

Impress 7 vs Impress 8



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A new version?

No, a new generation!

We are very proud to present to you the new generation of Impress. And when we say new, we mean brand new. This new generation has been built from scratch, giving us the opportunity to improve the “under the hood” design of the program and redesign the user interface. This also makes it somewhat hard to compare it to the previous generation (Impress 7).

But..., we gave it a shot. We have highlighted some of the biggest changes for you:

- General functionality
- User interface
- GPU acceleration
- Video navigation
- Scientific accuracy
- Media bin
- Project file
- Input engine
- Settings
- Reporting

We will discuss the above on the next couple of pages. But first, the new logo for Impress:



Figure 1 New Impress logo

General functionality

Our Impress software has been in development for the last 20 years and as a result Impress 7 was a very extensive toolbox. This meant that sometimes you could not see the wood for the trees. In Impress 8 we have started from scratch and we began with adding the most important filters first. This resulted in a smaller set of functional features, making it easier to navigate the software. Furthermore, a lot of the more advanced functionality is hidden. It can be switched on and off in the main settings by enabling the “scientific” mode. When this mode is off, you will see less options for the filters and the parameters in these filters but still can make use of the most important ones. When this scientific mode is on, you will have all options and are able to work in great detail. But of course this also makes the software slightly more complicated.

User interface

One of the most obvious changes is the user interface. With Impress 7 we tried making a user interface which was suitable for touch displays. At the time of the development Impress 7 these became very popular and it seemed a good idea. Little did we know...

With the new generation we have conformed to the modern user interface standards. Next to the visual benefits of this, the software is also more intuitive to operate. We implemented the “two click” design rule. This means all basic functionalities should be accessible within two mouse clicks.

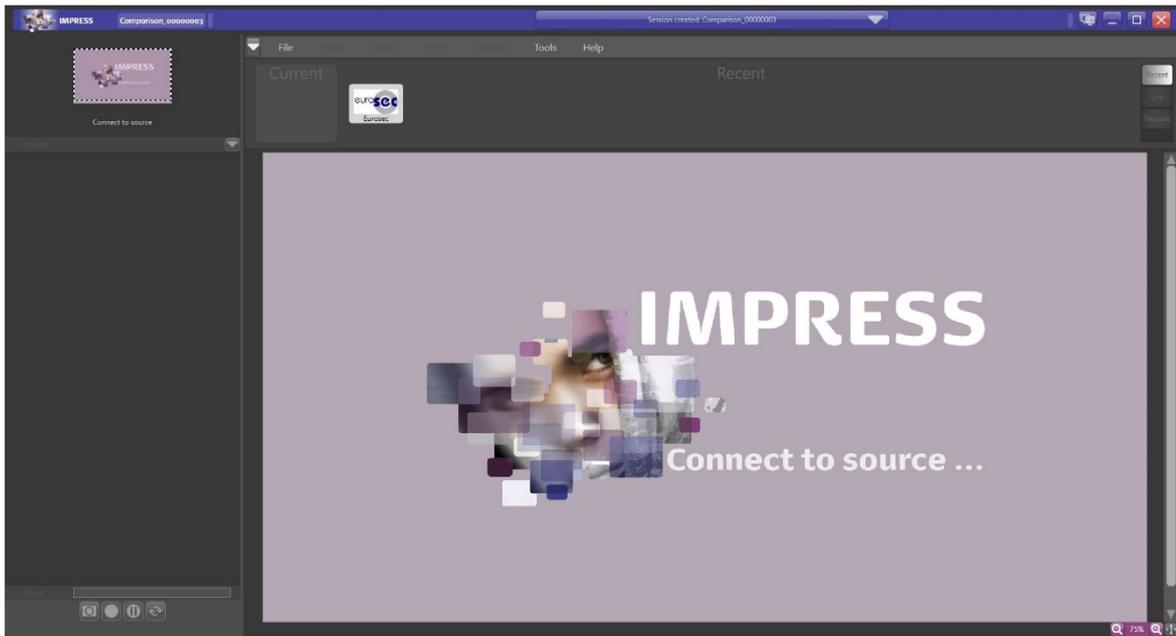


Figure 2 Impress 7 main window

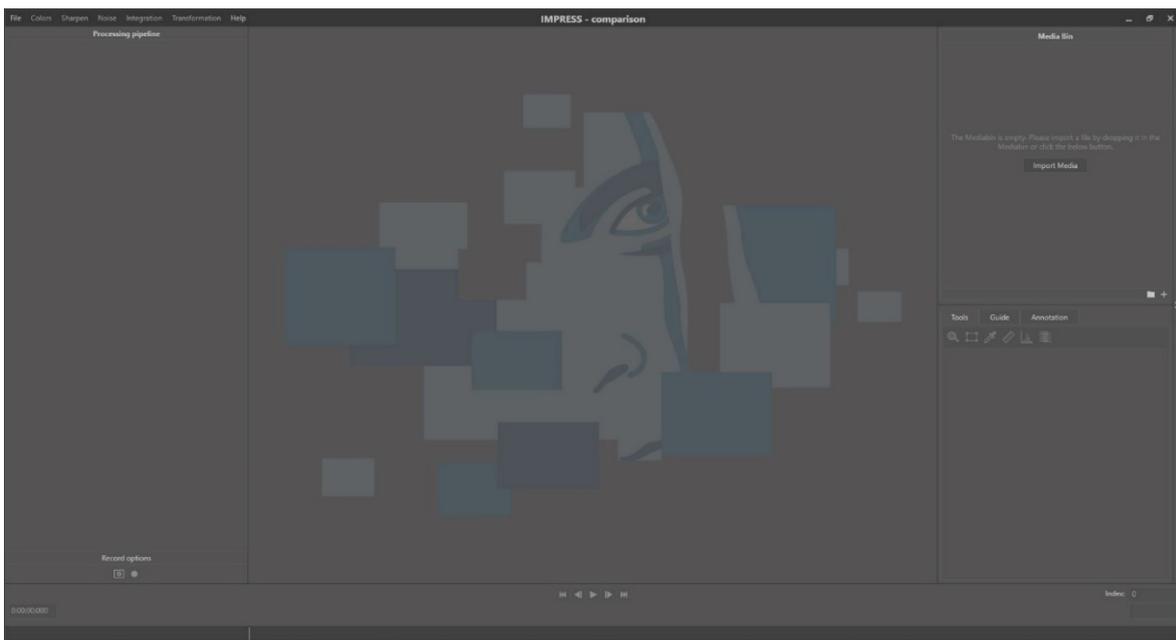


Figure 3 Impress 8 main window

GPU acceleration

While we already offered about five GPU accelerated filters in Impress 7, we now have accelerated all filters in Impress 8 with a GPU version. So, when your system is equipped with a powerful GPU, navigate to the settings and enable the GPU acceleration.

Video navigation

Another problem with video files can be the navigation in heavily compressed videos. In Impress 7 you might have encountered this. For example, you wanted to go to the previous frame by clicking the “previous” button and the result was you were going one frame forward. In Impress 8 we use a buffered media player which enables accurate navigation, even in the most heavily compressed video files. With this, expecting to go back in a file but going forward belongs to the past.

Scientific accuracy

Most of the software packages for this type of work use integer values for their calculations because the default pixel values are between 0 – 255. This can result in rounding errors. The difference is somewhat technical, but we will try to clarify this. For example, if you apply an average on two numbers: 7 and 8. The calculation will be as followed: $7 + 8 = 15$, $15 / 2 = 7.5$. Because of the 0 – 255 range we can only use whole numbers. Most likely 7.5 will be rounded to 8.

In Impress 8 we have used a different data type for our calculations. This data type makes it possible to store a number like 7.5. This will be especially useful when you are building a filter cascade, as the next filter will now have 7.5 as input instead of 8.

Media bin

Another part of the software we have improved in comparison to Impress 7 is the file management of imported files. In Impress 8 we introduced the media bin. This is an overview of all the files in the case. It is clear which relationship the files have (for example: parent – child relationship). You can also remove files from your case in this media bin.

Project file

In Impress 7 the option to save your current project/case and to open it the next day in the same state was not available. We understand the addition of this option is a big help to you, so we did! Your current case state/progress can be saved and opened at another point in time in Impress 8.

Input engine

In today’s world, there are hundreds of media formats available on the market. Finding the right input engine/technique for all these formats can be challenging. In Impress 7 we already introduced the media probe. This media probe can automatically test a lot of input engines/techniques and gives you the results for each of the techniques.

In Impress 8 we have made it even easier. When you import a video file into the media bin, the file will automatically be probed. The software will also automatically open the file with the best suitable engine/technique. So you don’t have to choose anymore. Furthermore, if you want to check if other input engine/techniques can open the file, just right click the file in the media bin and go to the “Open” menu item and here you will see all input engines/techniques which can open that specific file. Once we know which techniques can open a file, these techniques will be saved to a project file so there is no more endless probing.

Settings

In Impress 7 we had a very extensive settings window. In Impress 8 we have removed this since most of these settings were not useful for you as an end-user of the software. The settings menu in Impress 8 is uncluttered and much more operable.

Reporting

Another difference between Impress 7 and Impress 8 is the structure of the birth certificate. In Impress 7 the only possibility was to have an original and a child on the birth certificate. In Impress 8 the whole family tree is put onto the birth certificate. So you can always trace back to the original file.

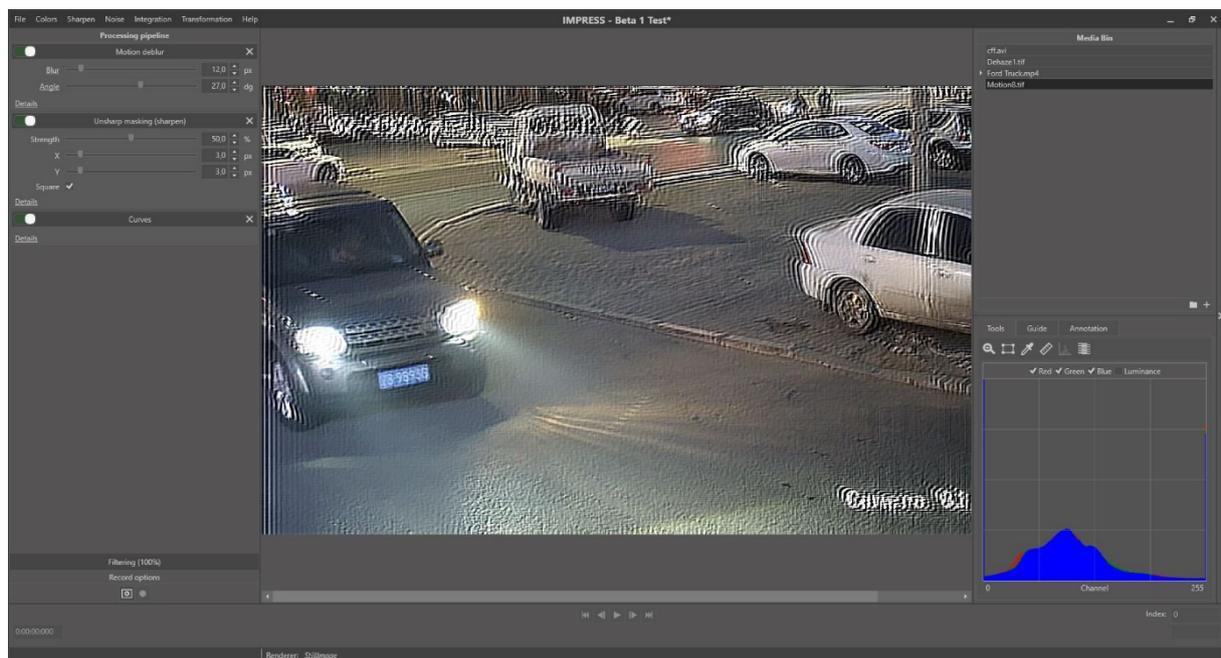


Figure 4 Impress 8 user interface

Are you ready for the next generation?

We hope you will enjoy using Impress 8 as much as we have building it. If you have any remarks, questions or suggestions, please let us know. We are happy to give you more information, answers or technical support, so do not hesitate to contact us!



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