



## Phantasm CS Publisher

### INVALUABLE PLUG-IN FOR ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR CS2-CS4

When working in Illustrator, have you ever thought that it would be nice to have Photoshop-type color adjustments? How about adding a few Acrobat prepress features? Well then, Phantasm CS is the plug-in for you.

Phantasm CS is a three-edition Illustrator plug-in, namely Designer, Studio, and Publisher (\$82, \$148, and \$231, respectively), with each edition adding more features to the previous one. The Publisher edition includes the most features, including an exposure setting that can mimic the HDR feature in Photoshop. Common features to all three editions include curves, hue/saturation, and levels, which work virtually the same as in Photoshop. In fact, many settings can be saved and loaded into Photoshop (and vice versa).

Many of the Publisher features will be useful to agencies, printers, and other prepress environments, including the ability to edit color channels (including spot color channels) and Bitmap Alpha channels (handy for editing drop shadow and glow settings in Illustrator). Process color channels can be mapped to spot colors for using more vibrant inks. Options to convert rich black to either black or a spot color, Safe CMYK (think GCR), total ink coverage inspection, and overprint inspection make this plug-in invaluable. There's a simple separation preview feature (in case you don't have CS4), but the quick separation preview option can take your file and split the color channels into separate layers.

The ability to edit embedded images with Photoshop (normally, only linked images could be edited) and the capability to convert embedded images to linked ones is helpful. Most of the features work on native vector objects, Illustrator-rasterized objects, and imported images—the settings can be used as filters or as effects (editable in the Appearance panel).

Overall, this is an excellent plug-in and definitely worth a look.  
—David Creamer

Company: Astute Graphics Limited	Price: \$231
Web: <a href="http://www.astutegraphics.com">www.astutegraphics.com</a>	Rating: ●●●●●
▲ Hot: Adds Photoshop-like and Acrobat prepress functions to Illustrator	
▼ Not:	



## Trapcode Particular 2

### GREAT PARTICLE SYSTEM PLUG-IN GETS EVEN BETTER

Regarding Red Giant Software's *Trapcode Particular 2*, I could basically end the review with an emphasis on the "2" (meaning 2 is better than 1) but I'd really get in trouble with the layout team. Seriously though, if you use Adobe After Effects, you know about Particular. Well, Red Giant has taken this seemingly endless super plug-in, which we thought was nearly perfect, and proved that it was far from it.

One of the major tweaks is the multi-core processor support that brings the obvious speed boost in rendering time, as well as the ability to handle more particles. It also opens more control as well; for instance, now there's more realistic shading, which allows the lights in After Effects to illuminate particles as they move in 3D space, in addition to the particles' ability to produce shadows. Also improved are the physics controls (more detailed turbulence and expanded air resistance) and the ability to have depth. If you're new to Particular, that's okay, as there are numerous presets installed to get all kinds of cool projects up and running.

Particular 2 is one of the most powerful plug-ins ever connected to After Effects and I'm convinced its only limitations are just in my own imagination. As a single plug-in, the price tag is quite steep; however, anyone who is serious about After Effects most likely has Particular 1, and therefore the price is only \$99 for an upgrade. Red Giant took what many thought couldn't get better and cranked it up a notch with *Trapcode Particular 2*.—Jason Scrivner

Company: Red Giant Software LLC	Price: \$399 (Upgrade: \$99)
Web: <a href="http://www.redgiantsoftware.com">www.redgiantsoftware.com</a>	Rating: ●●●●●
▲ Hot: Multi-core processing support; shading; physics controls	
▼ Not:	