



HYBRID WORKFLOW ACCESSIBILITY IN AFFINITY STUDIO

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Abstract: *In this paper, the authors propose to highlight the hybrid workflow within the Affinity Studio program. The hybrid workflow offered by Affinity involves the integration into one program of the 3 modules, the so-called "Studios": Vector, Pixel and Layout. The Vector module is meant as an equivalent of Adobe Illustrator, designed for vector graphics and design, allowing users to create scalable graphics, includes the pen tool, the pencil tool, the shape tool, the new tracing function, included in the 2026 Affinity Studio update, allows the tracing of raster images (pixels), such as PNG files, and their direct conversion into editable vector graphics. The Pixel Studio is the equivalent of Adobe Photoshop, a module dedicated to image processing and editing. Users can add pixel layers to paint or edit while keeping the original image data intact, another way of using it, the one presented in the paper, is to modify a text written in Vector mode and just by switching to Pixel mode, to stylize it with the image editing specific tools. Layout Studio is the equivalent of Adobe InDesign, it is designed for creating complex multi-page layouts, such as magazines, books and brochures, providing essential tools for typography, master pages and for print preparation.*

Key words: *Illustrator, Affinity Studio, Canva, Photoshop*

1. INTRODUCTION

Affinity Studio uses the "Personas" concept (renamed "Studios" in version 3.0), integrating vectors, raster editing, and pagination into a single unified interface [1]. The user can paint with pixel brushes over vector shapes or change the layout of a page without closing the document or changing the application [2]. This hybrid architecture allows a greater creative freedom. An illustrator or designer can draw the structure of a character in vectors for scalability, then switch to *Pixel Studio* to add organic shadows using charcoal or watercolor textured brushes, all on the same object and layer, without damaging the quality of the vector graphics [3].

Affinity evolved, under Canva's umbrella, into a high-performance and affordable alternative among freelancers, creative studios, and illustrators due to improved work speed and reduced cost.

As an established industry leader, *Adobe's* fame precedes it. Known for its *Creative Cloud*, which includes ultra-popular apps like *Photoshop*, *InDesign*, *Illustrator*, and *Lightroom*. In addition to its 20 creative apps, *Adobe* also offers cloud storage, fonts, templates, services like *Adobe Portfolio* and *Behance*, and generative AI tools like *Adobe Firefly* [4].

Known as one of the alternatives to *Adobe Illustrator*, *Affinity Designer* has emerged as a new and fresh tool in the vector graphics space. Its development has focused more on modern

computer technology and user expectations, based on various surveys. It is modern and more advanced compared to other programs [4].

The software update, released on October 30, 2025, brought some radical changes to *Affinity*. First, the three-app suite, Designer, Photo, and Publisher, no longer exists. The three apps are now combined into a completely new app, in the form of separate studios: Vector, Pixel, and Layout, **Fig. 1**.

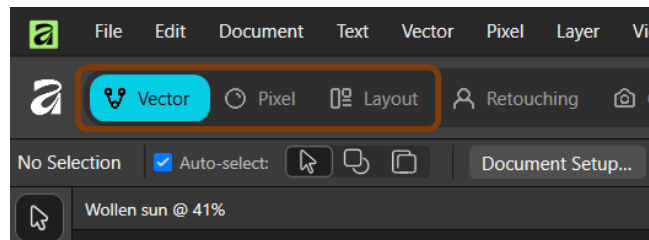
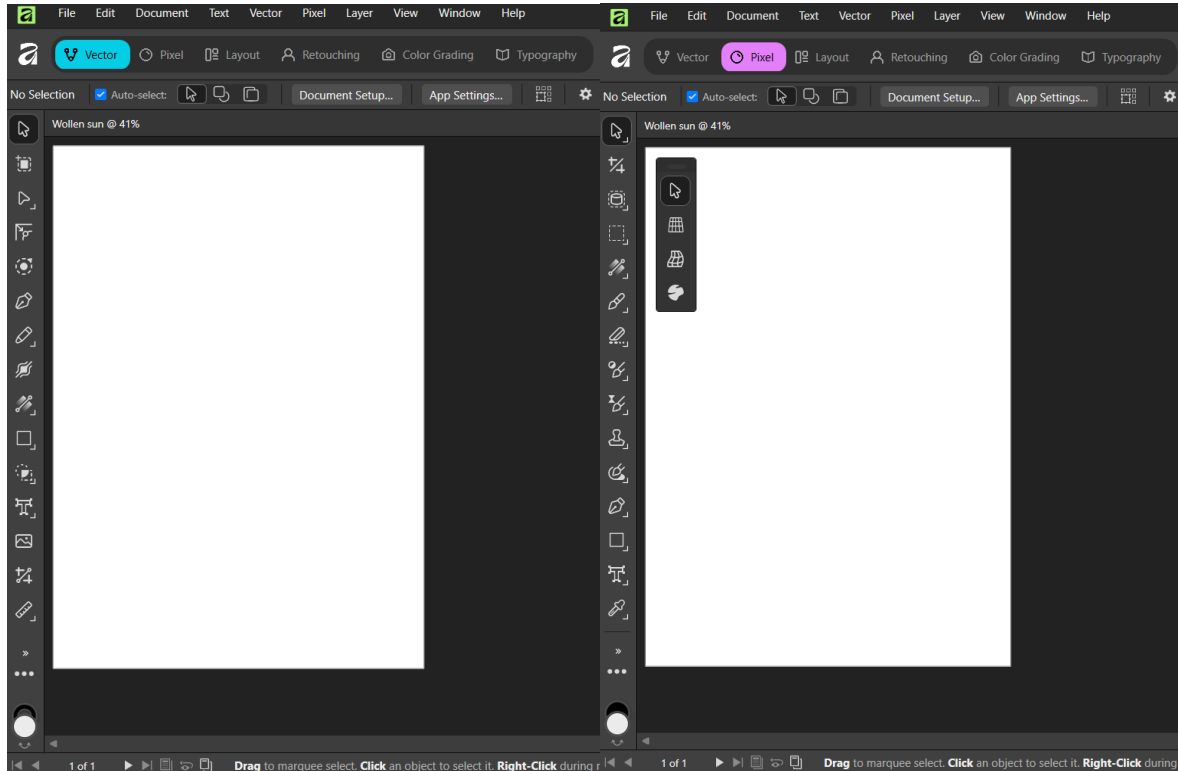


Fig. 1: Menu for switching between studios

Vector Studio is meant as an equivalent of *Adobe Illustrator*, dedicated for vector graphics and design, allowing users to create scalable graphics, includes the pen tool, pencil tool, shape tools, the new trace function, included in the 2026 update, allows tracing of raster images (pixels), e.g. PNG files, and their direct conversion into editable vector graphics, **Fig. 2a** [3]. *Pixel Studio* is meant as an equivalent of *Adobe Photoshop*, a dedicated image editing module. Users can add pixel layers to paint or edit, keeping the original image quality intact, **Fig. 2b** [5].



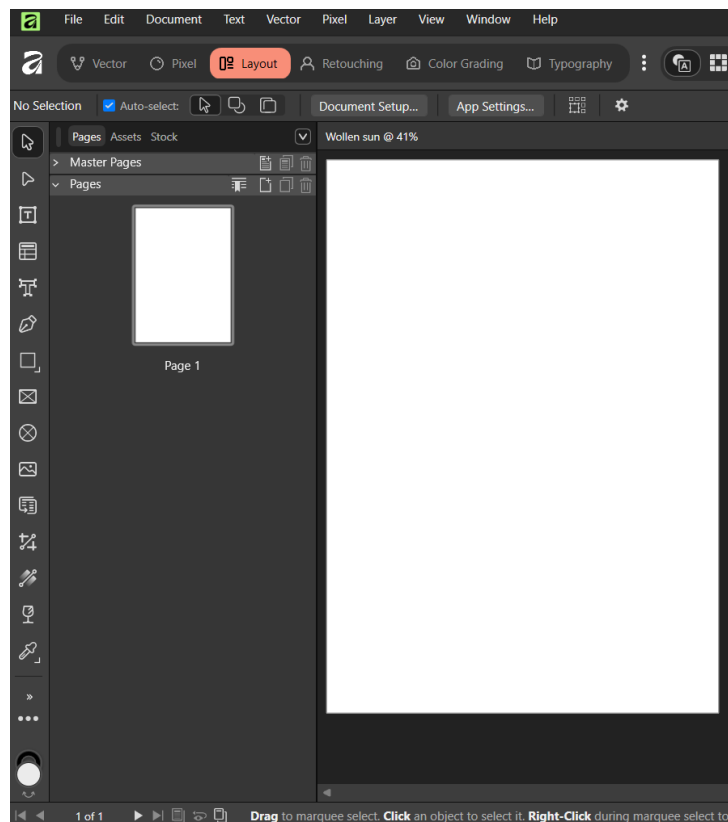
a)

b)

Fig. 2a,b: Vector studio and Pixel studio



Layout Studio is meant as the equivalent of *Adobe InDesign*, designed for creating complex multi-page layouts such as magazines, books, and brochures, providing essential tools for typography, master pages, and prepress settings, **Fig. 2c** [6].

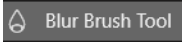
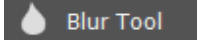


c)

Fig. 2c: *Layout studio*

Custom boards are also fully shareable, promoting the collaboration between users. Integration with *Canva Pro* offers a fourth studio, *Canva AI*, which includes features like fill, background removal and image and vector generation [2].

2. ACCESSIBILITY OF USING THE BLUR BRUSH TOOL IN AFFINTY VERSUS THE BLUR TOOL IN PHOTOSHOP AND ILLUSTRATOR

This part of the paper highlights the positive influence of *Affinity Studio* on work speed and how a vector graphic can be transferred from the *Vector Studio* in which it was created to the *Pixel Studio* just by switching between the studios. The chosen example is: creating a text in *Vector Studio*, editing it with the  Blur Brush Tool, proper for the *Pixel Studio* and with  Blur Tool, proper for *Photoshop* and transferring the edited text to *Vector Studio* for further desired changes.

2.1 Affinity Designer

In the *Vector Studio*, we start by drawing a circle, for this we select from the toolbar, the shape tool, as shown in **Fig. 3a** and by holding the shift key we draw a circle **Fig. 3b**, which serves as a pattern for the text, which will follow the shape of the circle, **Fig. 3c**.

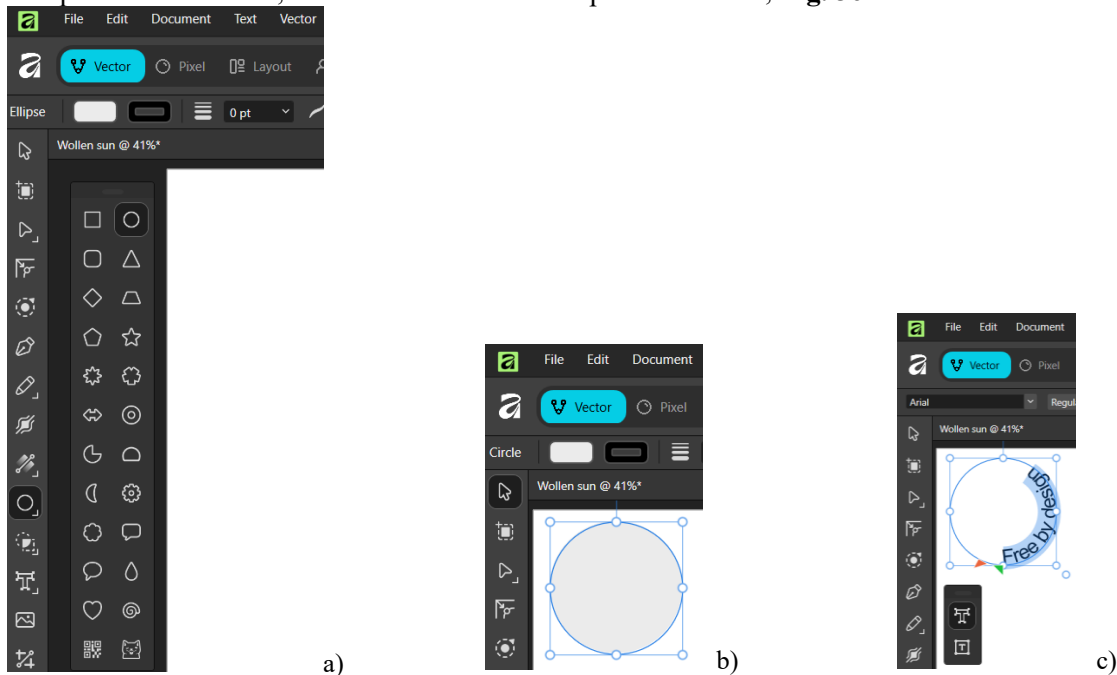



Fig. 3, a,b,c: Drawing the circle and writing the desired text in Affinity

We switch to *Pixel Studio*, as shown in **Fig. 4a** and from the menu bar we select the Blur Brush Tool  and we go over the text with the brush to give the text the desired blurry look, **Fig. 4b**. Thus, the text can be integrated into a graphic by simply switching and continuing in *Vector Studio*.

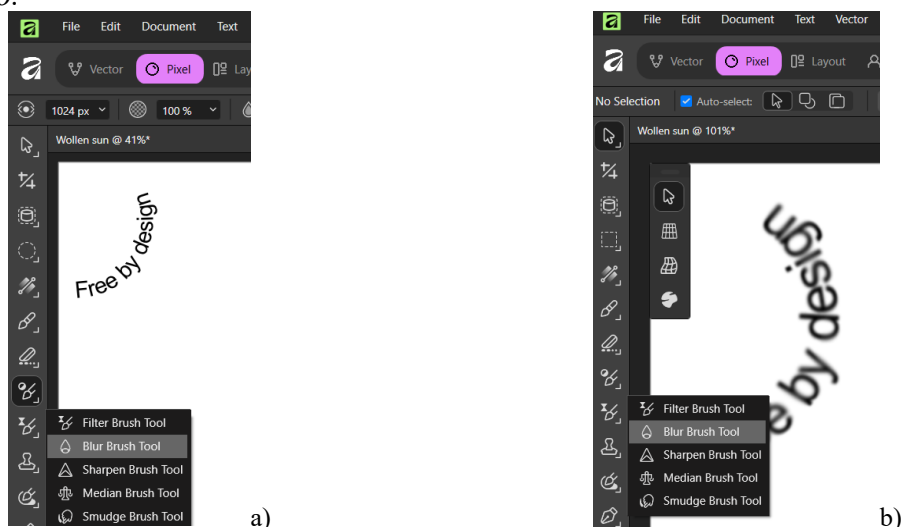


Fig. 4 a,b: Switching to Pixel Studio and using the Blur Brush Tool

2.2. Adobe Illustrator

In *Adobe Illustrator*, we also start by drawing a circle, for this we select the shape tool from the toolbar as shown in **Fig. 5a, b**, select the text tool, we choose the Type on path tool and we type the desired text following the shape of the circle, **Fig. 5c**.

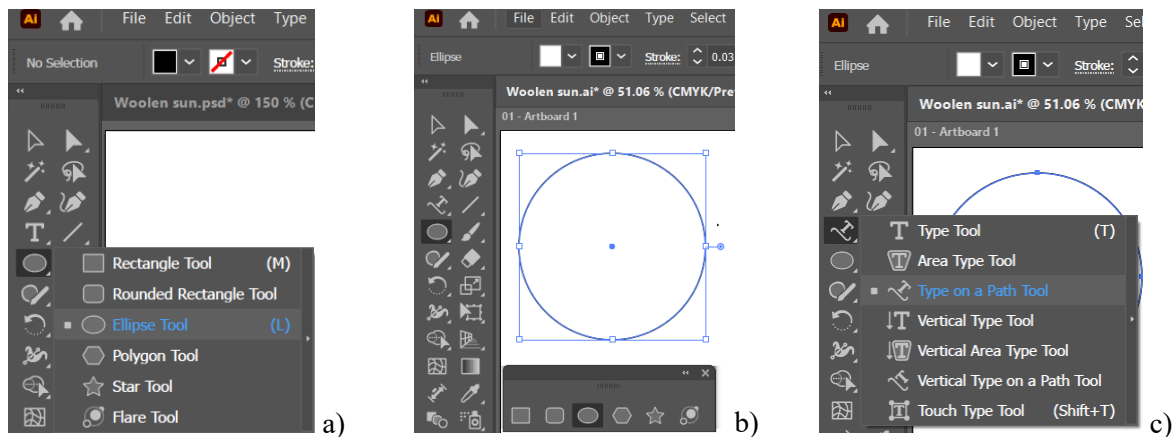
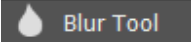


Fig. 5a,b,c: Drawing a circle and writing text in Adobe Illustrator

To continue with the editing steps of the text, the *Illustrator* file must be imported or opened with *Adobe Photoshop*, so the user requires access to both apps *Illustrator* and *Photoshop*. [7], [8], [9] Once the file is open in *Photoshop* as shown in **Fig. 6a**, from the menu bar we select the Blur Tool  and we go over the text to give the text the desired blurry look as shown in **Fig. 6b**, the steps required to integrate the edited text into a vector graphic, in this case can be continued in *Illustrator*, **Fig. 6c**.

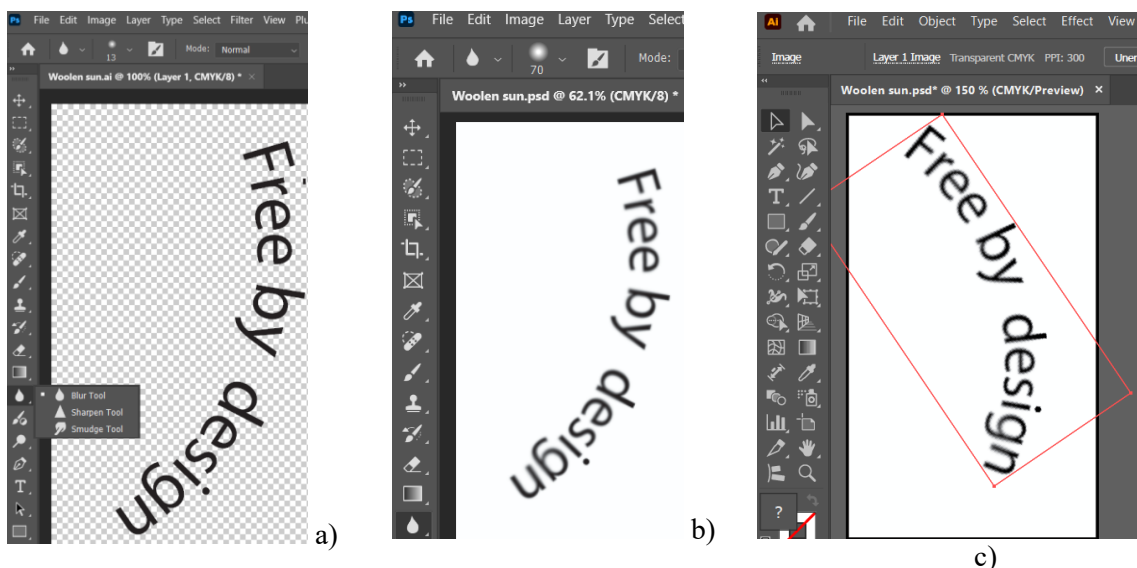


Fig. 6, a,b,c: Opening the text in Photoshop, editing, reopening the file in Illustrator



3. CONCLUSIONS

The most important aspect that was highlighted in this paper is the hybrid workflow that allows the user to say goodbye to the window switching function, known as Alt+Tab for Windows and Command+Tab for Apple or requiring access to separate applications but completing their work in a single application, thus *Affinity Designer* is growing in popularity among freelancers, creative studios and illustrators due to improved work speed and reduced cost.

However, Adobe Illustrator remains the industry's standard, most companies, publishing houses and production studios (such as animation studios that use After Effects) depend on native Adobe formats, this is where the experience and longevity in the market of over 30 years comes into play.

The choice between *Illustrator*, *Photoshop*, *Indesign* and *Affinity Designer* for vector graphics, photo editing and creating layouts for magazines or books should no longer be seen as a dispute between master and amateur, but the choice should be based on the working style and available resources.

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