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Create great vector graphics for free with Inkscape 2. Navigating an Inkscape Document 2. Navigating an Inkscape Document 5. Working with Fills and Strokes 5. Working with Fills and Strokes 8. Creating Complex Shapes 8. Creating Complex Shapes 10. Printing and Exporting Artwork 10. Printing and Exporting Artwork (Locked) Inkscape Beginners' Guide Shift + Ctrl + F Object ▸ Fill and Stroke Apart from the options listed under the title of this chapter, this dialog can also be opened by double-clicking on the fields for fill and stroke at the bottom left of the Inkscape window. The dialog has 3 tabs: one for the Fill, one for the Stroke paint and one for the Stroke style. The first row of buttons in the tabs for fill and stroke paint are for setting the type of fill or stroke paint that you want to use: The cross needs to be active when you do not want to have any fill or stroke paint respectively. The first square must be activated if you want to apply a flat, uniform color. The second square when activated if you want to apply the gradually changing color must be set when you want to use a linear gradient. The third square with the brighter color in the middle is for setting a radial gradient. The next square with its four quarters is needed for using a mesh gradient. The patterned square when active will allow you to apply a pattern. The white square is useful when you want to reuse the fill for other objects in the same document. It acts like a library. The question mark does not set any specific color. The object inherits the color of its parent. Below, you can customize your color - we will return to that in the next chapter. At the bottom of all 3 tabs, there are two fields that set values for the whole object: Blur: when you click, or click-and-drag in this field, you can apply a blur to the whole selected object. Be warned: in most cases, values greater than 2% are pretty useless. Opacity: when you click, or click-and-drag in this field, this will change the global opacity of the selected object - changing the opacity of fill and stroke equally. The first tab of the Fill and Stroke dialog, when an object with a plain light blue fill is selected. In the second tab of the Fill and Stroke dialog, the stroke is dark blue… … and 10 mm wide in the third tab. © Copyright 2018-2025, Inkscape Documentation Authors. Revision a281bd9. Built with Sphinx using a theme provided by Read the Docs. Inkscape Beginners' Guide An object's stroke, its outline, is handled independently from its fill. Two of the tabs of the Fill and Stroke dialog are dedicated to styling strokes. You can assign a paint to a stroke. This works in the same way as assigning a paint to the fills does (but in the Stroke tab). The stroke paint can not only be a flat color, but also a radial or linear gradient, a pattern or even a gradient mesh. In the Stroke Style tab, you can set the width of the stroke, the shape of its joins and end caps or select a dash pattern (simple stroke, various dash lengths,...). Check the zoom level (in %) in the bottom right corner of the window to be sure that you're applying a suitable width. The more you zoom in, the wider the stroke will appear. The options for Join and Cap slightly modify the shape of the stroke. The default values are fully sufficient in most cases. The Dashes dropdown list gives access to a large selection of different dash styles, that give you regular dash patterns along the stroke. The number field to the right allows you to shift the dash pattern to the desired location. It is impossible to apply blur only to an object's stroke. The options for Blur and Opacity always apply to the object as a whole. Black flat color on stroke Linear gradient with 3 stops. The dotted lines indicate the spread of the color for each stop. Radial gradient with 5 stops on the stroke. The dotted ellipses indicate the spread of the color for each stop. The 3 different types of line joins. © Copyright 2018-2025, Inkscape Documentation Authors. Revision a281bd9. Built with Sphinx using a theme provided by Read the Docs. Inkscape makes for a fantastic tool to work with when stylizing text, and today I'll be demonstrating one of the many ways in which you can do so. In this lesson you will learn how to outline text with Inkscape so that your text can have a distinguished look that jumps off the page. Outlining text with Inkscape is simply a matter of adding a stroke around the text object, setting the size, color, and changing one of the settings so that the outline (or "stroke" as it's called) goes along the outside of the letters as opposed to the inside. This is a relatively simple process, making this an excellent beginner tutorial for any first-time user of Inkscape. Outline Text with Inkscape To outline text with Inkscape, select the text with the Select Tool, then hold Shift on the keyboard and click on one of the colors in the color palette at the bottom of the screen. Follow the instructions below to learn how to place an outline around your text using Inkscape. For a more thorough learning experience, feel free to check out the brief video tutorial I've put together: If you'd rather follow the written instructions then continue on. Step 1: Generate Some Text In order to outline text with Inkscape, we first need to have some text to work with. So grab the Text Tool (keyboard shortcut: T) and type some text onto your canvas using a font of your choice. For this demonstration I will be using the Milkshake font: The text can be any font, style, or word that you'd like. If you already have a text object then you can proceed to step 2. And just to clarify: this method works with any vector object. So you don't necessarily have to use text for creating your outline. You can outline whatever you'd like using this process. Step 2: Add A Stroke To Your Text Once you have your text object in place, it's time to add a stroke. This is what will act as the outline around your text. Grab the Select Tool (keyboard shortcut: S) and then make sure your text is selected. You will now your text object is selected when there's a dotted bounding box around it and arrows in all of the corners: In order for the stroke to be applied, you must have your text selected as I do in the screenshot above. With your text selected, hold Shift on your keyboard and click on one of the colors in the color palette at the bottom of your screen. This will add an outline around your text in the color that you choose: This outline is what's known as a stroke in Inkscape. Don't worry if the outline is not in the color you'd like. You can adjust that further in the next steps. Step 3: Adjust The Stroke Settings Now that you've outlined your text, it's time to make some fine adjustments to some of the outline's properties, including: The thickness/size of the outline The color of the outline Whether the outline occupies the inner edges of the text or the outer edges To adjust these properties we'll be using the Fill & Stroke menu. The menu can be accessed by navigating to Object > Fill & Stroke or by pressing Control + Shift + F on your keyboard. It will appear on the right side of your screen as a docked menu: The Fill & Stroke menu will open up as a docked menu on the right of your screen. Change Outline Size At the top of the Fill & Stroke menu you should see 3 tabs. Look for the tab furthest to the right, labeled "Stroke Style" and activate that tab by clicking on it. Use the Stroke Style tab to make the following adjustments to your outline. You can increase or decrease the size of the stroke around your text by using the plus and minus icons next to the Width input. You can also manually set the size of your stroke with specific numeric values if you'd like, and you can also change the units of measurement to your liking: You can make your outline bigger/thicker using the Width preset. Change Outline Corner Style If you're using text with sharp corners then you notice an occasional glitch when certain corners protrude further than others, giving your outline an inconsistent look. You can remedy this by using a round join and a round cap, highlighted in the diagram below: The Join and Cap presets are used to determine whether your corners are rounded, squared, or cut off. You can also use these presets to give your outline either sharp, round, or cutoff corners. Feel free to experiment with these settings a bit to find the result you like best! Place Stroke Behind The Text As you increase the size of the outline around your text, you may notice that the outline is running along the inside edge of the text — as it is in my previous datagrams — rather than the outside. To change this, look for the Order section located at the bottom of the menu, and choose the Stroke, Fill, Markers setting. It's the middle icon in the top row: A label indicating the setting's properties will populate if you hover your cursor over it. This should place the stroke around the outside of your text, and behind it: How the text looks with its outline placed around the outer edge of the text rather than the inner edges. Change Outline Color Finally, chances are you probably want to change the color of the outline going around your text. Maybe you're not happy with the color selections in the palette at the bottom of the screen, or maybe you have a specific color code you'd like to apply. To set a specific color for your stroke, navigate over to the Stroke Paint tab within the Fill & Stroke menu: The Stroke Paint tab allows you to change the color of your outline. Within this tab you can change the color of the outline around your text based on the following criteria: RGB HSL HSV CMYK Wheel (standard color wheel) CMS HEX Code (denoted as "RGBA" towards the bottom of the menu) Choose a color of your choice and you are all set! That is how you can outline text with Inkscape! Conclusion You can use the Fill & Stroke menu to do a lot more than just outline text with Inkscape. You can also create dotted lines, create offsets that you can use for multiple outlines, and you can also apply all types of gradients to your outlines as well. These are all features that I go over in detail in my Inkscape Master Class. Check it out if you'd like to learn everything that there is to know about Inkscape. The first lesson is on the house, and we even have a private community with thousands of members where I can provide one-on-one help if needed. If you have any questions, or if any part of this lesson was unclear, just leave a comment below. As always, thanks for visiting! Disclaimer: this website does not track you, serve ads, or contain affiliate links. Gain a complete understanding of your favorite design apps with my comprehensive collection of video courses. Each course grants access to our private community where you can ask questions and get help when needed. View All Courses Inkscape Beginners' Guide An object's path determines its shape. The stroke is centered on the path, one half of it on the inside of the path, overlapping with the fill, the other half is on the outside. Markers, too, are centered on the path. In the Order section of the Fill and Stroke dialog, you can select the order in which these different parts of an object will be drawn. This way, you can place markers (and / or strokes) above or below the fill. The available marker orders' icons [top] markers > stroke > fill [bottom] [top] markers > fill > stroke [bottom] [top] stroke > marker > fill [bottom] [top] stroke > fill > markers [bottom] [top] fill > markers > stroke [bottom] [top] stroke > fill > marker [bottom] © Copyright 2018-2025, Inkscape Documentation Authors. Revision a281bd9. Built with Sphinx using a theme provided by Read the Docs. Inkscape is a powerful vector graphics editor that offers a wide range of features to help you create stunning designs. Two essential functions in Inkscape that you need to master are the fill and stroke functions. These functions play a crucial role in determining the appearance of your shapes and objects. Fill Function: The fill function in Inkscape allows you to add color, gradients, or patterns to the inside of your shapes. To apply a fill color to an object, select the object, choose a color from the palette, and click on the fill option. You can also create gradient fills by selecting the gradient tool and adjusting the gradient stops. Stroke Function: The stroke function in Inkscape is used to define the outline or border of your shapes. You can customize the stroke color, style, width, and opacity to achieve the desired effect. To add a stroke to an object, select the object, choose a color from the palette, and click on the Stroke option. You can also experiment with different stroke styles such as dashed or dotted lines. Using Fill and Stroke Together: Mastering the use of fill and stroke functions together can help you create visually appealing designs. By combining different fill colors, gradients, and stroke styles, you can add depth and dimension to your artwork. Remember to experiment with various combinations to find the perfect balance for your design. Overall, understanding how to effectively use the fill and stroke functions in Inkscape is essential for any designer looking to create professional-quality graphics. Practice using these functions on different shapes and objects to gain confidence and improve your design skills. 1 Create a shape to work with. Maybe a circle, for practicing commands. 2 Open the Fill and Stroke dialog box by selecting Object >> Fill and Stroke... (alternatively, Shift + CTRL + F). 3 Unless you have moved it, look to the right of your screen. That is where it will come up. 4 Make sure your shape is selected, then click on the Fill tab. This will bring up your Fill options. Immediately below the tab, you will see six icons and a question mark. They are: No Paint Flat Color Linear Gradient Radial Gradient Pattern Swatch Unset Paint (the question mark) This article will be using Flat Color 5 Check out the various color 'options'. Basically, they are different ways of looking at your color choices. For the purposes of this article, select the Wheel tab. 6 Experiment with the blur and opacity until you get something that appeals to you. 7 Select the Stroke paint tab. Colorwise, you will see the same choices you had with the Fill tab. The only difference is that they are applied to the outer stroke color. 8 Decide on how you want your border to look. Dashes, solid, invisible...just what are you looking for. 9 Learn the alternative way of changing the color of the Fill and Stroke. Look to the lower left of your screen. You should see a color palette and a status bar. In this screenshot, you see both of these dialogs. Turn them on, if you don't see them. Do this by clicking on View >> Show/Hide and make sure that there are checkmarks by their name. Select the one you want to change. You will see Fill and Stroke. Select the one that you want to change. Change the color in the palette. Slide the slider bar until you find the color you want to change it to. Alternatively, click and hold the mouse click on the one that you want to change. Scroll your mouse left and right until it looks like you want it. Add New Question Question Can I fill with negative space? I need to take a section of my vector and essentially remove it. Is this possible? You have to have a surface, it can't just be nothing. Try recreating the shape and trying again. Question Why does my object disappear when I create a path on my outline? It might be due to overlapping or conflicting properties. Check to see if the path is covering the object or has opaque fill/stroke settings. Ensure the layering order is correct and double-check your actions to avoid unintentional modifications. If the issue persists, consult Inkscape's documentation or community forums for assistance. Question I have not been able to match the colour of a text stroke and a shape fill. I want the text stroke/outline to match the fill colour when partly overlapped. Text is on top with white fill. This is a difficult question to answer as it depends on the scenario. Example: the exact same shade of aqua is used on a black background and a light background. Two objects with the same shade will 'appear' different because of their surrounding background. For visual appeal you may have to tweak the two colors separately depending on the scenario. Just don't tell the printing company that you did it. See more answers Ask a Question wikiHow is a "wiki," similar to Wikipedia, which means that many of our articles are co-written by multiple authors. To create this article, volunteer authors worked to edit and improve it over time. This article has been viewed 132,083 times. Co-authors: 5 Updated: December 12, 2023 Views: 132,083 Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 132,083 times.