

## Building a Custom Brush in Photoshop

---



A Photoshop Custom Brush can be used to easily place Watermarks or Copyright statements on to any photograph. If you have looked at this website, then you probably noticed that just like the jet photo at left, every Photograph carries a Copyright Statement. Naturally, you can use the text function in Photoshop to type in "Copyright 1,2,3 etc" on to every photograph, but that can

become a time consuming task if you have lots of images to mark. Luckily, there is an easier way.

This method was first found in Scott Kelby's great book called "Photoshop Elements 4" (pages 358 - 365). If you're not familiar with Kelby's Photoshop books you should be. They are well worth the money and they are packed with neat tips and procedures just like this one to make your Photoshopping quicker and easier. My method for creating a Custom Brush is slightly different from Kelby's, (I think mine is easier) but the effect is the same.

Once you create your custom brush, then you can call it up and insert it onto any photo you want to display. You can resize, change opacity and the color of the text on the fly, just like using any other paintbrush in photoshop. The difference is, that rather than this tool looking like a brush stroke, your new custom brush tool will say something like

**"Copyright 2007 © Gary Palamara"**

I will describe the procedure below using Photoshop Elements 4, but I have tried this on "C. S." and Elements 5 and all work essentially the same way. It may sound difficult, but after you've done it once, you'll see that it's a piece of cake. So, here goes.

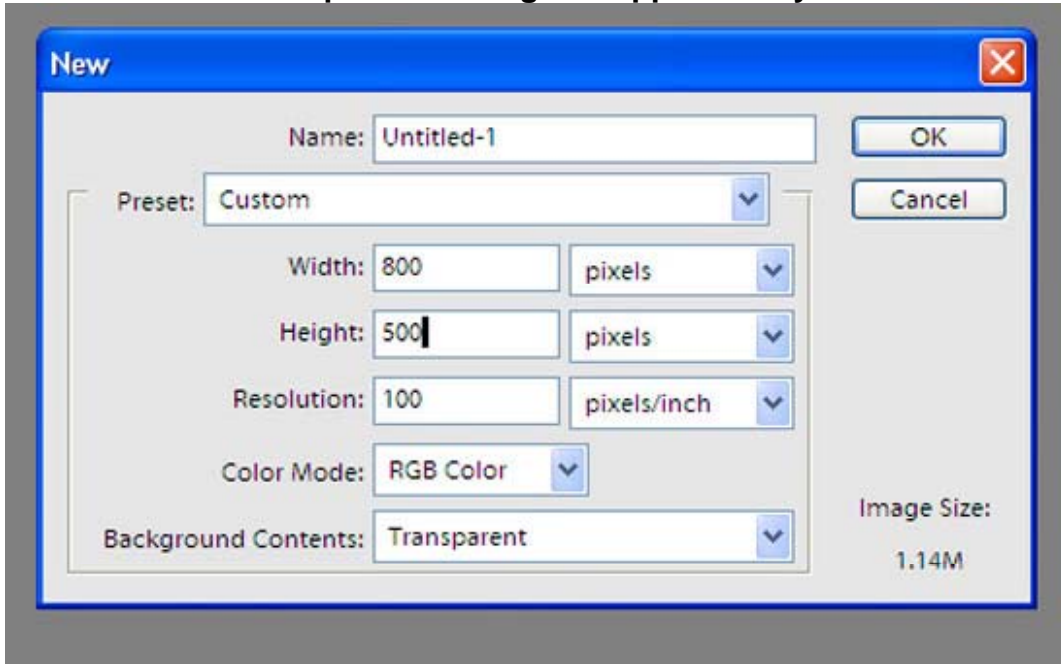
[www.garypalamara.com](http://www.garypalamara.com)

[www.garypalamara.com](http://www.garypalamara.com)

## Creating a Custom Brush Tool

First, while In the Photoshop Editor, Select "File", "New", then "Blank File" or you can simply type "Control + N"

After that a drop down dialog box appears on your screen.



Don't worry about naming the new box. First, you have to set the screen resolution. For video, 72 dpi works well, but for printing purposes, you should probably use a higher resolution like 300 dpi. In my example I used 100 pixels per inch. Next, for Width and Height, select "Pixels" and choose a fairly large screen size like 800 x 500. Finally, set the Background to "Transparent" and click "OK".

Next a blank transparent window, 800 x 500 pixels will appear on your edit screen.

Choose the Text Tool and select your Font Type, Font Size and Foreground Color. Don't worry too much about the size and color right now both can be changed at will later. In my example I chose "Stencil", 14 pt., Bold and the color was Black because it was easy to read. Next, somewhere near the center of the frame, type your copyright information.

**COPYRIGHT 2007 © GARY PALAMARA**

There are two ways to insert the Copyright Symbol "©" into your text. You can either get it from the Photoshop Symbols dropdown menu or you can simply type it in by holding down the "ALT" key on your keyboard while typing the numbers "0169". If you type it, one thing you'll notice is that the copyright symbol © looks a little weak compared to the rest of your text. If you want it to look more Bold, so it will match the rest of the line, simply highlight the symbol with your mouse and go up one point size. While my copyright text was 14 pt., the Copyright symbol shown on the screen is actually 18 pts.

Next, use the Crop Tool to select just your copyright information.



Then, hit "Enter"

Now, your copyright info is the only thing on the screen and the black text is displayed over a transparent background.

**COPYRIGHT 2007 © GARY PALAMARA**

Next, go to the Edit drop down menu and select "Define Brush". A new dialog box appears and you can name your new copyright brush something like "Copyright 2007". Notice the picture of your new Copyright is all scrunched up next to the name. Don't worry about that either. It will look fine later.

Click "OK" to exit the Brush Name window.



Now, here comes the fun part.  
Remove your copyright info from the screen and don't worry about saving anything else. After clearing the Edit screen, open up any photo that you want to copyright.



With your new photo on the screen, select the "Brush" tool. At the top of your computer screen, click on the down arrow to open up the drop down brush menu (it's to the left of the Pixel size box). Now, scroll down to the bottom of the brushes. The very last brush on that drop down menu is your new Copyright Brush tool. You'll notice it looks all scrunched up just like when you named it.

[www.garypalamara.com](http://www.garypalamara.com)

[www.garypalamara.com](http://www.garypalamara.com)

Select that brush and "X" out of the drop down menu. As you move your cursor around on the screen, you should see the outline of your copyright info. You can place it anywhere on your photograph by Left Clicking your mouse. If you don't like where you placed it, simply type "Control + Z" to undo the selection and place it somewhere else.

Now, using the foreground color, opacity and the size sliders at the top of your screen, you can control all of the aspects of your new copyright tool. You can place your copyright as many times as you like on your photo and it's always available as a custom brush on your brush menu. Naturally, rename your photo and save a new version so you always have the original clean photo for your own use.

Now, wasn't that easy!  
One other thing to consider... If you use a solid background color to create your Custom Brush, your copyright message may stand out better against some backgrounds. Naturally, if you want to do that, you may need to create different brushes for light and dark colored photos. Anyway, hopefully all this was understandable and will help you to protect your copyrights in the future.

Enjoy! Gary

**My Canon 30D with the Canon 24-105 - f 4L Lens**



## Addendum

I was wondering aloud on one of the forums about just how much changing the DPI resolution really affected the actual look of the brush. Was the resolution setting above referring mainly to creating a "New Photograph", or was it referring to the Custom Brush itself? Since the brush could be used with photos of any resolution, did the brush pick up the DPI setting of the photo it was used with? Or, did the brush really have a resolution of it's own? Since I have only used the brushes to copyright downsized Internet images, not High Resolution photographs, I wasn't sure.

So, I thought I'd do a little experiment.



I created two brushes with different resolution settings and pasted them onto the same background image. Both brushes were sized to 1000 pixels in width when placed on the image.

As you can see above at this magnification the 300 dpi is much cleaner when compared side by side with the 72 dpi version.

So, setting Brush Resolution does make a big difference.

If you are placing your copyright information onto a full size photograph prior to downsizing for the net, the higher resolution version probably will look better because everything will downsize together.

If however you downsize your photos first before copyrighting them, the lower resolution brush will look fine.

Copyright 2007 © Gary Palamara