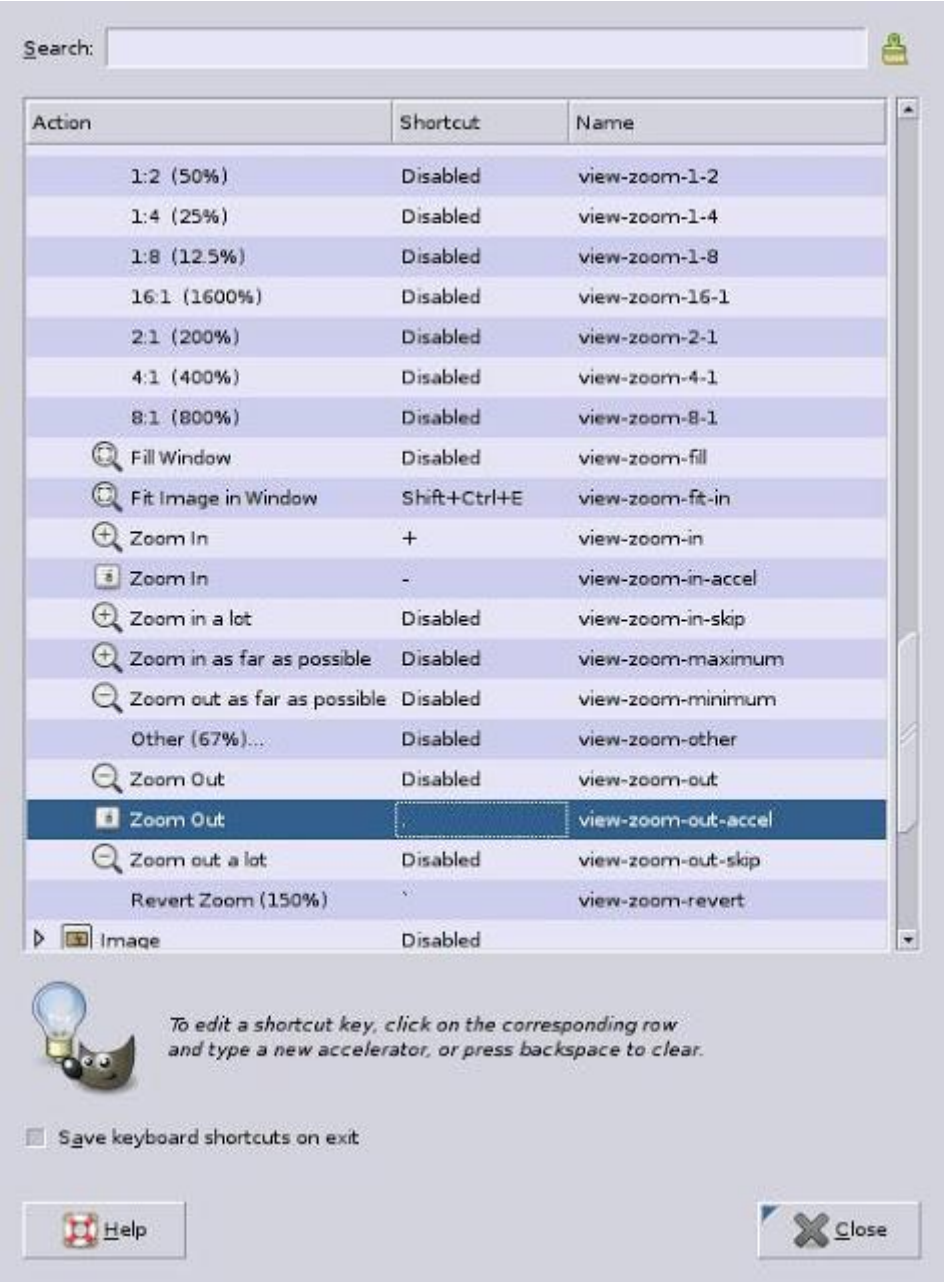
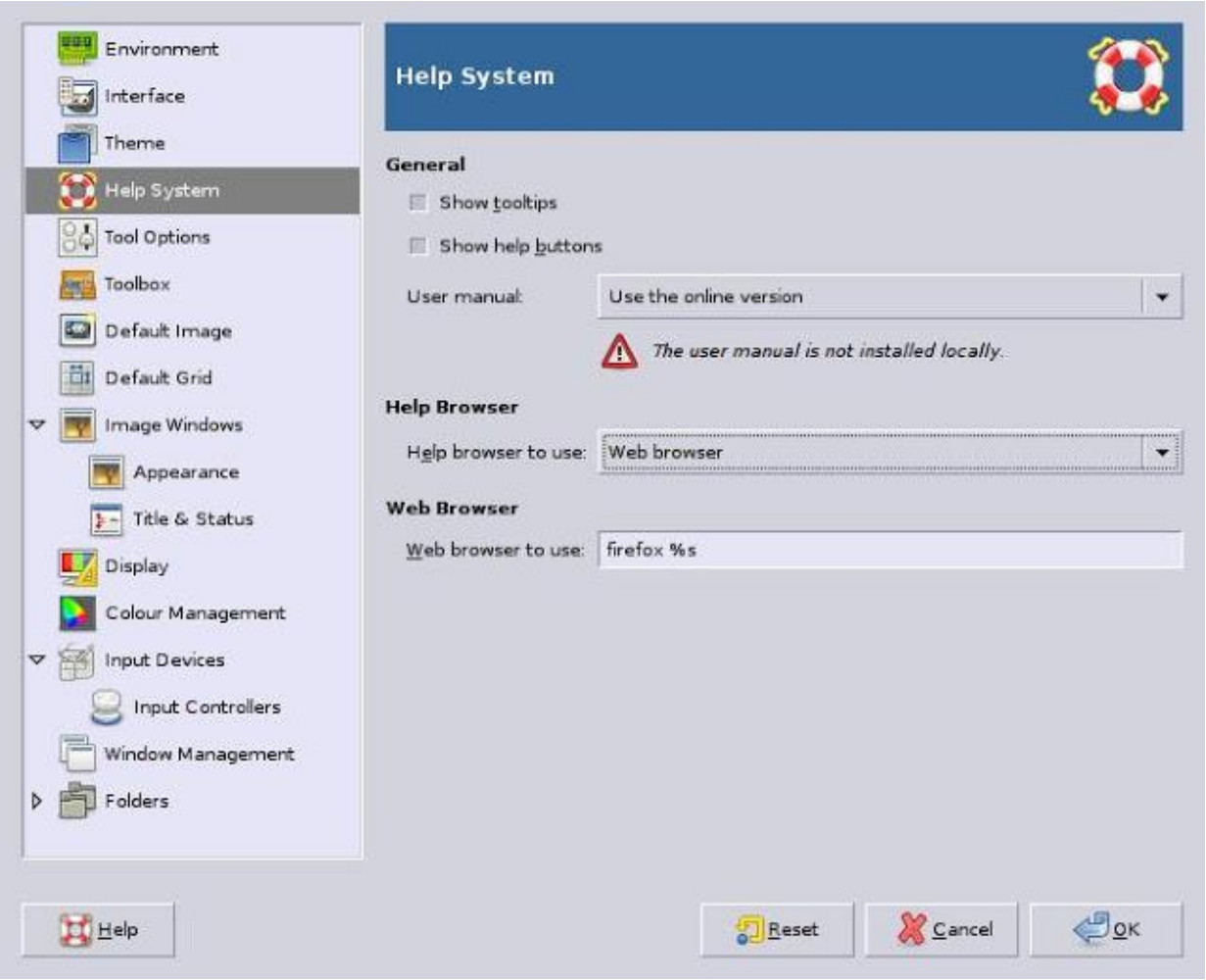


gimpsetup014.jpg

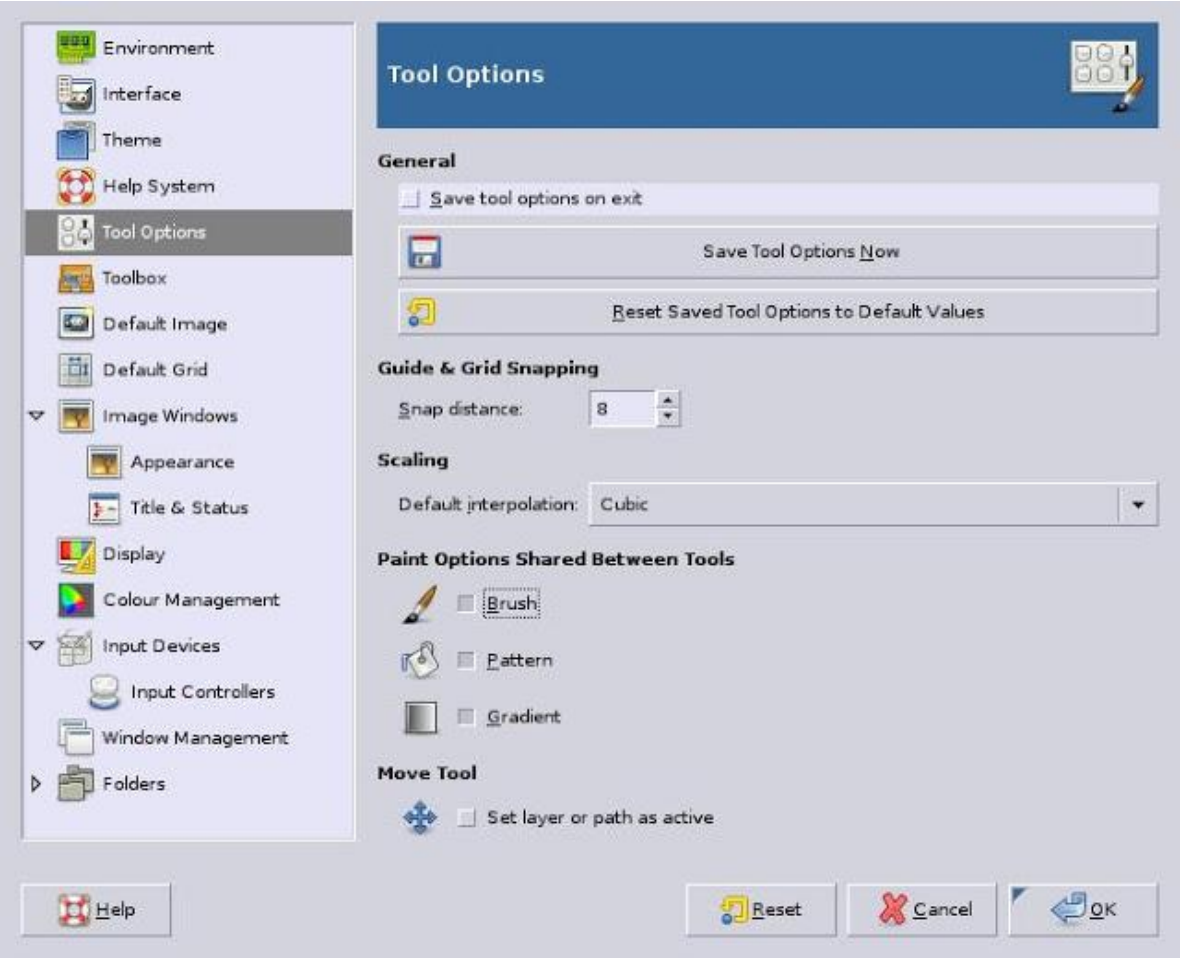
Let's, as an example, change the default keys for zooming in/out. It's nice to have these two buttons next to each other on the keyboard. Go down into the "View" menu and find the "Zoom in" and Zoom out" entries. Click on them and assign the key "-" to Zoom in and "." to Zoom out. There you go. Leave the menu and press "Save Keyboard Shortcuts Now" to make sure it is remembered. There are many useful keyboard shortcuts you will want to assign. You can find a list of all default shortcuts [here].



gimpsetup060.jpg

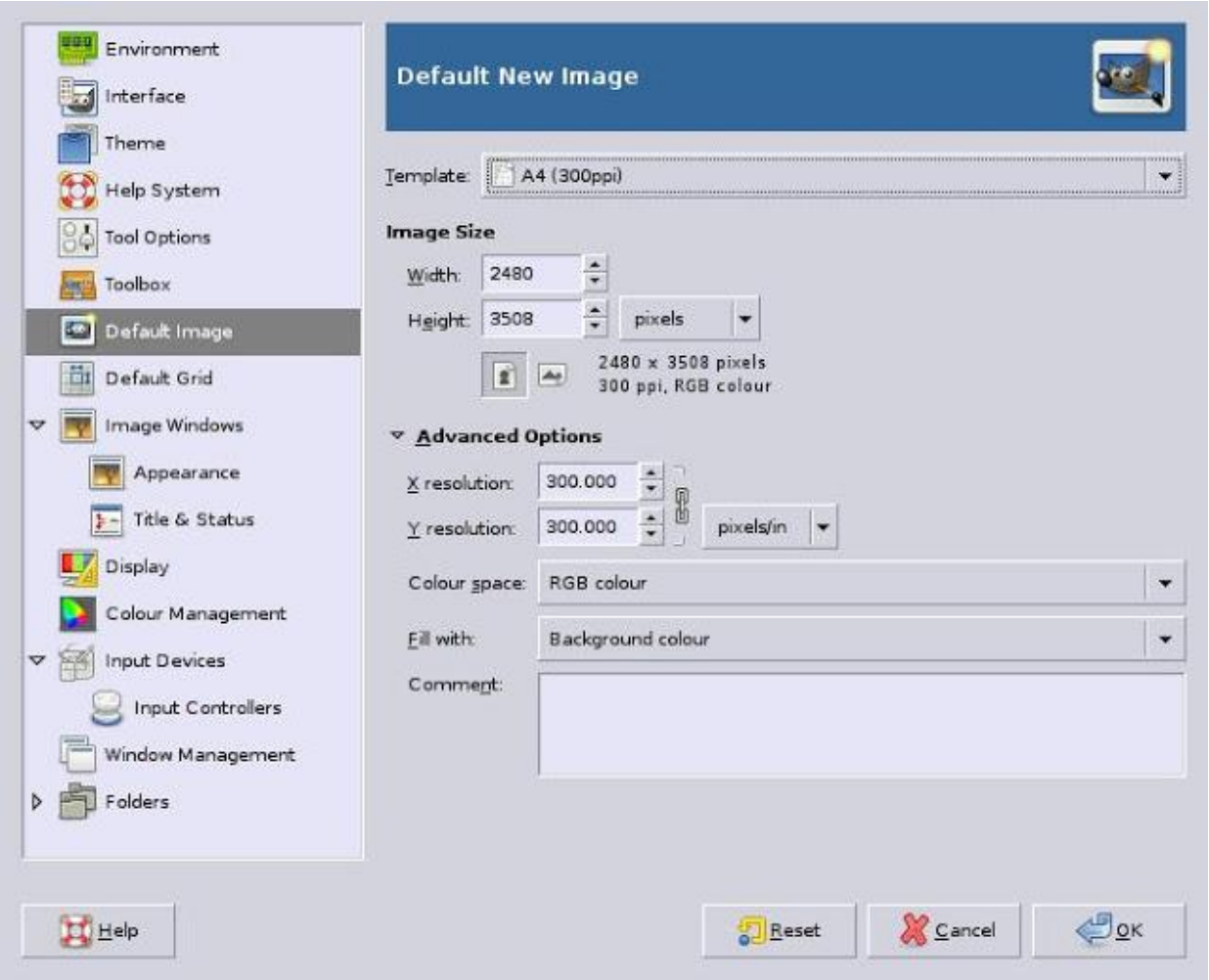
The Help System sets up GIMP's online help. The help files are distributed separately from the main program since they are quite large. You should be able to find them from the same sites distributing your GIMP version, otherwise they can be found from <!-- m -->http://www.gimp.org<!-- m -->. If you have it installed locally, GIMP will tell you. If not and you have internet access, you can use the online help instead by setting this up either with using GIMP's own browser or a browser of your choice. Press the *F1* key to access the help system, or *Shift+F1* keys to get a question mark you can click on things to get help on them.

Important Note: As of writing (Oct 2008), some users have reported GIMP crashing when trying to use the Help system under Windows GIMP. Crashing means you can loose your work. So be careful with this feature, and if you have trouble, stay away from it until it has been fixed.



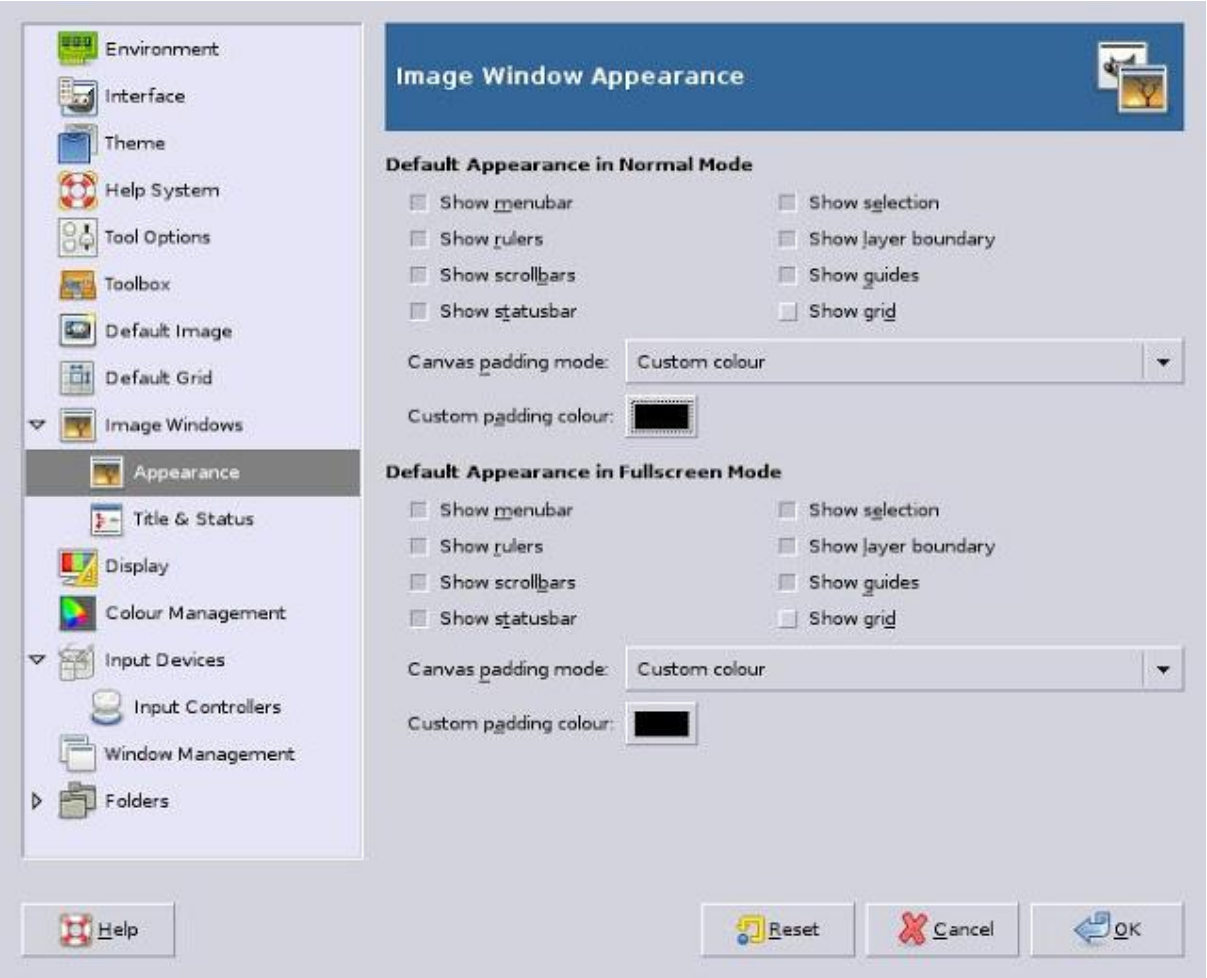
gimpsetup015.jpg

The main thing to check in the Tool Options section is if you want the tool options to be saved upon exiting GIMP. This allows for keeping the last setup you worked with, good when continuing on an image after a break. But there are also advantages to starting "fresh" every time, it's up to you.



gimpsetup019.jpg

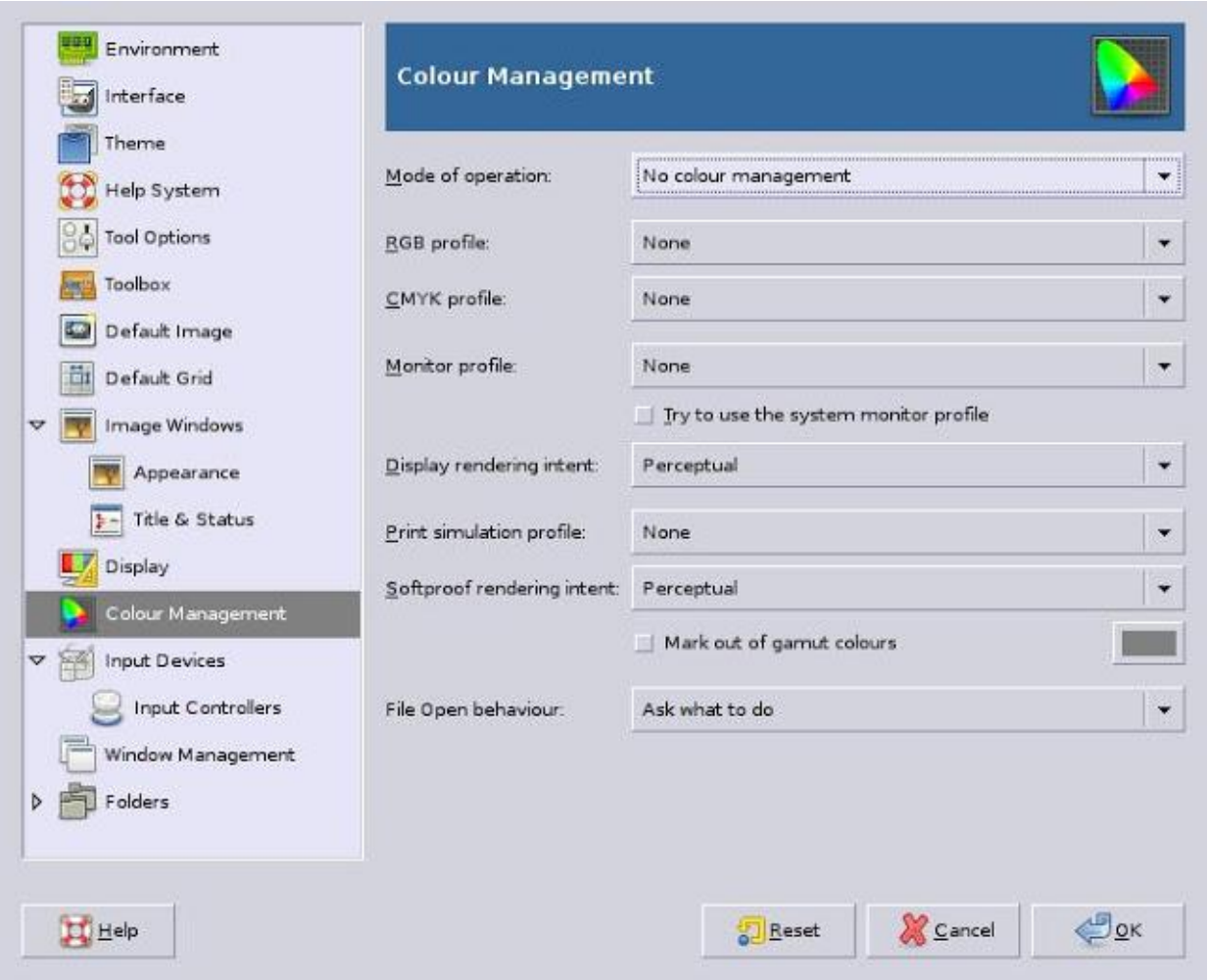
The Default Image setup is merely a convenience thing, it gives you a default setup when starting a new image, you can change it any way you want later anyway.



gimpsetup020.jpg

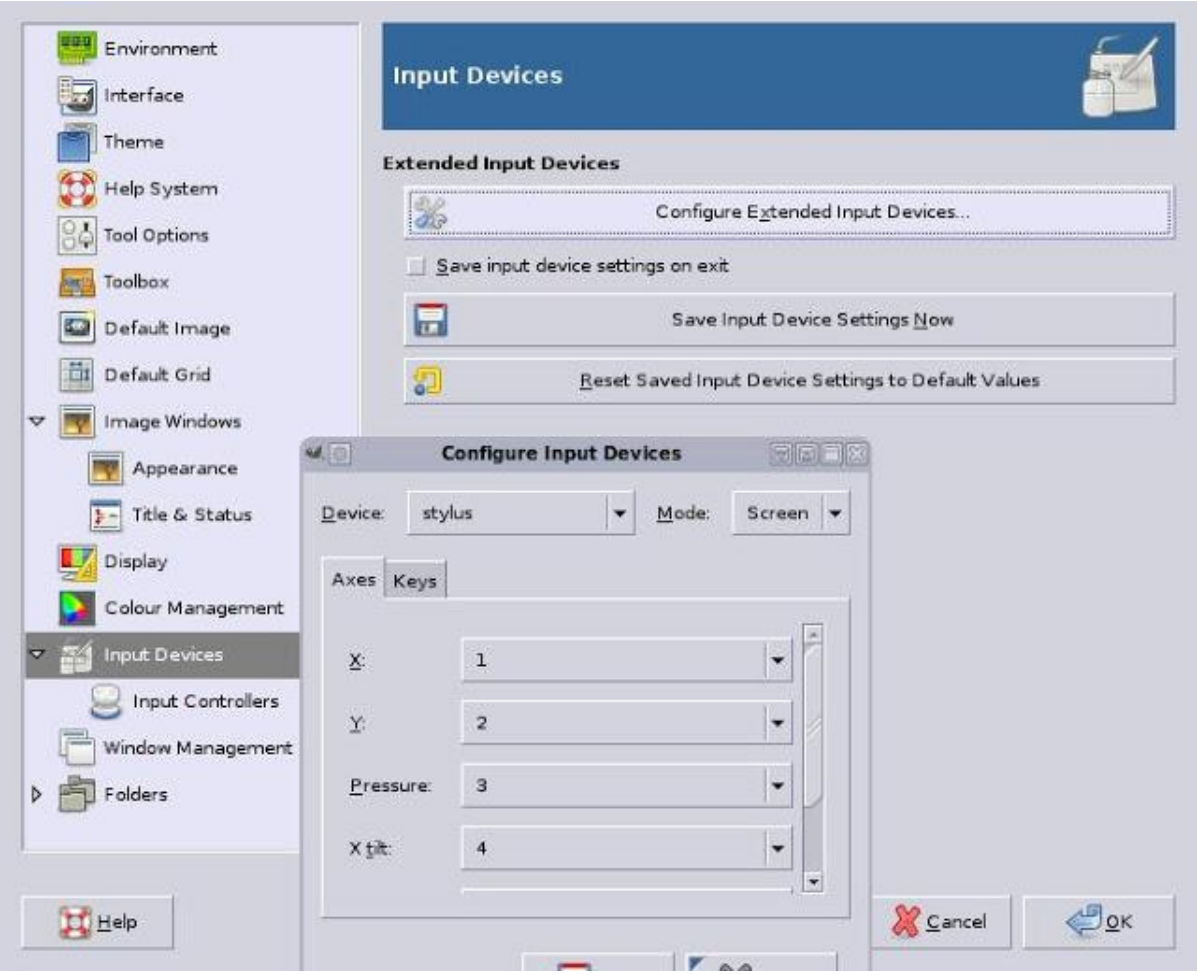
Image Windows: Appearance:

GIMP works either in "Normal" mode or in "Fullscreen" mode. Fullscreen is activated by pressing *F11* on your keyboard and only shows the image without the interface. It is useful for painters who don't want to be disturbed by the user interface, or for multiple-screen users (if you use two screens, the fullscreen canvas only takes up one screen and the interface can remain on the other). Apart from the many ways to customize the Appearance of each mode, you might also want to change the "Padding colour". This is the colour of the area appearing around your image (the area you cannot paint on). Many prefer a darker colour, but it's a very personal thing.



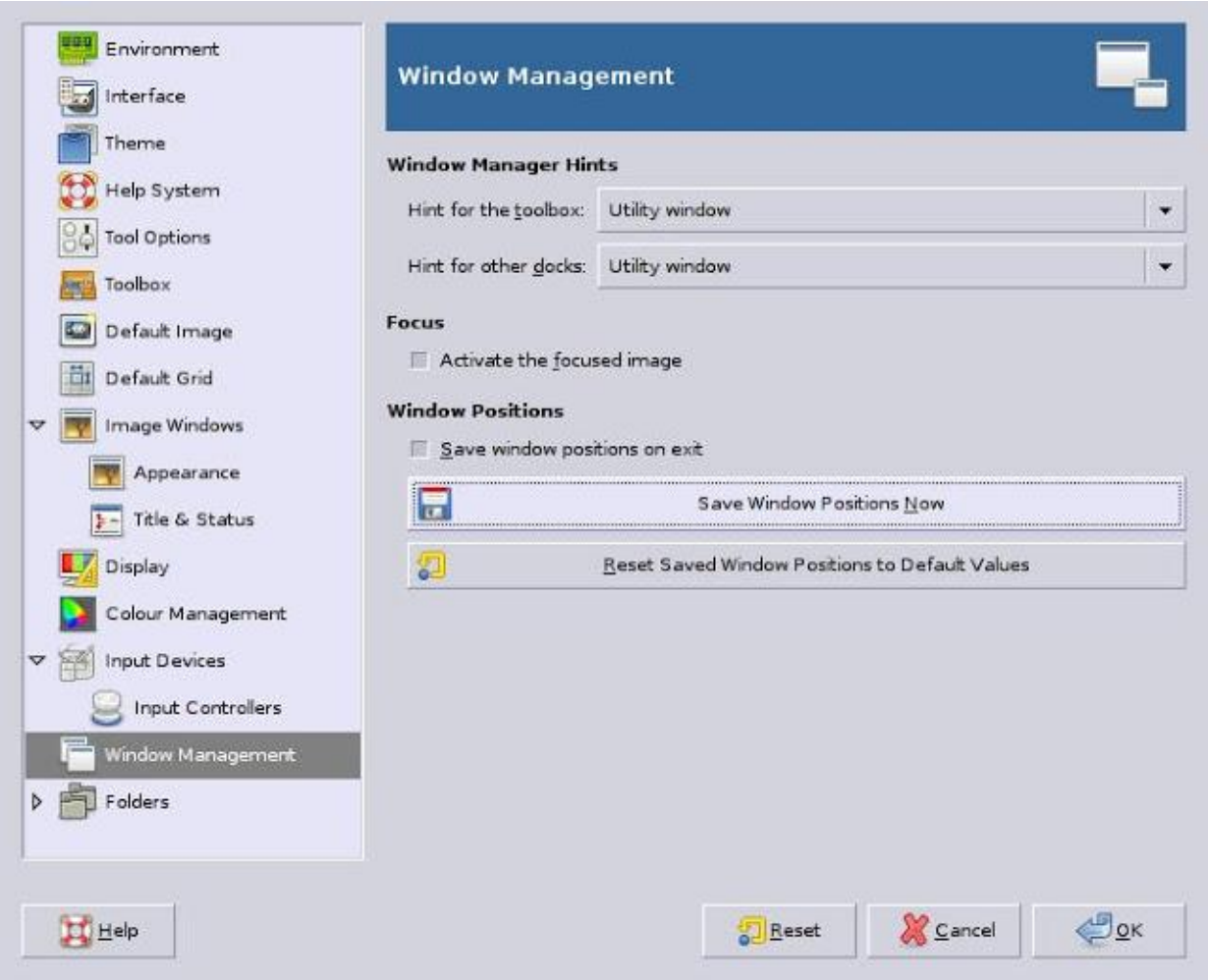
gimpsetup021.jpg

Colour management: If you don't know what this is and don't have a properly configured monitor profile you should probably turn this off until you find you need it.



gimpsetup022.jpg

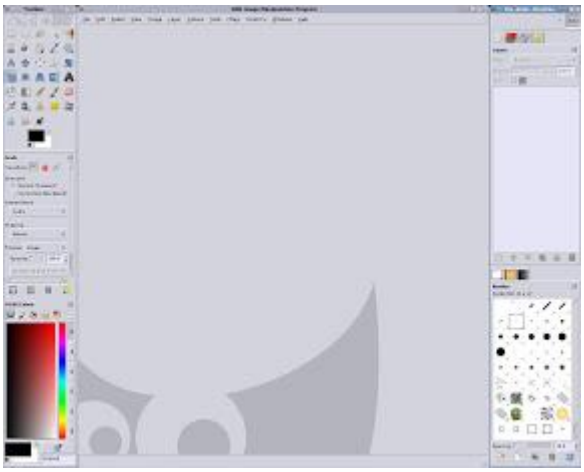
The Input devices setup controls the eventual extra hardware you have, especially graphics tablets. Troubleshooting and setting up tablets with GIMP is described in [this] tutorial.



gimpsetup023.jpg

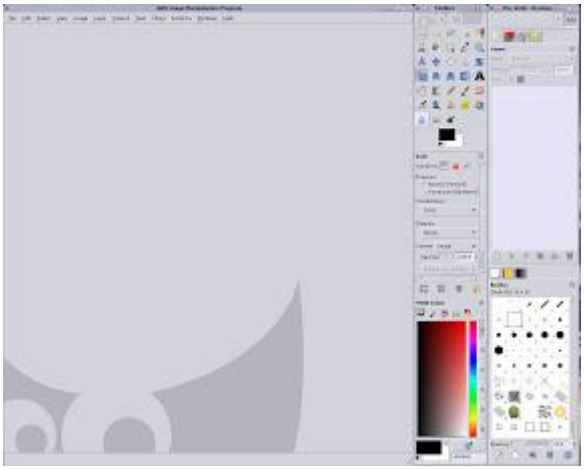
In the Windows Management setup, set the "Save window positions on exit". This will allow you to define it once and for all and have the windows appear in those places every time you start GIMP.

Below are some examples of GIMP window setups:



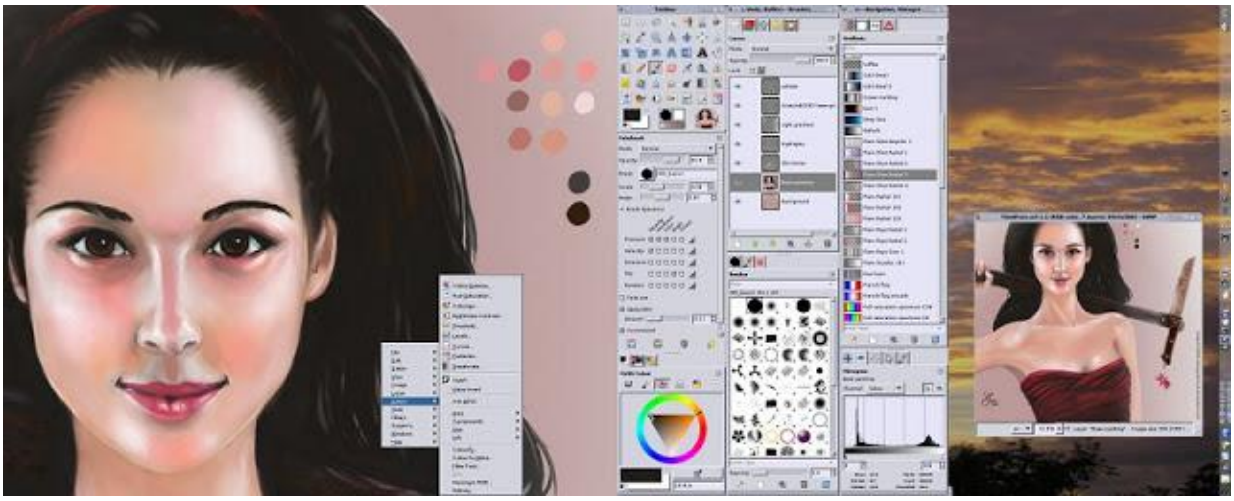
gimpsetup024.jpg

The main dock window was expanded to fill the empty area. Tool docks are on the left and the rest on the right. This is a rather popular setup.

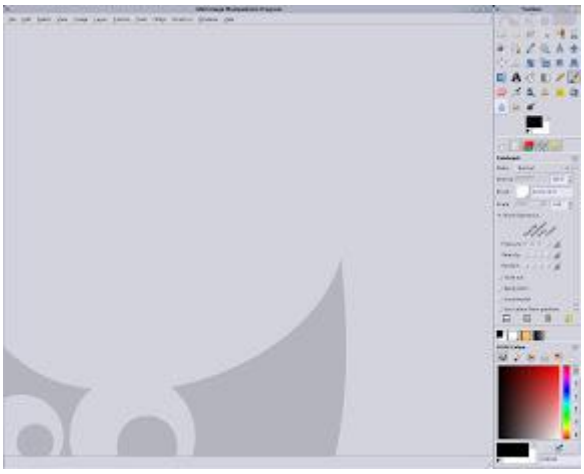


gimpsetup025.jpg

Here all of the interface has been collected on one side of the image window. This has the advantage of having things in the same place, it is also very useful if you have a wide screen or dual monitors (in the later case the interface could go on the second monitor).



Example of my own heavily customized interface to show the flexibility. This setup is set up specifically for digital painting and sports three separate dock windows with several tabs visible. It allows for rapid access to all common features, but takes up a lot of screen area, which is why dual monitors is necessary for this setup. It is not recommended for the beginner.

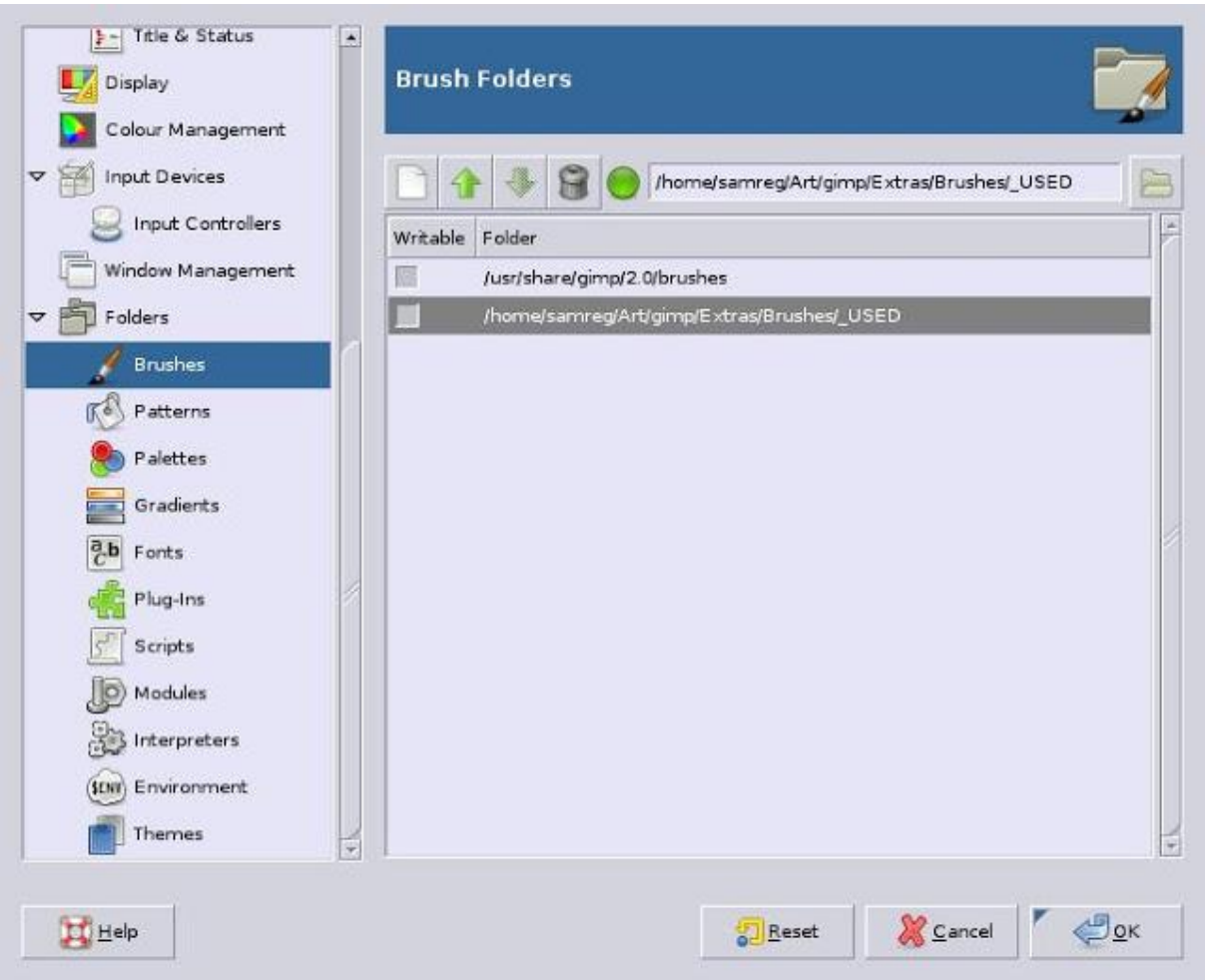


gimpsetup026.jpg

This setup gives maximum area for the image while making away with one of the dock windows completely. All the functions in the other window were moved into tabs. This reduces visibility a bit, but the gained screen area is usually worth it, especially if you have a smaller screen. ***We will use this setup for the sake of this tutorial*****. Try to replicate it if you want to follow the tutorial easily.** You can always customize it more to your liking later.

After adjusting the interface, return to the Preferences->Windows Management and choose to save the positions of all windows so they will come back up the same way when restarting GIMP.

Adding new things to GIMP



gimpsetup027.jpg

This is a very common problem for Newbies. GIMP comes with only a very limited selection of brushes, patterns etc out of the box. How to add more?

This is the last entry in the preferences dialogue: Folders. This is where GIMP looks for stuff it can use.

Let's, as an example, add a new brush to GIMP.

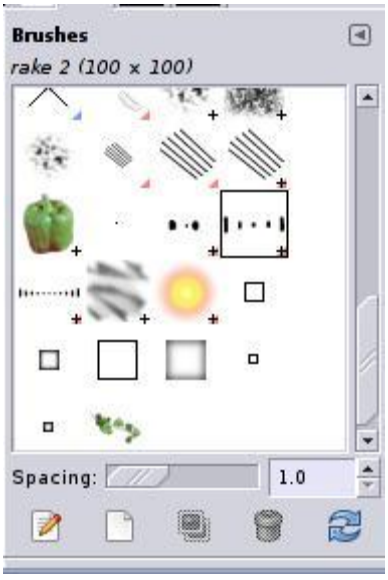
Go to the brush folder setup. The first line lists the location of GIMP's default brushes. You could put your own brushes in there too, but it's much cleaner to do it in your own directory -- if nothing else because they will not be affected no matter what future GIMP installers do to the default directory.

Press the "New" button to add a new, custom folder for your downloaded brushes. Use the file browser to navigate to a suitable place on your hard drive (Windows users would probably use "My documents" or something) and create a new folder there, named, say, "GIMP-brushes". You should now have two entries in the brush folder list -- your default brush folder (if you remove this you will loose your default brushes) and a new folder of your own choice.

For GIMP to recognize new folders, you need to shut down and restart it. Do so now. It is also a good time to check that the windows still pop back up the same way you want. (You *only* need to restart GIMP when adding new folders by the way, you don't need to do it when adding new brushes to those folders in the future).

Go to your web browser and download a brush for testing. You can get whichever GIMP-compatible brush you want, as an example you can get my Rake-tool brush (go to the page and click Download): http://griatch-art.deviantart.com/art/G ... s-77541538

Save the .zip file to your new "GIMP-brushes" folder and unzip it using whatever archiver program you have (Windows users can use Winzip). The file contains several brushes (GIMP brushes have file names ending in gbr or gih).



gimpsetup028.jpg

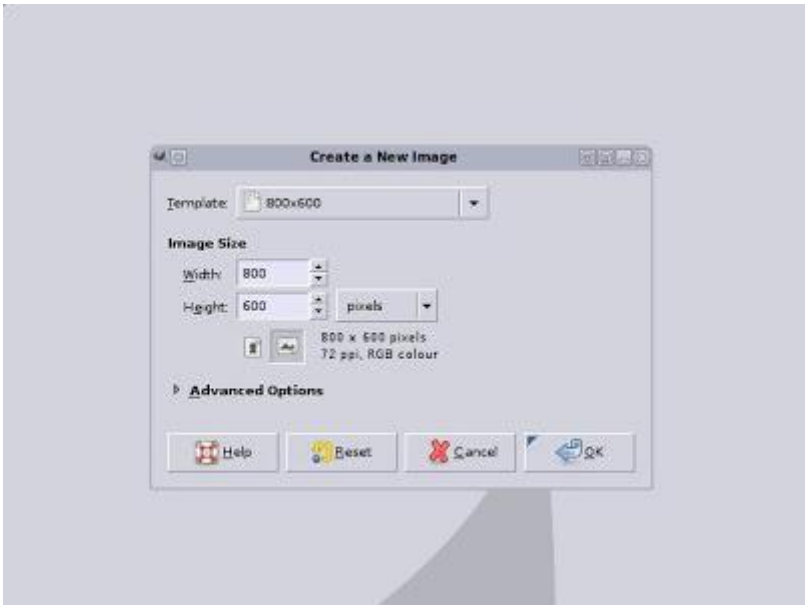
Back in GIMP, click the little "reload" button at the bottom-right of the brush editor. The new brushes are loaded! They appear a bit down in the list, but they are there. We will not use this brush in this tutorial, but at least you have it in case you want to experiment with it in the future.

You can add other resources to GIMP, like Patterns, Gradients and similar in the same way.

Make your first GIMP image!

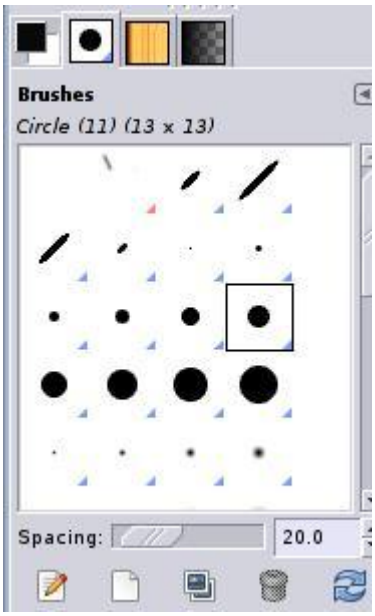
Ok, so finally we are ready to start actually *doing* things in GIMP! We will create a simple little drawing that anyone can do with minimal effort. This is not intended to show off the full power of the system, but only to give you a chance to try out some useful tools for yourself under a controlled environment.

One of the most useful keyboard shortcuts you'll ever find in GIMP is the all-powerful Undo, *Ctrl+Z*, (also reachable from the menu *Edit->Undo*). This cancels your last change. Press again to negate also the change before that. How long you can go back depends on your memory and setup. *Ctrl+Y* (*Edit->Redo*) will get your changes back again. With Undo and Redo you can step back and forth in your history of changes as you wish. Keep these commands handy at all times, you will not regret it.



gimpsetup029.jpg

Use the menu *File->New* to get the above dialogue. Create a 800x600 pixel image. A large empty white canvas should pop into existance in your main dock window.



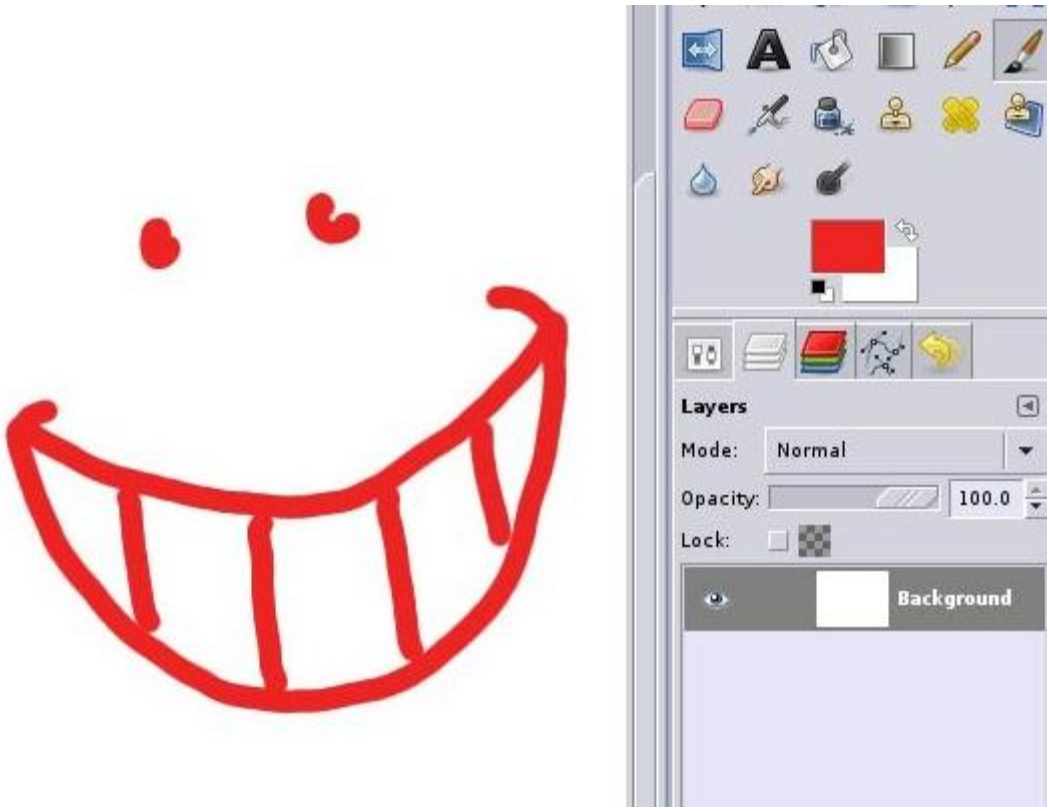
gimpsetup030.jpg

Choose a hard and round brush from your brush list (we will not be using the brush we downloaded above in this tutorial).



gimpsetup031.jpg

Go to the colour selector and pick a bright red colour. Play around a bit so you see how you select colours you want. There are also several types of colour selectors using different ways to represent the same thing. Different people prefer different things.



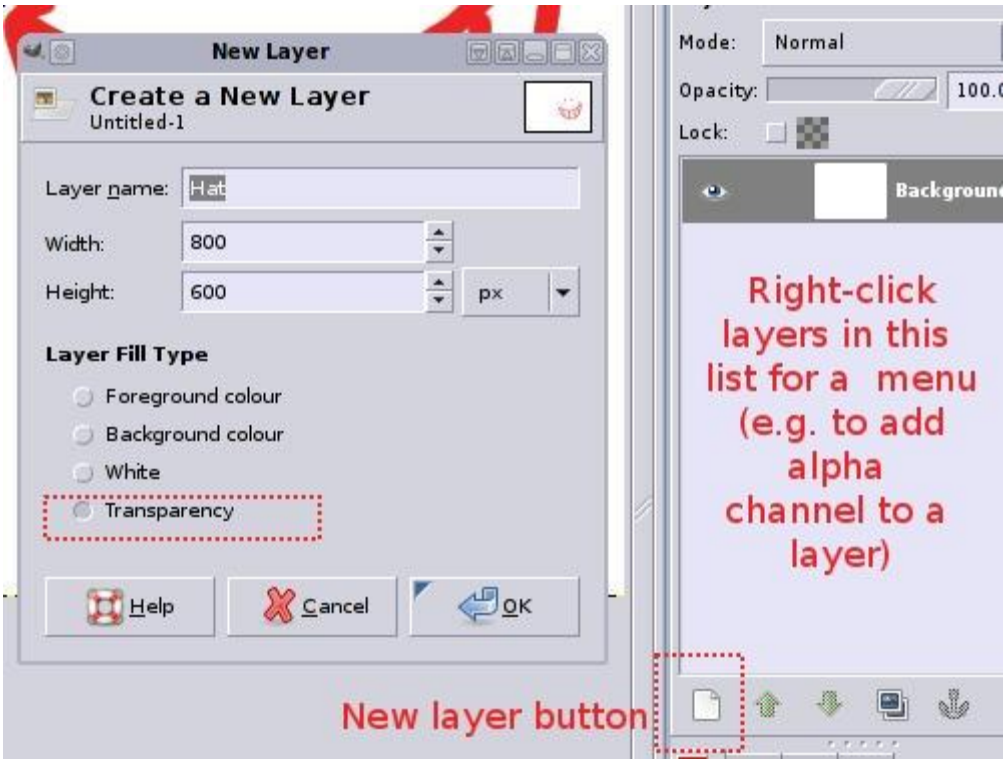
gimpsetup032.jpg

Choose the *paintbrush* tool. You use the left mouse button to draw on the canvas using the selected red colour. Use *Ctrl + Z* (or menu *Edit->Undo*) if you want to take back your changes.

Draw a smiley face, use my example as a template. Place it off on the right side of the canvas and make sure there's plenty of space above and below it (we will add to it later in the tutorial). This is a simple image anyone should be able to complete with a little trying.

Look at the Layer list and you shall find there is now a *layer* in it, called "Background". This particular layer was filled with
white (this was defined in the "Advanced" part of the New image dialogue that we didn't bother changing). We have drawn our smiley face on that layer. We could continue to work on this layer as much as we wanted, but let's add a new layer, for training.

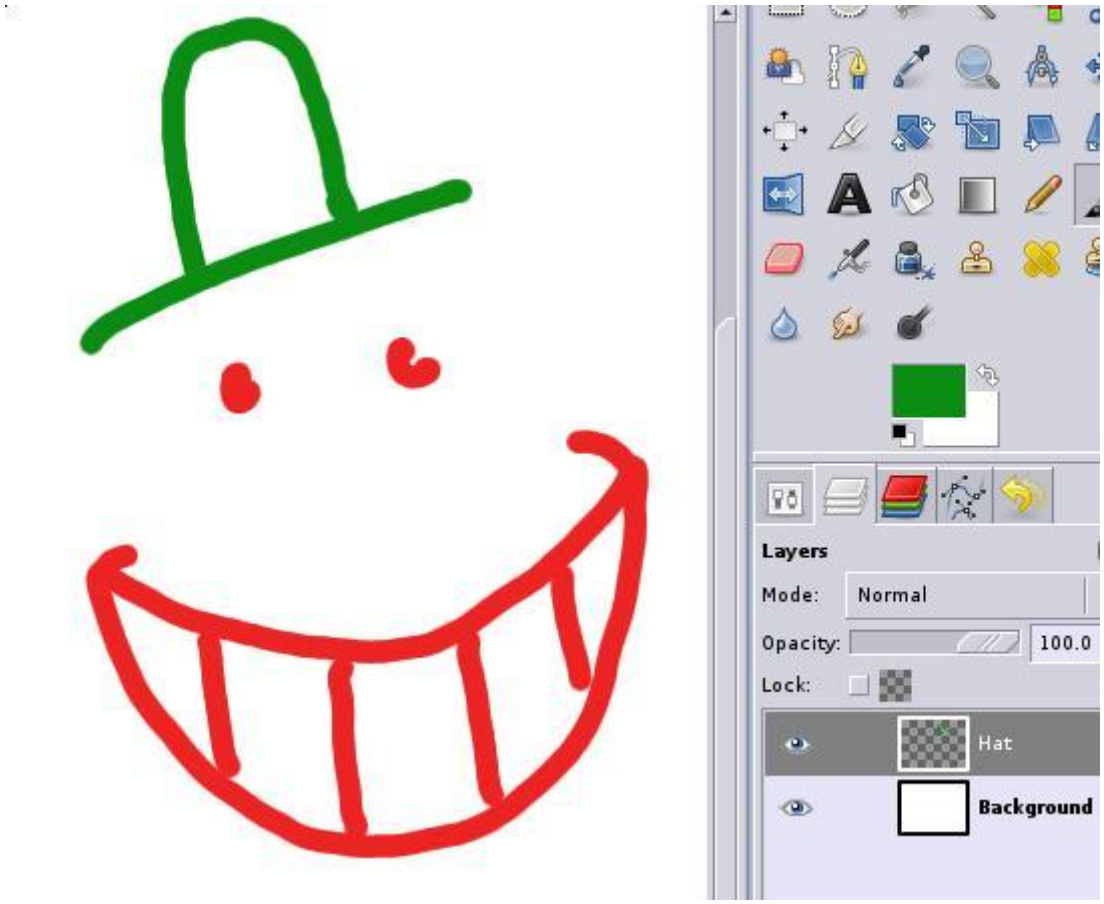
Click the "New layer" icon at the bottom of the Layer list (it's marked in the image below).



gimpsetup033.jpg

A dialogue pops up. We will add a hat to the man, so let's name the layer "Hat". Make sure its Layer fill type is set to "Transparency".

Note: In the image above there is a mention of the layer menu you get by right-clicking layers. We will not be using that in this tutorial, but you should know it's there because it allows you do many useful operations on your layer(s), such as merging them or allowing them to become transparent ("add alpha channel"). Almost all docks in GIMP have hidden right-click menus like this by the way, check it out for yourself).

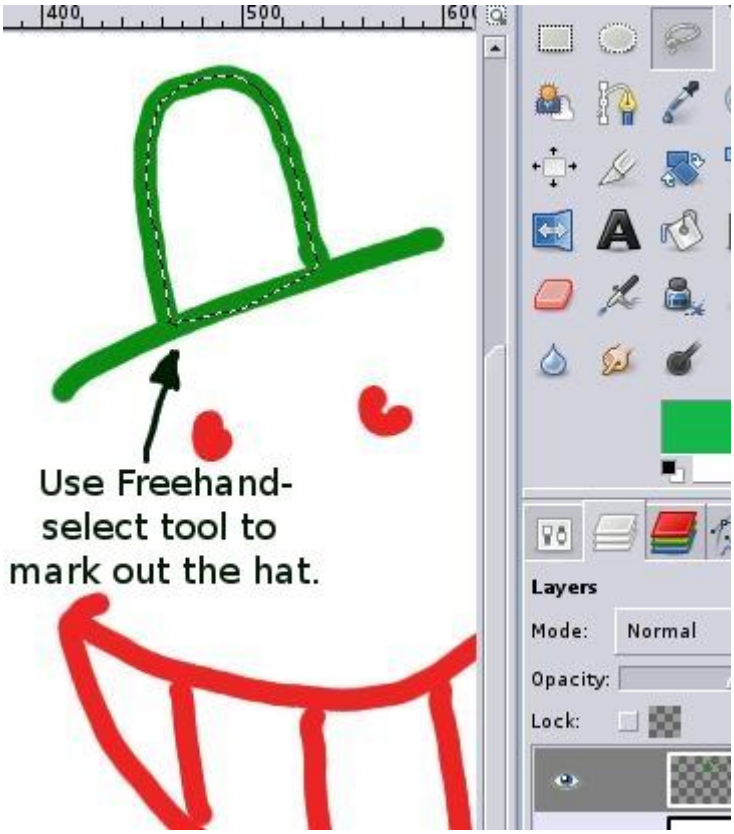


gimpsetup034.jpg

Your new layer appears above the old one in the layer list.

Make sure your new layer is selected. Pick a green colour and use the Paintbrush tool to make a simple hat. Make sure it is not filled, we will try another tool to do that next.

Transparent layers work as if you were placing a plastic transparency over your image -- you can see underlying layers through it, but you cannot affect layers below. Try for example to erase some of the red smile from this layer, and you'll see you cannot. This is very useful for separating work and also many other things.



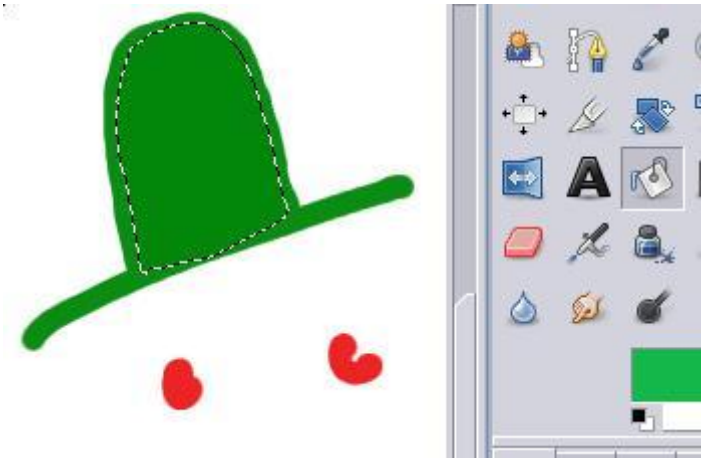
gimpsetup035.jpg

Next we will try out our first selection. Make sure your "Hat" layer is selected and go to the *Freehand select* tool (also known as the "lasso"). Use the lasso to mark out the inner "hole" of the hat. Stay inside the green. *Note that if you cheat and just use one of the region-select tools to select the white area inside the hat, you will likely get problems with the inner edge of the hat (this shows quite clearly in the final result). So do try to do this step with the lasso, for this tutorial at least. It's good practice.*



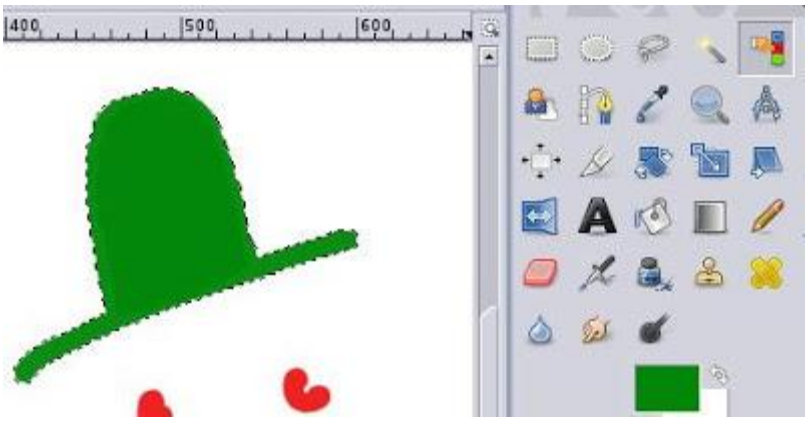
gimpsetup036.jpg

Switch to the *bucket fill tool*. Check out its tool options and make sure it is set to "Fill whole selection". This will make sure our bucket fill will only affect that area we just selected.


gimpsetup037.jpg

With the same green as before selected, click with the bucket-fill tool inside the selection. It fills with green.

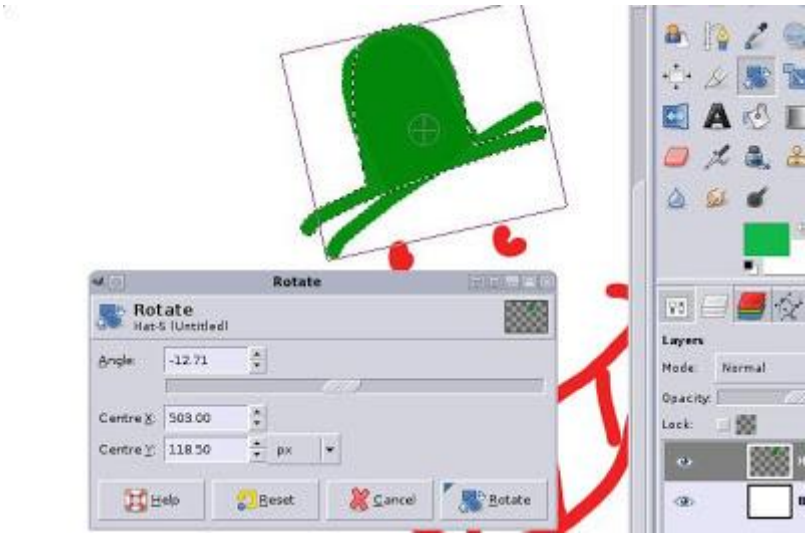
Now get rid of the selection by the menu Selection->None (or Ctrl+Shift+A).



gimpsetup038.jpg

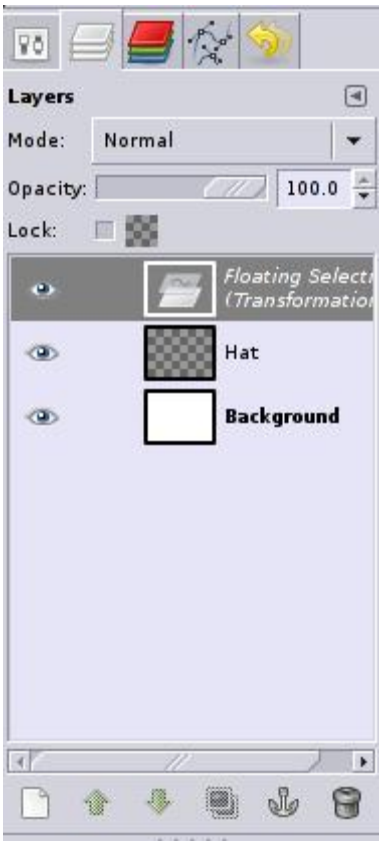
Next, let's use the *Colour select tool*. This tool selects similar colours. Click on your green hat with this tool and the entire hat should be selected.

We want to rotate the hat a bit, it's not really positioned where we want it (no it really isn't, promise!).



gimpsetup039.jpg

Select the *Rotate tool* and click with it inside the selected hat. You will get to rotate it. It should be easy to figure out. Just remember that if your windows manager does not behave right, the rotate window could end up behind your image if you click in the image again. If so, just bring it forth again, it is not gone. Rotate the hat a bit, don't overdo it. Press "Rotate" or Return to finish the operation and actually rotate the hat.



gimpsetup040.jpg

After the rotation is complete, take a look at your layer list. A new layer has appeared! This is a "Floating selection layer".It contains only your rotated hat and is a temporary thing; you cannot select any other layer while this layer is there.

Select the *Move* tool (make sure the Move tool's Option is set to "Move active layer"). Move the hat around a bit to try it out and place it better. Next find the little Anchor at the bottom of the Layer dialogue. Pressing this will merge the floating layer back into the Hat layer and everything will be working normally again.

(Advanced note: Using any selection-type tool with the floating selection will have it act as a move tool when over the hat while clicking the tool outside the hat will directly anchor it down. This is a faster way to work.)