

## ► **Adobe CS6: Real-World Productivity for Design Professionals**

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### **Introduction**

This document presents key findings of a benchmarking project designed to assess the impact of the Adobe CS6 applications on the productivity of designers and creative professionals.

Benchmarks were designed to measure how specific functions speed up everyday tasks. For details on the methodology used to conduct these benchmarks, check out “About the Benchmarks” at the end of this report.

This report focuses specifically on features and functionality geared towards the professional designer. Web creation and interactive media, digital imaging, and video production are covered in separate reports.

- **Adobe Illustrator CS6: Performance** ..... **3**  
Illustrator CS6 has been rewritten from the ground up for better performance, especially when working with large, complex files.
- **Adobe Illustrator CS6: Gradients on Strokes** ..... **4**  
Being able to apply gradients to strokes provides considerable creative potential and increases productivity significantly.
- **Adobe Illustrator CS6: Pattern Creation**..... **5**  
Illustrator CS6 provides a new pattern creation feature that makes creating and modifying patterns much more intuitive and efficient.
- **Adobe InDesign CS6: Alternate Layouts and Liquid Layout** ..... **6**  
Alternate layouts facilitates the creation of multiple variations of a design, and speeds up delivering content for tablets and devices.
- **Adobe InDesign CS6: Linked Content** ..... **7**  
Linked content in InDesign CS6 streamlines the production process of different documents that share assets and design elements.
- **Adobe InDesign CS6: Content Collector Tools** ..... **8**  
A new tool in InDesign CS6 makes re-purposing elements from existing documents significantly easier.
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Photoshop CS6 offers several ways of working more efficiently with layers, speeding up creation and modification of complex documents.
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Find out more about the methodology and the techniques used to provide a reliable assessment of productivity gains.

# Illustrator CS6

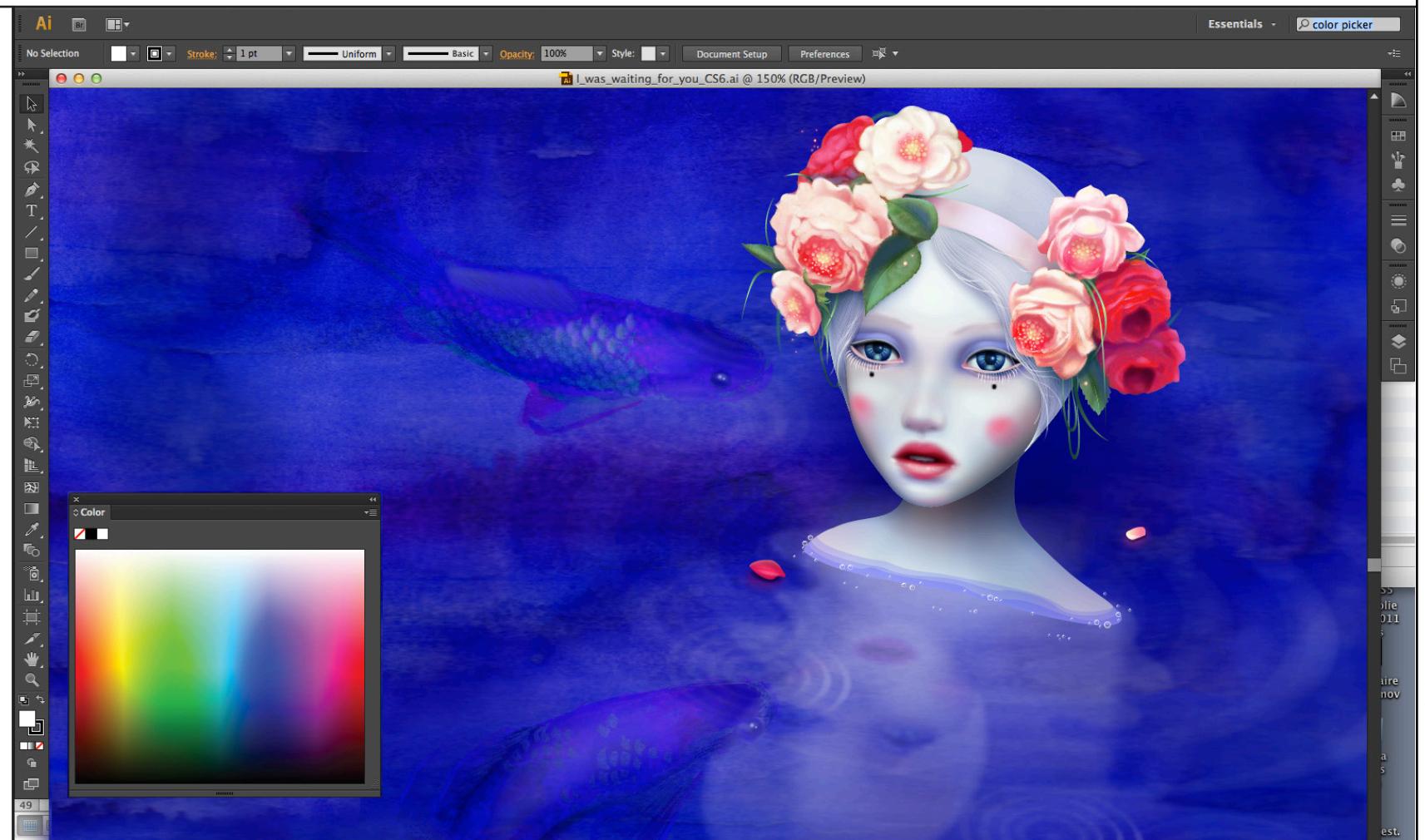
**Application Area:**  
**Performance**

## ► The new Illustrator: 64bit Architecture and Performance Gains

### What is all about?

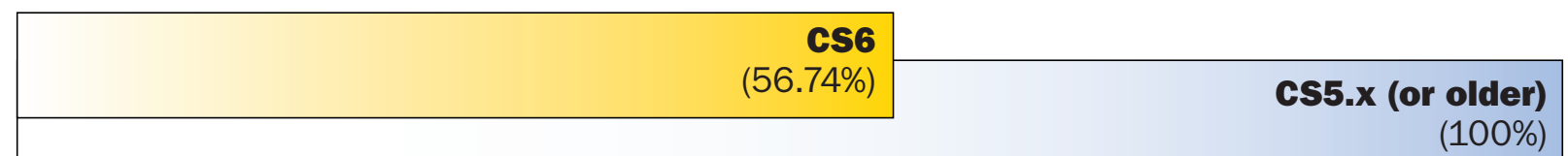
Illustrator has been rewritten from the ground up for the CS6 release. The redesigned user interface makes many common operations much more efficient: the bigger color palette (which can have a measurable influence on productivity), in-line editing in content panels, or enhancements in managing type, among many others.

The most important improvements, though, are under the hood: Illustrator CS6 is a 64-bit application that eliminates memory limitations. The processing architecture of the program has been redesigned to provide significant performance gains, particularly when working with complex files.



### About the Benchmarks

We conducted over 80 individual benchmarks, covering a wide variety of time-consuming operations. On average, Illustrator CS6 took close to half the time than earlier versions in these benchmarks.



Illustrator CS6: **38.03 sec.** Illustrator CS5.1: **1 min. 07 sec.** Shorter is better.

Average of 81 individual benchmarks on both Mac and Windows® platforms, covering a selection of 15 common operations performed with Illustrator ranging from opening and saving files to common editing operations as well as frequently used effects.

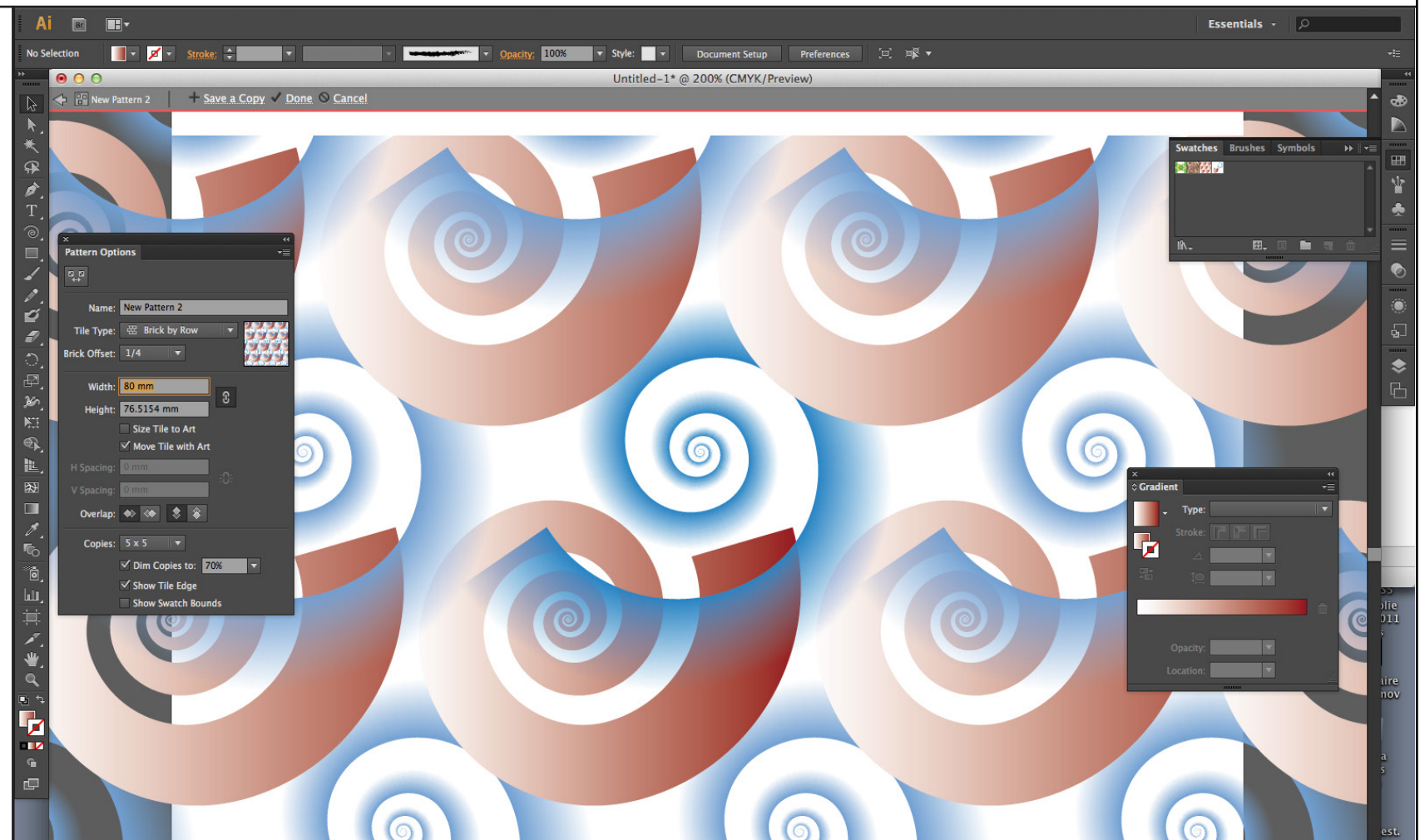


## ► Gradients on Strokes: Productivity and Creative Potential

### What is it all about?

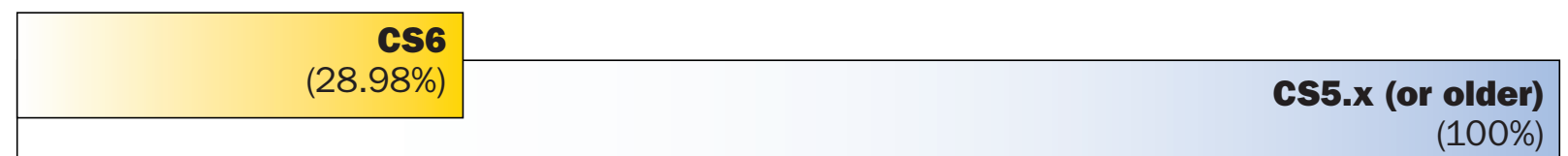
One of the major feature innovations of Illustrator CS6 is to allow the use of color gradients on strokes.

This opens up a considerable creative potential, particularly when combined with the variable-width stroke feature introduced in Illustrator CS5: Gradients on strokes allow creations that would have been all but impossible using older releases of the program.



### About the Benchmarks

Since many of the creations possible with gradients on strokes are very difficult to emulate with pre-existing tools, our benchmarks were limited to two very simple examples. The creative potential of this feature is significant.



Illustrator CS6: **7.45 sec.** Illustrator CS5.1: **25.72 sec.** Shorter is better.

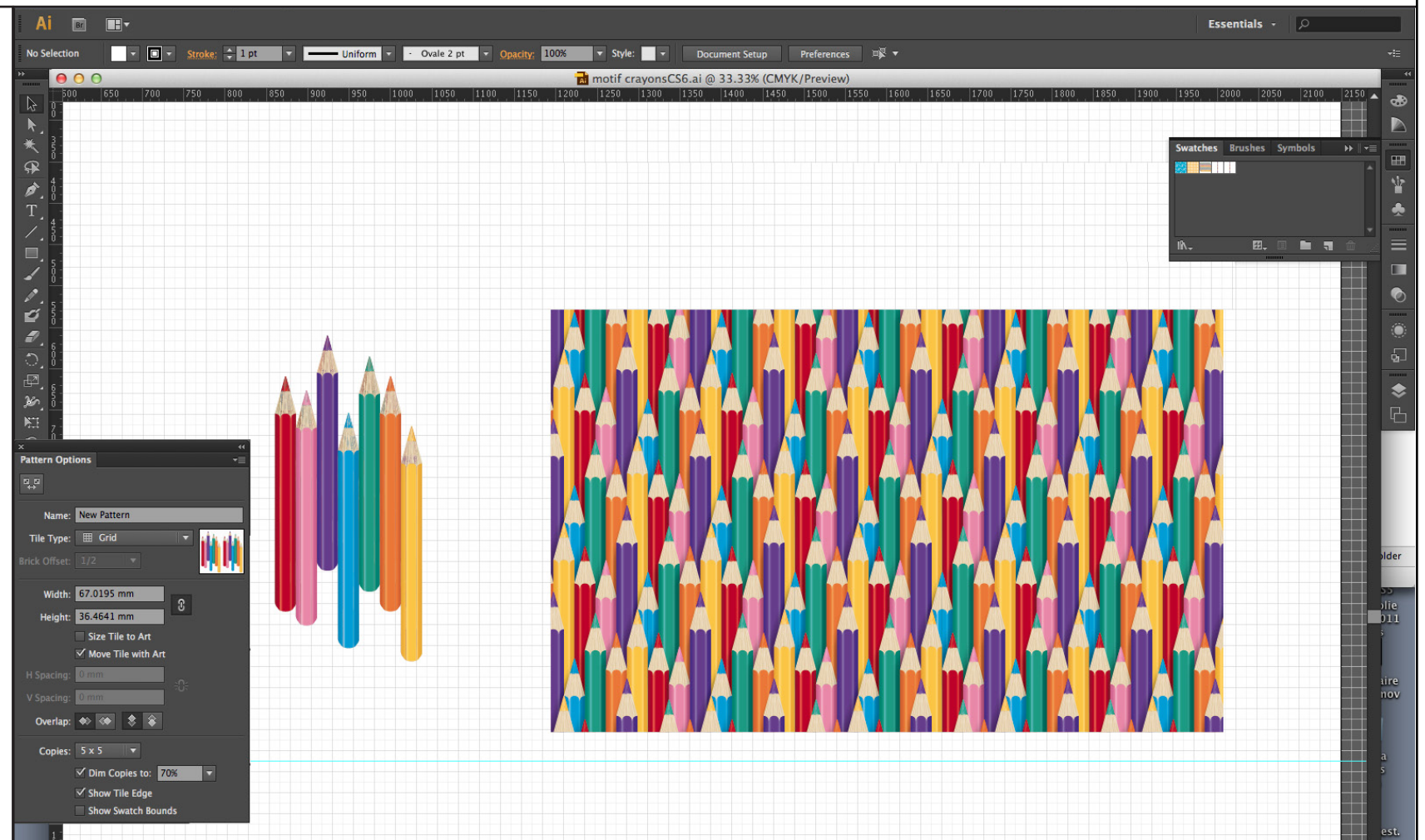
Average of 12 individual benchmarks, comparing the Gradients on Strokes feature with the time necessary to create similar effects using older releases. (Note: Benchmarks did not cover complex effects, easy to create with the new feature but very hard with older versions.)

## ► How Illustrator CS6 Re-Invents Pattern Creation

### What is it all about?

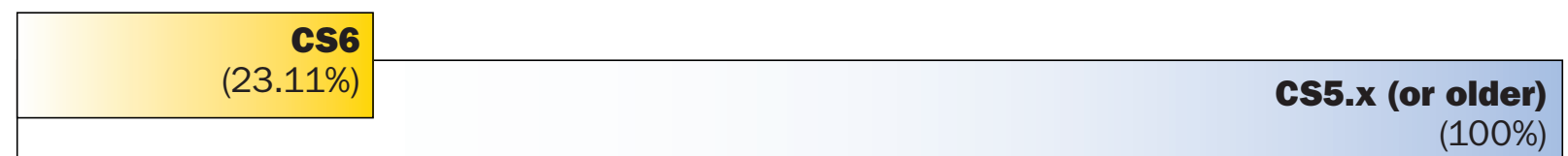
Illustrator CS6 provides a pattern creation feature that not only makes pattern creation much more efficient than in the past, it also allows tiling and other options unavailable before.

The new Pattern Options panel makes it very easy to experiment with variations and spacing of elements. As a result, the sort of complex pattern such as the one in our illustration, common when creating fabric designs, for instance, have been almost impossible in the past. In any case, the productivity gains are very significant.



### About the Benchmarks

Illustrator CS6 took less than a quarter of the time to create simple patterns. Time savings with more complex examples would be even more significant.



Illustrator CS6: **7.64 sec.** Illustrator CS5.1: **33.04 sec.** Shorter is better.

Average of 18 individual benchmarks, covering creation, modification and fine-tuning of simple monochrome and multi-color patterns. (Note: Elaborate patterns, easy to create with the new pattern tool but very hard in older releases have not been covered.)

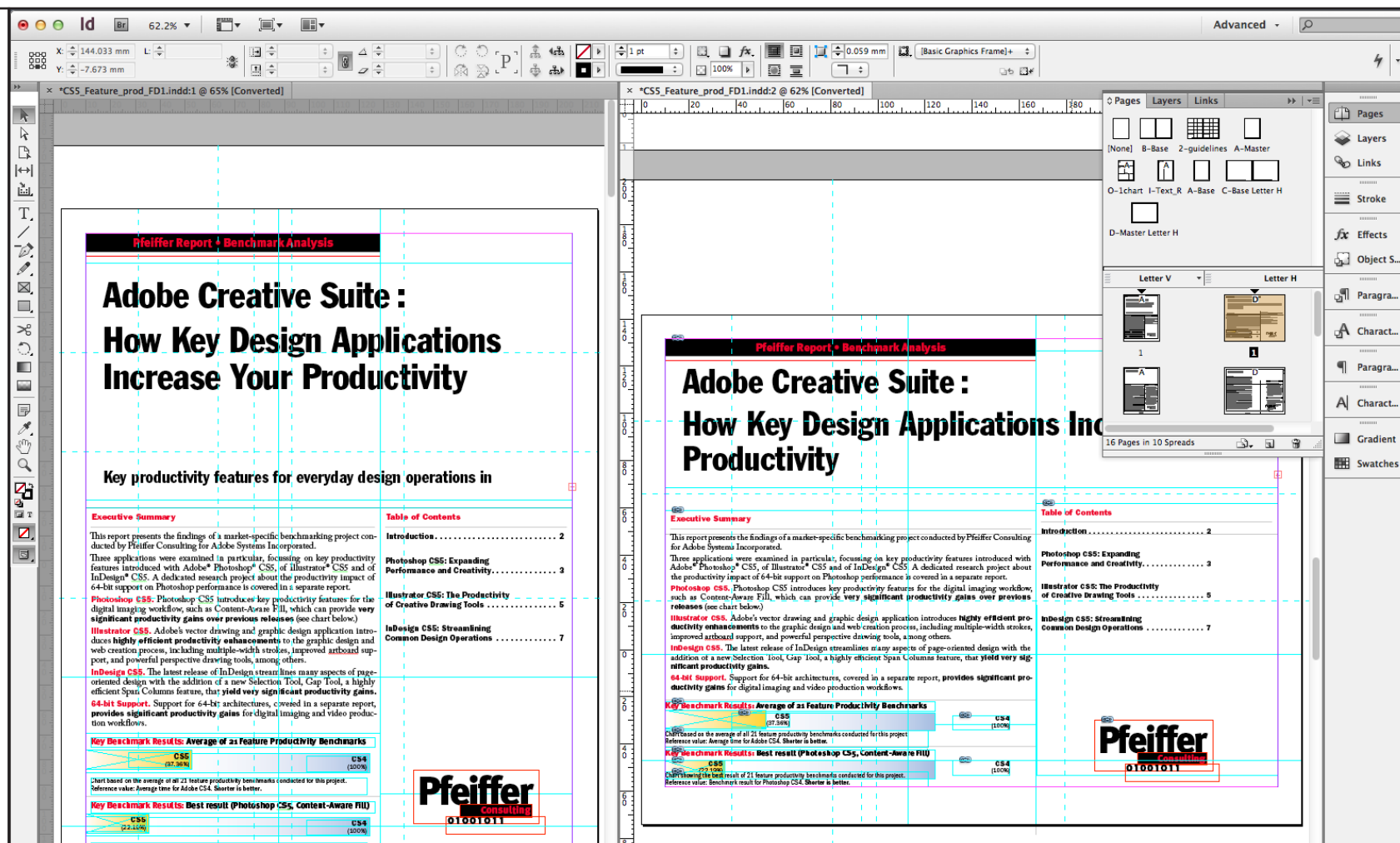


## ► Liquid Layout and Alternate Layouts: Variations Made Easy

### What is it all about?

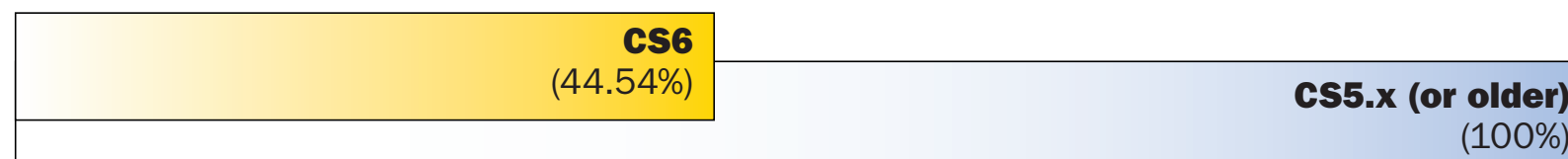
In the world of modern digital media, where several different variations of one page need to be created and updated rapidly, the Liquid Layout and Alternate Layouts features in Adobe InDesign® CS6 represents a major breakthrough in terms of workflow efficiency.

Liquid Layout is a rule-based system that, combined with Alternate Layouts, automates many of the tedious repetitive steps when creating a variation of an InDesign document — yet leaves the designer all the necessary freedom to make creative adjustments and variations where necessary.



### About the Benchmarks

Even on relatively simple operations on short documents our benchmarks were able to complete the tasks in half the time it previously took. Productivity gains on complete publications are likely to be very significant.



InDesign CS6: **2 min. 56 sec.** InDesign CS5.5: **6 min. 35 sec.** Shorter is better.

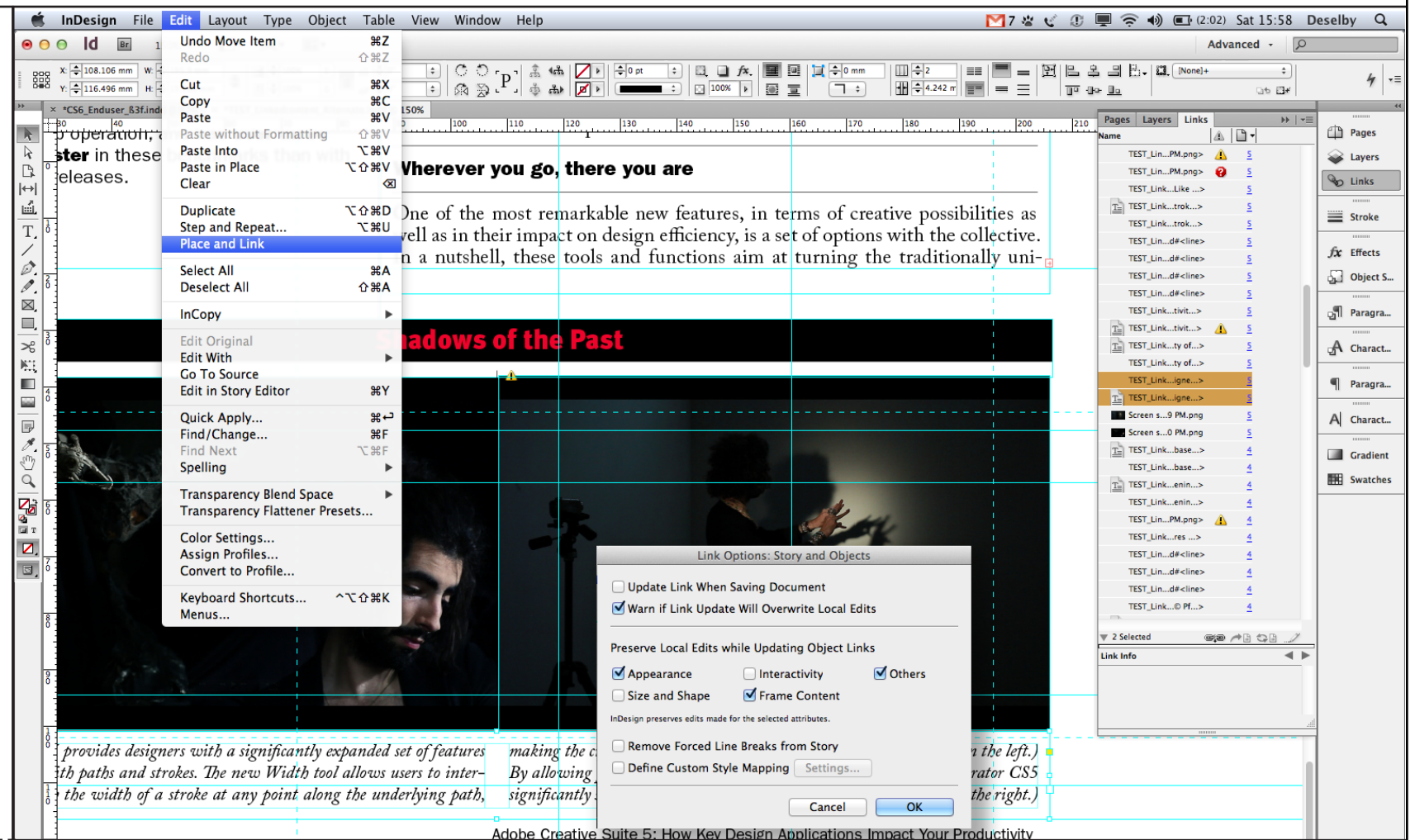
Average of 3 different multi-step workflow benchmarks covering the creation and fine-tuning of alternate versions of the same document. (In the case of InDesign CS5.1, some benchmarks were executed using the Layout Adjustment feature, others without it.)

## ► **Linked Content: Keeping Your Content in Sync**

### What is it all about?

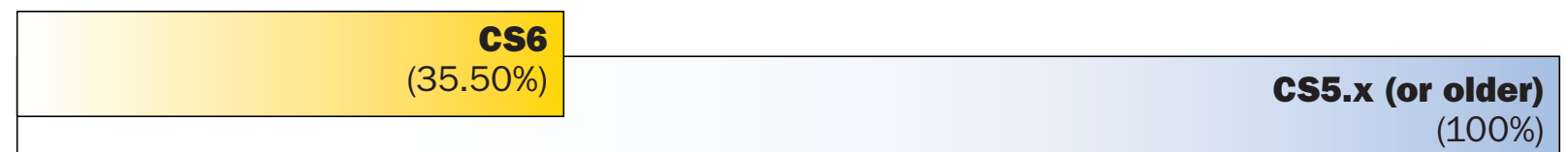
Linked content allows elements to be shared within a single document or across different InDesign files, and to easily update them as the original is changed.

The linking feature includes not only the content of a frame, but also graphic parameters and interactivity. The considerable power of the feature lies in the fact that the user can choose which aspects of a linked instance are updated. It is possible, for instance, to update the text in a text frame, but preserve changes made to shape and appearance.



### About the Benchmarks

We benchmarked the Linked Content feature in a variety of workflow situations, on relatively short documents. Productivity gains on longer or more complex documents are likely to be significant.



InDesign CS6: **15.08 sec.** InDesign CS5.5: **42.48 sec.** Shorter is better.

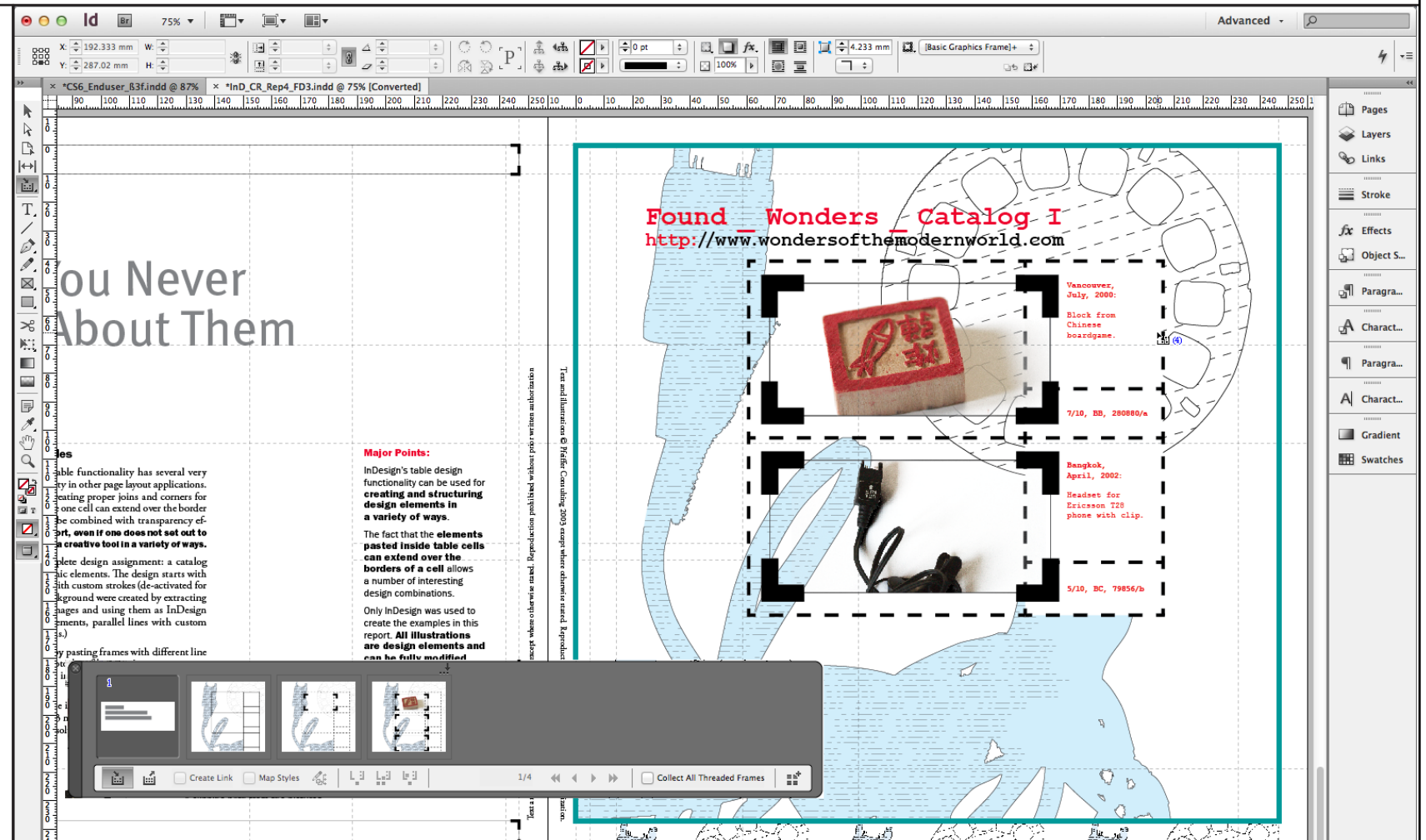
Average of 15 individual benchmarks covering a variety of workflow situations that require updating text, images or graphic elements of a secondary version of a master page layout that has been modified.

## ► The Content Collector Tools: A New Perspective on Repurposing Content

### What is it all about?

The Content Collector tools provide a sophisticated way of re-purposing content from existing InDesign documents.

Unlike using the Cut/Paste method, elements can be collected from several pages or open InDesign documents at the same time, and can subsequently be placed individually or as groups. Collected items can also be scaled while being placed, or placed as a repetitive grid. If required, a link to the original content can be automatically created.



### About the Benchmarks

Our benchmarks covered several common workflow situations where elements from different designs are re-purposed: collecting several elements from different pages of a document, or collecting different elements and scaling them upon placement.

**CS6**  
(44.55%)

**CS5.x (or older)**  
(100%)

InDesign CS6: **23.17 sec.** InDesign CS5.5: **52.01 sec.** Shorter is better.

Average of 12 individual benchmarks comparing the efficiency of the Content Collector tool with the time necessary to transfer different design elements between documents by manual cut and paste operations.



# Photoshop CS6

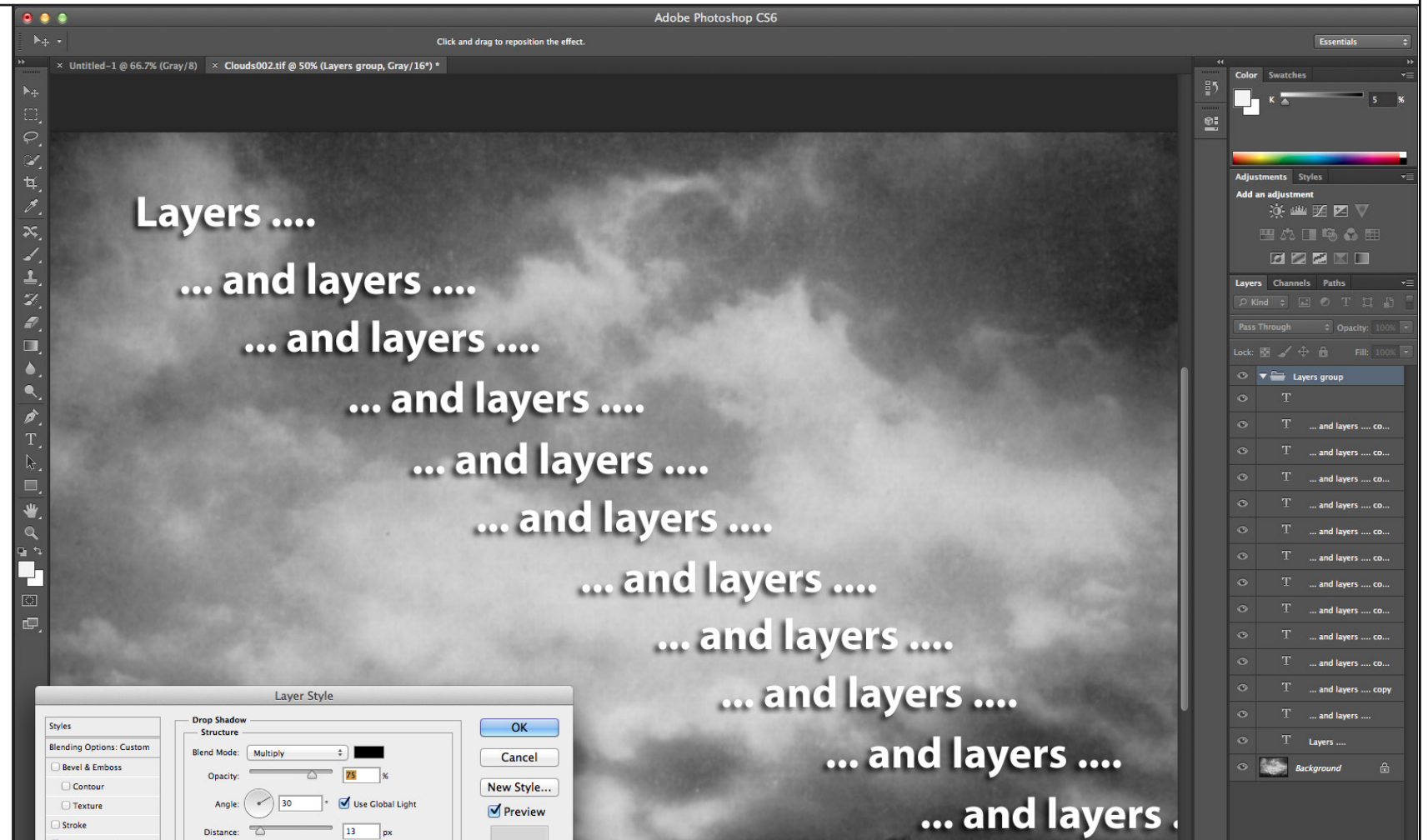
**Application Area:**  
**Working with Layers**

## ► Photoshop Layers: A New Level of Efficiency

### What is it all about?

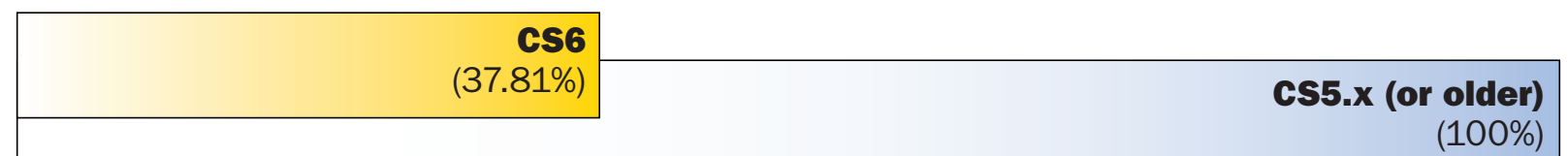
Layers have been an essential feature of Adobe Photoshop® for many years. Photoshop CS6 adds several essential options: Layer Styles can now be applied not only to individual layers, but to groups (as in our illustration).

Other productivity enhancements include a sophisticated search function, that can help locate layers by name or type, speeding up work with complex documents significantly.



### About the Benchmarks

Our benchmarks covered the key productivity enhancements to the layer architecture in Photoshop CS6.



Photoshop CS6: **11.53 sec.** Photoshop CS5.1: **30.50 sec.** Shorter is better.

Average results from 12 individual benchmarks, executing a selection of layer-related operations, including applying effects to multiple layers, locating a specific layer in complex file by name or by type, and renaming multiple layers.

► **About the Benchmarks: How We Measure Productivity**

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**About the Adobe CS6 Productivity Benchmarks**

The productivity figures in this report are part of an extensive productivity benchmarking project commissioned by Adobe, in order to independently assess the productivity gains that CS6 applications can provide creative professionals.

Pfeiffer Consulting independently developed and executed the benchmarks presented here. The benchmarks were designed and executed by creative professionals.

**How we design the benchmarks**

The basic approach is simple: in order to assess productivity gains that a new release or a different product may (or may not) bring, we start by analyzing the minimum number of steps necessary to achieve a given result in each of the applications that have to be compared.

Once this list of actions has been clearly established, we start to execute the operation or workflow in each program, with the help of seasoned professionals who have long-standing experience in the field and with the programs that are tested.

In order to be certain that no lag or operator-induced delays are included in the productivity measures, each benchmarked example is cut down into small segments of three or four steps each. After an initial training phase, each segment is executed three times, and the average time is used as a result. The cumulative times for all segments that form a complete workflow example are then used as benchmark results.

**How we prepare hardware for testing**

We use factory-standard configuration hardware, that has been completely re-initialized prior to benchmarking. Only the system software and application software necessary for tests, as well as all required updates at the time of testing, are installed on the benchmark system. No peripherals other than the ones required for the benchmarks are connected.

**Hardware**

Benchmarks for this document were conducted on several different Mac and Windows workstations and notebook computers with 8-16 GB of RAM (see complete benchmark report for details.)

**About Pfeiffer Consulting**

Pfeiffer Consulting is an independent technology research institute and benchmarking operation focused on the needs of publishing, digital content production, and new media professionals.

Download the full Adobe CS6 Productivity Benchmark Report, as well as other benchmark reports and research studies at [www.pfeifferreport.com](http://www.pfeifferreport.com).