



Final Usability Test Report

Adobe Illustrator

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3 December, 2021

Executive Summary

Our main objective was to call attention to the user experience of the Adobe Illustrator interface between experienced users and new users through in-person usability testing. We tested six users, each taking about 10 to 25 minutes to complete, record, and observe with note-taking. Each user was given a presurvey about experiences regarding Illustrator. All of our users have experience in Adobe products, however 14% of our users have been using Illustrator for 1-2 years, 42% of our users have been using Illustrator for less than 6 months and 42% of our users have been using Illustrator for 3+ years. All of our users use it for professional use, but 86% of our users use it personally as well. The tasks given were designed to highlight common uses of Illustrator to find common difficulties and determine design flaws. Our main takeaways were the following, with their respective recommendations below:

- Majority of users experienced errors with the color picker locations and being able to find the HEX color code editor.
 - *Provide all the same color property adjustments in all color editing locations.*
- 100% of our users struggled with adjusting the starting position of their text on a line path and center aligning it under the given graphic.
 - *The semiotics of how to move the line path text should be more obvious.*
- Overall, the participants in the experienced user group achieved tasks quicker than those in the newer user group, but all participants experienced shared challenges when completing the given tasks.
 - *Adobe Illustrator should revise their interface to be more efficient for both new and experienced users.*

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Purpose of the Test/Introduction

The objectives of this test were to determine recommendations for design improvements Adobe Illustrator could make to be more user-friendly. The test scenarios were designed to showcase how easy or difficult users found the process of navigating through Illustrator and completing tasks. Our main objective was to call attention to the user experience of the Illustrator interface between experienced users and new users. Since Elon iMedia students often use Illustrator to complete tasks, the cross-platform experience is important. Students use Adobe Illustrator to create logos, icons, drawings, typography, and complex illustrations for any medium. This user test was important in showcasing how effectively users could interact with and navigate Illustrator when given quick and short instructions. The tasks given were designed to highlight common uses of Illustrator to find common difficulties and determine design flaws. We were able to recommend design changes that would improve the platform experience from the results we received, which considered the number of steps it takes to complete simple tasks, speed, and error rate. Three of our participants stated they are experienced users, while the other three participants stated they are new Illustrator users.

Methods

Participants

We selected participants of a wide range of experience levels in order to observe nuances in all areas of the application. The participants were divided evenly into two groups: New Users and Experienced users. While testing we had both sets of observers remain consistent in the groups. Ana and Christy tested the new users (less than one year) and Emma and Savannah tested the experienced users.

Procedure

Prior to starting the testing we read our written introductions to the participants and then gave them a brief questionnaire regarding their background with and emotions about adobe illustrator.

Tasks & Scenarios

The test was divided into four sections based on difficulty of task in order to find foundational problems with the interface but also to dive deeper into more specific problems with tools and the ways users understand the interface. Our overarching scenario was that each of our users were a company graphic designer given design tasks using Adobe Illustrator for a client. We specifically tested document set up, creating an ellipse, color adjustments, type on a path with specific dimensions and sizing, and the pen tool for a challenge.

Data Collection

During each task we used screen recordings and voice recordings to ensure that we did not miss any interface or audible observations. After each task we asked our users about their experience and if anything was tedious or challenging to them and why. During the test, we asked users to think aloud while they did the tasks for qualitative information and comments. For quantitative data, we measured the time for each individual task, errors made, and total time spent on all four tasks to compare to other users. Errors were defined as any additional clicks detouring away from the critical task path given. See the results below.

Results

ii. Quantitative Results

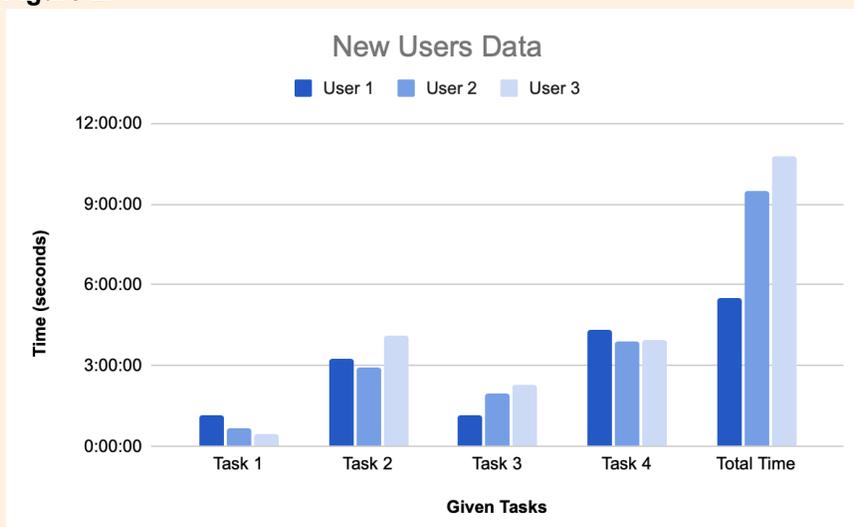
The following quantitative results of this usability study of the Adobe Illustrator application were as follows:

Figure 1.

Average Time Completing Given Tasks (minutes)		
	Experienced Users	New Users
Task 1	0:17:40	0:45:11
Task 2	2:27:00	3:26:00
Task 3	2:08:20	1:48:45
Task 4	2:48:00	4:03:52
Total Time	7:41:00	10:03:48

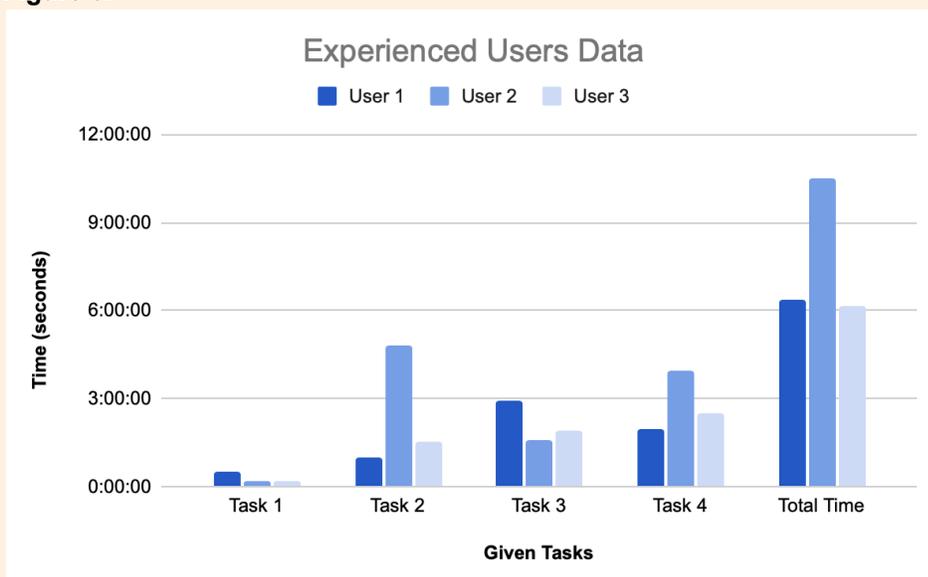
In figure 1, the table shows the average amount of time it took for users to complete each given task. As each task progressed with more steps required for completion, the amount of completion time for each task showed a consistent increase. Participants took an average of seven to ten minutes to complete all of the given tasks within the testing session.

Figure 2.



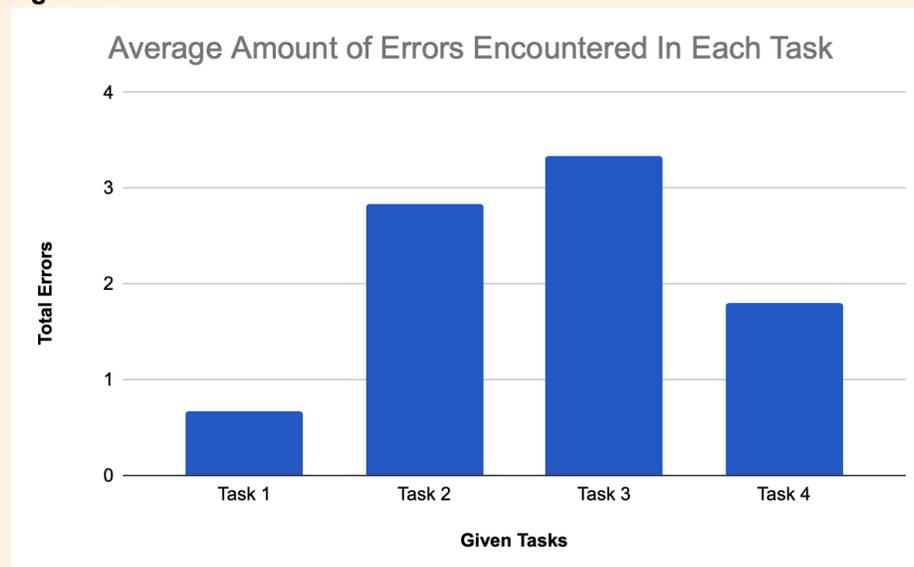
As the amount of required steps were increased in each task, it can be hypothesized that the amount of completion time for each task will also increase. However, looking at the data in figure 2 and 3 we can see that each user from both the new and experienced users did not reflect this assumption. For the new users group, task two and four required the most time for completing the task given. As for the experienced group of users, the time needed for completion was scattered for each task and user. There was no indication of a pattern or consistency between each task.

Figure 3.



In figure 4, the chart reflects the average amount of errors encountered by all participants in the testing session. The data illustrates that task 3 was the most challenging and the users encountered the most errors in the given tasks. This goes to further support the statement made above about the previous charts and data collected. As the user progressed to the next task, it was hypothesized that the user would encounter more errors as the task was made more difficult. However, task 3 specifically focuses on the use of the type on path tool which took less time than task 4 to complete based on figure 1 but compiled more interface errors from the user interaction. This information will further go to support the findings and recommendations that will be made for the interface later in this report.

Figure 4.



Findings & Recommendations

Between the participants more experienced with the software and those who were not, these testing sessions unveiled a few major findings. One of the biggest findings included the existence and non-existence of the HEX color code input box. There are multiple locations on the Illustrator screen where the color of an object can be viewed, changed or adjusted: only one of those locations included the option to view or adjust the HEX code, which posed a big obstacle to our testing participants. We recommend that this HEX code input box be placed anywhere where color options are presented within the software.

Another large issue we found our participants encountering was the adjustment of text on a line path. Our participants struggled with adjusting the beginning location of the line path text, and were trying to drag the small box on the line instead of the vertical line. We recommend the line path text simply start at the very beginning of the line and end at the very end of the line: additionally, the semiotics of the line path text position adjustment should be more obvious.

From our observations of participants, we recommend that there should be an automatic transparent fill when using the pen tool. Many users experienced frustrations with being unable to see their trace.png image due to an existing color fill, which they then turned off to more easily complete the task. An automatic no-fill when creating shapes with the pen tool is recommended from these findings. Lastly, we recommend the opacity adjustments be available in multiple locations, wherever the color options are. As it does not take up much screen real estate, it could be helpful for users to access these settings in multiple interface locations.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Pre-test survey questions:

1. Age?
 - a. _____
2. Occupation?
 - a. _____
3. Gender?
 - a. _____
4. Have you used any similar programs, such as Photoshop, InDesign, Sketch or more? If so, which ones?
 - a. Yes, _____
 - b. No
5. How long have you been using Illustrator?
 - a. Less than 6 months
 - b. 6 months-1 year
 - c. 1-2 years
 - d. 3+ years
6. Have you used Illustrator for personal or professional (including school) use, or both?
 - a. Personal
 - b. Professional (including school)
 - c. Both
7. On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable are you with using Illustrator?
 - a. Not comfortable 1 2 3 4 5 Comfortable
8. Do you enjoy Illustrator?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Love/Hate relationship
 - c. No
9. How do you plan to use Illustrator in the future?

Appendix 2

Beginning Instructions

Thank you for participating in this testing session. This should take approximately 15-30 minutes of your time. During this session, we will be screen recording the desktop monitor you will be using. We will also be recording your audio during the session. You will complete a pre-test survey, followed by 4 tasks in Adobe Illustrator. I will give you printed out instructions for each task, and I will also read them aloud to you. Feel free to speak aloud during the completion of these tasks. We will ask you for feedback after each individual task. Feel free to ask us questions at any time during the session.

Let's begin!

Appendix 3

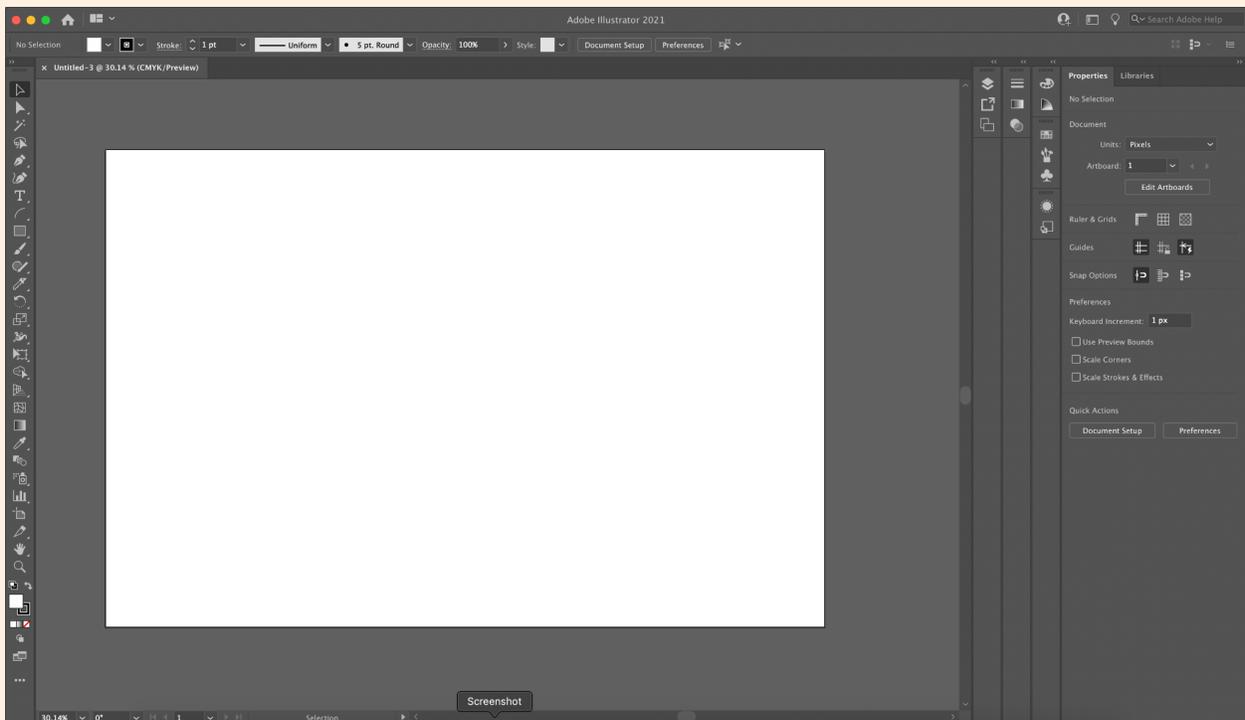
Task 1

Scenario: Imagine your client gives you specific dimensions and document requirements. Create a new document with these requirements.

Complete the following tasks:

- Create a new document in Adobe Illustrator with these specifications:
 - Dimensions of 1800 by 1200 pixels
 - Landscape/horizontal orientation
 - 1 Artboard

Screenshot of Completed Task:



Appendix 4

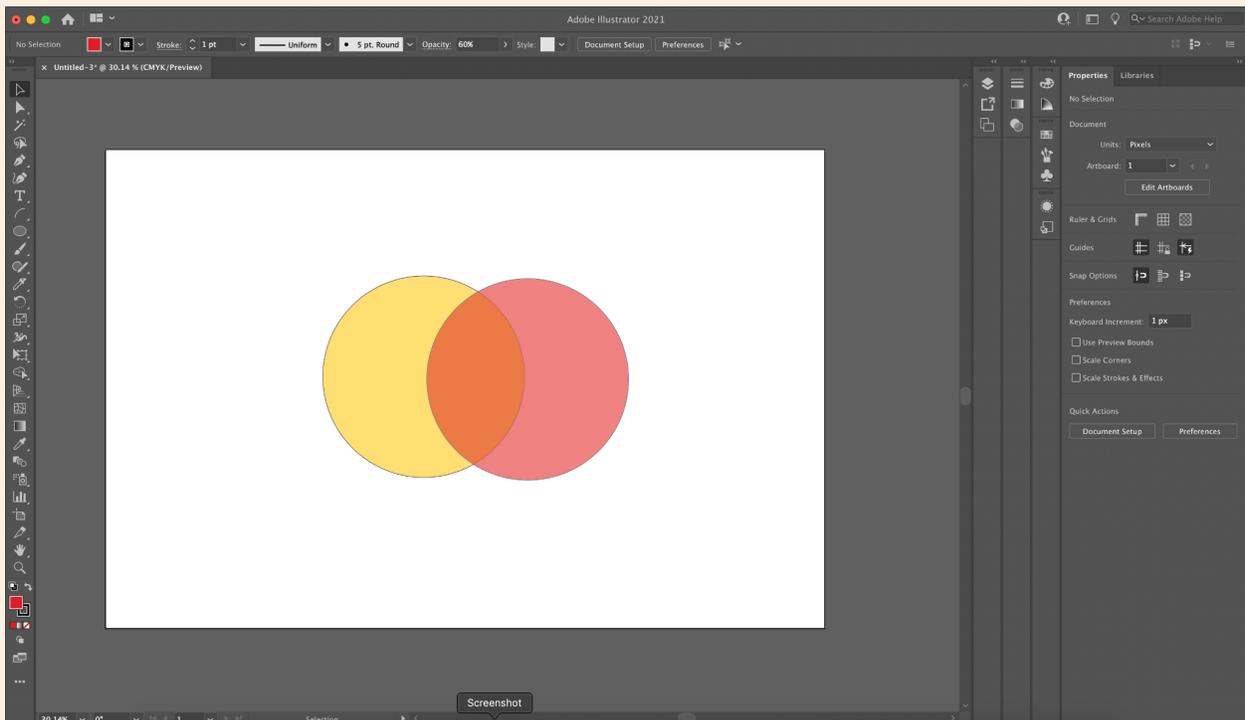
Task 2

Scenario: For a project in your new job, you will recreate a logo or a design that your client likes/needs.

Complete the following tasks:

- Recreate the image on the sheet given (2 overlapping circles) with these specifications:
 - Fill circle with color #FFD020
 - Change opacity to 71%
 - Fill the 2nd circle with color #DD1F26
 - Change opacity to 60%

Screenshot of Completed Task:



Appendix 5

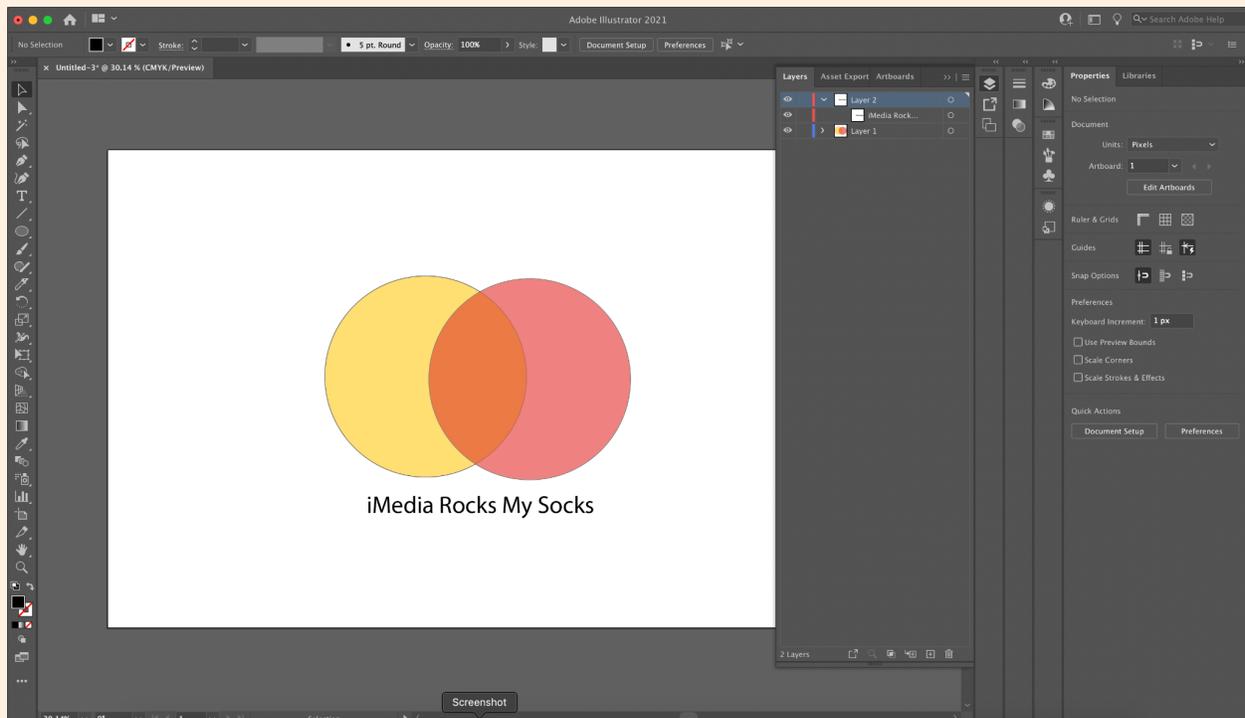
Task 3

Scenario: As a graphic designer, visual representation of tone is important; this means adjusting the way text is presented on a deliverable.

Complete the following task:

- On a new layer, create a line that is 900 pixels in width
- Type the following sentence on that line path: “iMedia rocks my socks”
 - Font Size: 60pt
 - Center text under circle logo

Screenshot of Completed Task:



*****AT THE END OF THE TASK*****

Testing Observer script: **When completing this task did you find any challenges, if so? What were they?**

Appendix 6

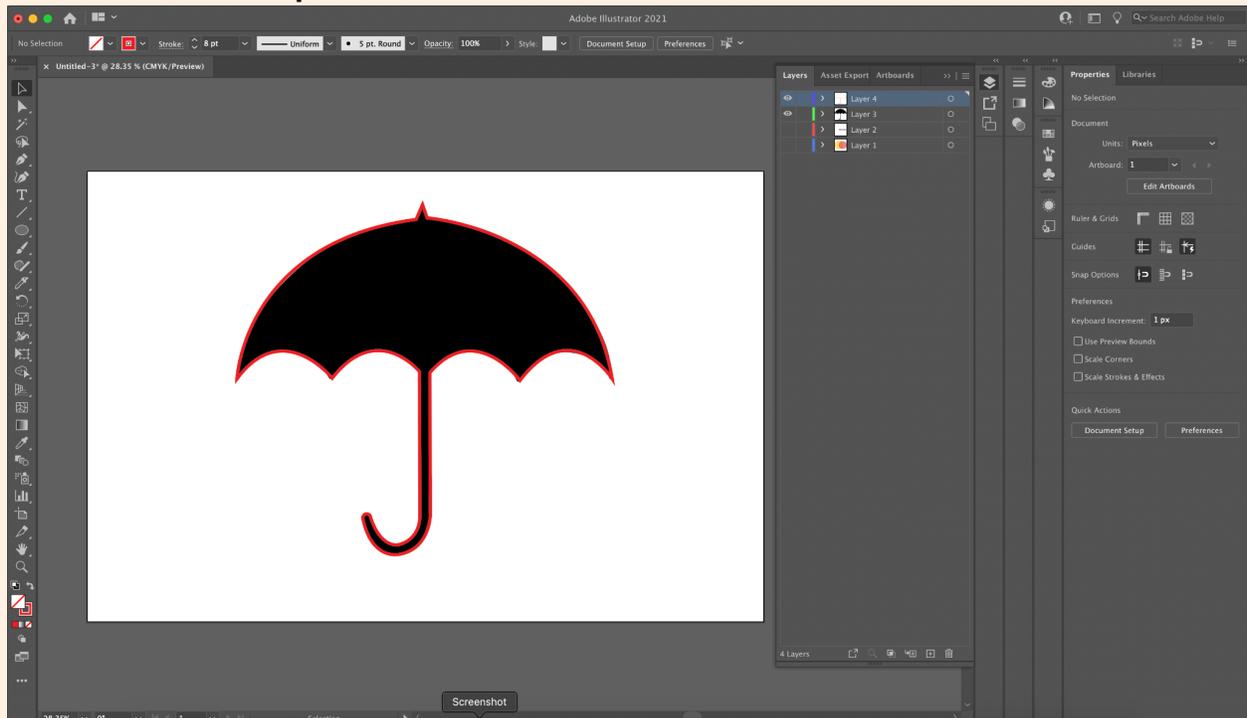
Task 4

Scenario: One of the most important uses of Illustrator in the design world is to precisely replicate an existing image for your design; you will need to do this for a future client.

Complete the following tasks:

- Create a third layer and hide the first two layers.
- Working in that new layer bring in the photo “trace.png” from the desktop.
- Creating a fourth layer trace the silhouette with the pen tool, creating a replica shape.

Screenshot of Completed Task:



*****AT THE END OF THE TASK*****

Testing Observer script: **When completing this task did you find any challenges, if so? What were they?**

Reflection

Overall, this testing procedure revealed successes and opportunities for improvement. All of our users were able to understand the tasks given to them, and our method of reading the tasks aloud and presenting them in paper form was beneficial. Through this process we observed problems that can be improved such as resetting the Illustrator settings between participants as some settings were saved between sessions. Additionally, we ran into issues with printing our instruction handouts, resulting in black and white instructions and abandoning the accurate color representation for specific tasks. This presented obstacles for testing participants as they were unable to verify the accuracy of their HEX color code by looking at the handout. Overall, we feel that this was a successful testing experience as many of us who conducted it have also conducted user experience testing prior to this project.