

Guide to Choosing Colors

At Anita Goodesign we try to make embroidery easy and fun. Every day we receive questions on lots of different embroidery topics, but the one that seems to surface the most is about thread colors and changing thread colors. We wrote this guide for a few different reasons. The first reason is to assist you in choosing the perfect thread colors to compliment your beautiful embroidery designs. The second reason is to help you with your software. The first part of this guide deals with choosing thread colors and the second part of this guide will show you how to change thread colors in the most common embroidery programs on the market.

Steve Wilson

Why don't the thread colors appear correctly in my machine?

This is actually a very easy question to answer. There are around 25 to 30 different embroidery machines available on the market today. These machines are made by many different manufacturers and use many different design formats. Some of the design formats hold color information relating to current thread manufacturers and others only hold basic color information. If we create a design and use Madeira thread it may show up in a newer Brother machine exactly the way we created it, but it may show up differently in a Pfaff or Bernina. How can we fix that? We would have to re-master every design in every different brand of software and then go even further backward and re-master them in older versions of that same software because I'm sure all of you don't have the most current version. This is an impossible thing to do if we are going to maintain our standards of value and economy. At Anita Goodesign we strive to create all of our designs in our studio with a personal touch and give you more designs than our competitors at a reasonable price. If we had to create an individual CD for each machine brand, then the cost would rise dramatically.

How do other companies do it?

This is an easy answer as well. They don't. If you buy a design from Bernina, the design may come up perfectly in a Bernina machine using Isacord thread, but it may not in other brands of machines. Each embroidery design company usually chooses one machine brand and one thread brand to be fully compatible with. If you don't use that thread or brand of machine you will usually have to convert your own colors to match your thread brand.

I don't have this thread brand, how do I pick colors?

Oh how I sometimes wish that there were only one brand of thread! But then I think how boring would that be- there are dozens of different brands of thread available to you. And I've spent enough time with you over the last few years to know that you probably have a little or a lot of everything. How can we possibly choose corresponding thread colors for every thread brand for every design we create? This would be an impossible task. I will give you an example. If we used Robison- Anton thread and they have over 400 colors of rayon alone, how can I expect you to have each of those? The same goes for every other brand. That's reason enough to choose your own thread colors. I will give you some insight into how we chose colors in the past and a few new ideas for you to choose colors going forward.

How do we choose colors?

That's what this guide is for! We wrote this guide to help you choose colors more successfully and to have fun doing it. We've taught this color class at all of our events and it is always successful. Read on!

The old fashioned way

When I first started by business 15 years ago the embroidery machine didn't show colors, they didn't even have screens. The display on commercial embroidery machines looked like a calculator screen. The screen simply showed the file name and the numbered amount of steps or color changes in it. We then used our computers to click through each number and on a piece of paper we made notes on which color to use in each step. This is the way we did it for years and is still the way we do it today. Imagine if you had to purchase new thread every time you wanted to embroider a different design! As a business it would not be a very smart decision and as a hobby way too expensive. What you see onscreen is only an idea of the colors that could be used in a design. You should choose your own thread colors from what you have available to you or use what brand you prefer to embroider with. The next paragraph details our method for choosing thread colors. I hope that it helps you, too.

The Fabric Method

I am sure most of you have a fabric stash at home to rival most fabric shops. We sure do! Why do we buy so much fabric? That's an easy answer as well. We buy fabric because we love the way it looks. We love the colors! All of those batiks, paisleys, country prints and patterns. Some of them we have an idea of what we are going to use them for and others, well, you know the story. Maybe, eventually we will find the perfect project for them. Well you're in luck, we have the perfect project for all of your fabric. You can use fabric to choose thread colors for your designs. We simply choose a beautiful piece of fabric and

take it over to our thread stash and then match the threads to the colors of the fabric. If you think about it this makes perfect sense. This way if you are going to use that fabric in part of your project then the colors will match perfectly. Fabric is designed by experienced color artists that's why we love it, so let that experienced color artist help you.

Other advantages to the Fabric Method.

1. Have you ever tried to buy trim to coordinate with a project after you have already embroidered it? It is almost impossible to do. However if you choose your thread colors by holding your trim up to your thread before you embroider and match those colors, then your design and trim will match perfectly.
2. If you wanted to create a beautiful embroidered quilt this technique works as well. As you know, quilts have a number of different fabrics in them, but usually follow a theme. Use this color theme to choose the thread colors for all of the designs you are going to embroider. Then no matter what fabric you place your embroidery on it will go perfectly.
3. For those of you who use appliqué this technique works twofold. By using fabric to choose your colors the thread colors will delightfully blend with the fabric. And, the design itself, since it is appliqué uses fabric as well. So, if you embroider a lot of appliqué designs you will see your fabric stash shrink and you will finally get a chance to use some of that fabric that you have been holding on to.... But, in reality we know that isn't going to happen, because anyone who has actually been around a fabric stash knows that they don't shrink, they just get bigger!

Anita Goodesign

Here is an example of how we choose colors using the project/trim method. No matter what color we originally chose when designing this collection it is imperative to make it look good on the sample. Not every color has to match, but by matching key colors in the sample you will be impressed with the results.



Guide to Choosing Colors

Anita Goodesign

Here is an example of how we choose colors using the fabric method. No matter what color we originally chose when designing this collection it is imperative to make it look good on the sample. Not every color has to match but by matching key colors in the sample you will be impressed with the results.



Guide to Choosing Colors

Anita Goodesign

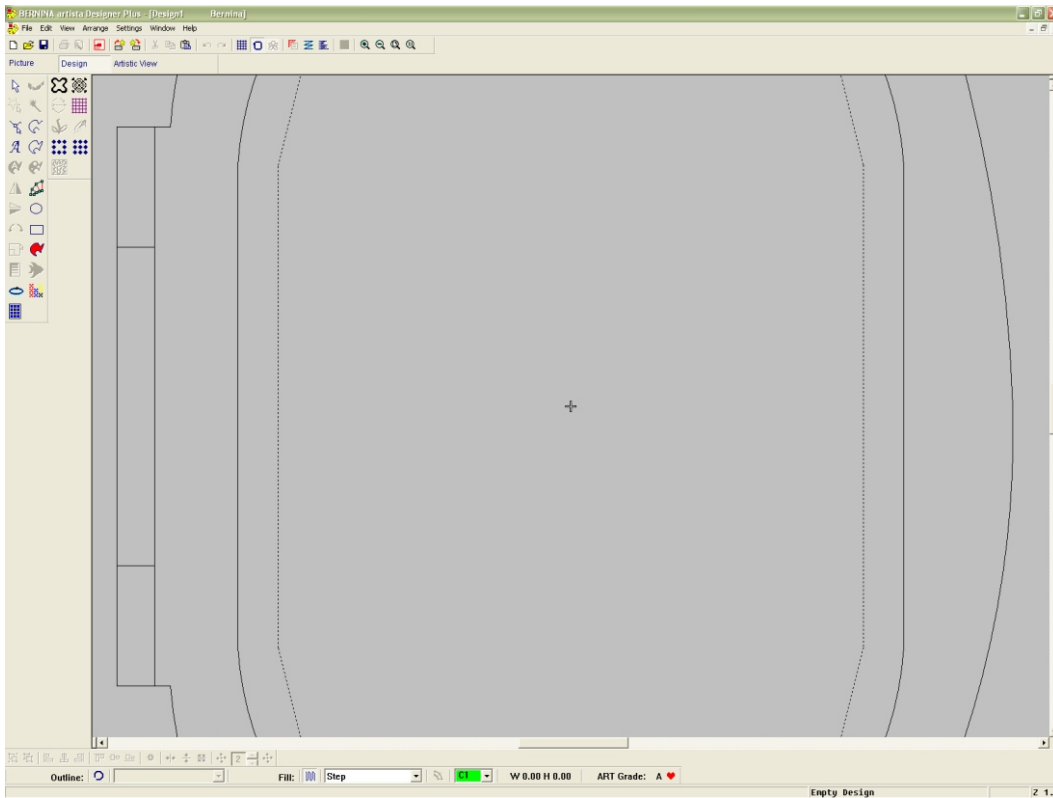
If you are new to embroidery and don't have a thread library yet, we suggest investing in a thread kit. Most thread companies have these available. Madeira, for example, has quite a few. The Thread Chest shown below has every color of their rayon library and even includes variegated and metallic threads. The retail price at the time of this tutorial is around \$299.00. Other examples are Threadable boxes. These have up to 80 spools of thread and are sure to kick start any collection.



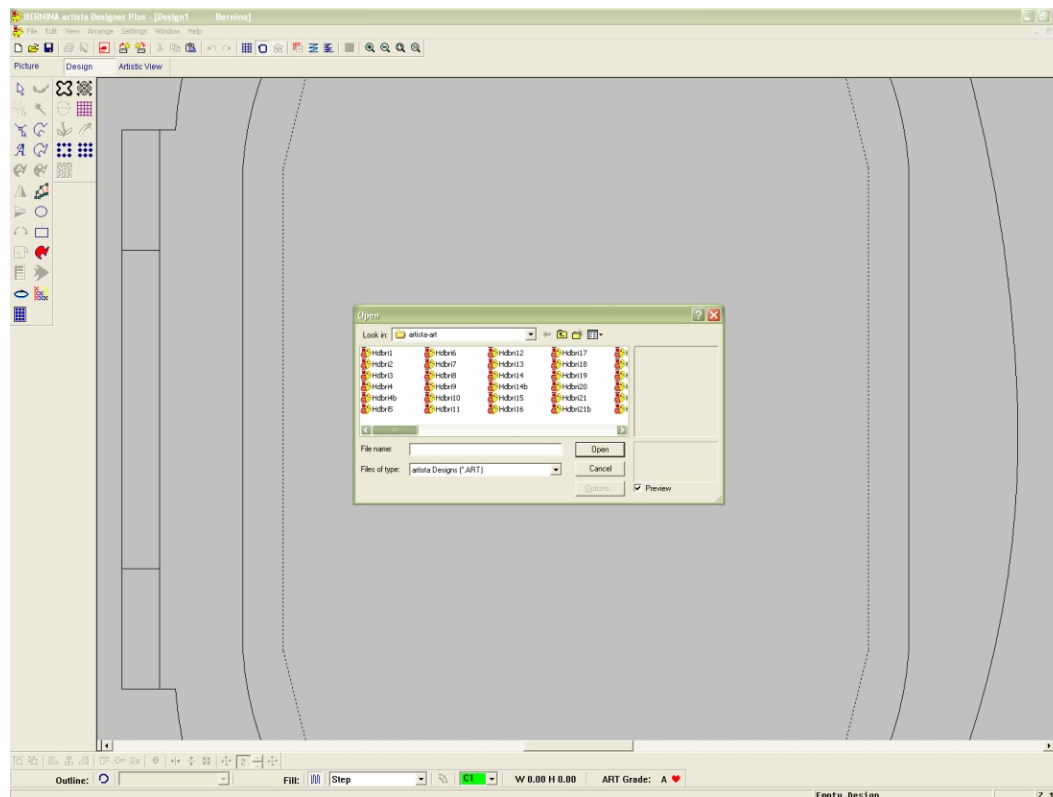
Guide to Choosing Colors

Using Software to change thread colors

Converting thread colors in the Bernina Artista software is simple. Just follow these basic concepts. Please note that if you have a different version of software your screens may look slightly different.



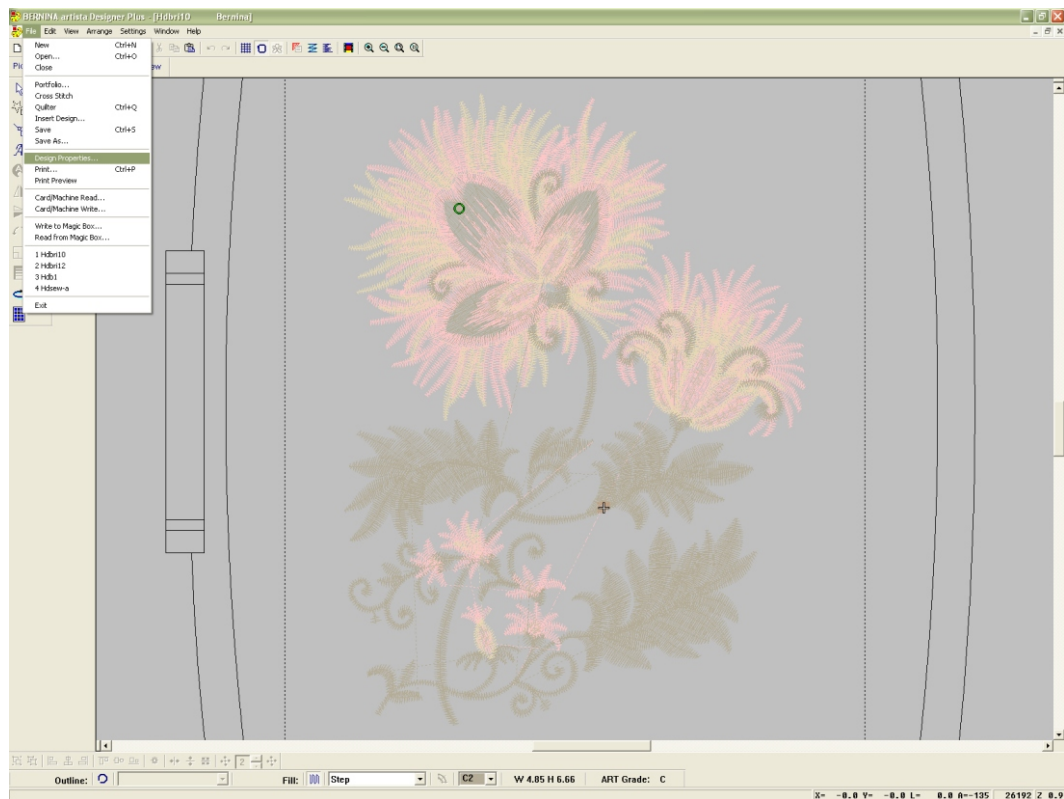
When you first start your Artista software your screen will look like this.



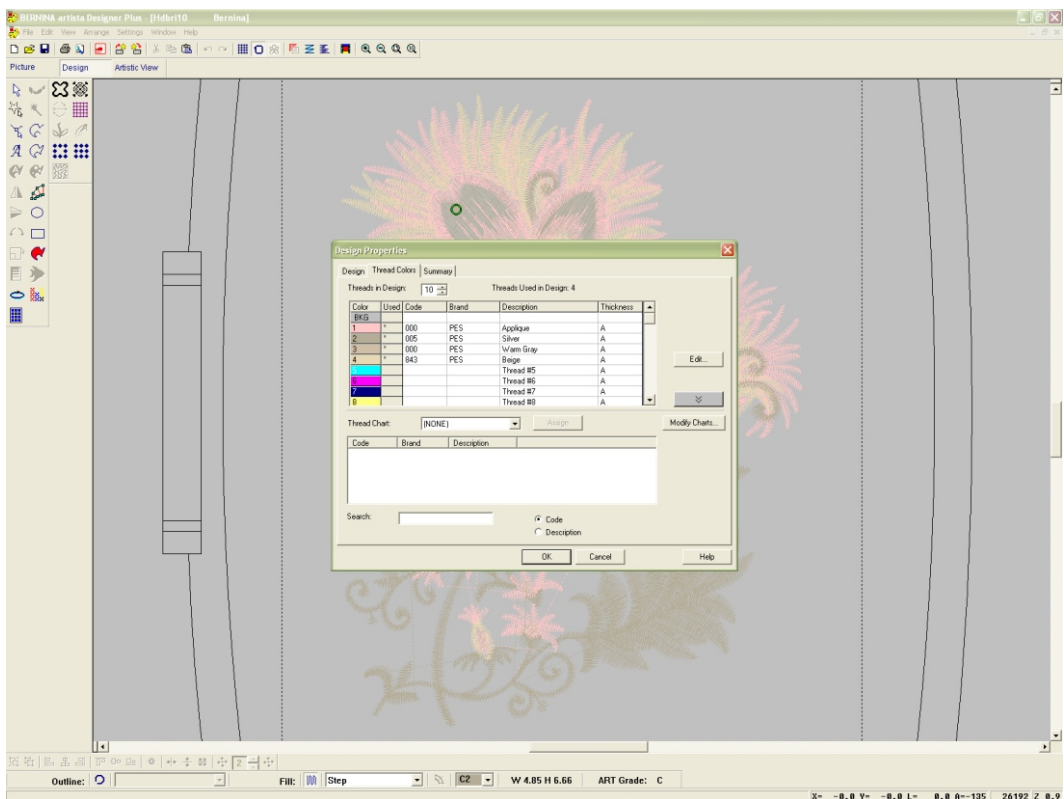
Under the file menu click: open. Open an Anita Goodesign design from your selected Cd-Rom. Make sure you choose the .art file. When you first open a design you will receive a message that states "design may have limitations when scaling". Ignore this message.

Changing Design Colors using Artista Software

Using Software to change thread colors



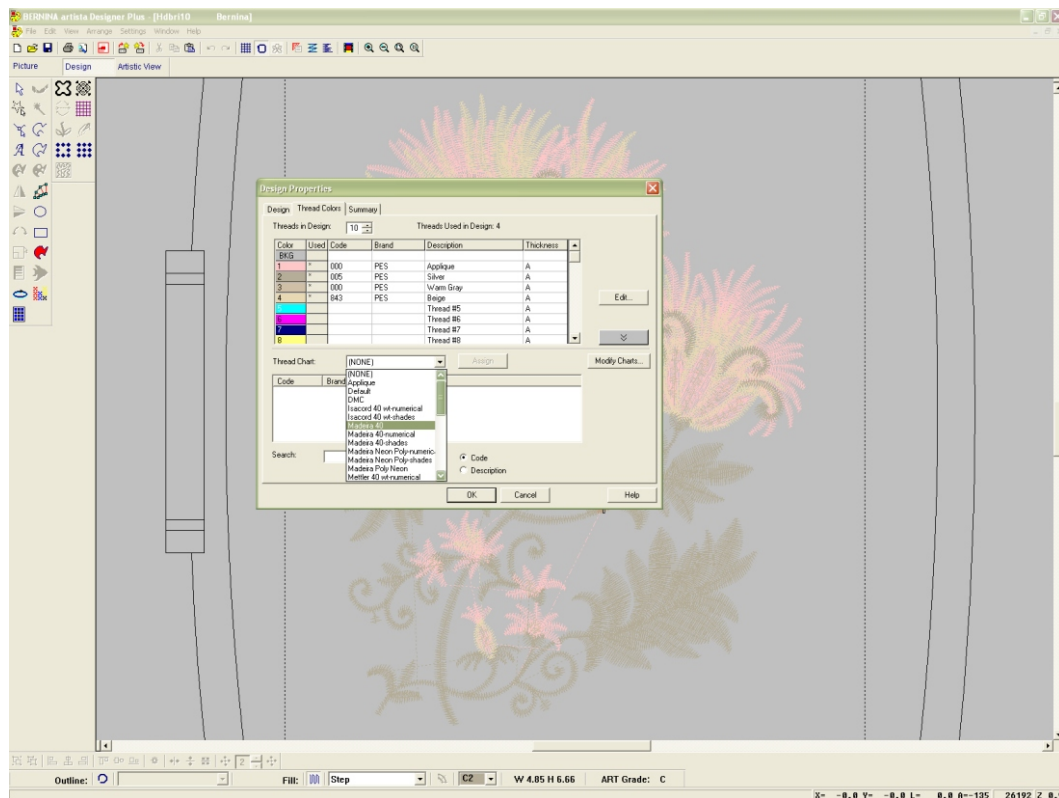
Once your selected design is open, under the file menu click on the "design properties" menu.



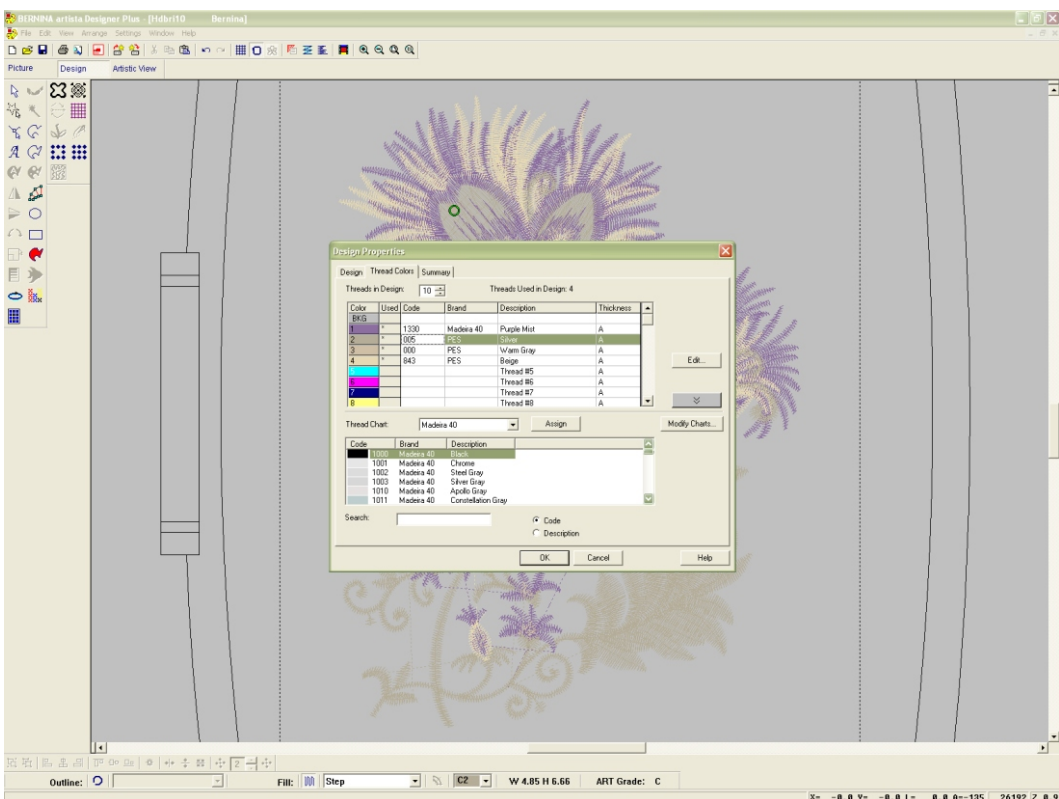
Once you click on "design properties" a dialog box will appear in the middle of your screen. The second tab on the box says " thread colors". Select it.

Changing Design Colors using Artista Software

Using Software to change thread colors



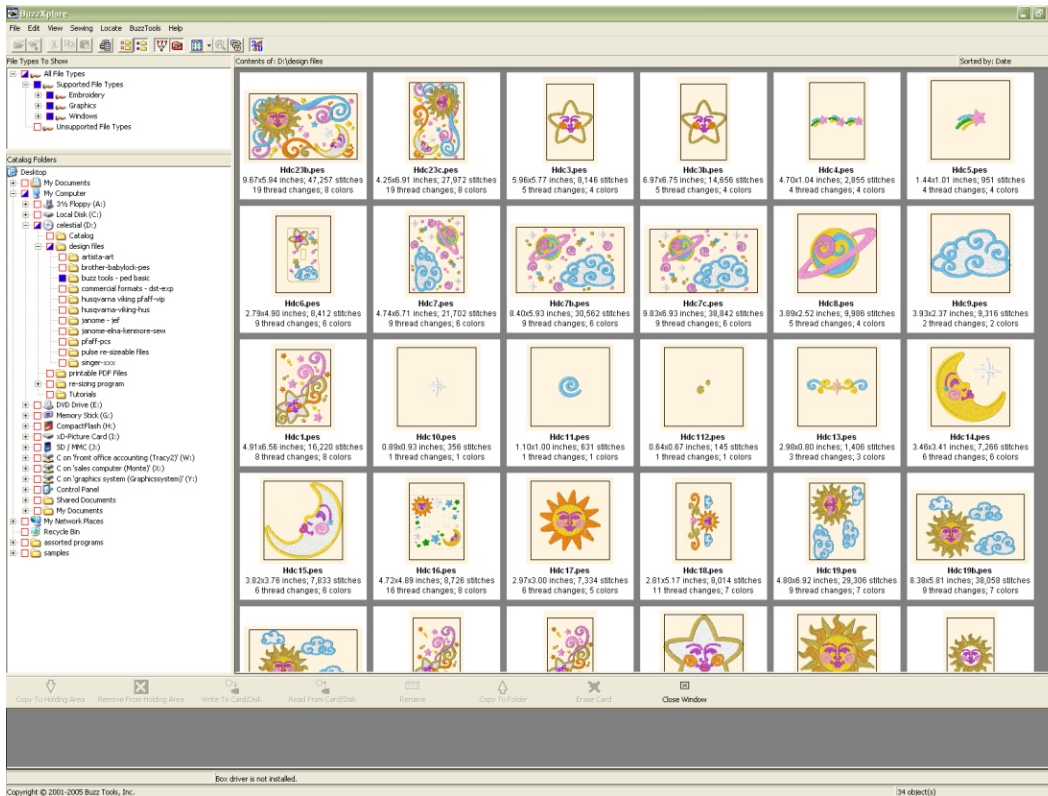
In the lower part of the dialog box you will see a pull-down menu that says "thread chart". Choose the thread type that you would like to use for your design.



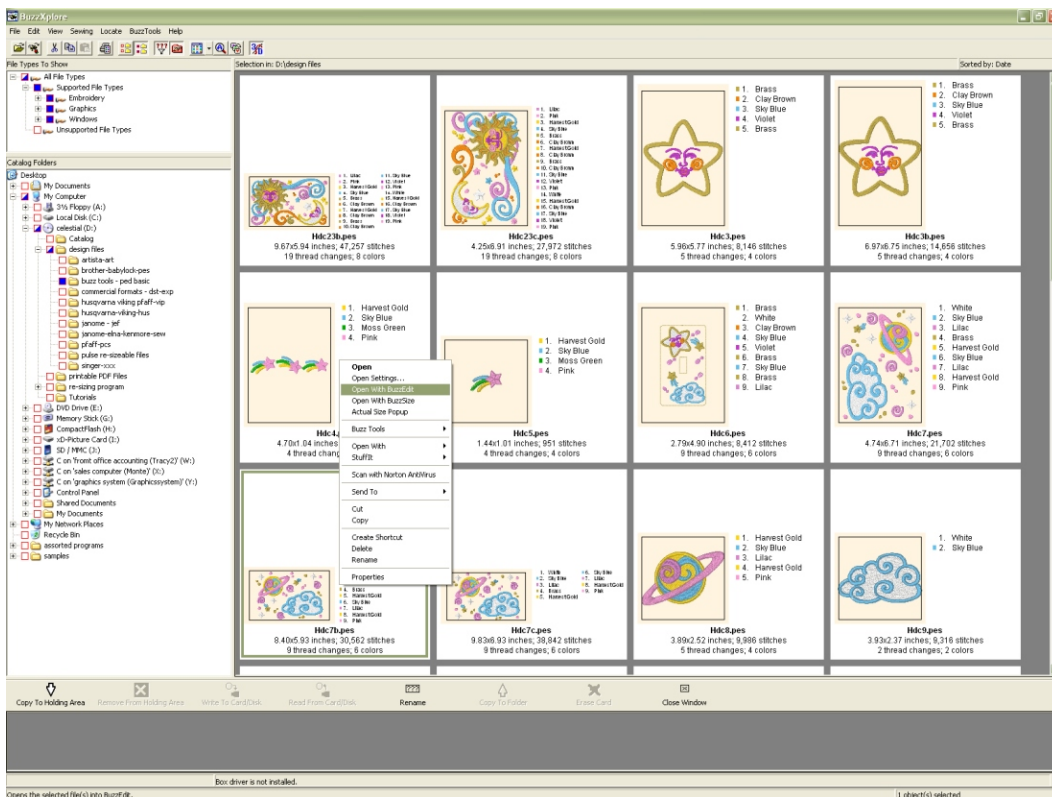
The upper box illustrates the steps in the design and the lower box shows you the available thread colors in the library you selected. To change the colors of the design simply select a step for the top box and click on a color from the thread library. The thread color will then be replaced in the design. Once you have changed all of your desired colors save the design onto your hard disk and send it your machine or print out a template on your printer.

Using Software to change thread colors

Buzz Tools is a great program to organize and edit your designs. We used two of their programs for this exercise; Buzz Edit and Buzz Explore. This isn't the newest version of the software, so some of the features may have changed.



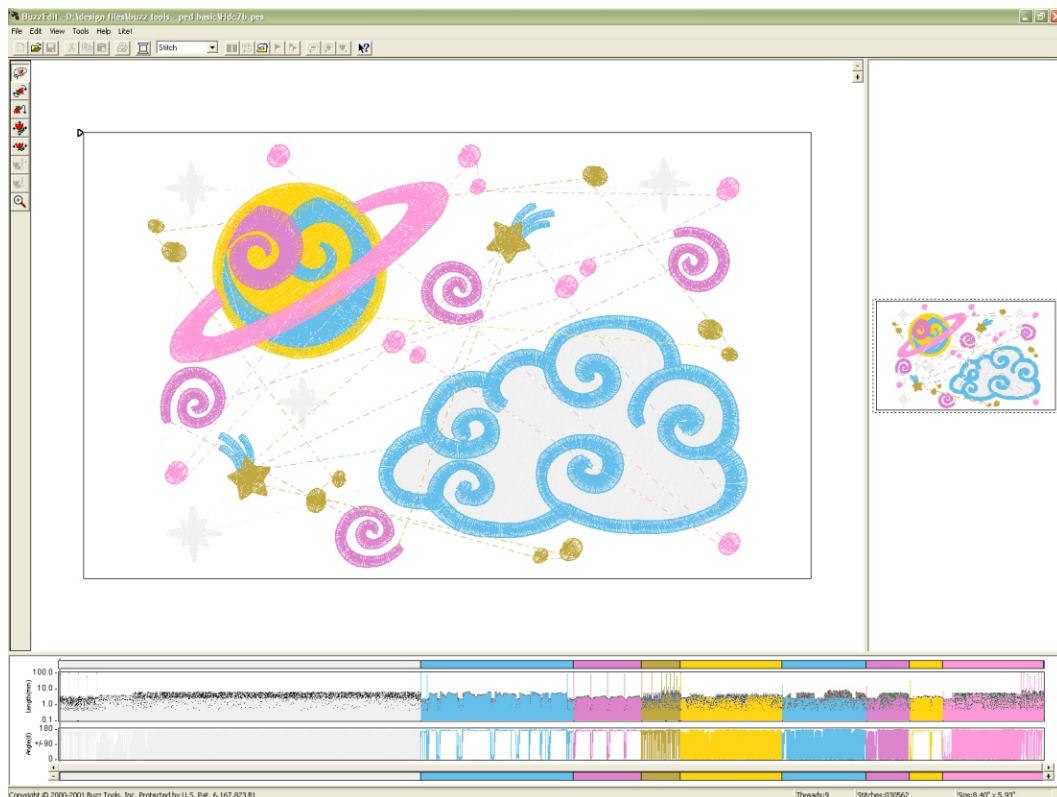
Open Buzz Explore when the Anita Goodesign Cd-Rom is in your computer. The lower left side of the menu shows you all of the directories on your PC. Select the CD-Drive. Then select the folder entitled "designs". Then select the machine format for your brand. For this exercise we selected Buzz-Tools .ped basic.



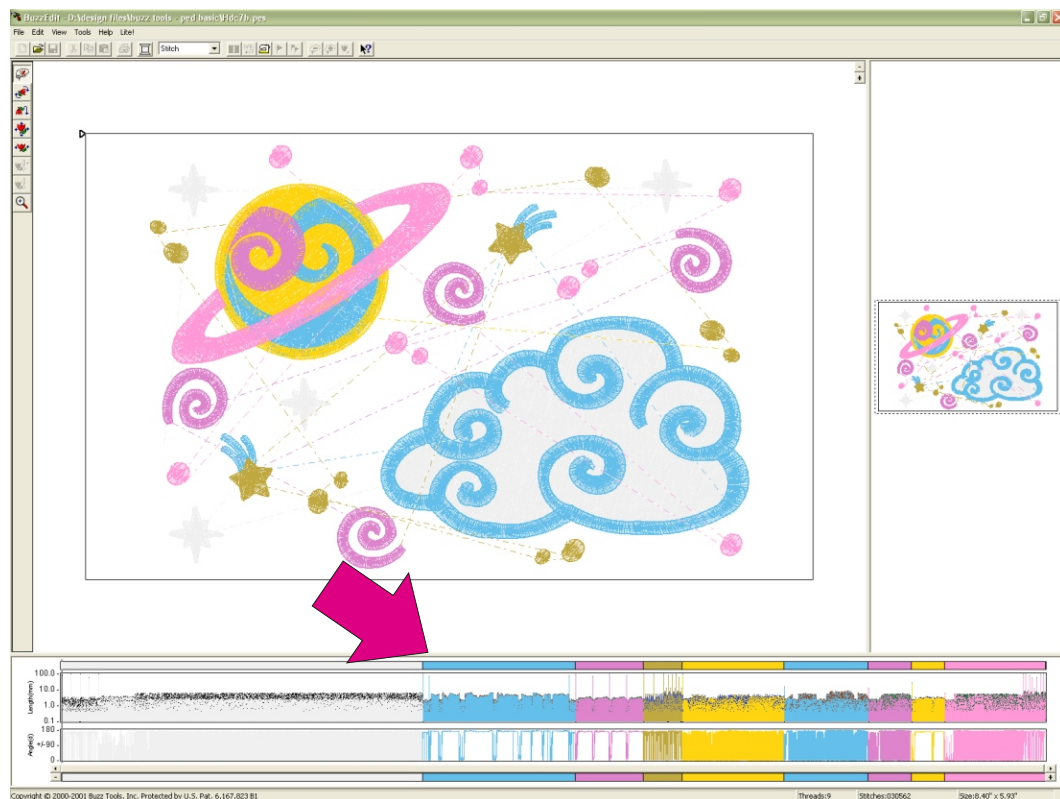
With your mouse, right click on the design you would like to change the colors for. Once you right click a dialog box will appear. Select the "open with Buzz Edit" line.

Using Software to change thread colors

Once you select the "open with Buzz Edit" option your computer will automatically launch Buzz Edit. This program is what you will use to change colors in the design.

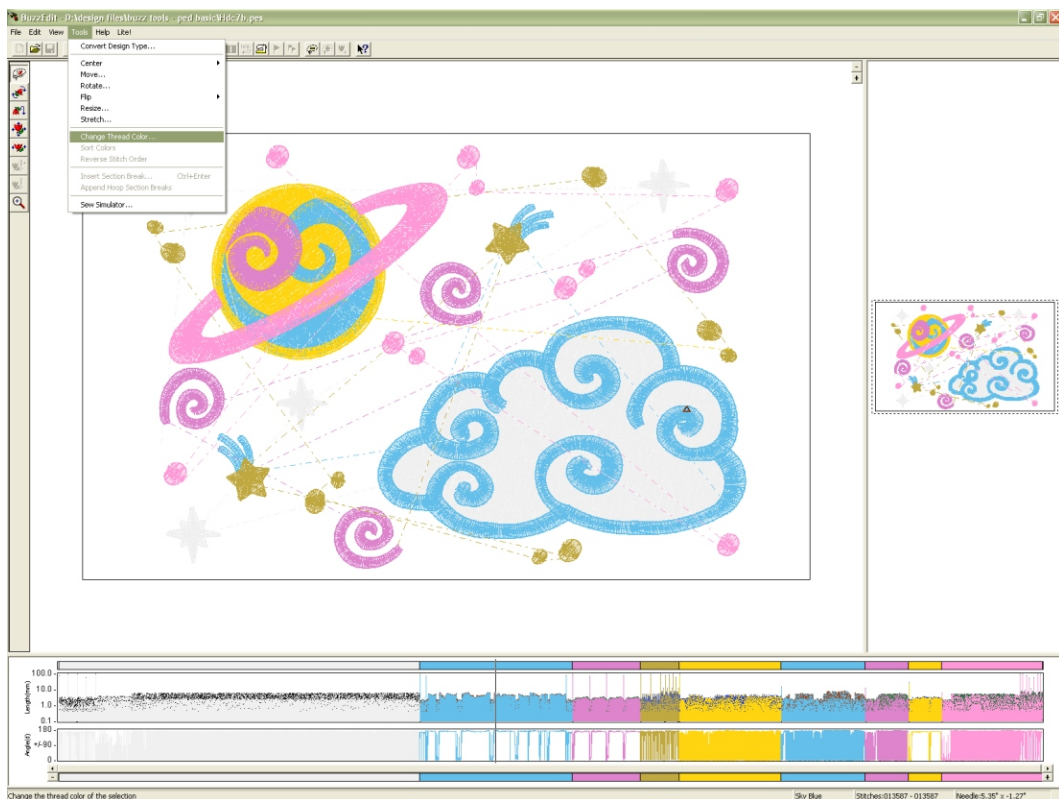


On the lower part of your screen you will see a color ribbon. This shows you all of the color steps in the design. With your mouse, left click onto the color you want to change. In this example we selected the blue.

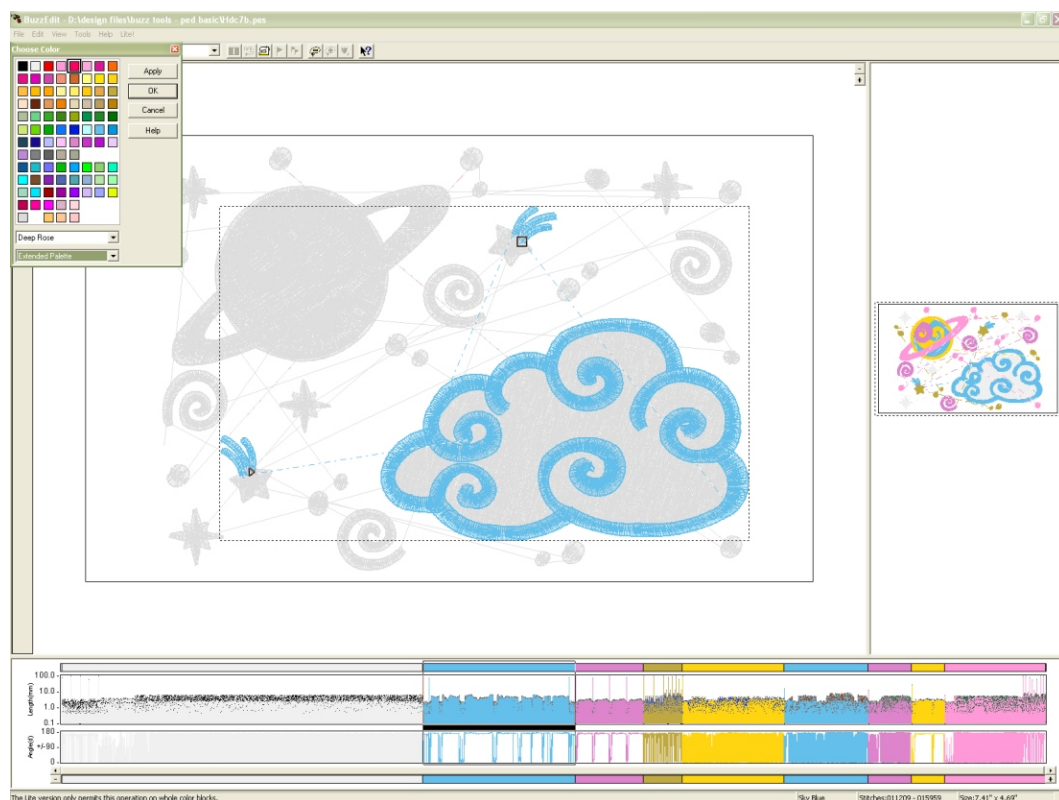


Changing Design Colors using Buzz Tools Software

Using Software to change thread colors

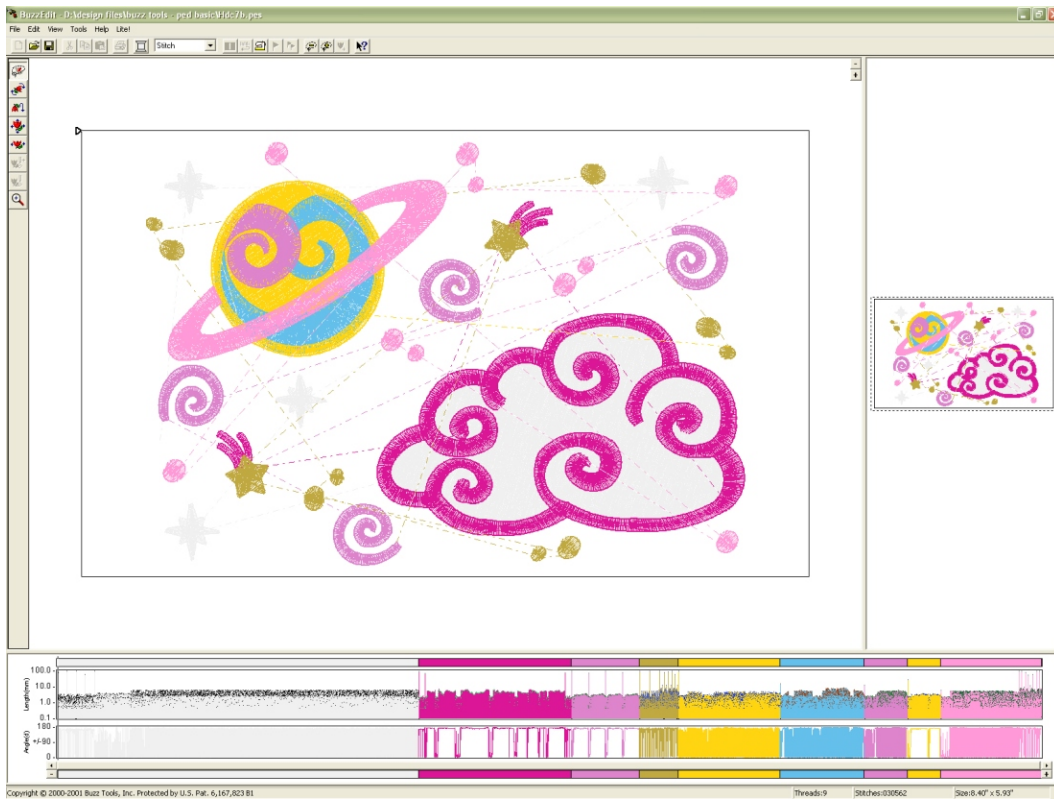


Click on the tools menu. You will see an option that says "change thread color." Select it.



A dialog box will appear in the upper left hand corner of the screen. Select the color you would like to replace the blue with. For this example I chose pink.

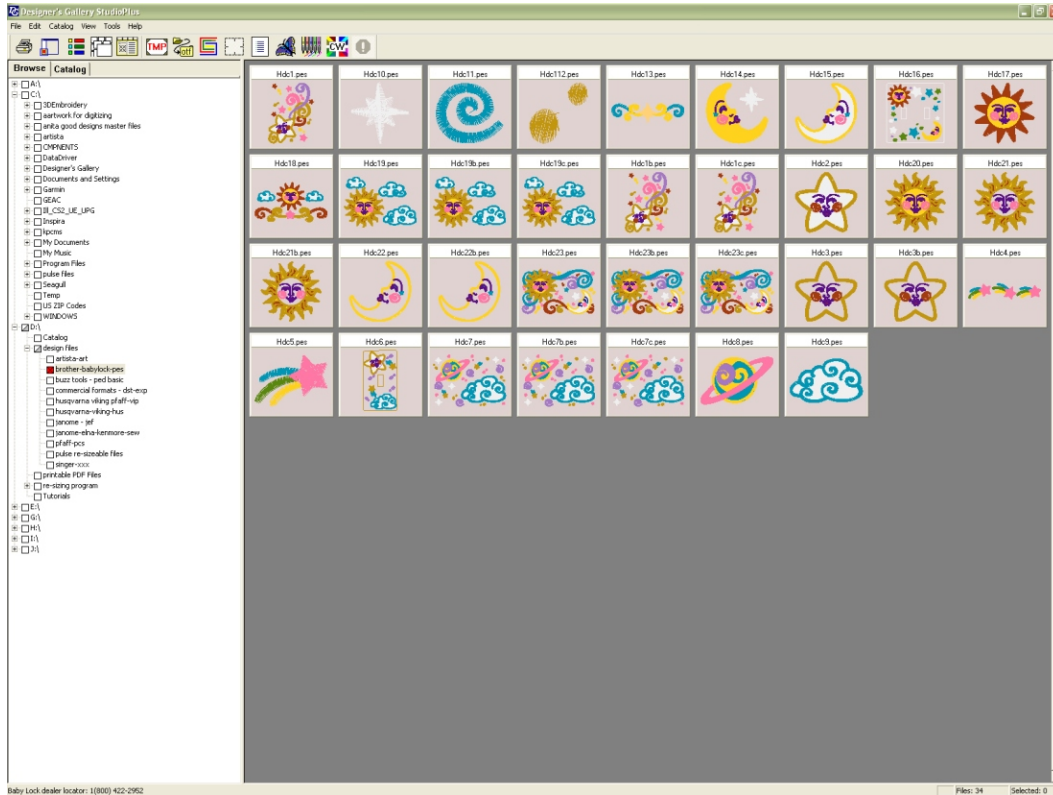
Using Software to change thread colors



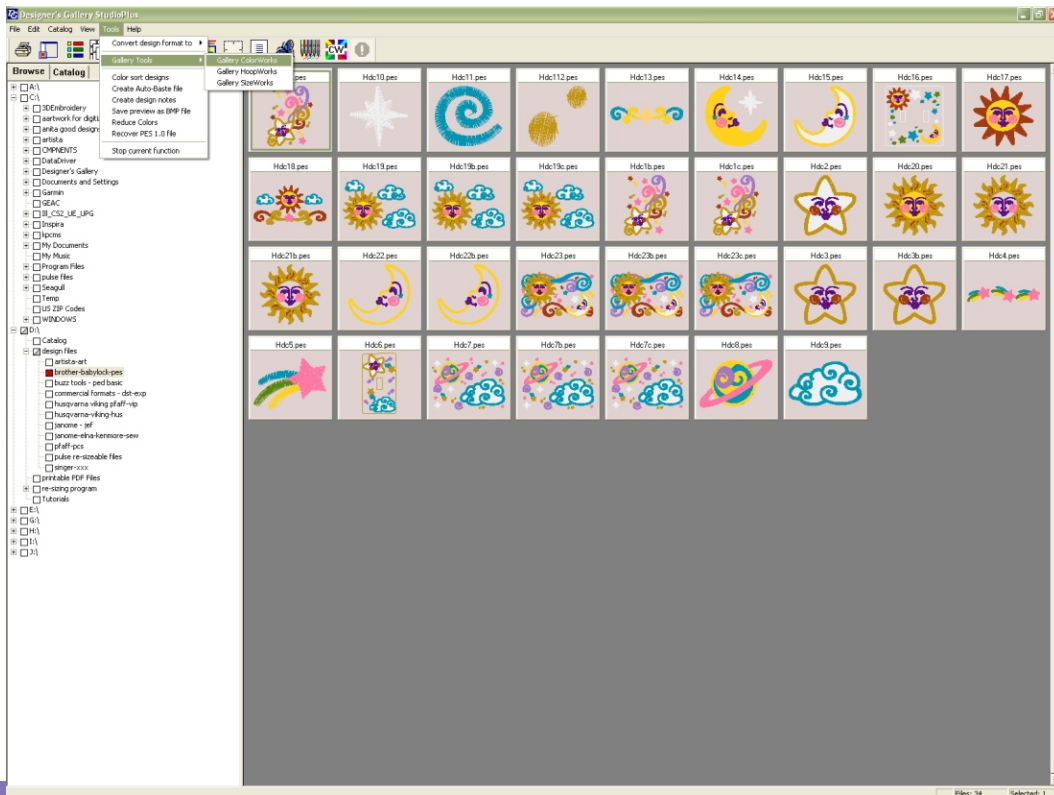
It's as simple as that. You can repeat this step for all of the colors in the design if you desire. Once you are finished under the file menu click on "save as" and give your design a new name and save it to place where you can find it later.

Using Software to change thread colors

Designers' Gallery is a suite of software modules offered by Babylock. The suite consists of a multitude of programs that range from cataloging to digitizing. To change colors in a design you need two of these programs. The first is Designers' Gallery Studio, which is their basic program and secondly you need Colorworks.



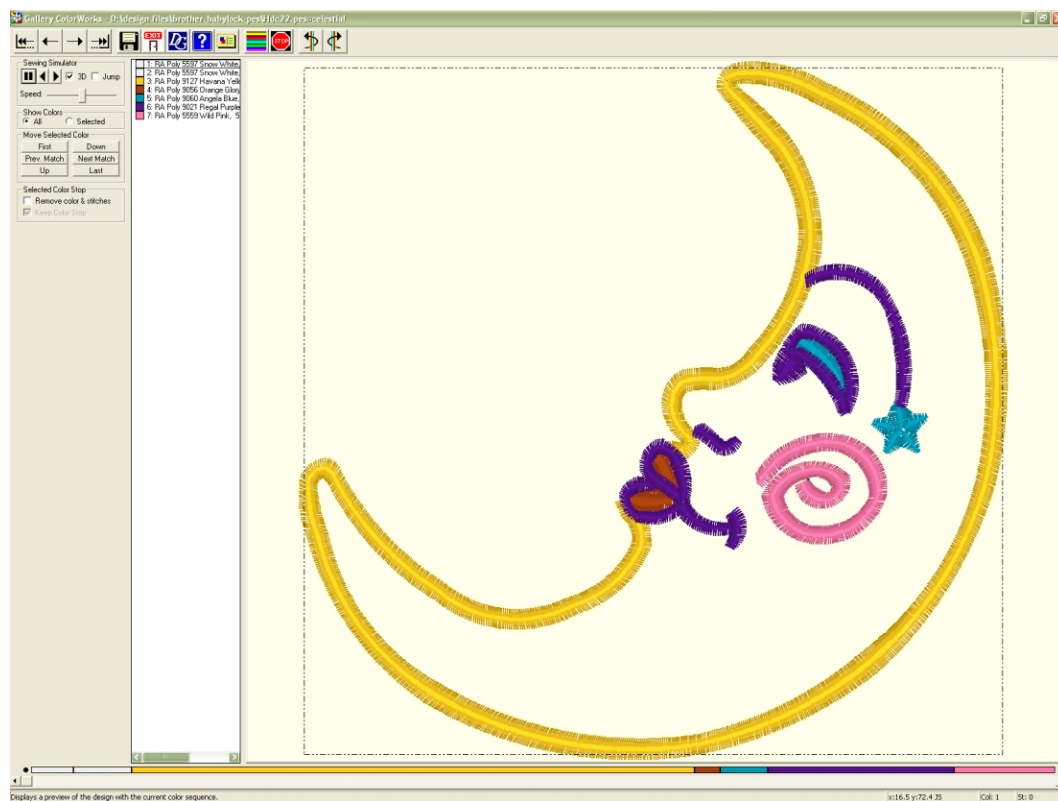
When you first start Designers' Gallery your screen will look like this. You will see a menu on the left. This menu lists all of the directories on your computer. Insert an Anita Goodesign CD-Rom in your computer. Then select the CD-Drive. After the CD Drive is open select the "designs" folder. After that is expanded select the brother/babylock folder. The designs will then fill the screen.



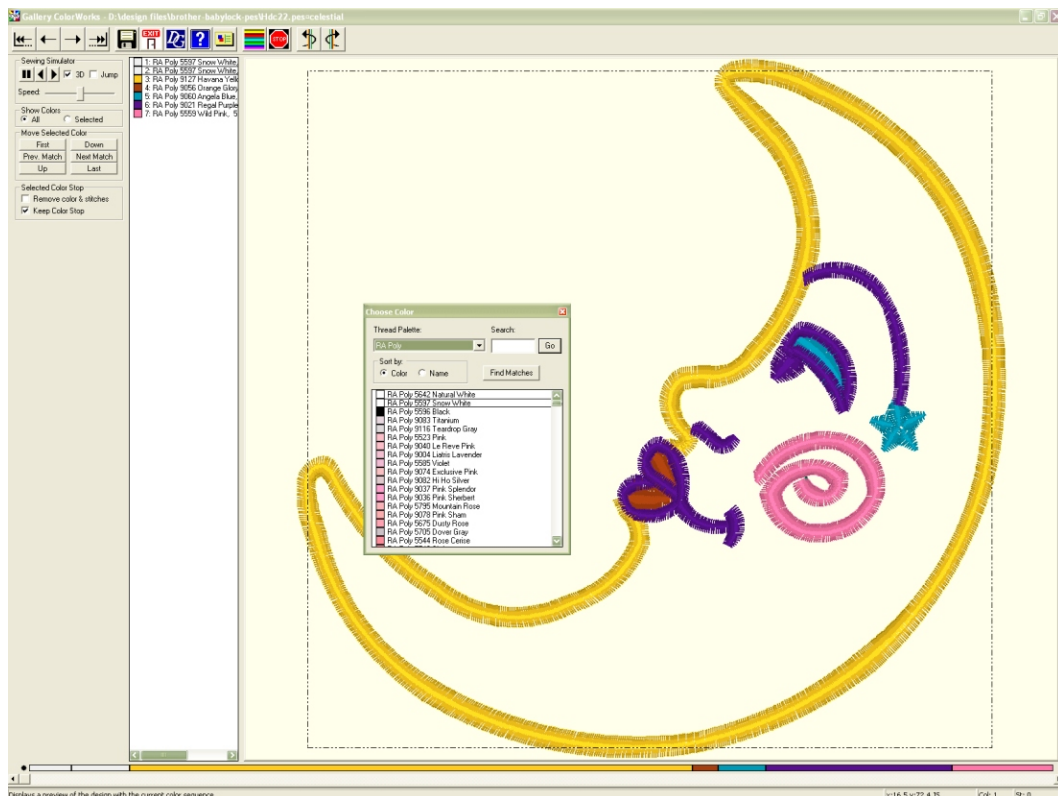
Select the design you want to change by left clicking the picture with your mouse. Under the "tools" menu select "Gallery tools". Another menu will expand to the right. Select the line that says "Colorworks". Designers' Gallery will then automatically launch Colorworks.

Changing Design Colors using Designers Gallery

Using Software to change thread colors

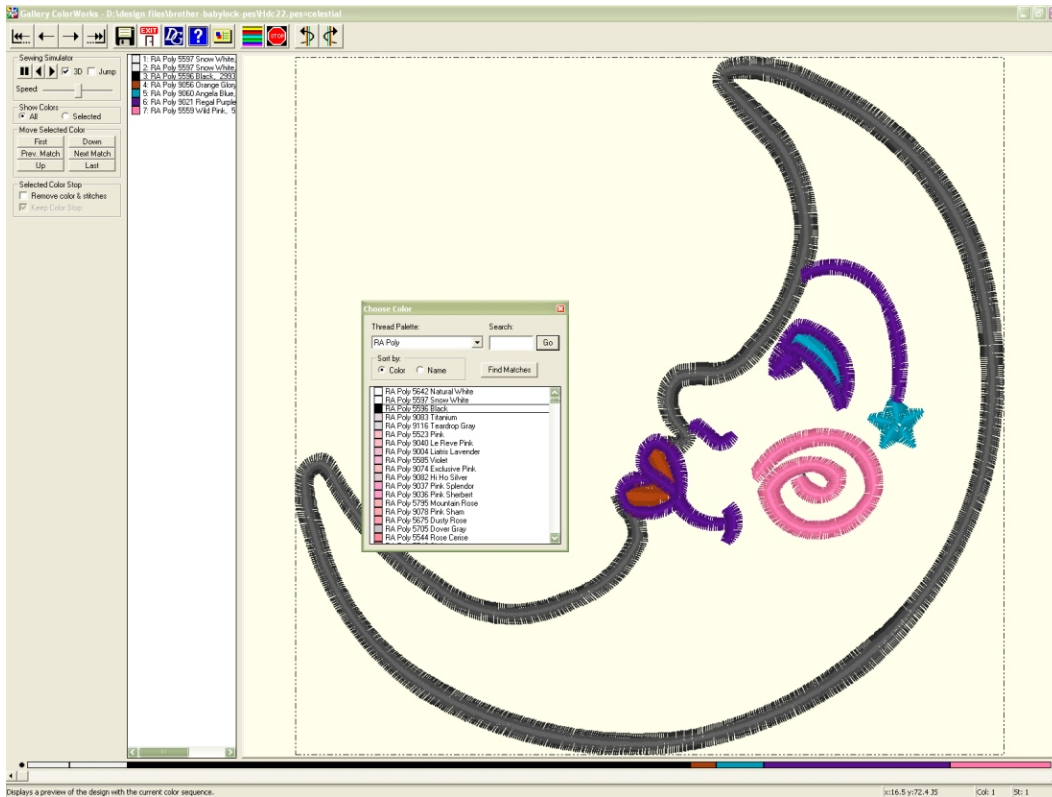


Colorworks will look like this. You will see a listing of the thread colors to the left of the design and also as a ribbon underneath it. Left click on the color you wish to change.

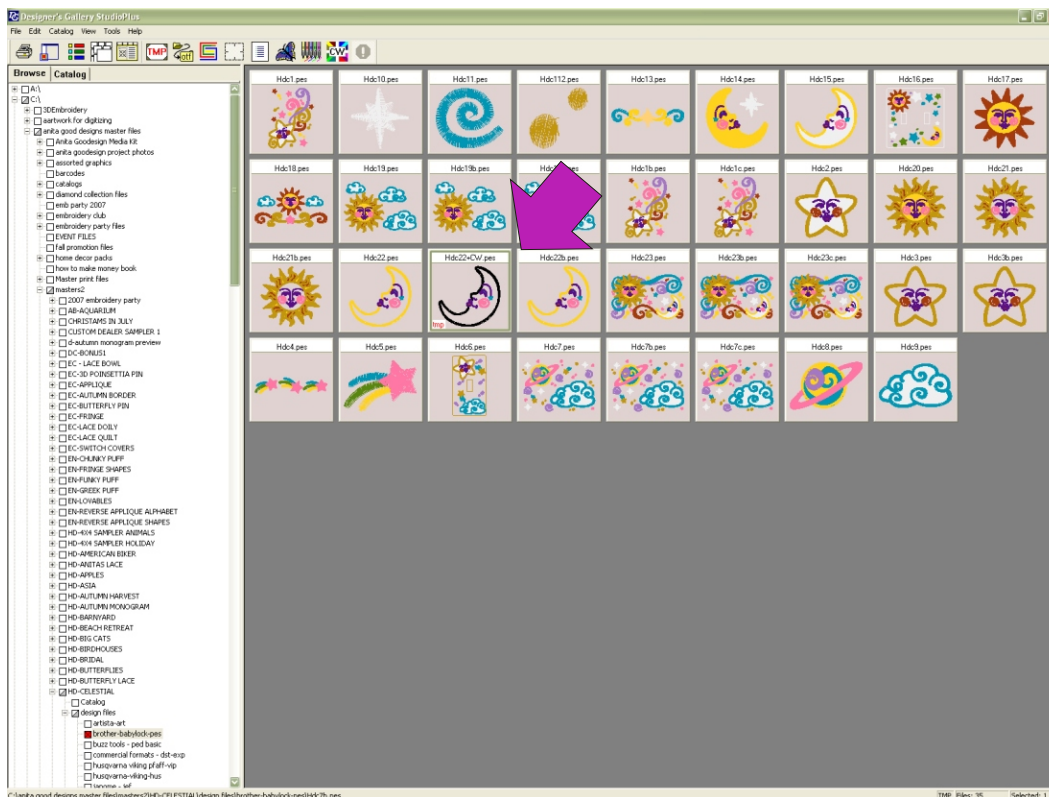


Once you select the color you wish to change click the tool at the top of the screen that looks like a rainbow. This will cause a dialog box to open that lists your available color options. You can select from multiple thread libraries. For this example I am going to change the yellow to black.

Using Software to change thread colors



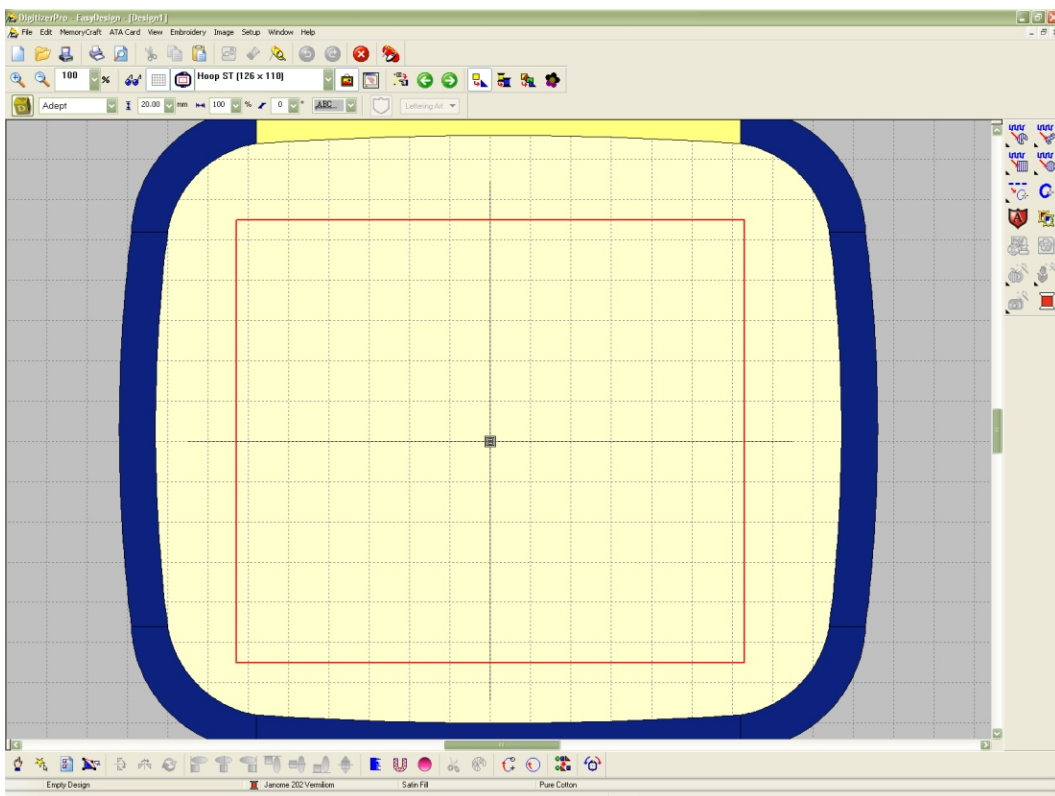
Notice how the thread color changed. Once you are done choosing all of your colors close the dialog box. At the top of the screen you will see a button that looks like a floppy disk. Click on this button and your design will be saved. Once you click the saved button, exit Colorworks.



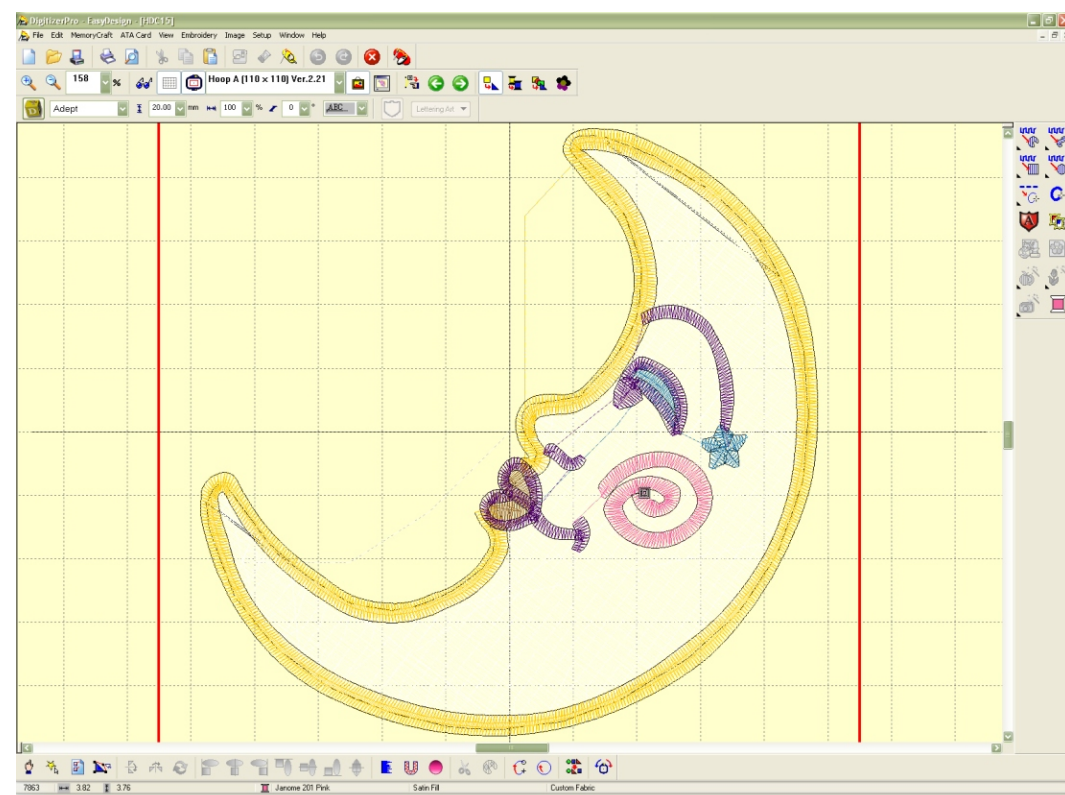
One of the neat features of Designer's Gallery is how the modules all work together. By saving the design in Colorworks it will automatically send the design to Designer's Gallery Studio and create a new file name for it so your original version is unaffected.

Using Software to change thread colors

Changing colors using the Janome software is easy. The software I am using is their digitizing software. I would imagine their basic editing software operates in much the same manner



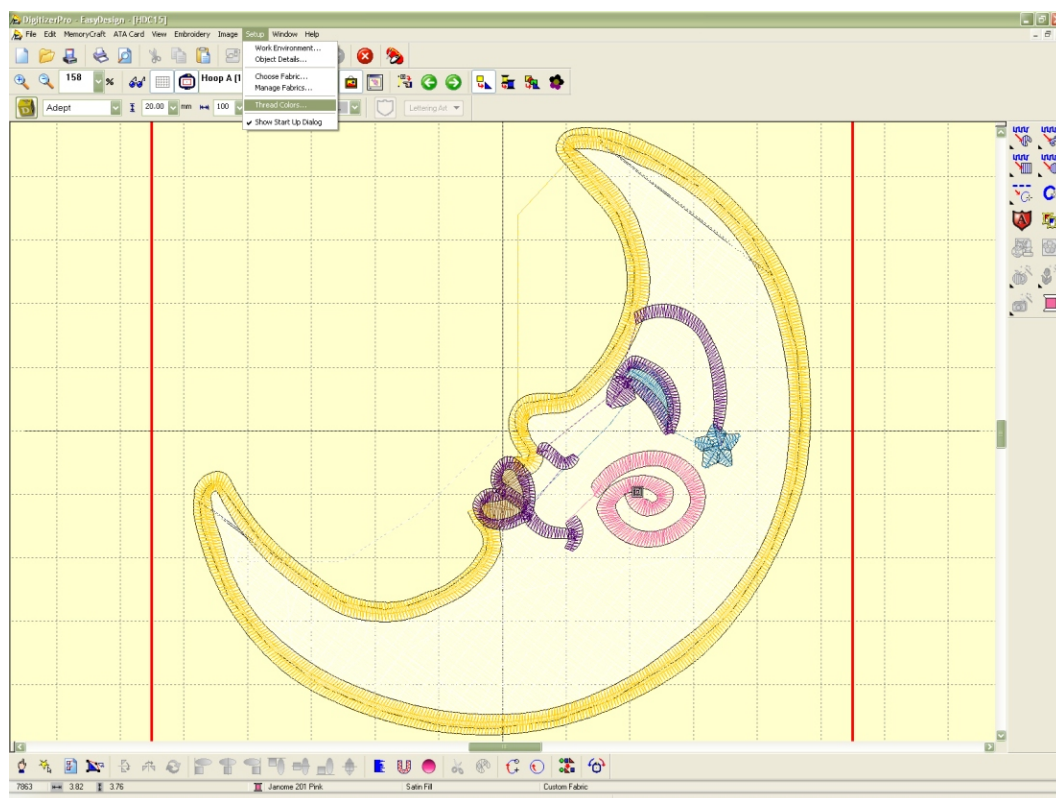
When you first start Digitizing Pro this is what the screen will look like..



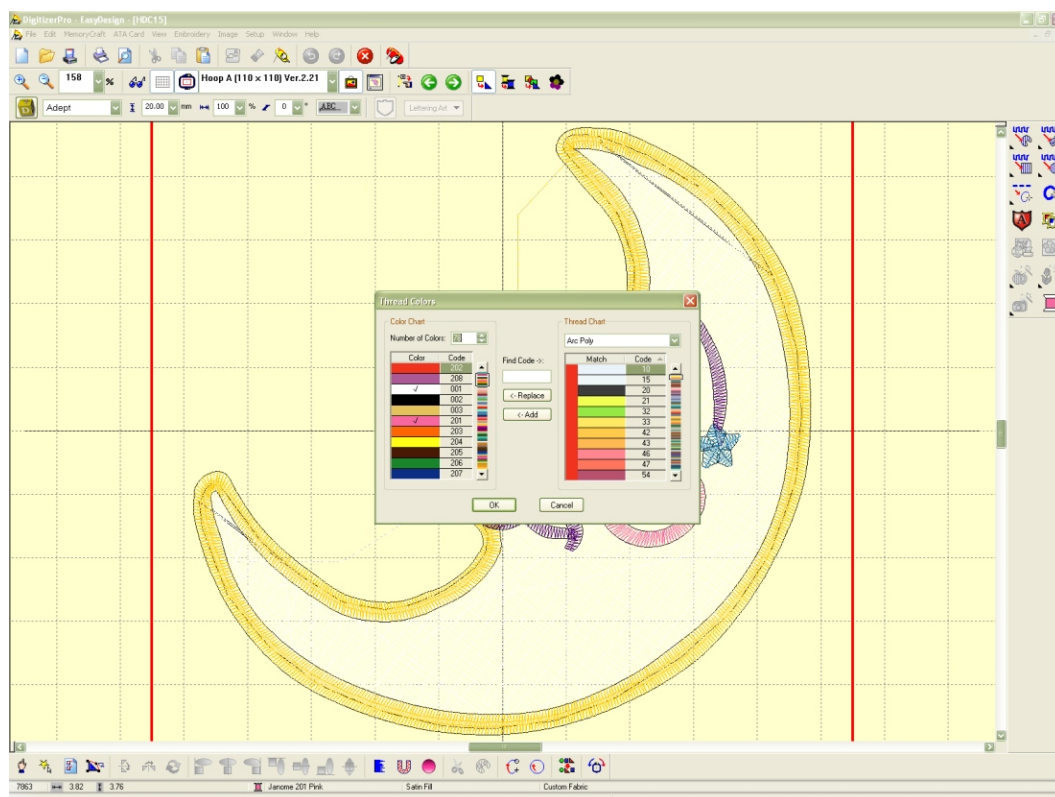
Open a jef file from the Anita Goodesign Cd-Rom. The jef files are located in the jef Janome folder which is in the "designs" folder.

Changing Design Colors using Janome Digitizing Pro

Using Software to change thread colors

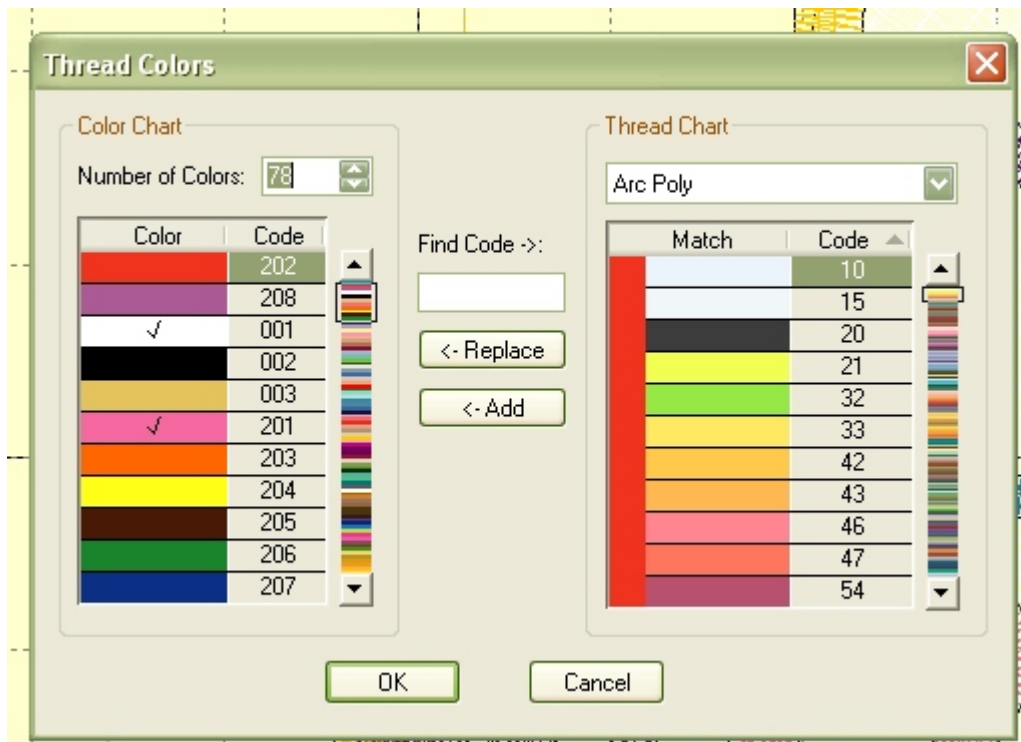


Once the design is open go to the top menu marked "setup" and select the line that says "thread colors".

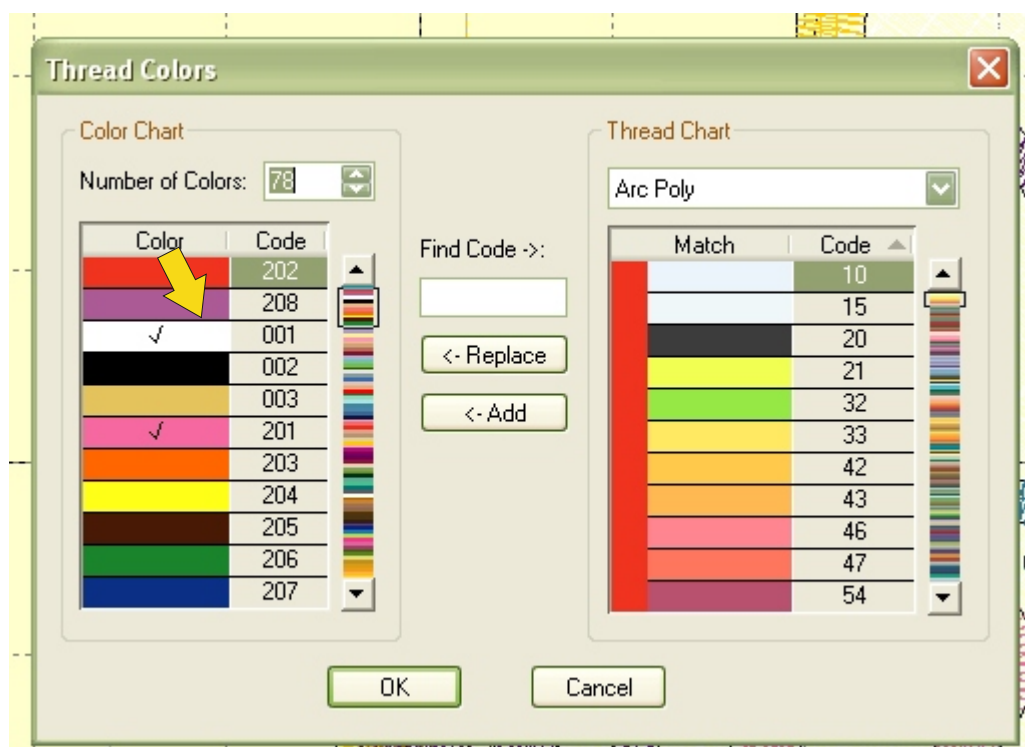


Once you select the thread colors button this dialog box will appear.

Using Software to change thread colors

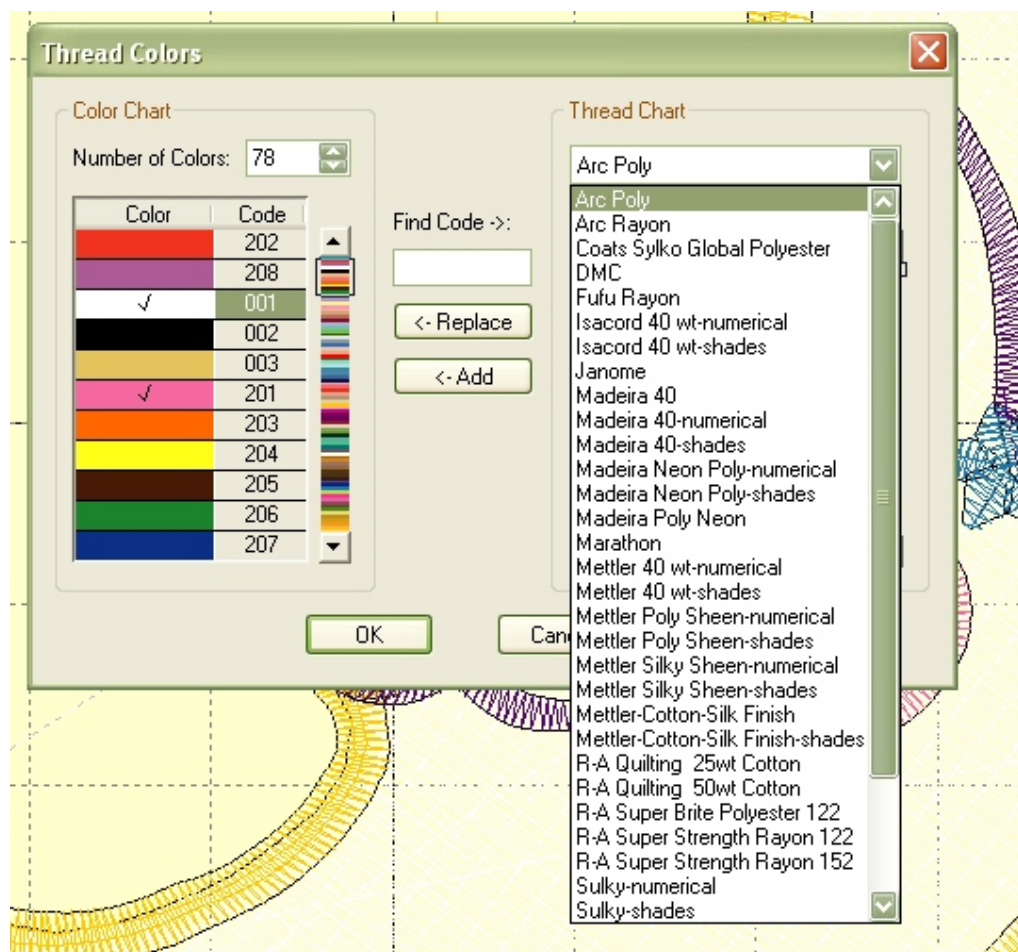


The thread colors dialog box has two separate sections. The menu on the right lists the current colors. If the color is used in the design it will be marked with a check.

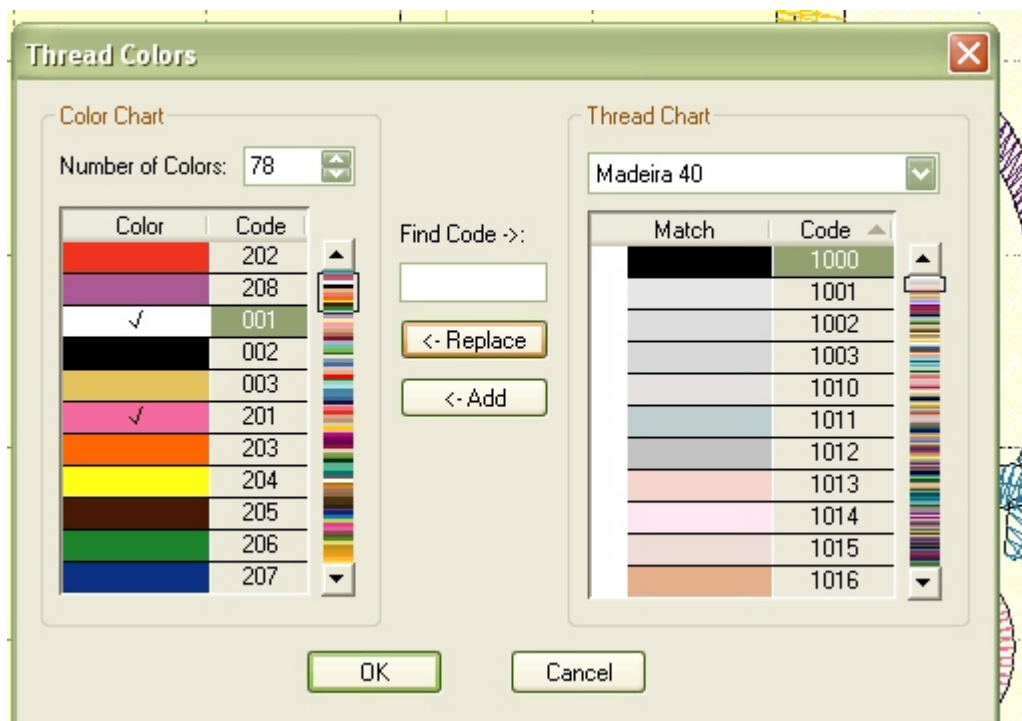


To change a thread color select the color from the left menu box that you would like to change. For this example we are going to change the white thread.

Using Software to change thread colors

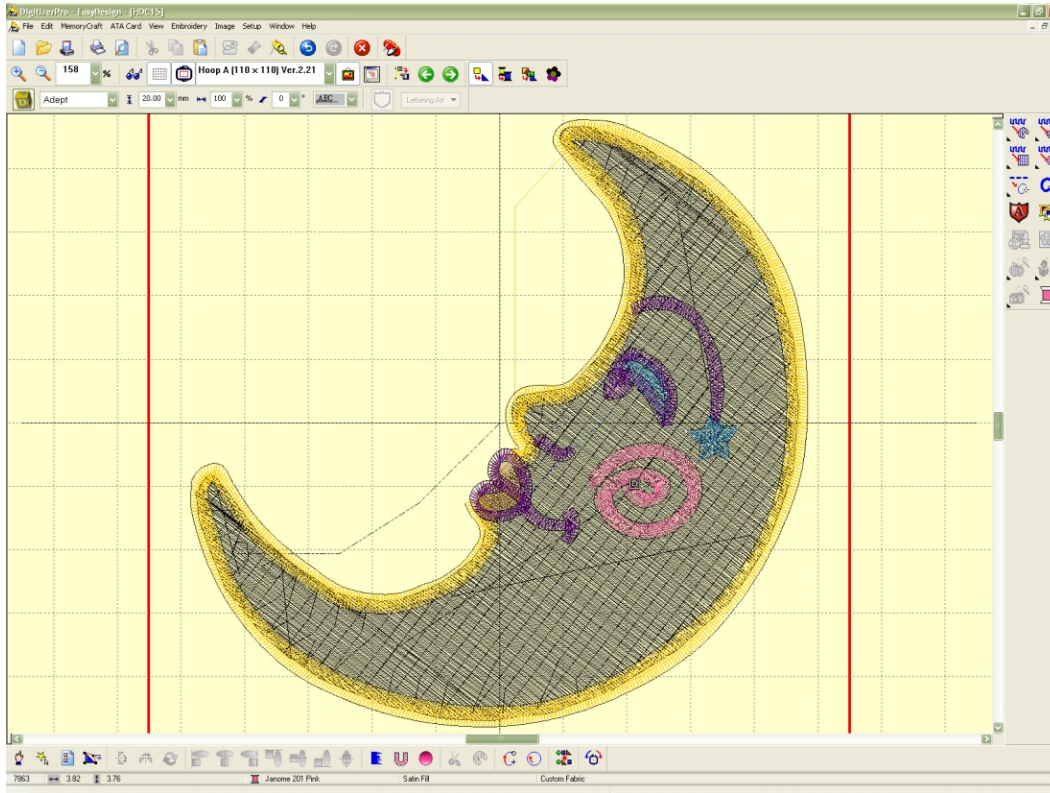


Once you have your desired color selected, pull down the menu to the right and select your desired thread library. For this example we are going to choose Madeira 40.



Once your desired color appears in the right menu, click "replace". This will replace the white in the design with Madeira black. After you click "replace" click "OK" at the bottom of the dialog box.

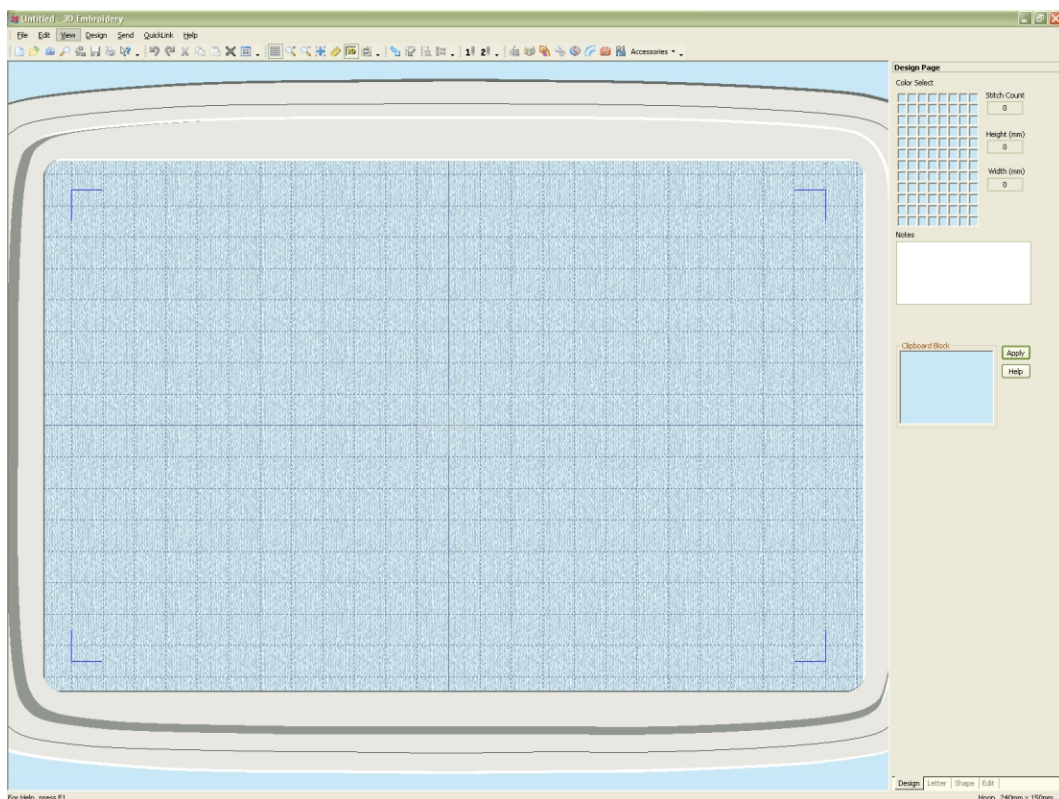
Using Software to change thread colors



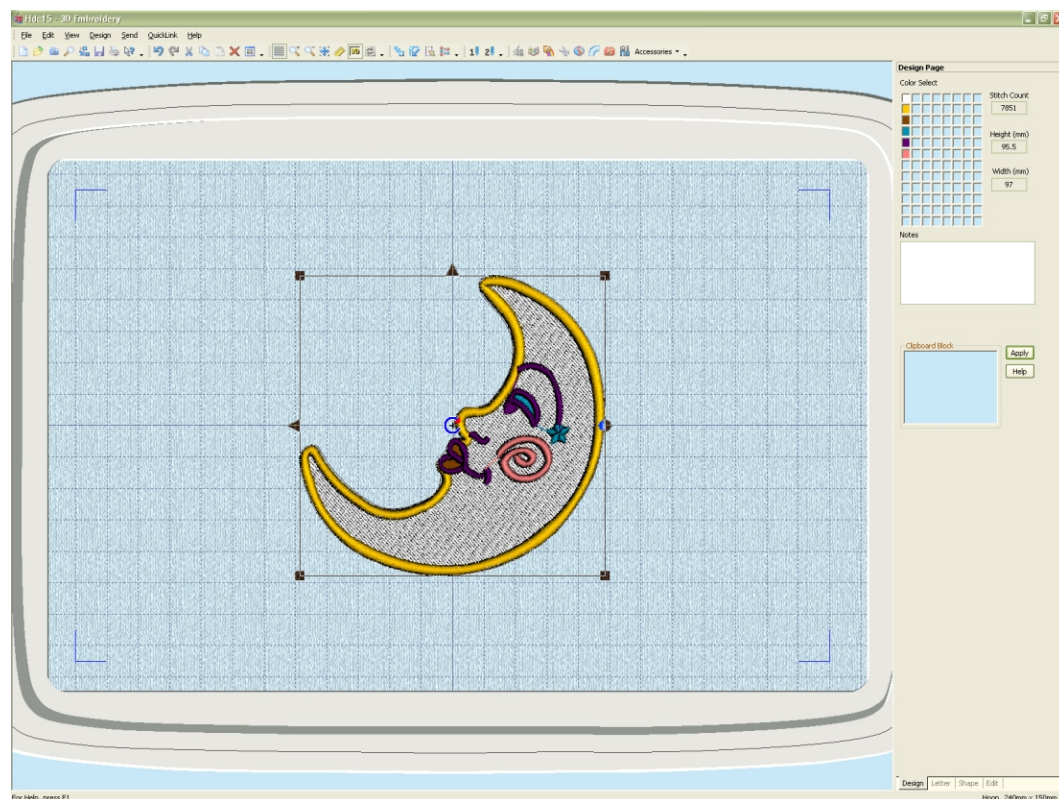
The design is now changed to the new color. You can save the design to your desired location.

Using Software to change thread colors

Changing the thread colors in 3D software is very simple. Plus, this software probably has the largest assortment of thread libraries including metallic and variegated thread.



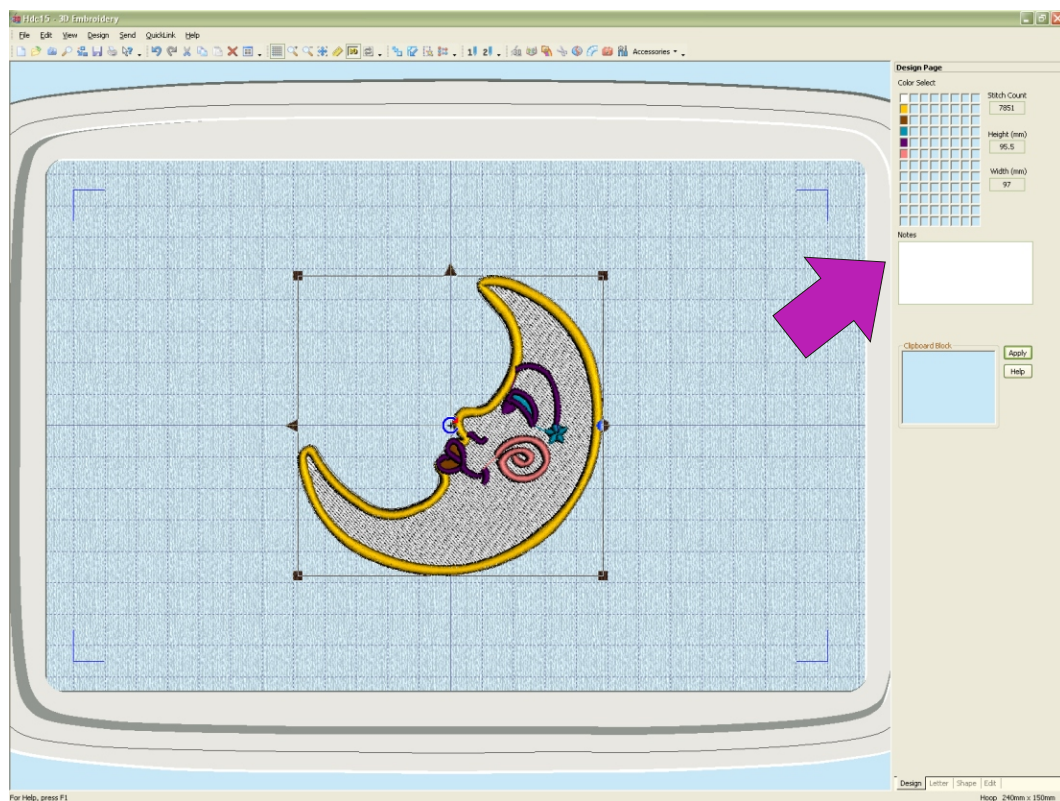
Once you start your 3D software with either Viking or Pfaff your screen will look similar to this.



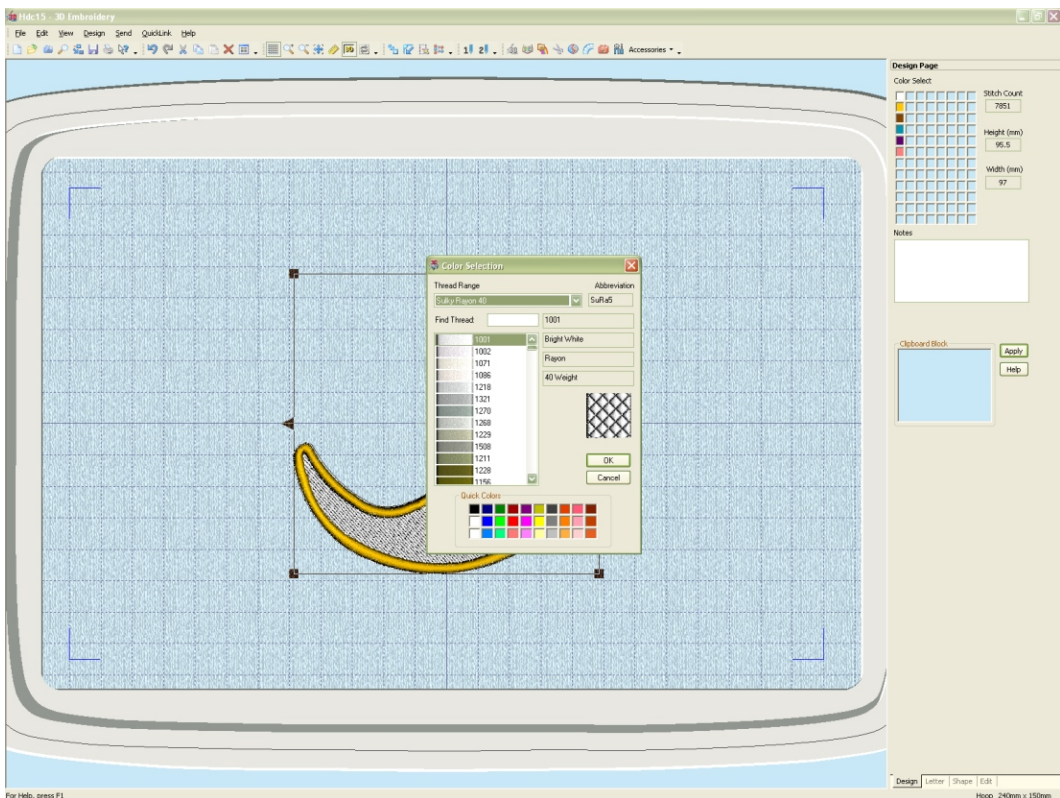
Open a design from the Anita Goodesign Cd-Rom. The designs for Viking or Pfaff are located in either the .hus or .vip folders. You can find these folders in the "Design" folder on the CD-Rom. The design will then appear on your screen.

Changing Design Colors using 3D Suite
for Husqvarna Viking and Pfaff

Using Software to change thread colors



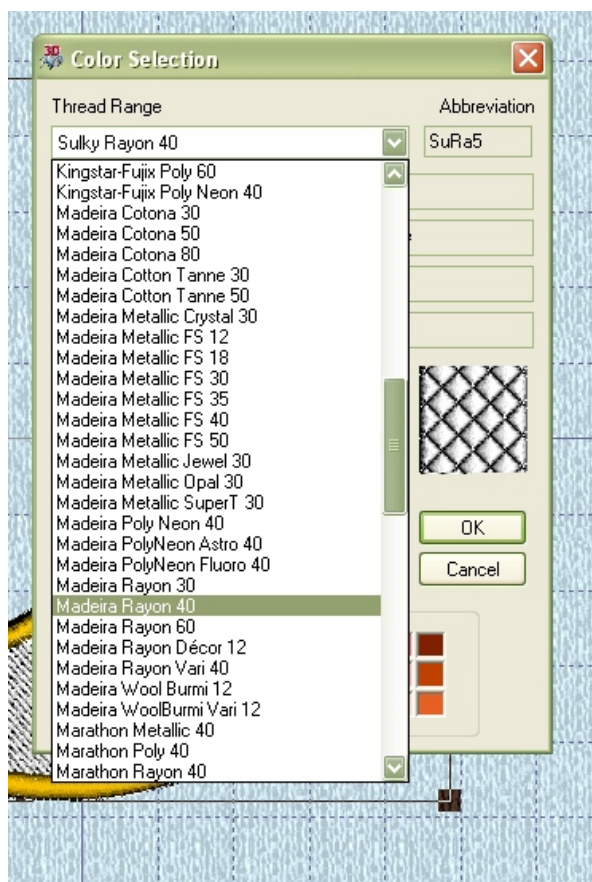
You will see all of the colors that are used in the design displayed at the top right of the screen.



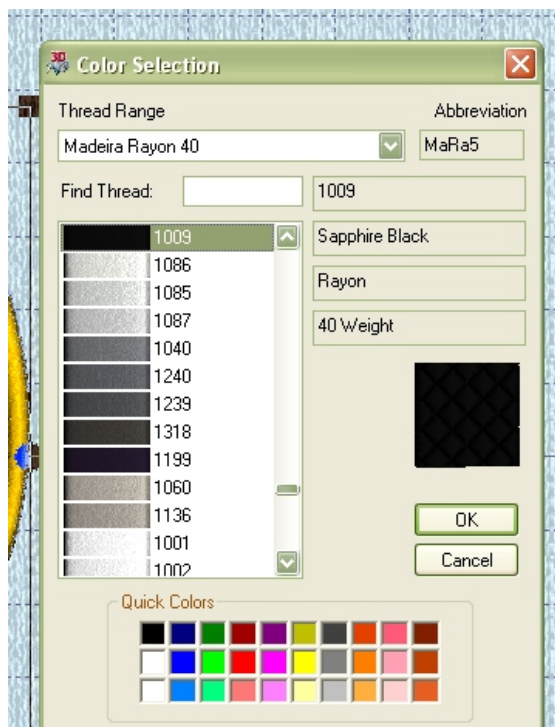
Click on the button of the color you want to change. This will cause a dialog box to appear in the center of your screen.

Changing Design Colors using 3D Suite for Husqvarna Viking and Pfaff

Using Software to change thread colors

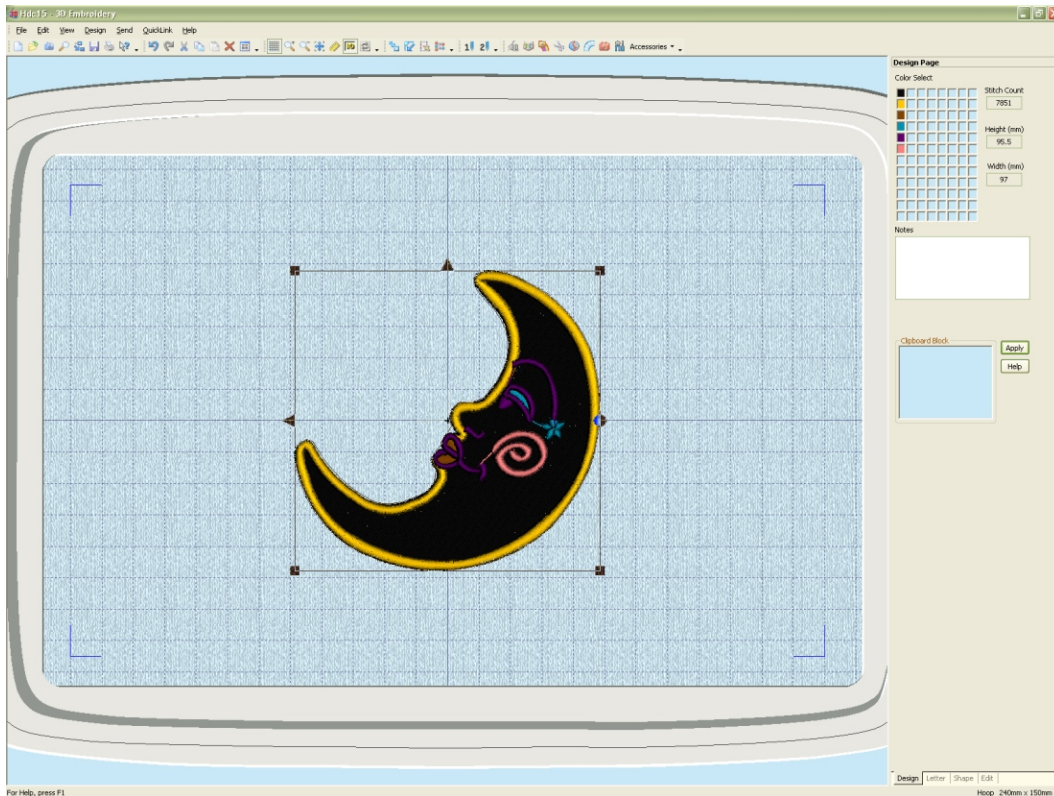


You will see a pull down menu at the top of the dialog box that will allow you to choose your desired thread library. For this example we are going to choose Madeira 40.



I will then simply select my desired color replacement. For this example I am going to choose black. Once I highlight black I simply click "OK". The color will then change in the design.

Using Software to change thread colors

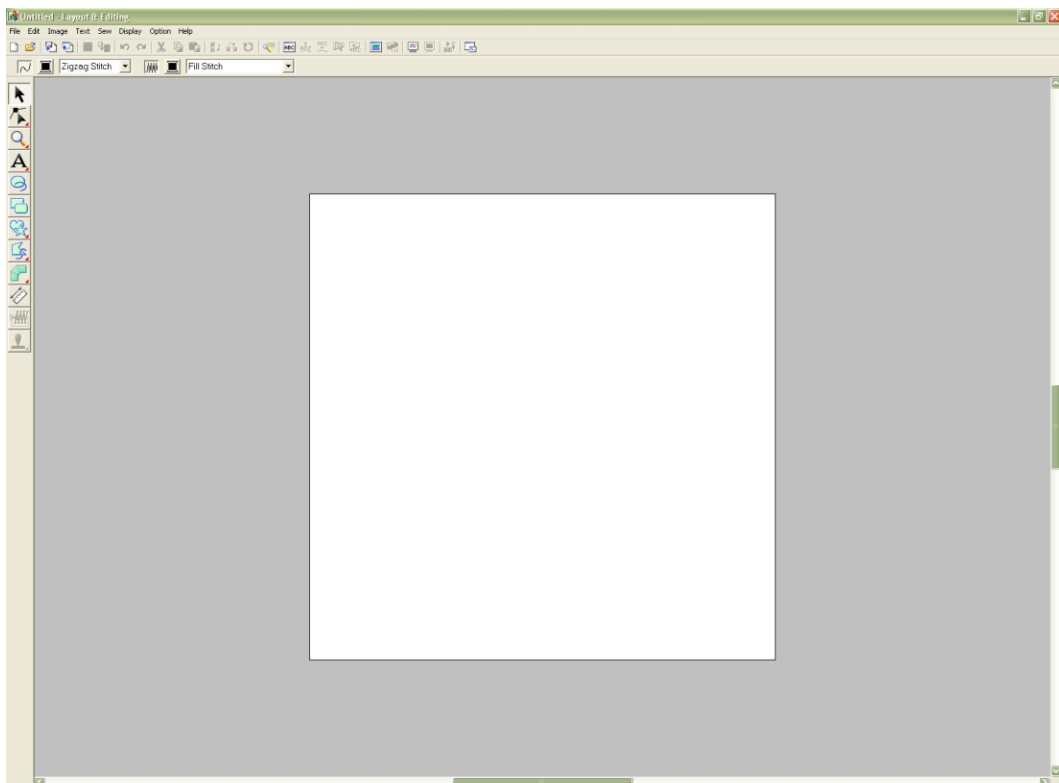


If you wanted to change more than one color simply repeat these steps. Once you are done you can save the design to your desired location.

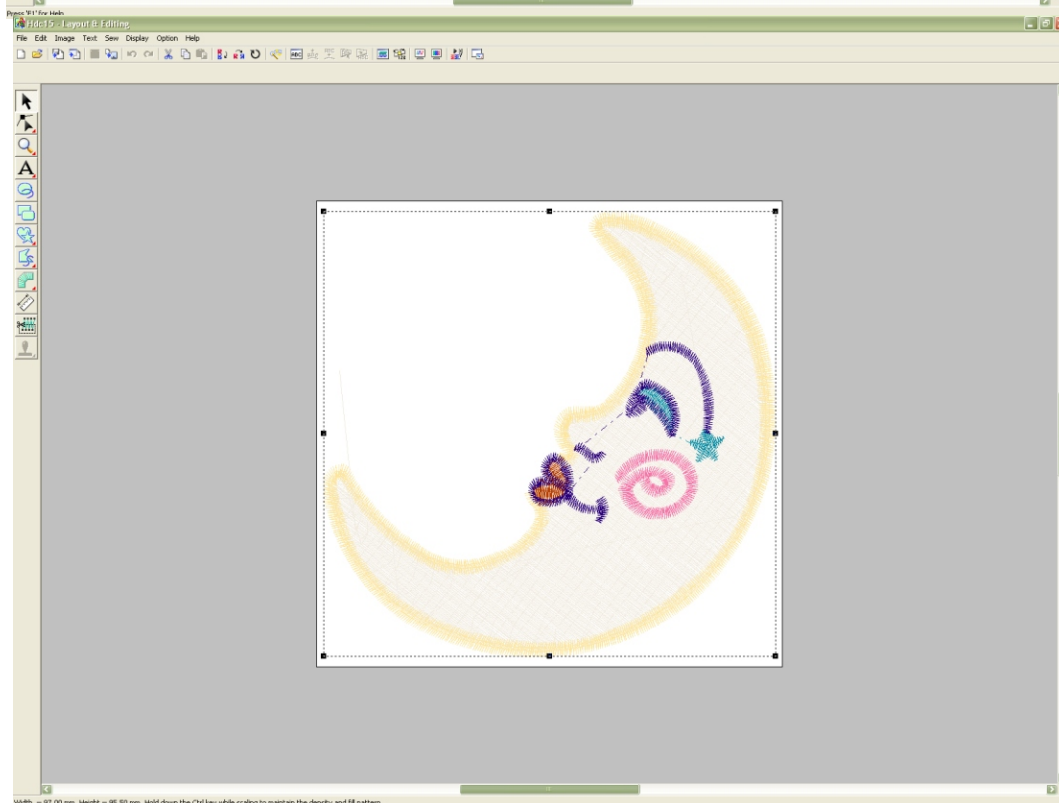
Changing Design Colors using 3D Suite for Husqvarna Viking and Pfaff

Using Software to change thread colors

Both Brother and Babylock use the same software for their Digitizing and Editing. The software is either called PE-Design for Brother or Palette for Babylock. There are multiple versions available but they all change colors in essentially the same manner. The software contains 4 different programs. We are going to use Layout and Editing to change design colors.



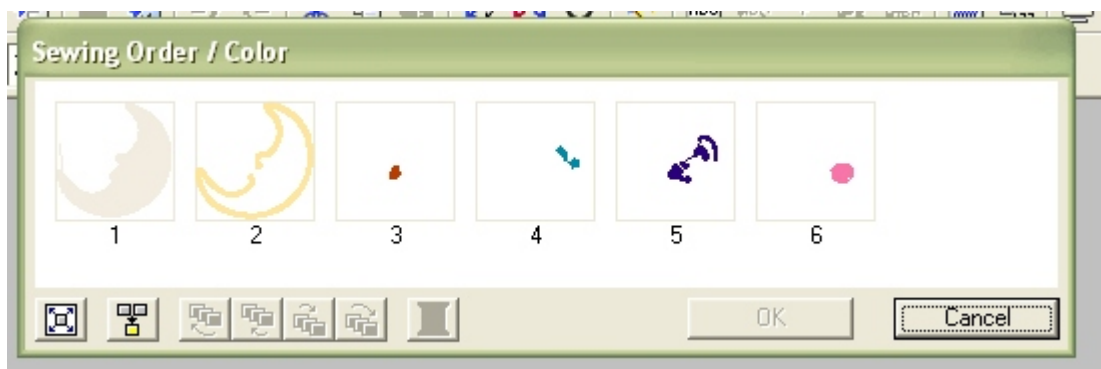
Once you start Layout and Editing your screen will resemble this. The next step is to open a design. On our design Cd's we have two different locations for .pes files and they are both in the "Designs" folder. The first option is in the Brother / Babylock folder and this is for newer versions of this software; Version 4 and higher. There is also a folder called Buzz Tools - Ped Basic. Use these files for older versions of this software.



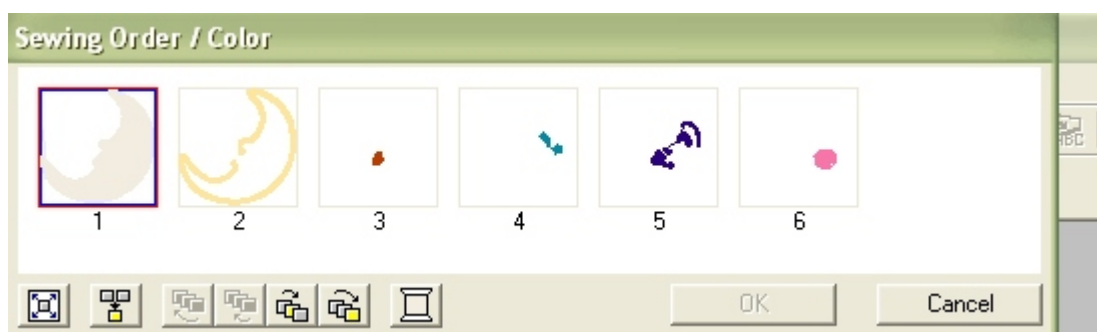
The design will automatically appear onscreen once you open it. Now it's time to change the colors.

Changing Design Colors using Brother PE-Design or Babylock Palette

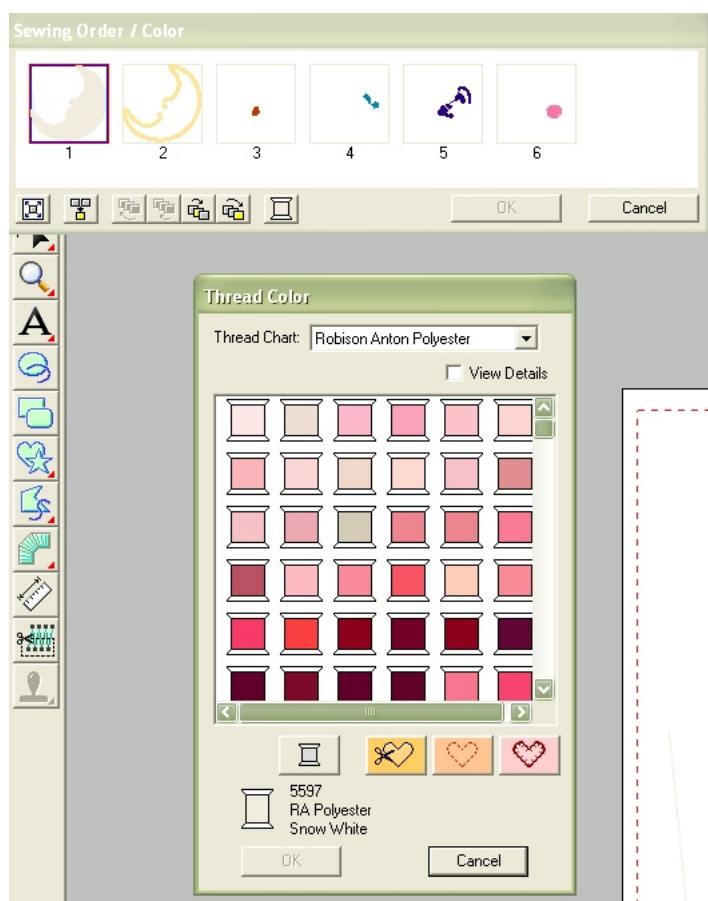
Using Software to change thread colors



Press the F10 key on your keyboard. A dialog box will pop up on your screen. This is the sewing order / color box.



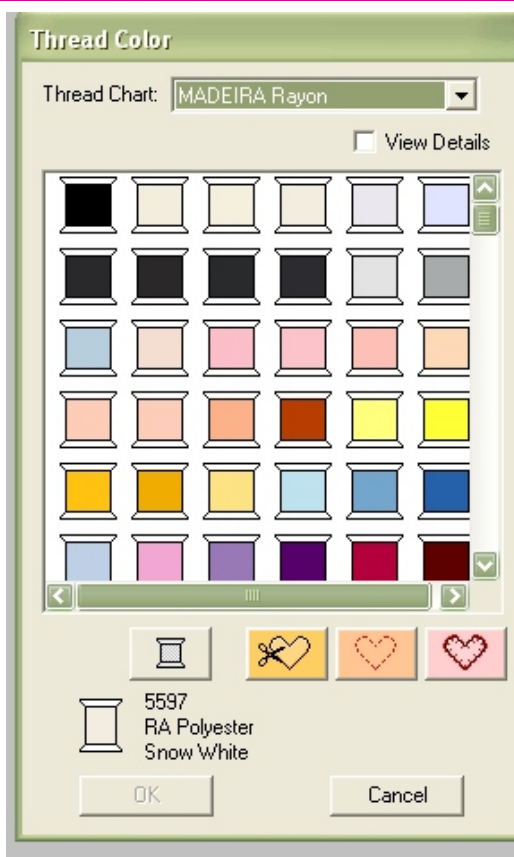
Using your mouse, left click over the step you would like to change. For this example I am going to choose step 1.



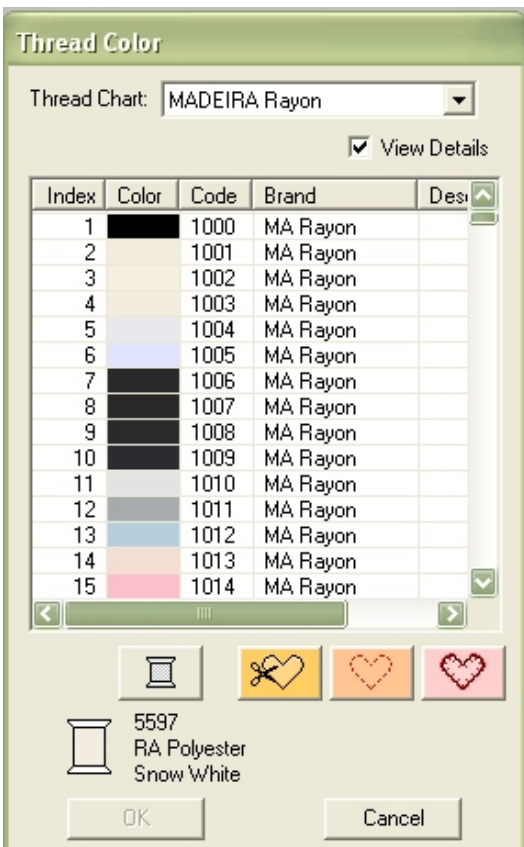
Once your color steps selected click the image of the thread spool. A separate thread color dialog box will pop open. At the top of the dialog box is a pul down menu that will allow you to select your desired thread library. For this example we are going to choose Madeira Rayon.

Changing Design Colors using Brother PE-Design or Babylock Palette

Using Software to change thread colors



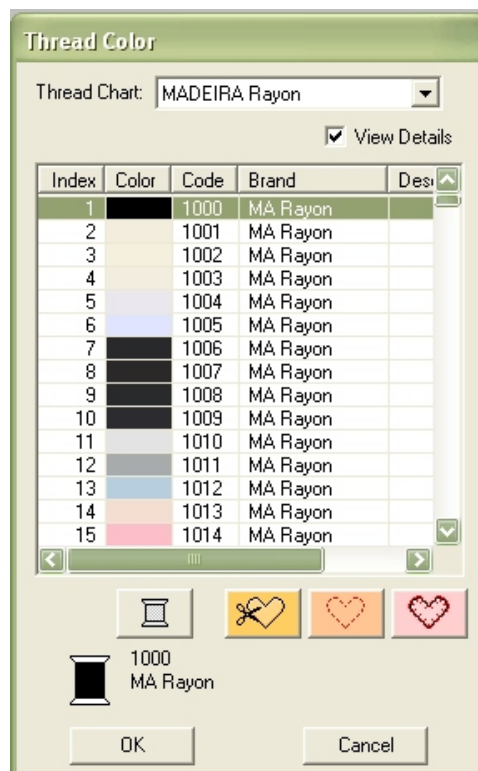
Once you have selected your color library simply choose your desired replacement color. You can either look at small colored spools...



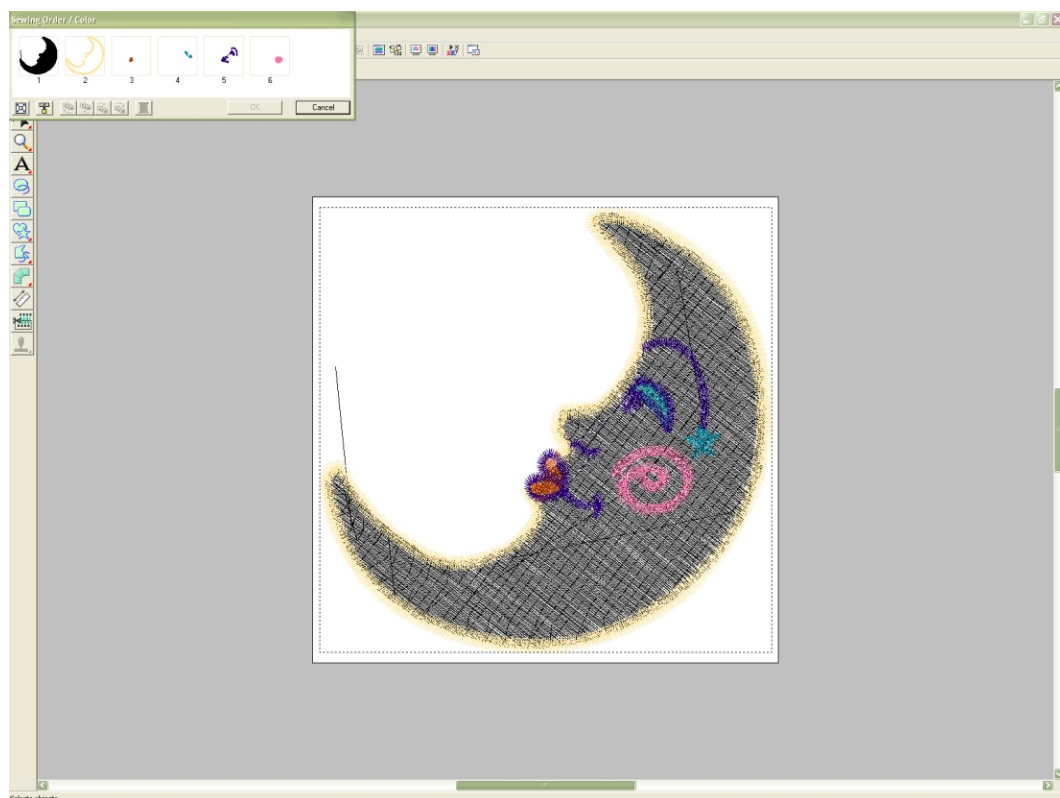
Or, by checking the box marked "view details" you can view the name of the desired color as well. For this example we are going to choose black.

Changing Design Colors using Brother PE-Design or Babylock Palette

Using Software to change thread colors



Simply highlight black and click "OK".



You have now changed the color of step one. If you want to change more colors, repeat these steps. Once you are finished save the design to your desired location.

Changing Design Colors using Brother PE-Design or Babylock Palette