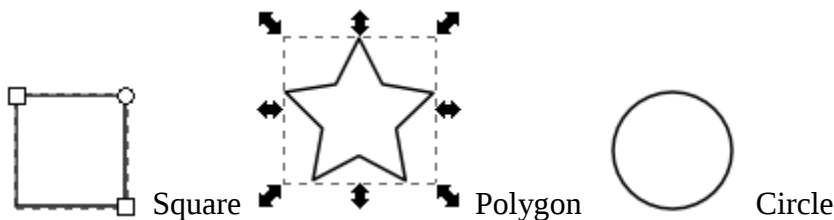# A Brief Peek at Inkscape

**Inkscape** is an illustration program. It isn't a photo manipulation program. Inkscape works by creating images using what are called **vectors**. That really means that the drawings don't get messed up at all if they are made bigger or smaller. You may be more familiar with **bitmap** images. Photos are bitmap images (JPEGs). So are the simple Internet graphics, either GIFs or PNGs.



Using vectors, an image can be made bigger or smaller, as needed without any loss of fidelity. Bitmap images lose something whenever they get enlarged or reduced. For the record, the storage format of vector graphics is usually SVG. SVG is really a set of instructions to redraw the graphic from scratch each time it is needed. SVG = "Scalable Vector Graphics."

Inkscape is FOSS. It can be freely downloaded and installed over and over. http://inkscape.org/
Most Linux distributions have packages available, too making setup simple.

## Basic Shapes


Square          Polygon          Circle

There are several controls for shapes. In the square, you can see the "handles" for pulling the dimensions from a square to a rectangle. There is also a round handle which allows you to control the curvature of the corner; sharp right angles or rounded. Once you have defined the basic shape, you can manipulate it for size, rotation and skew.

You can choose color for the **fill** of the object and color for the outline which is called its **stroke**.

You can duplicate any shape, copy and paste, make fancy rotations.

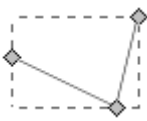If all you want is some SVG graphics to reuse, check out my own progress with Inkscape. http://runeman.org/clipart/

You'll find many more professional clipart at http://www.openclipart.org/

Lines can be either **freehand** or made of elements called **bezier curves**.
Once drawn, lines can be adjusted in many ways. You can drag the ends of lines by their handles to make them shorter or longer. You can grab the line between handles, too. That lets you create interesting curved shapes from the bezier lines/curves.

Freehand        Bezier line        Bezier line (modified)

Text is easy, too.

Make a rectangle. Add a blurred copy in gray. Place your text on it. There you are.

There is much more to Inkscape. Install it and have fun.

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The original document (odt)can be found at: http://runeman.org/articles/natick-foss/