

What to do with an Adobe Illustrator file.

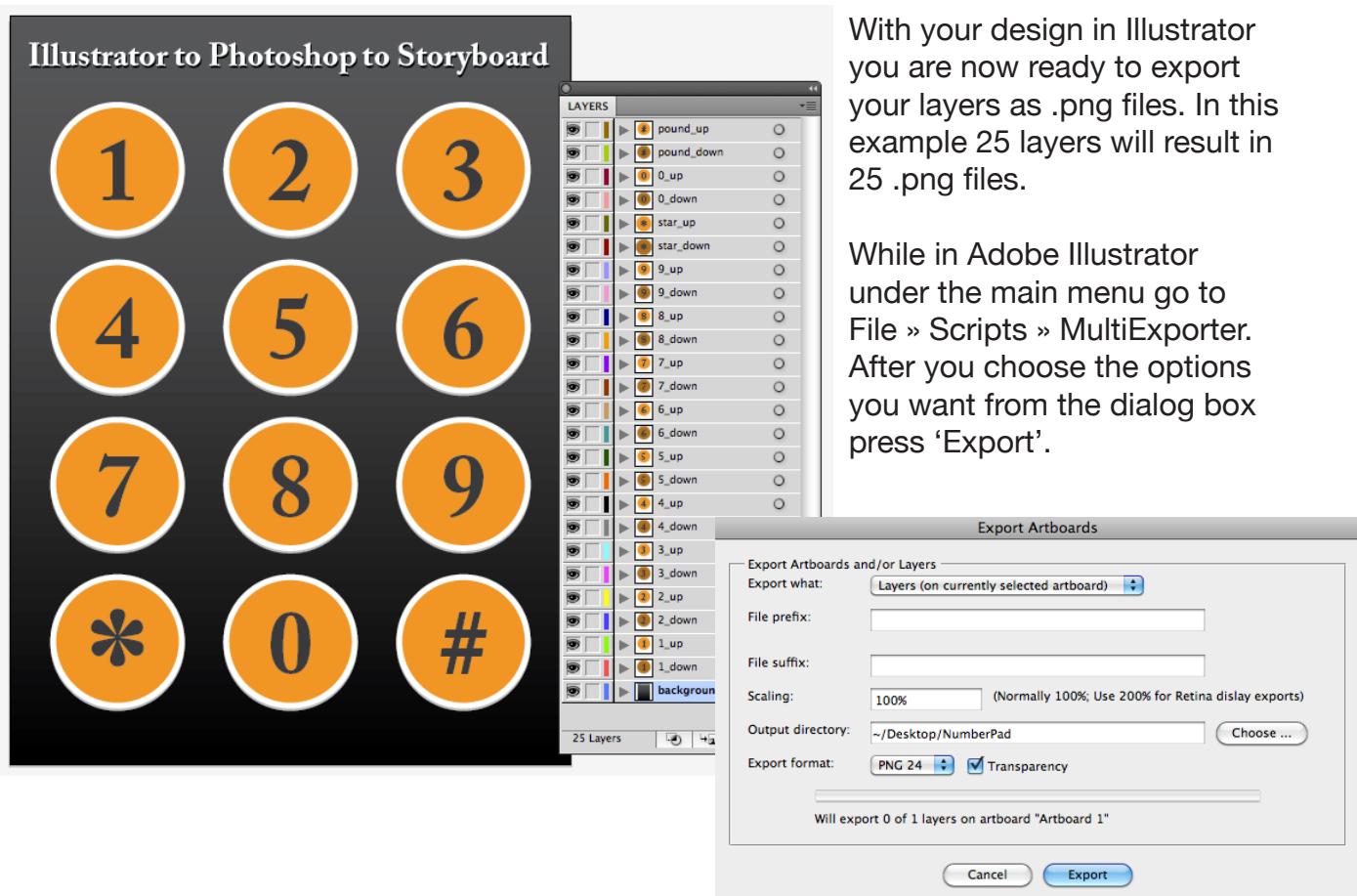
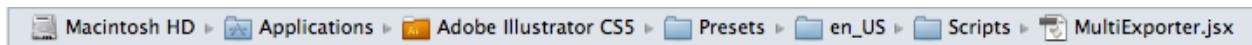
Crank Software's Storyboard Designer enables users to implement their UI-designs from Photoshop by importing them directly into Storyboard, but what if your design has been created in Adobe Illustrator?

Storyboard does not have a feature that allows you to import an Illustrator file (.ai) directly, but you can export your layers from Illustrator as .png files which is a great start.

Instead of using Illustrators 'Save for Web & Devices' feature to export each layer as a .png file one at a time, you can use this script MultiExporter.jsx

Download: www.cranksoftware.com/downloads/samples/MultiExporter.jsx

This script allows you to export multiple layers and artboards as different file formats including .png with one export operation. Download the script and place it in your scripts folder for Adobe Illustrator, then restart Illustrator.



The screenshot shows the Adobe Illustrator interface with a numeric keypad design consisting of 12 orange circles containing numbers 1 through 9, an asterisk (*), a zero, and a hash (#). To the right of the design is the 'Layers' panel, which lists 25 layers, including various numbered layers like '1_up', '1_down', '2_up', etc., and an 'background' layer. An 'Export Artboards' dialog box is open, prompting the user to 'Export Artboards and/or Layers'. The 'Export what:' dropdown is set to 'Layers (on currently selected artboard)'. Other settings include 'File prefix:', 'File suffix:', 'Scaling: 100%', 'Output directory: ~/Desktop/NumberPad', and 'Export format: PNG 24'. A checked checkbox for 'Transparency' is also visible. At the bottom of the dialog, a note states 'Will export 0 of 1 layers on artboard "Artboard 1"'.

With your design in Illustrator you are now ready to export your layers as .png files. In this example 25 layers will result in 25 .png files.

While in Adobe Illustrator under the main menu go to File » Scripts » MultiExporter. After you choose the options you want from the dialog box press 'Export'.

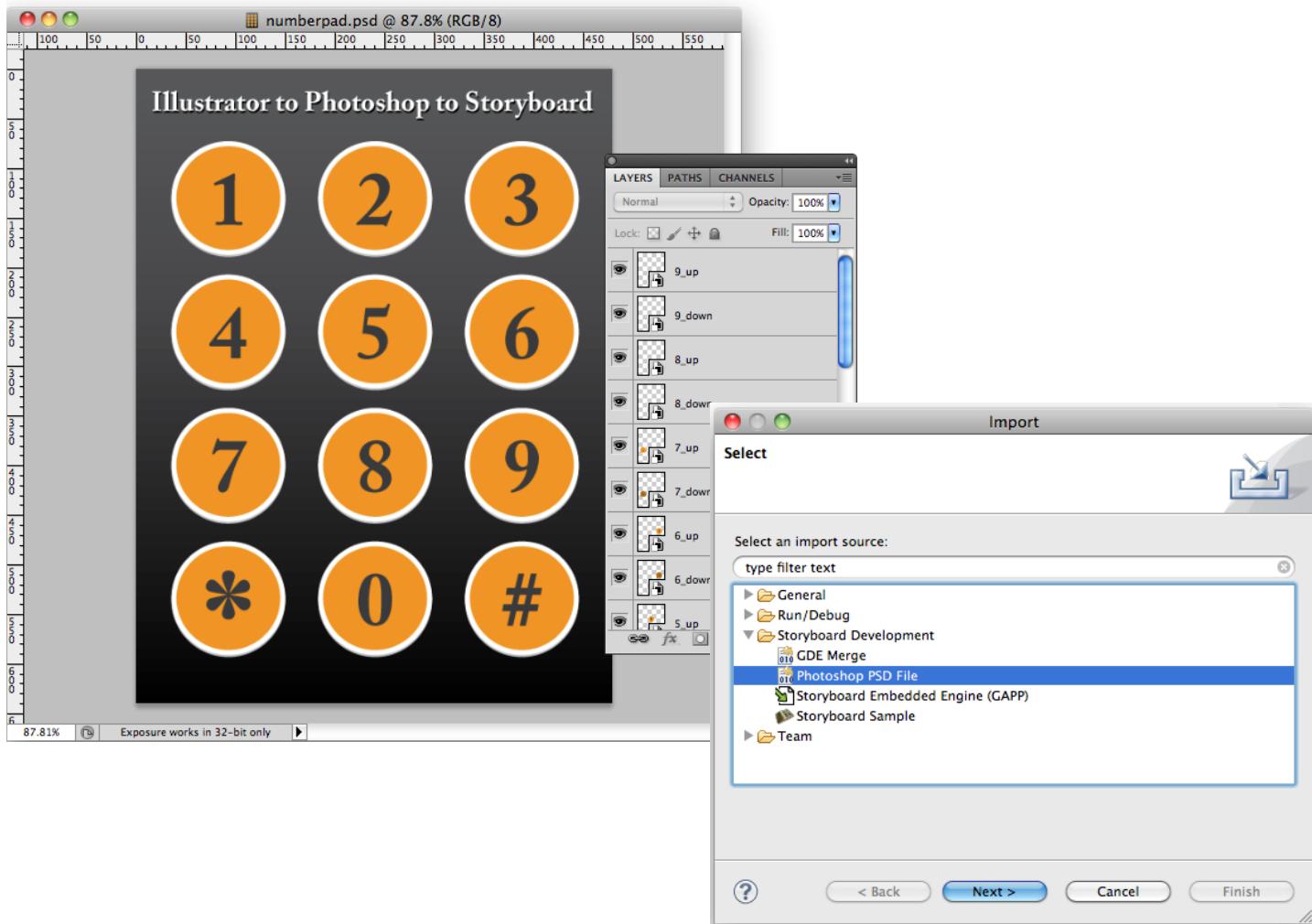
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After the layers have exported, each .png will be created at the dimension of it's parent document. Every image in this example will be 480 x 640 pixels.

If you create a new photoshop document 480 x 640 pixels at 72dpi with an RGB colour space you can now place all of the .png files into the photoshop document. The best way to do this is to select all of the .png images and drag them into the new Photoshop document. You will have to hit <RETURN> (mac) or <ENTER> (PC) to place each item as its own layer.

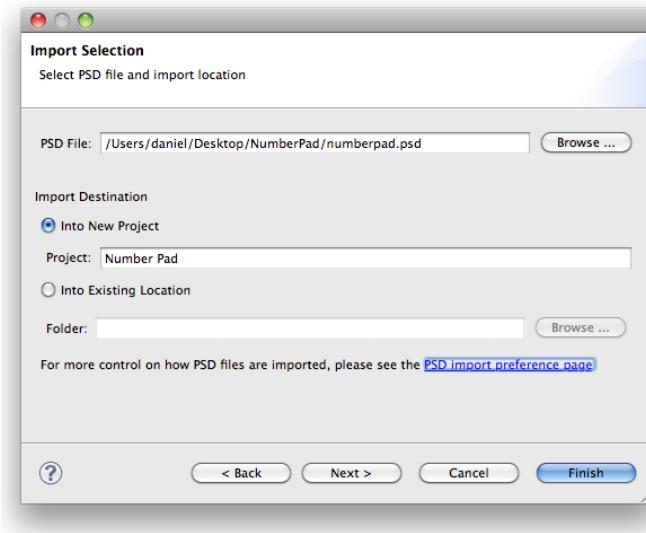
After placing the images, you may want to re-order some of the layers in Photoshop depending on what order they are placed. When the new document has been saved as a photoshop file (.psd) you are now ready to import into Storyboard Designer.

Within Storyboard, select <IMPORT> under <Storyboard Development> and select <Photoshop PSD File>.



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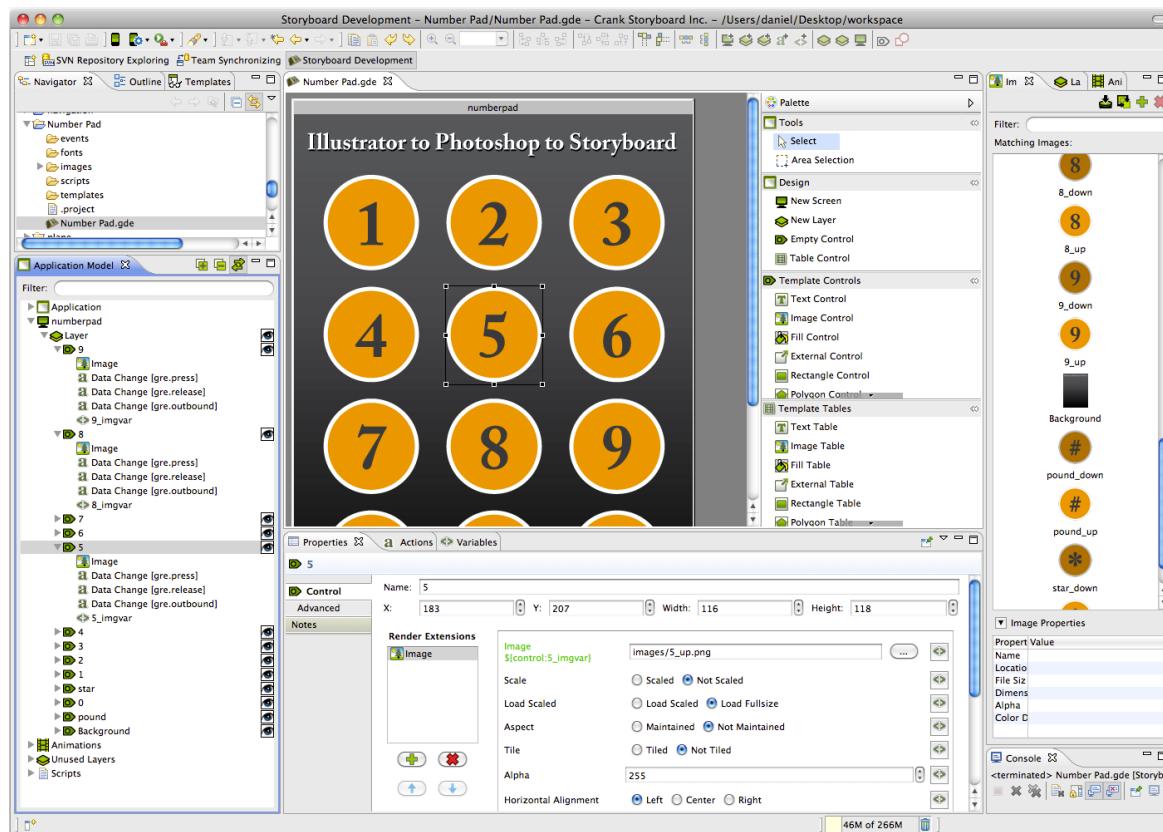
You will then choose your photoshop file and either create a new project or an existing project, then click <FINISH>



When Storyboard imports the photoshop file it processes the images and places them with the same x,y location that they had from photoshop.

These imported images will now have only the dimensions that they occupy. During the first export from Illustrator all of the images were 480 x 640 pixels because that was the size of document. Storyboard creates the images at the size they occupy.

Now the design is ready for development in Storyboard Designer.



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Here are some additional points from the MultiExporter author Matthew Ericson.

- You can choose whether you want to export all the artboards in the document with the currently visible layers showing, or if you want to export files for each of the layers in a document on the currently active artboard, or if you want to export a combination of all the artboards multiplied by all the layers.
- Files are named based on their layer name. It only exports layers where their name has been changed from the default “Layer 1”, “Layer 2” or “Artboard 1”, “Artboard 2”, etc.
- If you put a minus sign (-) in front of a layer name or artboard name, it will skip that layer or artboard. (Useful for when you no longer decide you like a particular mockup, but don’t want to delete it from the master Illustrator document.)
- For layers only: If you put a plus sign (+) in front of a layer name, that layer will always be visible. Useful for if you want to have a layer that always appears in the background of each exported image.
- It stores its settings in a nonvisible, nonprinting layer named “nyt_exporter_info”
- It has an option for transparency, and lets you choose between PNG8, PNG24 and PDF.