Adobe Stock:

Boosting Design Efficiency Through Integration

Creative Cloud integration significantly increases productivity for creative workflows working with stock images

About this research

This report presents the findings of a market-specific benchmarking project conducted by Pfeiffer Consulting for Adobe. The main aim of the research was to document the efficiency and productivity gains linked to Adobe Stock, compared to using web-based stock libraries.

Benchmarks were executed using Pfeiffer Consulting's Methodology for Productivity Benchmarking, which has been fine-tuned over more than a decade, and measures the time experienced operators take to execute specific tasks. Please refer to the Methodology section on the last page of this document for more information.

About Adobe Stock

Adobe Stock differs from most stock image services through the tight integration it offers with Creative Cloud applications such as Adobe Photoshop CC, Adobe Illustrator CC, Adobe InDesign CC and more: placement images are made available in CC Libraries, and can be dropped directly into a document. More importantly, images can be licensed directly from the CC application, and the high-res version of the data replaces the watermarked image, eliminating the need to re-apply non-destructive adjustments and modifications made in Photoshop, resulting in significant productivity gains. We benchmarked Adobe Stock in three distinct workflow situations with bitmap images: simply replacing a placement image with its licensed, high resolution version; replacing an image that had some color grading applied in Photoshop; and finally, replacing an image that had multiple non-destructive Photoshop effects applied.

Key Benchmark Results: Average of Three Workflow Benchmarks

With Adobe Stock (9,55 %)

Without Adobe Stock (100 %)

Chart based on the average of three different workflow scenarios per solution.
A total of 36 individual benchmark measures were taken.
Reference value: Average time when working with shared files on a server. **Shorter is better.**

Executive Summary

▶ Adobe Stock provides tight integration with Creative Cloud applications **that resulted on average in 10x efficiency gains** over working with common stock image services in the benchmarks conducted for this research. (See chart below.)

▶ Adobe Stock allows images to be **licensed directly from Creative Cloud applications**. All occurrences of the placement image are replaced, and **non-destructive adjustments in Photoshop are automatically applied.**

▶ Productivity gains measured in these benchmarks **are very significant.** Efficiency improvements linked to using Adobe Stock **are particularly important in complex workflow situations** where images are included in complex Photoshop compositions or used in multiple documents and resolutions.

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Workflow Scenario 1: Simple Replacement of Licensed Image

License high-res image and replace in composition
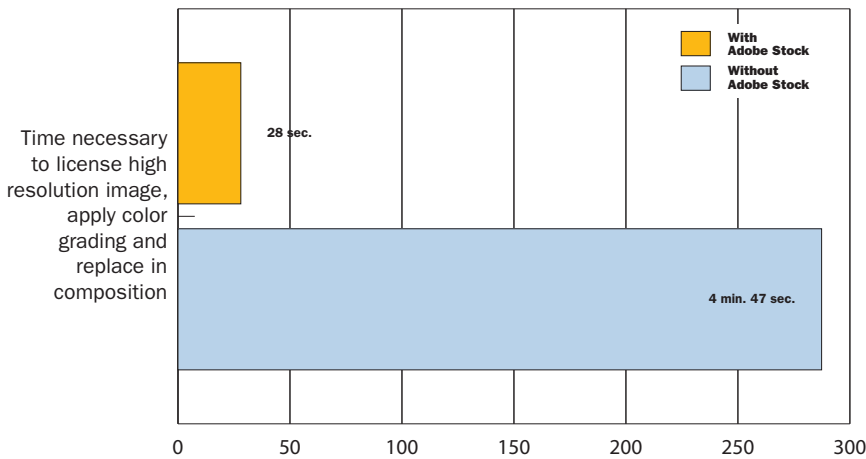Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Time necessary to license high resolution image and replace in composition

- With Adobe Stock: 16 sec.
- Without Adobe Stock: 2 min. 52 sec.
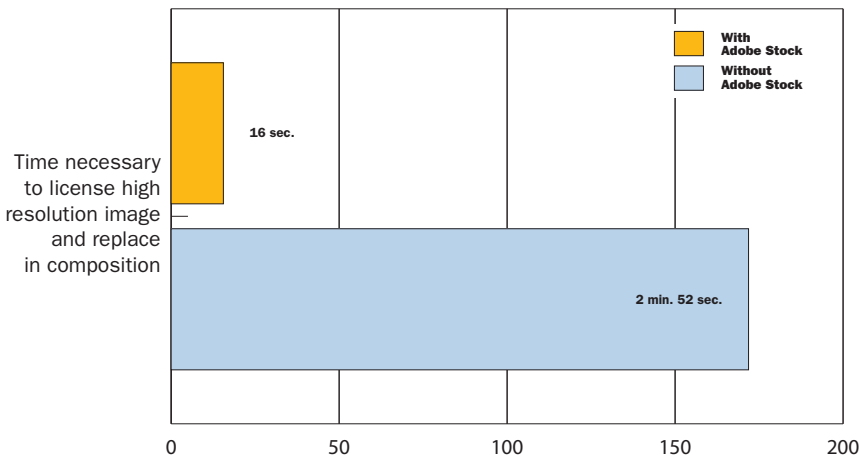
▷ **Basic stock image bottlenecks:** Working with stock images can be cumbersome, obliging the user to download first a watermarked placement image, and subsequently licensing and downloading the full version of the image, and then manually substituting it for the low-res placement image. In our benchmarks, completing these tasks **took almost three minutes**.

Adobe Stock eliminates these steps, since the licensed version automatically replaces all occurrences of the previous image, requiring **less then half a minute** for the same tasks.

Workflow Scenario 2: Replacement of Licensed Image, Including Color Adjustment

License high-res image, apply color grading and replace in composition
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Time necessary to license high resolution image, apply color grading and replace in composition

- With Adobe Stock: 28 sec.
- Without Adobe Stock: 4 min. 47 sec.

▷ **Applying adjustments:** With most stock services, when a placement image has been color corrected, it is necessary to manually document the exact values of the adjustment, and then manually apply them to the licensed high-res file. Licensing the image and completing these steps **required almost five minutes in our benchmarks.**

With Adobe Stock, any non-destructive adjustment in Photoshop will be automatically applied when the image is licensed, a process that took just **28 seconds in our benchmarks.**

Workflow Scenario 3: Stock Images as Smart Objects in Photoshop

Update stock image used as Smart Object in Photoshop and replace with licensed file
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Update placement image used as Smart Object in Photoshop and replace with licensed file

- With Adobe Stock: 28 sec.
- Without Adobe Stock: 2 min. 31 sec.
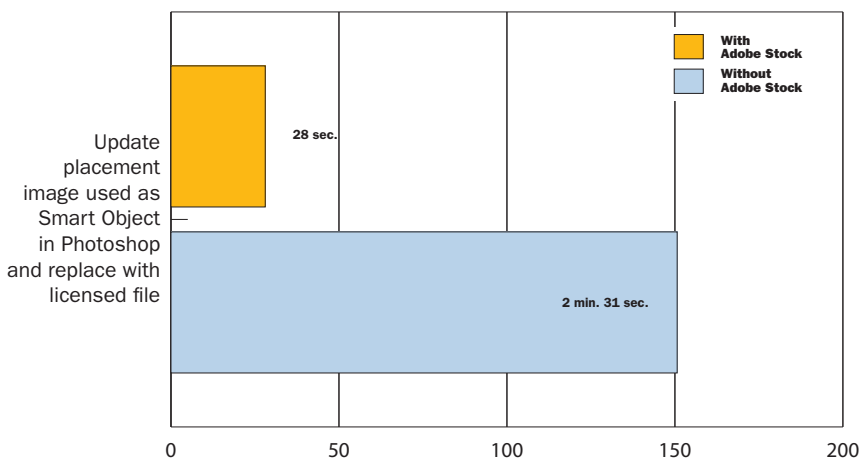
▷ **Using Smart Objects magic:** Using placement images from a stock service allows Photoshop users to integrate low resolution images in complex compositions, then swap them out for the licensed file without having to re-apply non-destructive changes.

While this method works with stock images from different sources, Adobe Stock had a clear productivity advantage because of its direct integration into CC Libraries. Licensing and updating the placement image **took only 28 seconds with Adobe Stock**—compared to **two and a half minutes with other stock images**.

Methodology

This benchmark project was commissioned by Adobe and independently executed by Pfeiffer Consulting.

All the productivity measures presented in this document are based on real-world workflow examples, designed and executed by professionals with many years of experience with the programs and workflows involved.

▷ How We Design the Benchmarks

The basic approach is simple: in order to assess productivity gains that a program or solution 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 solution, with the help of seasoned professionals who have long-standing experience in the field and with the solutions that are tested.

Every set of steps is executed three times, the average of the three measures used.

▷ 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.

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