

AFFINITY PHOTO HOW TO

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR SERIOUS PHOTO
EDITING

ROBIN WHALLEY



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INTRODUCTION



Welcome to Affinity Photo How To.

If you have read any of my other books you will find this book a little different. Its objective isn't to teach you how to edit photography and it also doesn't teach you the basics of using Affinity Photo. For that, please see my previous book "Essential Affinity Photo". Instead, this book will help to expand your knowledge and skills in using Affinity Photo. To achieve this, it's been organised around common tasks or question Affinity Photo users have.

To arrive at this list of topics, I've been collecting feedback and questions since the publication of my first Affinity Photo book as well as on my YouTube channel. It quickly dawned on me that people were often struggling with similar topics. Some of these I addressed through YouTube but often I couldn't go into much detail. That's where the idea for this book originated.

Some Assumptions I've Made

In writing this book it was necessary to make some assumptions which I'll now share to help you decide if this book is for you:

- The first assumption is that you are using Affinity Photo for editing photography. Whilst Affinity can be used for more than photo editing, that's the focus of this book. I should also mention that as I'm a landscape photographer, the example images used are all landscapes. Don't let this put you off if you don't shoot landscapes, the principles of editing are the same.
- Next is that you know your way around your computer. This book does not handhold you with instructions on basic computer skills like using a mouse.
- It's assumed that you have some basic experience in using Affinity Photo, but I haven't assumed how much. The information in the book covers all levels. Even when covering relatively simple topics like resizing an image, the book provides several examples and methods. Often simple topics are explained and expanded so that more advanced users will also gain value.

Now let's look at how to gain the most value from this book

How to Gain the Most from this Book

Reading this book won't turn you into an expert photo editor with Affinity Photo. That will require a lot of practice, but the book will help you achieve that much faster than experimenting on your own. Here are some suggestions about how you can get the most from this book.

- Read the chapters in order they appear in the book initially. Whilst the chapters are "standalone" to deal with a question about how to do something, they have been arranged into a specific order intended to help you learn.
- At the end of each chapter there is a section listing related chapters. It's exceedingly difficult to deal with a single topic in isolation so referring to these additional chapters will help to develop your skills. **DO NOT** however jump to related

chapters on your first reading of the book. Keep to the order of the chapters.

- Don't assume something is basic because you already know about it like how to read the Histogram. The Histogram is a good example. Most people reading this book probably understand the Affinity Histogram. Despite this, I'm certain almost everyone will learn something about the Histogram (probably several things) that they didn't already know.
- Information and tips are scattered throughout chapters. Where possible additional information is included to expand on a subject, and you may find yourself learning about tools that you don't immediately associate with the chapter title. This is another good reason to read the chapters in order and not skip any.
- Download the supporting files and complete the exercises. You will find the image files to accompany this book on the "Downloads for Books" page of my Lenscraft website (<https://lenscraft.co.uk/learn-photo-editing-books/useful-downloads-books/>). You will find exercises based on these images throughout the book in most chapters. Be sure you complete these to build your knowledge and skills.
- After reading the chapters of the book in order, return to chapters you want to consolidate. This is also the time to use the Related Chapters list. After reading a chapter this second time, visit the related chapters. This will probably give you a completely different view of the book and material.
- This is not a reference guide to all the features in Affinity Photo.

I should also mention that the illustrations in this book are the Mac version of Affinity Photo. Whilst there are some minor differences with the Windows version of the software, these are small. By reading the text, Windows users should be able to easily relate the screenshots to their own computer. If you do experience a significant difference between what you see on your computer and the illustrations in the

book, it's most likely to be due to customising the interface which we cover in the first couple of chapters.

With that I will say thank you for purchasing this book and let's get started.

Robin Whalley

SUPPORTING IMAGES FOR DOWNLOAD



You will find the supporting image files for this book on my website. Look for the “Downloads for Books” page in the “Books & Courses” section. You can also use the following direct link

<https://lenscraft.co.uk/learn-photo-editing-books/useful-downloads-books/>

This page contains links to download files for all my book titles. Please take a moment before starting this book to download the files.

If you have any problems accessing the files, please email me at robin@lenscraft.co.uk.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE AFFINITY PHOTO INTERFACE



Something that appears to cause a lot of confusion for new users of Affinity Photo is the interface. This chapter is intended not only to help you make sense of the interface, but also to lay the foundations for the rest of the book. It explains the key components of the interface and you will find these referred to repeatedly in later chapters. It's therefore important to read and understand this chapter first.

Even when you understand the components in this chapter you may encounter a related problem, which is the degree of customisation that's possible in Affinity. This comes from being able to reconfigure and change the interface, as well as being able to create your own presets. It's therefore possible that if you've made changes to the Affinity Layout (possibly unintentionally), your version could appear quite different to the screenshots in this book. For this reason, after you have learned to navigate the Affinity interface in this chapter, you should follow it immediately with the chapter looking at customising Affinity.

Tip: If you see significant differences between your interface layout and the screenshots in this chapter, it's unlikely to be caused by a difference in your version of software compared to mine. The most likely cause is that some degree of customisation has taken place.

Affinity Photo Personas

When you first open Affinity Photo you will find yourself in the Photo Persona.

Affinity Photo currently has five different Personas, each with a different purpose. What's might be confusing is that each Persona has a different look or layout, as well as tools available in that Persona. The Personas are:

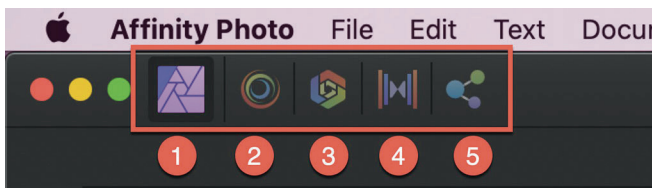
- **Photo Persona** – For general photo editing and manipulation of images. This is where you will probably perform most of your photo editing work, together with the Develop Persona. The Photo Persona is the default Persona and the only Persona you can access without first opening an image.
- **Liquify Persona** – Designed for manipulating images by stretching or distorting them in some way. For example, you could use this Persona and tools to manipulate the shape of someone's face to adjust the smile or make them fatter or thinner.
- **Develop Persona** – This is the only Persona that works with RAW files. The tools allow you to adjust a RAW file before converting it into a regular image for editing. You can also use the Develop Persona to adjust regular pixel images like JPEGs or TIFFs though you may be better using the tools in the Photo Persona for this.
- **Tone Mapping Persona** – This Persona is designed to help you tone map images. Tone Mapping is a technique used in

High Dynamic Range (HDR) photography where you blend multiple image exposures into a single image. These files tend to have a higher dynamic range than is possible with a single exposure and use a different (32-bit) mode to regular images (which tend to be 8-bit or 16-bit). Tone Mapping helps 32-bit images render properly on computer screens which might not otherwise be able to display them correctly.

- **Export Persona** – Designed to make the exporting of images much quicker and easier. For example, you can use the Export Persona to simultaneously export a finished image as a full resolution TIFF file for printing, a medium resolution JPEG image for posting to a photo website and low resolution JPEG's for different social media platforms. You can also create your own combinations of formats and image resolutions, saving them as presets.

You will find a video overview of the different Personas on my YouTube channel. The video is “Affinity Photo Tutorial 1: Making Sense of Affinity Photo Desktop” (<https://youtu.be/6nD5kyO5BSM>).

After opening an image in Affinity Photo, you are then able to switch between the different Personas mentioned above. You can do this using the icons to the top left of the interface, just below the menu.



Persona Icons. Click these to switch between the different Affinity Personas.

The icons for the different Personas are:

1. Photo Persona

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2. Liquify Persona
3. Develop Persona
4. Tone Mapping Persona
5. Export Persona

Tip: A frequent query that I've received from Mac users is that they don't see the same user interface as shown in my books. Instead, they just see the Affinity Photo menu running along the top of the screen but there are no windows or toolbars. This happens when you don't fully close the application but instead close the main window.

The main application window on a Mac has three “traffic lights” or coloured dots in the top left. A common habit amongst Mac users is to close the application by clicking the red dot. But this only closes the main window and not the application and will leave the menu visible. To fully close the application, use the “Affinity Photo” menu (which doesn't appear on a Windows PC) and select the “Quit” option. Alternatively use the keyboard shortcut “Cmd + Q”.

If you find yourself with only the menu visible, fully quit the application and reopen it. Alternatively, you can open an image and the main window will reappear.

As mentioned above, the Photo Persona is the default Persona. When you use the “File | Open” menu command you can use the Open dialog to select compatible files. You can also reopen recently edited image using the “File | Open Recent” menu. This displays a list of the 10 most recently edited images in Affinity Photo together with an option to clear the list.

Affinity can open and edit a wide range of image and document formats including JPEG, PNG, TIFF, PSD, and RAW. It can also export completed images in most of these formats as well as saving your work in the .afphoto format. This is a special format developed

for Affinity Photo which preserves editing information. We look at this in more detail in the chapter “How to Export and Save Images”.

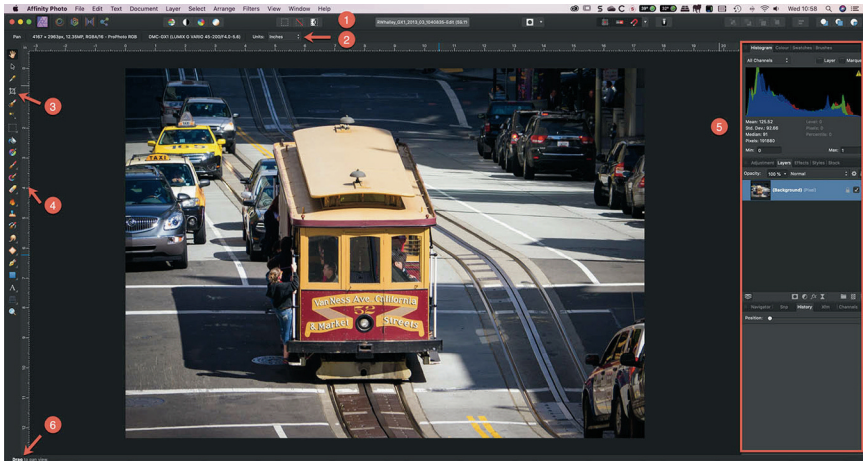
When you open an image file in Affinity, what happens next depends on the type of file selected. If the file is a regular image (also known as a document) it will open in the Photo Persona. But if the image is a RAW file Affinity will switch you to the Develop Persona. After adjusting the RAW file (RAW files are never written to directly to preserve their integrity) you can convert the RAW data into a regular image. This will also return to the Photo Persona and can then use any of the Personas with your image.

Tip: The behaviour of Affinity, automatically opening the Develop Persona when editing a RAW file is a common source of confusion. This often happens when launching Affinity Photo from the Windows Explorer or Mac Finder by right clicking or double clicking an image file. Sometimes you might not realise that you are opening a RAW file. If you weren't expecting Affinity to open in the Develop Persona it can be quite confusing.

The Photo Persona Components

Now let's look at the key components you will find in the Photo Persona.

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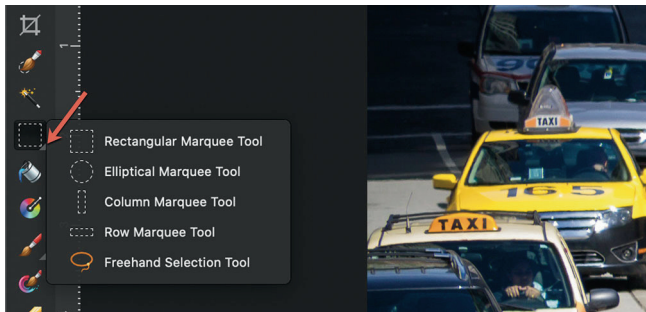


Key components of the Photo Persona interface.

The screenshot has several areas numbered as follows:

1. At the top of the interface is the menu, which is the only area of Affinity that's guaranteed to be visible when the application is open. Immediately below this is the Affinity Toolbar which displays a series of icons, including the Persona icons which we mentioned above.
2. There is a second toolbar located immediately below the Affinity Toolbar and which is only visible when you have an image open for editing. What makes this toolbar different to the Affinity Toolbar is that it's Context Sensitive. This means that it changes depending on the tools you are working with. Sometimes the toolbar will display information about the current image, or it will display controls for the currently selected tool. When there are multiple images open in Affinity at the same time, they appear as a series of tabs below the Context Sensitive Toolbar. Clicking on the tab of another image selects that image and may also change what's displayed in the Context Sensitive Toolbar.
3. This is the Tools Palette which is a collection of tools you can use when editing an image. Each tool has an icon to

represent its purpose. You select a tool by clicking the icon or using its keyboard shortcut. This can be another source of confusion because many tools are in groups which share the same keyboard shortcut except only one of the tools appears in the Tools Palette. You can identify which tools are part of a group by the small grey triangle that appears to the bottom right of the icon. When you click this part of the icon, a fly out menu appears showing the other tools in that group. If you click to select one of the other tools in the group, the icon for that tool replaces the previously displayed icon. The keyboard shortcut then activates that tool rather than any of the other tools that share the same keyboard shortcut.



Rectangular Marquee Tool in the Tools Palette.

1. If it's active, a ruler will appear around the edge of the interface when you open an image. It's possible to change the units for the Ruler as well as activating a grid overlay over the image.
2. Shown over on the right side of the screenshot are a series of panels which Affinity calls Studio Panels. Each Studio Panel has a different purpose and contains tools and shortcuts relating to this. The Studio Panels are another common source of confusion amongst new Affinity Users. It's extremely easy to change what's displayed in a Studio Panel as well as where the Panel Appears in the interface (if at all).

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Different Personas also have different Studio Panels, and some may not be available in every Persona.

3. This is an area of the interface that's often overlooked but which can be extremely useful. It displays tool tips to help you use the tool in the Tools Palette. Not only does it explain how to use the current tool, but it includes modifier keys you can press on your keyboard. Pressing these modify or change the tools behaviour. For example, with the Rectangular Marquee tool selected you can click and drag with the mouse to draw a rectangular selection on an image. But when you hold down the shift key whilst doing this, it constrains the selection to being a square and it's not possible to draw a rectangle. Modifier keys are extremely useful but difficult to remember. By glancing down to the tool tip area, you can easily see what the modifier keys are for the tool you are using.

Exercise 1–Personas

If you haven't already done so, open an image and spend a few moments switching between the different Personas. This will help you to get a feel for their purpose, their tools, and their layout. I also recommend watching my YouTube introduction videos for Affinity Photo (there are six of these). You can find these on my YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/robinwhalley>) or on my Lenscraft website.

To watch the videos on my website, scroll down to the bottom of the page (<https://lenscraft.co.uk/photography-tutorials/affinity-photo-tutorials/>). This page contains Affinity Photo tutorials, but below this list you will find the introductory video series.

Related Chapters

Whilst this book breaks down Affinity Photo features based on tasks to perform; many relate to other chapters. It's not uncommon to find a feature mentioned in one chapter expanded in another. You will find

the “Related Chapters” section at the end of most chapters, listing further chapters you may find helpful.

The following chapters contain additional information relating to some of the features mentioned in this chapter:

- How to Customise the Affinity Photo Interface
 - How to Save and Export Images
 - How to Work with Rulers Grids and Guides
-

HOW TO CUSTOMISE THE AFFINITY PHOTO INTERFACE



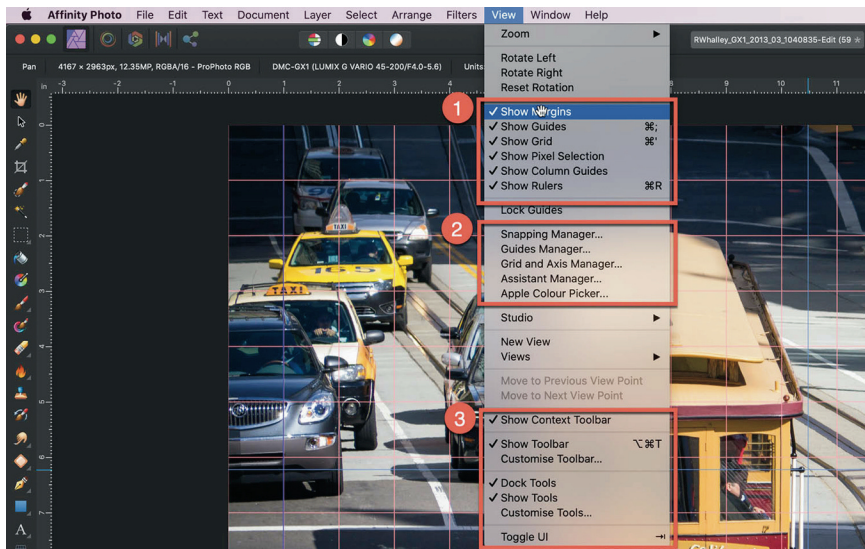
The Affinity Photo interface is extremely flexible and highly customisable. Often you can make changes to the interface without even realising what you have done. If your interface appears significantly different to the screenshots in this book, it's likely to be caused by customisation and not that we are using different versions of Affinity Photo.

When a new version of Affinity Photo is released, there may be some changes to the interface, but these are rarely significant. If the Affinity interface changed significantly in each release, we would all need to continually re-learn the software, making it quite unpopular. If there is something missing or significantly different in your version of Affinity Photo compared to this book, it's most likely caused by one of more interface options described in this chapter.

Of course, this chapter is not only about how your version of Affinity Photo may look different to this book. It's about helping you understand the many configuration options you have available. When you take control of Affinity in this way you can configure it to suite your needs, making it significantly easier to work with.

The View Menu

The View Menu is a good place to start when it comes to customising the Affinity Photo interface. You can access many of the configuration options and features there.



Understanding the Photo Persona View menu.

The screenshot splits the menu into three sections to make it easier to understand:

1. Viewing options relating to the document or image that you are working on. Clicking one of these options will toggle the option to become visible or hide it.
2. Affinity comes with a selection of “managers” which you can open using the menu commands in this section. These “managers” are dialogs relating to the viewing options (point 1 above) and which you can use to configure what’s seen when you make something visible. For example, the “Show Grid” option in the menu will display or hide a grid overlay on the image. But if you open the “Grid and Axis

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Manager...” from the menu, you can configure aspects of the grid like the spacing and colour of the grid lines.

3. The final section of the menu relates to the various toolbars in the Affinity Photo interface. This includes making an element visible or hiding it, as well as what’s displayed in that element.

We will now look at sections 1 and 3 in a little more detail. We won’t be looking at section 2 in this chapter as we cover the various managers in the chapters of the book that they relate to.

Viewing Options

There are six options in this section of the menu, all of which will toggle some aspect of the interface on and off:

Show Margins – This is a layout aid, typically helping with print design. When printing a document or image, it’s likely that your printer will have margins or borders that it prints within (unless it can print borderless). Affinity has the option to set these margins for the document or image using the “Document | Margins...” menu command. Once you have set the margins, you can display them using the Show Margins option. You then know to keep your layout of design within these margin lines.

Show Guides – Affinity Photo allows you to create/set ruler and column guides using the Guides Manager which we cover in a later chapter. Ruler guides are lines which you can position to help with aligning elements in an image. For example, you might create a guide in the centre of an image to check the symmetry of an image. The Show Guides option will toggle the display of these on and off. Guides can also be helpful when composing images as you can use them to accurately position elements.

Show Pixel Selection – When you create a selection in Affinity, for example using the Rectangular Marquee Tool, the selected area appears inside an animated dotted line. We often call this animated line “marching ants”. Whilst the animation is a great way to see that

there's a selection in place, it can make it difficult to see what's happening when you apply adjustments. Show Pixel Selection allows you to hide or display the marching ants.

Tip: If you turn off the marching ants, it's best to turn them on again once you've finished what you're doing. Leaving them off permanently can cause lots of confusion.

Show Column Guides – Column Guides, which we mentioned above are another layout and design feature from the world of desktop publishing. One of their most common uses is to format the position of text on a page. For example, the text in a book or print article tends to appear in one or more columns, each with margins and gutters between columns. You can define the column guides using the Guides Manager and use the Show Column Guides option in the menu to hide or make them visible.

Show Rulers – Toggles the visibility of the rulers around the edge of the image working area. Affinity has a vertical and horizontal ruler which you can set to different units of measurement like pixels, inches, and cm.

Whilst all these viewing options can be useful, you may want to hide some or all of them but then still have them available without needing to turn each one back on in the menu. The Affinity View menu has a “New View” option to help you do this. When you click this option in the menu you will create a new or rather second view of the image that you're working with. This appears as a second tab, below the toolbars and you can switch between the two views by clicking these tabs.

When you edit the image in any of these views, you see your changes in all the views. But what's different in each of these views are the visible Viewing Options (Margins, Grid Lines etc). This allows you to configure one view to show design aids like Margins and Grids whilst another view could have all these hidden. It's then easy to see how the

finished image looks without needing to hide each Viewing Option. You just need to switch tabs to look at one of the views.

Exercise 1- Using Views

Open an image in the Affinity Persona.

In the View menu select the option to create a “New View”. You will then see a second copy of the image appear as a tab along the top of the interface, just below the Context Sensitive Toolbar. When you click the tab, you can switch between the two views.

In one of the views, turn on (or off if they are already visible) the Margins and Gridlines. Now switch to the other view and notice that these views are different.

Not all the viewing options (for example Rules) work independently in the views. Turning them off in one will also turn them off in the other. Spend a moment to work out which options work independently in different views.

Once you have finished, you can close a view (without closing the image) by hovering your mouse pointer over the tab. You will then see an ‘X’ mark appear in the tab which you can click to close that view.

Controlling Toolbars

Affinity Photo has three toolbars which we mentioned in the chapter “How to Navigate the Affinity Photo Interface”. The main toolbar is along the top of the interface, immediately below the menu. Then below that toolbar is the “Context Toolbar”. You will find an option in the View menu to hide or display both Toolbars.

Tip: If you can't see either these toolbars in your version of Affinity, be sure to check the View menu first as it's most likely they have been hidden.

The third toolbar in the Affinity interface is the Tools Palette which usually appears on the left side of the interface. As with the other two toolbars mentioned above, there is an option in the View menu to turn this off, hiding the tools. When the Tools Palette is visible a further option is available in the View menu to “Dock Tools”.

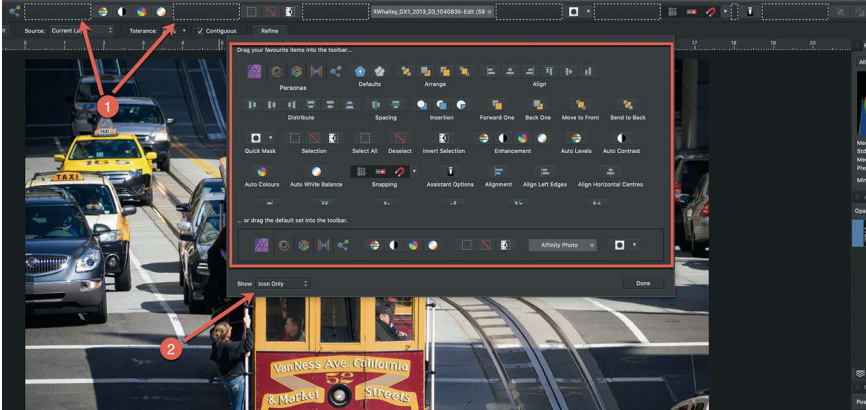
When you have the Tools Pallet docked, it appears (usually) down the left side of the interface in a fixed position. But when you turn this option off, the Tools Palette becomes a floating toolbar. You can then move it to anywhere on the screen by clicking the title area of the toolbar and dragging it with your mouse.

Tip: If you are working on a large screen and/or large graphics tablet, you may find it can help to undock the Tools Palette. When the Tools Palette is floating you can position near to where you are working. When you use a graphics tablet with Affinity, the pen of stylus often requires more movement than a mouse. Continually moving the stylus across the screen can become tiring and time consuming which is where the floating Tools Palette can help.

The View menu also has an option at the bottom to “Toggle UI”. Clicking this will toggle all three of the toolbars off and on together.

Except for the “Context Toolbar” you can configure the icons that appear in the Affinity toolbars. To configure the main Toolbar, right click with your mouse on the toolbar and select the “Customize Toolbar...” option in the popup menu. Alternatively select “Customize Toolbar...” in the View menu. This displays a dialog containing various icons/groups that you can add to the toolbar.

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Customising the main Affinity Photo Toolbar.

In the main area of the dialog are icons which you can click and drag, to drop them into positions on the toolbar. The dotted areas between the existing toolbar icons (number 1) are spacers between different icon groups. They are not the areas to drop the icons onto.

You can also reposition existing icons in the toolbars by clicking and dragging. If you drag and drop them off the toolbar you will remove them.

By default, the Affinity Toolbar displays only icons. It's possible to change this using the dropdown (number 2) so that it displays both icons and text.

Tip: Be careful when reconfiguring the Affinity Toolbar at the top of the interface as there isn't an easy option to reset this to the default view.

As well as customising the main toolbar, Affinity allows you to customise the tools that appear in the Tools Palette. To do this use the "Customise Tools..." option in the View menu. This will expand the palette to reveal all the available tool icons. You can then drag and drop the icons into the toolbar to add them. You can also drag and

End of Sample

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