

Adobe User Profile: John Laker – Gaphic designer and Website Creator –
Current employer: Atomwide Ltd.
Clients: Buckinghamshire LA, London Grid for Learning, South east Grid for Learning

Background and training

I have been using Adobe products for the last 15 years, 12 of these as a professional graphic designer. I started using Adobe Photoshop when when my father, himself a graphic designer, brought home a copy for me to play with as a painting tool. I was 12 years old. I think it was this early use that helped me decide that I was going to be a graphic designer.

I left University in 2000 with a degree in Multimedia Technology. I had used a number of Adobe software packages - Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere and After Effects as well as Flash and Dreamweaver.

I then spent 5 years working in the print industry producing books, magazines, leaflets and posters. Photoshop and Illustrator were key tools in my work as well as Adobe Acrobat to supply print ready PDF files to the printer.

The print industry had given me a fantastic grounding in the art of page layout and typography and taught me a lot about structure, balance and the use of colour, things that are transferable across all forms of design. However I wanted to expand my knowledge and use my skills in other areas, particularly digital media. In 2005 I became a freelance graphic designer. It was during this period that I first had the opportunity to use Dreamweaver and Flash in a professional environment.

After a couple of years working as a freelancer the opportunity arose to come and work for Atomwide Ltd as their in-house graphic designer where i still am today. The role combined elements of both print media and digital media and allowed me to use the full range of skills I have developed over my career up until that point. I now exclusively use the Adobe Creative suite (CS5.5) of software to express myself creativity in my role.

Photoshop and Illustrator – How they help me do my job more effectively

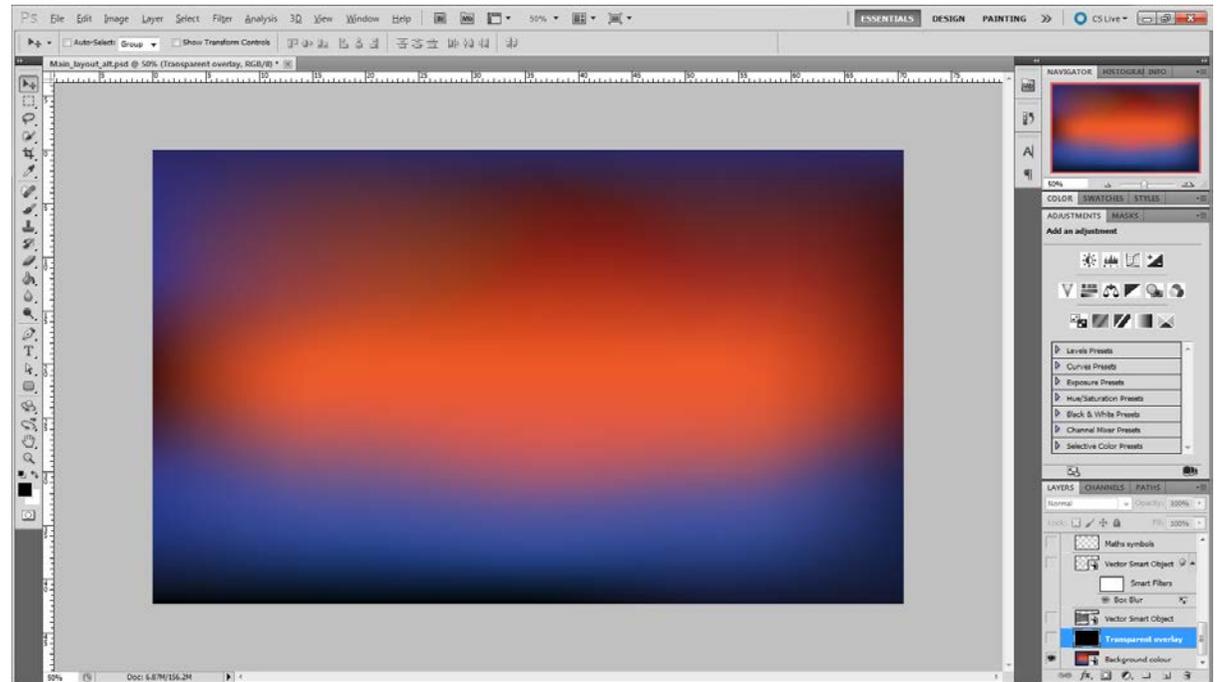
With any project that I do, my starting point is always the design and this is created using a combination of Photoshop and Illustrator. I like to use Photoshop and Illustrator together. Illustrator is used to draw vector objects with the **pen tool** and Photoshop is used to add colours, effects and filters.

The introduction of **smart objects** in CS2 made this integration between Photoshop and Illustrator even better. **Smart Objects** allows you to edit in Illustrator and the changes are linked back into Photoshop in a non-destructive way. **Smart objects** can also be incorporated into Dreamweaver making a truly integrated project that is quick and easy to update or change.

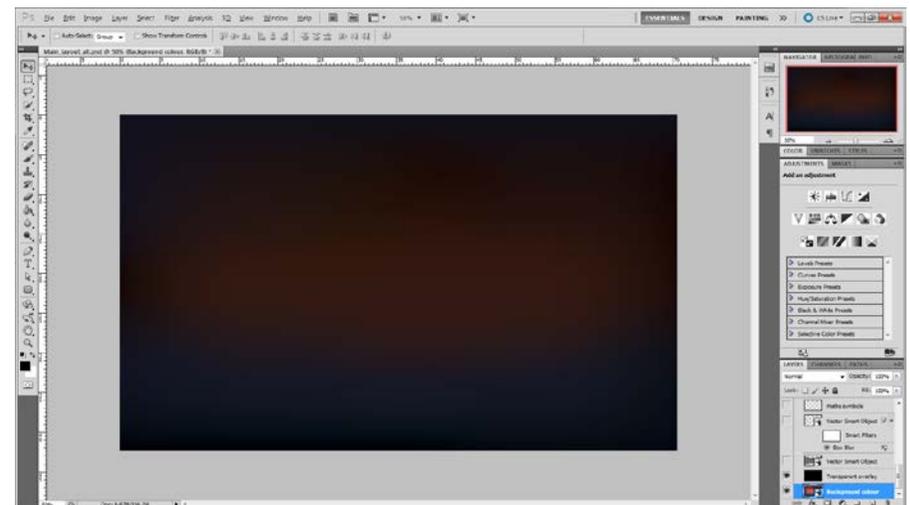
Broadcast Engineering and Maths project:

To illustrate this along with the use of **layers**, **transparency** and **blending modes** here is a step by step guide showing how the background image of the Broadcast Engineering and Maths project was created:

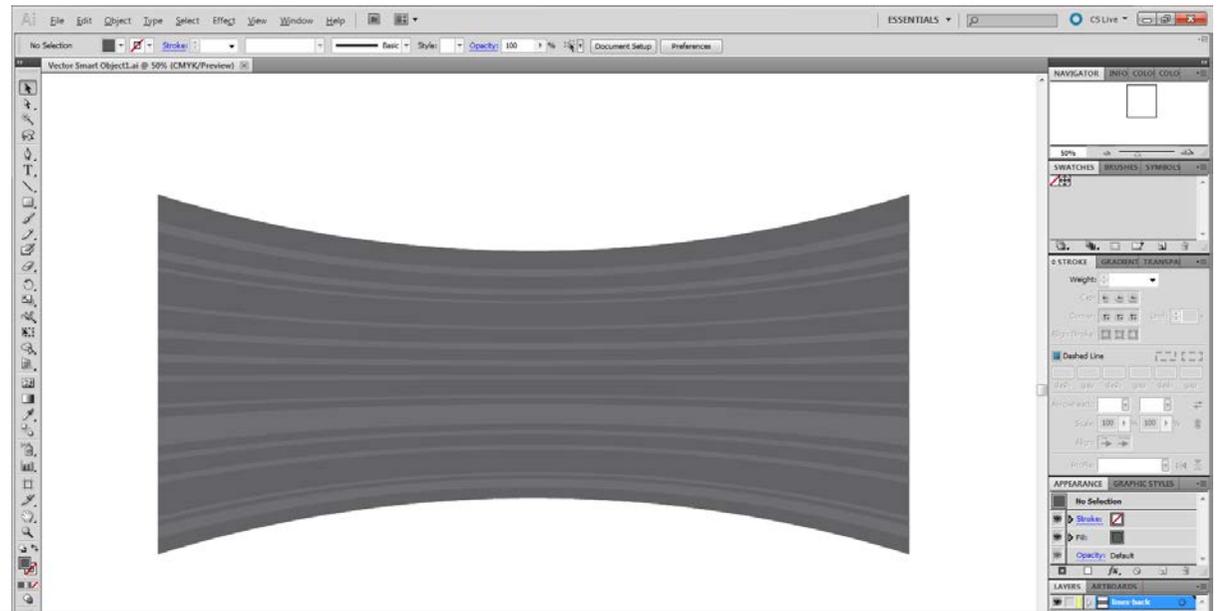
We start with a colour **gradient** that covers the entire layer.



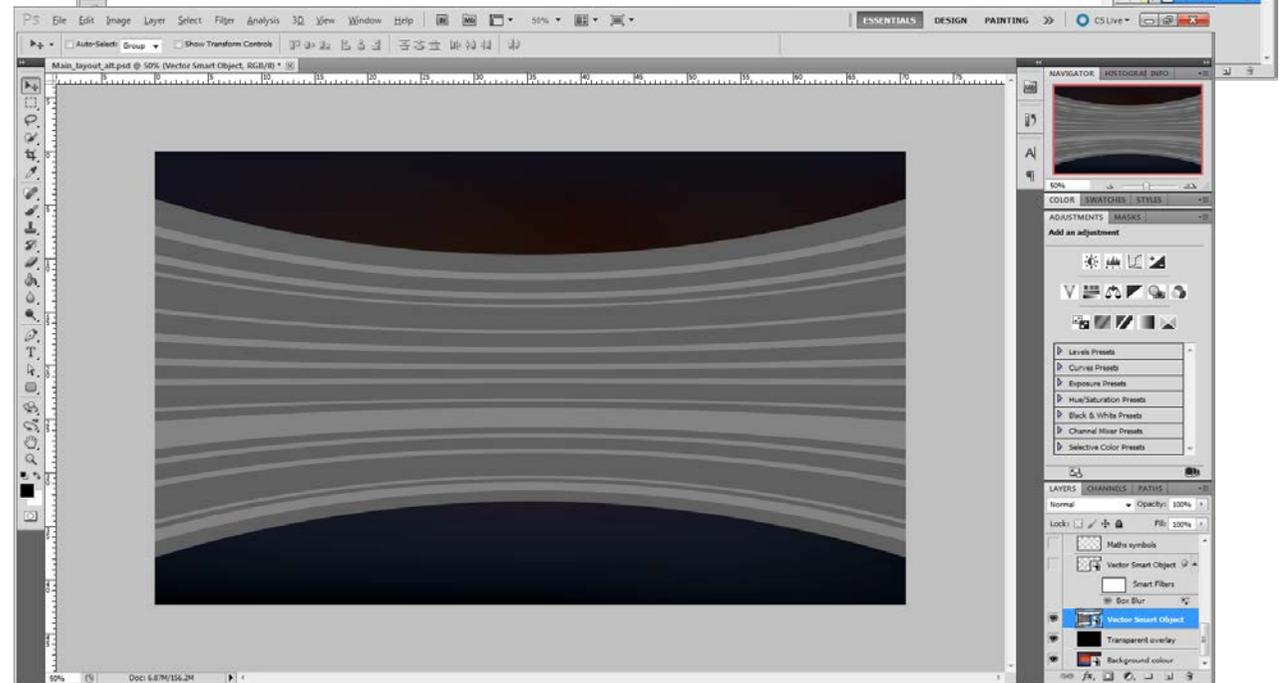
On top of this, a layer filled with black and set to **80% transparency** is added.

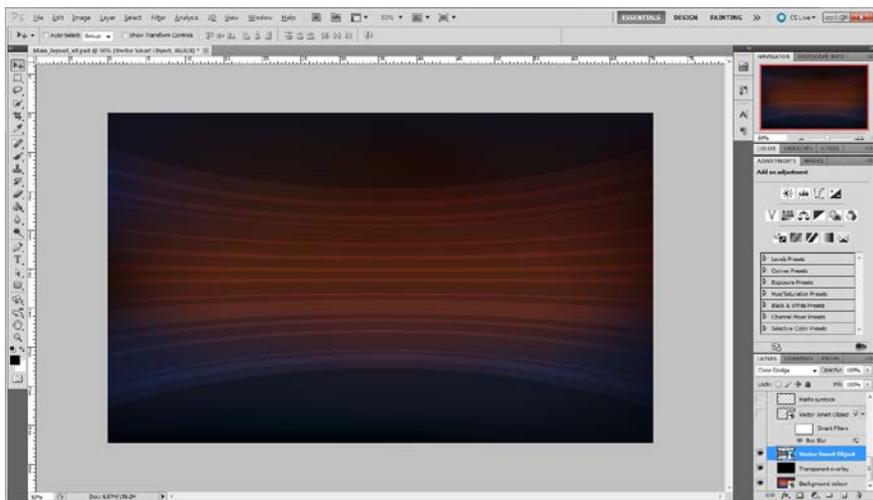


The next layer consists of a curved shape drawn in Illustrator and imported into Photoshop as a **smart object**.



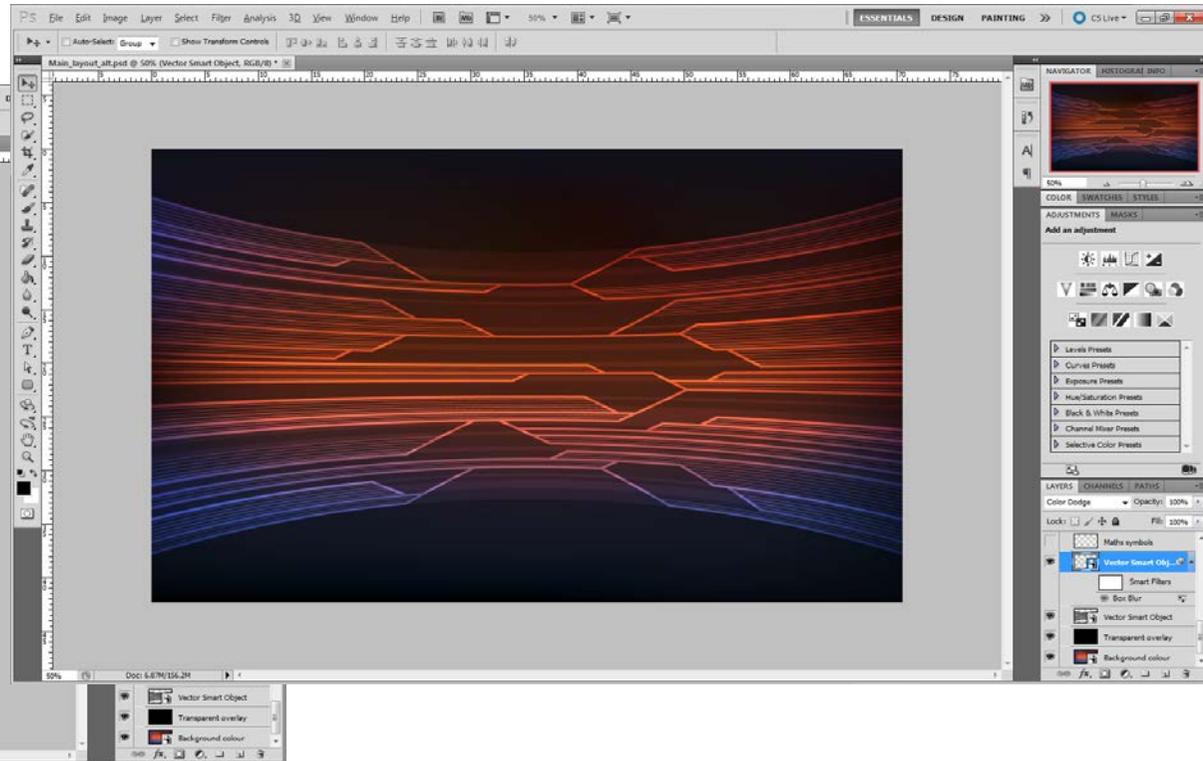
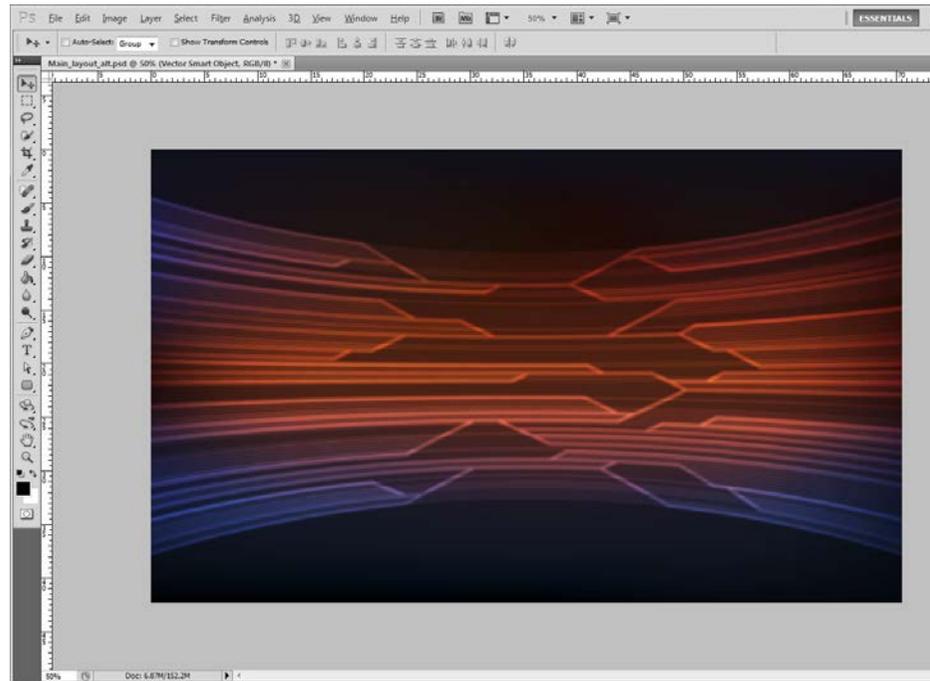
The blend mode of this layer is set to **Colour Dodge**. The dodge and its opposite burn tool work best on grayscale images. **Colour Dodge** usually brightens the underlying image while making the colors more saturated. Because it doesn't change the darkest part of an image very much, it allows you to brighten an area while still maintaining a good contrast. You can see on the image that the lighter grey areas have been brightened more than the darker grey. Because of the **transparency** we added to the 80% black layer this means that more of the background gradient will show through the lighter the grey gets.





The same process was followed in the next layer.

To this layer we also added a **blur** filter to add some movement to the design. As the image in this layer is a **smart object** the filter can be applied as a **smart filter** allowing us to change the **blur** settings in a non-destructive way until they are just right.



Finally some mathematical symbols were added in the top layer and the **Colour Dodge** blending applied once again to give us the final design.

The background is then incorporated into the rest of the design.

Once the design of the website is finished it is sliced up and saved out as either a jpeg or a png file and imported into Dreamweaver where the html and javascript code is written.

In addition to the Adobe Creative Suite, Adobe Flash Media Server 4.5 (FMS) was used as the platform to stream all of the videos in this project to both an Adobe Flash player as well as an html5 player for IOS devices.

