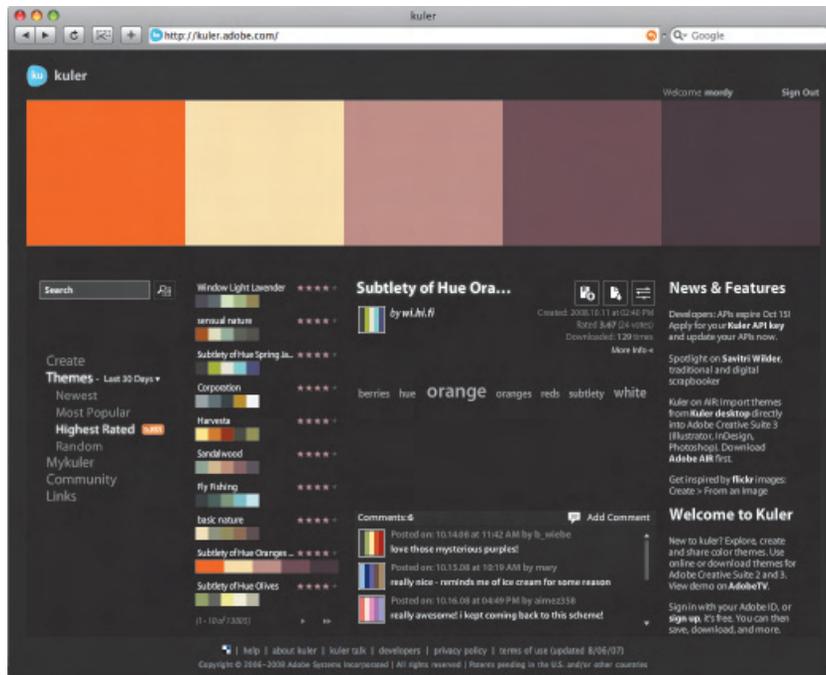


Using the Kuler Website

To access the Kuler website, visit <http://kuler.adobe.com> (Figure 1). Adobe actually refers to Kuler as a rich Internet application (RIA), and you need to have Flash Player 9 or newer to use it (the site will redirect you if you need to download a newer version of Flash Player). Although you can use parts of Kuler without logging in, you'll get the full functionality by entering your Adobe ID. If you don't already have one, an Adobe ID is free and allows you to post to the Adobe user-to-user forums, access free content from the Adobe Design Center, and purchase items through the online Adobe Store. If you've recently registered any Adobe software, you probably already have an Adobe ID. If not, you can click the Register link at the top right of the Kuler website.

Figure 1 Free to all, Adobe Kuler can also generate themes of colors from photographs that you can upload or import directly from Flickr.



What's cool about Kuler is that, as part of the online community, you can view color themes that others have created, and you can even rate them. Themes are tagged with metadata, allowing you to easily search for colors (such as winter or chocolate). In fact, color themes are actually published as RSS feeds, allowing designers to search based on things like the most popular or the highest rated themes.

Using the Kuler Panel in Illustrator

Although the Kuler website is nice and all, you still have to leave your design environment and use your web browser to find your colors. That's why Adobe took the next step and brought Kuler directly into Illustrator (it also exists in other Adobe Creative Suite CS4 components). Choose Window > Extensions > Kuler to open the Kuler panel (Figure 2), which gives you access to the themes within the online Kuler community.



Figure 2 With the Kuler panel, you can browse color themes directly from within Illustrator for instant color inspiration.

Click the pop-up menus at the top of the Kuler panel to display specific RSS feeds, such as highest rated, most popular, and so on. You can also specify a time constraint (such as list all newest themes within the past 7 days). Enter any keyword in the Search field to find Kuler themes that fit your exact needs. If you find a theme you like, then select it, and click the Add Selected Theme to Swatches icon at the bottom of the panel. Illustrator automatically adds the selected theme to your Swatches panel as a color group. Alternatively, you can click the triangle to the far right of any theme to open it in Kuler directly (Illustrator launches your default web browser to do so).

The Kuler panel is also a two-way street, meaning that if you develop some colors you like while using Illustrator, create a group in your Swatches panel (of five colors or less), and then click the Upload from Swatch Panel to Kuler Community button in the Kuler panel. Illustrator transfers your colors to the Kuler website, where you can then add metadata tags and publish your theme.