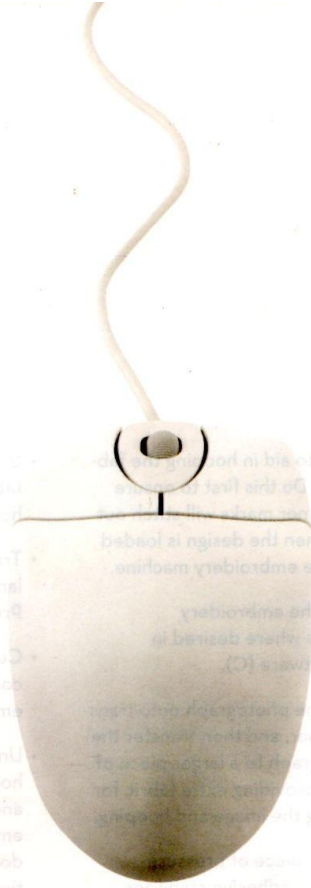


DIY Digitizing

by Kim Hanson

Create unique and personalized embroidery designs by learning how to navigate digitizing software.



THE BASICS

Digitizing is the process of converting information, an image, graphic or photo, into a digital embroidery format. Many digitizing software versions have an auto-digitize feature, which is convenient but doesn't always produce the best stitchout. Learn the absolute basics of digitizing in order to start using your software to its full potential.

FIND THE RIGHT SOFTWARE



- Only purchase software that's compatible with your machine format and brand. Most machine companies sell software along with their embroidery machines and accessories. Some software programs are specific to lettering designs and monograms while others will only manipulate existing designs. Make sure the software you purchase allows you to digitize designs from the ground up, beginning with an image, graphic file or photo you've produced. See the Machine Company Software Chart at right for a list of the top six machine brands and their recommended digitizing software programs.

MACHINE COMPANY SOFTWARE CHART

- Your embroidery machine dealer likely offers classes on using the recommended software for your machine; many offer free in-store demos as well. Consult with the salesperson you purchase the software from to inquire about available support should you need future guidance or troubleshooting assistance. Purchase a new software version from a reputable dealer in order to receive such support. Used versions won't include manufacturer offers, such as discounted upgrades, free trials and tutorials, or retailer support.
- Independent software retailers also offer digitizing products that are compatible with a number of machines. These software options are helpful if you work on multiple machine brands or want to add features to your existing software. Many of these companies offer free trial versions of their software, designs, tutorials and endless support, from videos to call centers. See the Independent Company Software Chart on page 56 for a list of five unique offerings.
- Make sure your computer operating system is compatible with the digitizing software you plan to purchase. Problems arise when the computer runs on an older operating system and attempts to run new software versions. Down-

MACHINE	FORMAT	RECOMMENDED DIGITIZING PROGRAM	WEBSITE
Baby Lock	.pes	Master Works Lite 	babylock.com
Bernina	.art	Design Works	bernina.com
Brother	.pes	PE-Design Next 	brother-usa.com
Husqvarna Viking	.hus	5D or 6D Embroidery Software	husqvarnaviking.com
Janome	.jef	Artistic Suite V6.0 	janome.com
Pfaff	.pcs, .vip, .vp3	5D or 6D Suite (PC) or TruEmbroidery (MAC)	pfaff.com

INDEPENDENT COMPANY SOFTWARE CHART

COMPANY	COMPATIBLE DESIGN FORMATS	WEBSITE
Creative Drawings 	28	creative-drawings.com
Embroid with Studio Plug-In 	50	embird.net
Fancyworks Studio PLUS by Pantograms	9	creativeseries.com
Generations Auto-Digitizing Software	multiple	generationsemb.com
SophieSew Version 113 Free Software	5	sophiesew.com

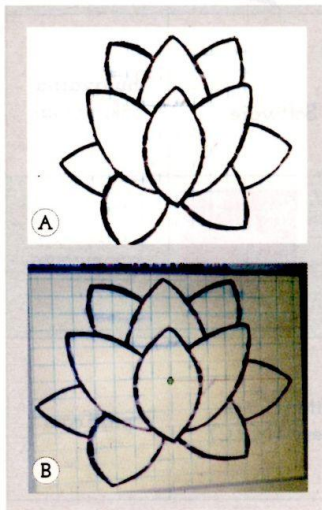
straight line and a right mouse click for a circle.) Three clicks form each line in the image, so the process is rather speedy. Achieve clean points by ensuring lines don't overlap or intersect. Zoom into each point to ensure lines meet cleanly. Save the design.

- The image is now a file that the machine can read (C). Enhance the design by experimenting with some available options, such as choosing a variable stitch length, step or satin fill, or altering the stitch density.

- To ensure a quality stitchout, reduce the number of jump threads, combine and reduce time-consuming color changes and sequence the stitchout according to colors and layers as desired.

- Once satisfied with the design, test the embroidery sequence. The software will have an option to illustrate the sequence by visually embroidering the design on the computer screen. Note any problem areas as the design "stitches," and then correct the design areas needed by eliminating errant stitches, re-outlining portions or smoothing line intersections.

- Save the design in the file format compatible with your embroidery machine. Transfer the design to the machine and perform a test stitchout (D).



load updates and/or drivers to allow the computer and software to successfully interface.

1-2-3 DIGITIZE

- Draw a simple outlined image onto paper (A). Scan and save the image to the computer, and then open it as an object in the software (B). The image or photo is a clean vector file, which means the quality won't be compromised when resizing.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions to select the drawn lines and transform them into stitching lines. (Most software programs indicate a left mouse click for a