How to Create an IM Icon in Adobe Illustrator CC

> In today’s tutorial, we’re going to explore the process of creating a simple IM icon, using nothing more than same simple geometric shapes and tools found within Adobe Illustrator.

That being said, grab a cup of that fresh batch of coffee and let’s get started!

Tutorial Details: IM Icon

- **Program:** Adobe Illustrator CS6 – CC
- **Difficulty:** Beginner
- **Topics Covered:** Design Theory, Compositional Construction, Shape Alignment, Grid Positioning
- **Estimated Completion Time:** 30 Minutes

Final Image: IM Icon

Step 1

As with every new project, start by first setting up a **New Document** by going over to **File > New** (or using the **Control-N** keyboard shortcut), which we will adjust as follows:

- **Number of Artboards:** 1
- **Width:** 128 px
- **Height:** 128 px
- **Units:** Pixels

And from the **Advanced** tab:

- **Color Mode:** RGB

- **Raster Effects:** Screen (72ppi)
- **Preview Mode:** Default

Quick tip: most of the indicated settings can be automatically triggered if you set the document’s **Profile** to **Web**, the only one that you’ll have to manually adjust being the Artboard’s **Size** (Width x Height).

Step 2

Once we’ve set up our project file, we can start working on the actual icon, and we will do so by creating the its background using a **120 x 120 px** rectangle, which we will color using **#71E1FF**, and then center align to the underlying

Artboard.

Step 3

Create the center text box’s main body using a **50 x 20 px** rectangle (**#FFFFFF**), which we will **Vertically Center Align** to the larger background, positioning it at a distance of **18 px** from its left edge.

Step 4

Turn on the **Pixel Preview Mode (Alt-Control-Y**), and then adjust the shape that we've just created by adding a new

anchor point to the center of its right edge, followed by a top and bottom one distanced at just **4 px** from it.

Step 5

Select the center anchor point that we've just added using the **Direct Selection Tool (A)** and then push it to the outside by a distance of **6 px** using the **Move** tool (**right click > Arrange > Transform > Move > Horizontal > 6 px**).

Step 6

Give the shape that we've just created an outline using the **Stroke** method, by creating a copy of it (**Control-C**) which we

will paste in front (**Control-F**) and then adjust by first changing its color to **#0A1A1E**. Next, flip its **Fill** with its **Stroke** (**Shift-X**) making sure to set its **Weight** to **4 px** and its **Corner** to **Round Join** from within the **Stroke** panel. Once you’re done, select both shapes and group them together using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut.

Step 7

Add the dummy text lines using a **20 x 2 px** rectangle (**#0A1A1E**) vertically stacked at **2 px** from another slightly larger **28 x 2 px** one (**#0A1A1E**), which we will group (**Control-G**) and then center align to the larger box, positioning them at a distance of **8 px** from its left edge. Once you're done, select and group (**Control-G**) all the IM box's composing shapes together before moving on to the next step.

Step 8

Create the center box’s emoticon using a **28 x 28 px** circle (**#FF8D4D**) with a **4 px** thick outline (**#0A1A1E**), which we will group (**Control-G**) and then position onto its right side, at a distance of **4 px**.

Step 9

Add the emoticon’s eyes using two **4 x 4 px** circles (**#0A1A1E**), which we will vertically distance at **4 px** from one another, which we will group (**Control-G**) and then center align to the larger body, positioning them at a distance of **6 px** from its top edge.

Step 10

Create the mouth section using a **12 x 12 px** circle (**#0A1A1E**), which we will adjust by removing its top half, positioning the resulting shape underneath the two eye. Once you’re done, select and group (**Control-G**) all of the emoticon’s composing shapes together, doing the same for the entire IM message line afterwards.

Step 11

Create the top and bottom IM text lines using two copies (**Control-C > Control-F** twice) of the one that we've just finished working on, which we will vertically distribute at **4 px** from the original.

Step 12

Vertically reflect the two copies by selecting them and then **right clicking > Transform > Reflect > Vertical**.

Step 13

Take a couple of moments and change the colors of the left sided emoticons to **#FF8D4D**, selecting and pushing both the top and bottom text lines to the left side by a distance of **8 px** (**right click > Transform > Move > Horizontal > -8 px**).

Step 14

Finish off the IM icon by vertically reflecting the IM’s top text lines (**right click > Transform > Reflect > Vertical**), and then replacing the bottom ones using three **4 x 4 px** circles (**#0A1A1E**) horizontally distanced at **2 px** from one another, which we will group (**Control-G**) and then center align to the underlying text box. Once you’re done making the adjustment, select and group all of the icon’s composing sections using the **Control-G** keyboard shortcut.

Great Work!

You now have an IM icon to use in your next project! As always, I hope you've managed to follow each and every step and most importantly learned something new and useful along the way.

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Just another coffee addict / pixel grinder, creating colorful projects one pixel at a time.

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