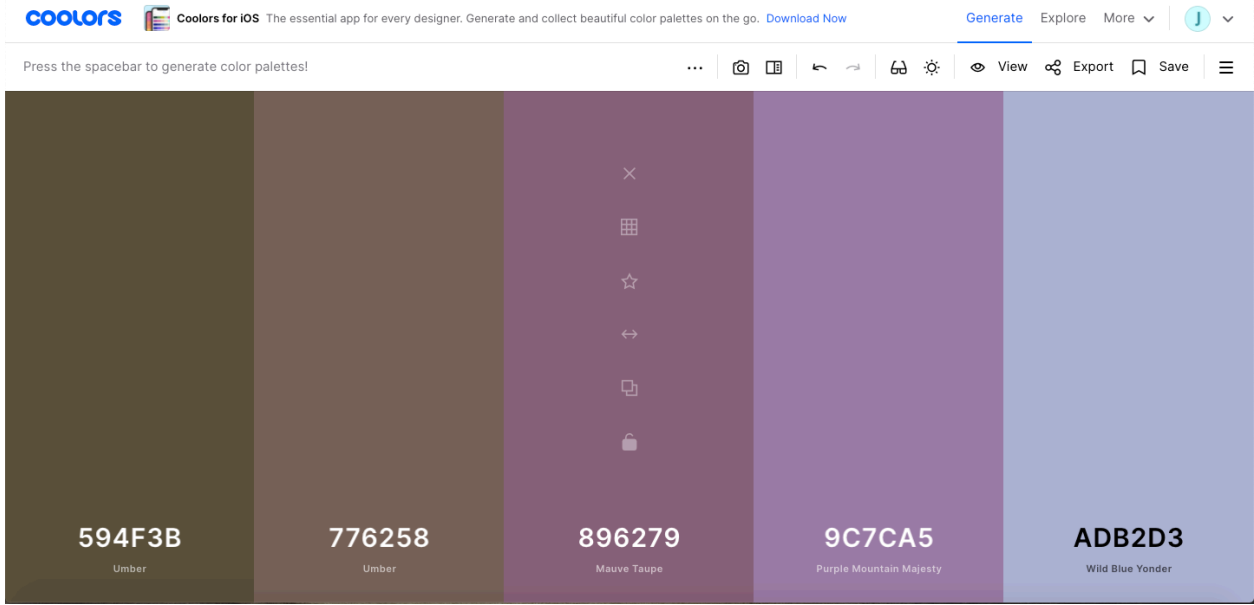


Image 5- My colors palette

After choosing my colors I had to apply them to my circle using a simple paint fill action. Next I began to use strokes and add layers. Strokes allow the user to make borders inside of an image and then create a layer so that only that specific region (made of the strokes) would be affected by further changes. For example, I added a white ring inside of my circle and added mountain to the design.

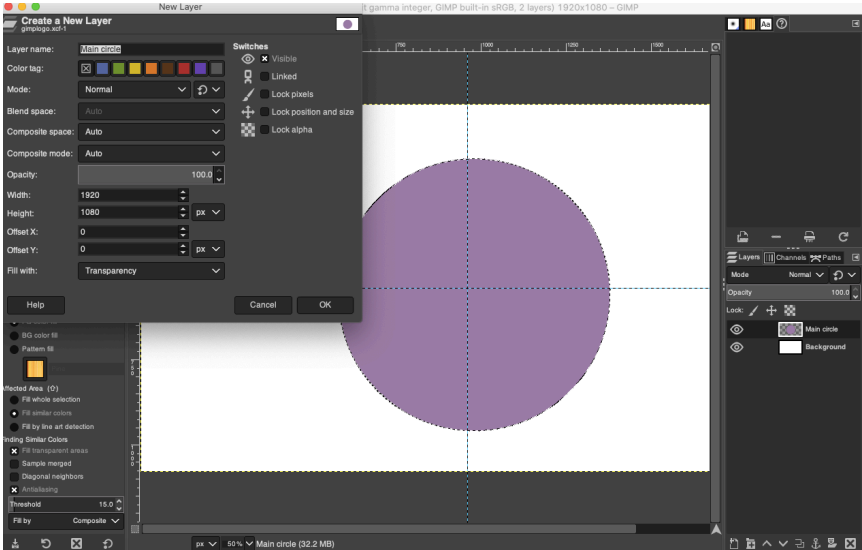


Image 6- Adding a layer called "main circle"

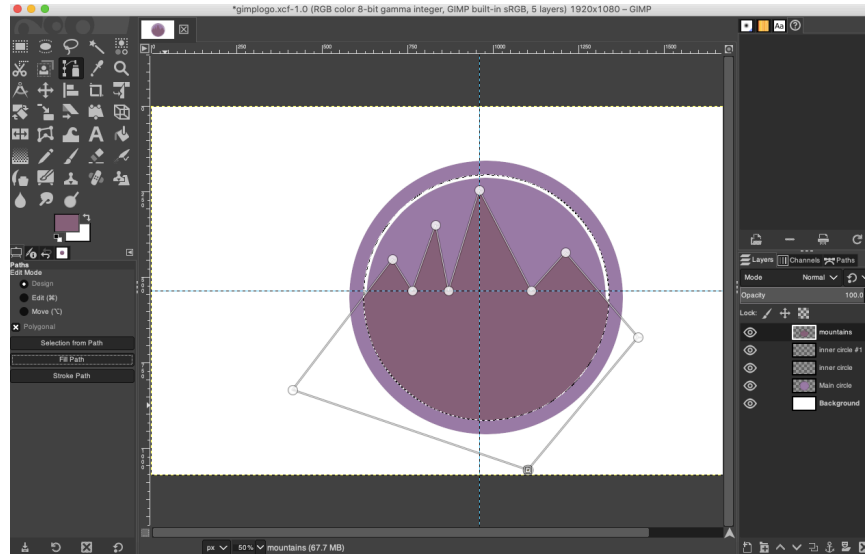


Image 7- The white border represents the addition of a stroke and layers have allowed me to add the mountains and change them to a different color without affecting the whole circle.

The other function that allows users to make graphics like my mountains is the path feature. Each peak and valley of the mountain in my design represents a point on the path (Image 7). Creating a path enables me to make a unique shaped design, such as mountain peaks.

My final task was to create text. This step was simple: add a text box, choose a color, font, and size. GIMP supplies many different fonts to choose from and you can also upload any fonts you may want to use.

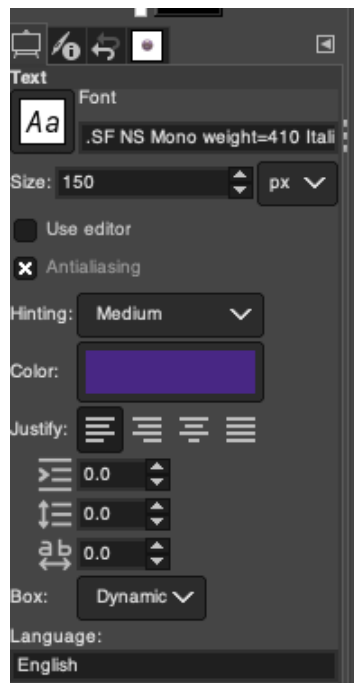


Image 8- Options for creating a text box

## Final Design

At the end of the day I am proud of this design. It took a lot of effort and I think it came out great, especially since this is the first thing I have ever designed graphically. Some features of GIMP that I utilized in this design were layers, paths, strokes, and text.



Image 9- My final design

## Final Evaluation

Overall, I enjoyed using GIMP as my first-ever design application experience. It was basic enough that I was able to create a simple, unique design. I was faced with challenges when it came to very technical aspects such as spacing and creating layers. I was easily able to remedy any issues I had with internet searches. The app itself never gave me any issues in terms of loading, saving, or exporting. I really liked the features that allowed me to upload my own fonts and color palettes too. GIMP serves its purpose well and with ease. I would recommend this design application to those who are both new to the field and veterans.