

Digital design for the home

From sleek high-definition televisions to the newest smartphone-enhanced kitchen appliances, technology is rapidly transforming the way Canadians live.

Even home decoration is going high-tech: an exciting range of digital design tools has hit the market, allowing computer-savvy creative types to take a hands-on approach to adorning their living spaces. With the click of a mouse, consumers can create customized home accents that bring their personal design vision to life.

According to Shelli Gardner, CEO and co-founder of crafting and design company Stampin' Up!, digital home décor is an exciting new way to decorate.

"Thanks to advances in technology, home décor is entering a new era," she said. "The pleasure designers enjoy with their hands can now be enjoyed when creating on a computer. Web-based resources such as step-by-step tutorials, designer templates and easily accessible advice from design experts make it easy for everyone— even those who aren't tech-savvy— to create beautiful customized home décor."

Noteworthy software-based design programs include My Digital Studio, which features exclusive artwork, colours, and designer templates. Originally conceived as an online scrapbooking tool, the program is growing in popularity for its home décor possibilities.

In addition to the design software, the My Digital Studio website (MyDigitalStudio.net) also includes a number of resources that facilitate the user experience, including images

of sample projects, videos featuring beginner and intermediate techniques, blogs from design experts and more. Beginners can take advantage of a no-commitment free trial by visiting stampinup.com/store.

Getting started

When using a tech-based design program for the first time, Gardner suggests starting with a beginner-level project, which can still pack a stylish punch.

Popular project ideas for first-timers include personalized family photos. Start by scanning a favourite family photo onto your computer. Then, using design software, try layering the scanned photo onto a colourful or patterned background, creating the look of a triple-matted picture without going to the trouble of finding and cutting the mats. Photos in black and white can look especially elegant. For a finishing touch, add a caption accent to the top or bottom corner of the photo, such as the last name of a family.

Another easy project idea involves creating and framing a phrase using a design program's library of fonts and symbols. Plan the colours and patterns according to the colour scheme of the room being decorated. For example, try creating a unique statement piece by printing and framing a brightly-coloured ampersand. Display the framed ampersand surrounded family photos for a unique, modern look.

Whatever the project, when it comes to digital design, the possibilities are endless.

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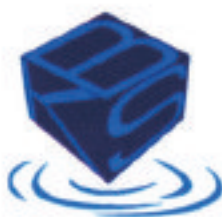
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