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NOTE: Our voicemail system is monitored 24/7. If you leave a voicemail here after hours/weekends/etc., I should be able to track one of the guys down to help you.

Tech Support Info

Epilog Tech Support
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www.epiloglaser.com/service.htm

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Glass/Cylindrical Tips

from Randy's FAQ Files

Setting up cylindrical objects [Editor's note: these instructions are mainly for the Epilog glass attachment] with a balloon or tapered shapes:

- 1) Measure the circumference of the object at the point of rotation.
- 2) Measure the circumference at the point of engraving.
- 3) Divide Circumference #1 by Circumference #2 (above).
- 4) Stretch or compress the text as required by using the values in the Property Bar.

Examples:

A. Tapered Shape

4" at lip of the glass (driver motor point)

3" at engraving point

4" / 3" = 1.33" Stretch the text to 133% of its original size to maintain the aspect Ratio.

B. Balloon Shapes

3" at lip (driver motor point)

4" at engraving point

3/4 - .75; compress the text to 75% of its original size to maintain the aspect ratio.

More glass engraving info:

- Lay wet newspaper over glass before starting job. This will reduce the depth of the laser's heat and will result in better edge quality, a smoother feel and increased opacity.

- Have a glass where the handle is too close to the top, like a coffee mug? Remove the extra wheels from the attachment by taking out black thumbscrews inside the wheels.

Vector Magic

– Roy Brewer

The finest software ever written for tracing is now available and it is *free* if you have an Internet connection.

Many of you know that I've been working with logo creation and raster to vector software and hardware for many years. IMHO, this article reviews one of those "giant steps forward" in vectorization.

This is how it works: you log on to a specific page on the Stanford University website, upload a bitmap file (most of the common raster formats), fill in a few parameters and tell the software to vectorize it.

You can upload several files at once and come back later to check the progress or download the results. If you'll take a look at the comparisons page (see link below) you'll be hooked. On this page, you are dynamically shown the results of some of the best known programs (from Corel and Adobe) and how they compare. In my opinion, the results are really as much different as this page indicates. Not only is Vector Magic superior to the tracing decisions made by the HP PrecisionScan, but it also vectorizes (separates) colors which PrecisionScan could not. Of major significance to vinyl lettering, mechanical engravers, marquetry and laser inlay work, VectorMagic does not stack colors on top of colors (as does Corel PowerTrace) so the results often need no post-processing for these applications.

While the improvements in Corel's PowerTrace make it quite superior to previous versions, I'll use it in the future only for "quick & dirty" conversions or if I can't get online to use Vector Magic. I am not privy to Stanford's future plans for this "experiment". I'd be surprised if it will be a permanent fixture on their web server. I suspect that it will be sold to one or more software vendors and if so, I'll be standing in line to buy it.

The following links allow you to preview the future of raster-->vector conversion and allow you to get some terrific vector graphics into your library while it is available.

<http://vectormagic.stanford.edu/vectorize/comparisons>

<http://vectormagic.stanford.edu/vectorize> (page from which you upload your bitmap files)

Upcoming Events

ARA Int'l Awards Market, Las Vegas
February 24-28

Texas Trophy & Awards Show, Galveston
August 1-2

Monthly CorelDRAW Basics Clinic, Arlington
March 10

"What's New with X4?" Clinic, Galveston
July 31

Monthly Epilog Laser Basics Clinic, Arlington
March 10

Xenotech Users Clinic, Galveston
August 3

The Woodworking Show, Houston
April 4-6

Imprinted Sportswear Show, Ft. Worth
October 3-5

The Awards & Custom Gift Show, Ft. Worth
May 8-10

For more details on any of the above, click on Events at www.enravingconcepts.com



News from Golden, CO

[Editor's note: We lifted the following info from the Epilog Laser driver upgrade site. Just another example that Epilog continues to be the "technology leader".]

New! 64 Bit Operating System Driver (Beta Version)

For customers working with a 64 bit operating system, we have developed a beta version of our driver. Click here to install the 64_801.exe driver file. [www.epiloglaser.com | [Tech Support & Documentation](#) | [Driver/Firmware Downloads](#) | [Select your model & page down to the 64-bit link](#)]

Why is it a beta version? We are still testing the driver with 64 bit operating systems, and would like any comments that you have. If you test out the system and have any problems or comments on the driver, please send them to sales@epiloglaser.com.

How do I know if I have a 64 bit operating system? If you have one, you probably know it! The 64 bit operating system is still very rare and is not supported by most peripheral devices. Information on the 64 bit operating system is available here.



Roy's Preliminary X4 Review

While Corel X4's Print Merge is still not all I want it to be, it does have one *terrific* new option: **Merge to new document** which creates a new document and then adds a page for each row (plate/sign to be engraved). These "plates" are editable (Wow! Have we wanted this!), so we can handle a name that is too long or add a logo to just one of the plates, etc. Then after you're happy with the "batch", use the Imposition Layout to populate a multiple plate print job.

Additionally, this algorithm allows us to instruct the print engine which pages we want to print. While this was possible before, it was very non-intuitive and not versatile.

I really like the improved interface. X3 was too "artsy" for me; I couldn't tell what tool was selected on my trusty laptop without moving head to left/right a couple times. X4 eliminates that and looks/feels like a real work horse.

There are several features that each will be important enough to certain users to make the upgrade worth the cost. Single line fonts to be able to create panels in Corel and then engrave on mechanical engraver; finally we can rotate &/or mirror paragraph text; improvements in PowerTrace (Centerline Trace is better than Draftsman!); *What the Font* integration is really slick; while few are infatuated with Vista, I'm one of them and I love the integration with Vista's search/display; extremely powerful workflow enhancement.

Most of us will need to upgrade just because X4 is able to import files from Adobe's C3 graphics suite; many are being sent these files on a weekly, if not daily, basis. Similarly, the AutoCAD import has been updated. It's hardly bulletproof, but greatly improved.

My recommendation is to purchase X4 as soon as possible (scheduled for official release: Feb22), but keep your current version handy until the first patch to X4 is available.

Jeanette's Test Drive – Laser U

If you're interested in finding more training/educational opportunities, I strongly recommend taking a look at Laser U. www.laseru.com is an excellent resource especially for new laser owners &/or for new employees who have little laser experience. Laser University has really matured over the last year and there's no doubt it will continue to increase the volume of information available.

There's a section on "your laser" that shows you how to set up *your* laser; covers some laser basics; and walks you through your first laser job.

After your laser is set up, Laser U offers several courses in the **Learning Center**. Step by step, you walk through several lessons within each course. Finish up with a quiz to be sure you've mastered that particular course.

The **Corel Center** offers a plethora of Corel topics in either printable files &/or video format. You'll find written & video instructions in the **Project Center**. While you'll find instructions on how to create specific products in this section, it's also a great place to pick up some different, new ideas for your product line.

There is a settings calculator where you plug in your laser model, wattage & the material – the calculator spits out suggested power, speed & resolution for your job.

You'll find a list of questions & answers from other users in the **Resource Section** – along with the opportunity to ask your own question(s). There's a laser dictionary and a list of articles on many different laser engraving topics.

I don't have the room to do this fabulous resource justice. Check out the website at www.laseru.com. I'd be interested to hear what y'all think too!



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