No need to extend Photoshop, stick to Standard

In their latest release of Photoshop CS3, Adobe has split the hefty program into two versions targeted at two different types of users.

Photoshop CS3 and Photoshop CS3 Extended are similar programs. However, in the Extended version more features are included for videographers, animators and engineers.

Extended offers users the ability to edit and create 3-D and 2-D models and motion-based animation images.

The new features are cutting edge, however unless you or your kid wants to learn video editing, Photoshop CS3 standard will serve your newspaper's purposes.

Despite a few redesigned palettes, which are now arranged in self adjusting docks that can be resized, and some new useful plug-ins, the standard edition is the Photoshop you are familiar with.

Built upon Adobe's Photoshop CS2, CS3's most valuable feature is its improved ability to process RAW images. If you aren't already familiar, RAW photos are like digital
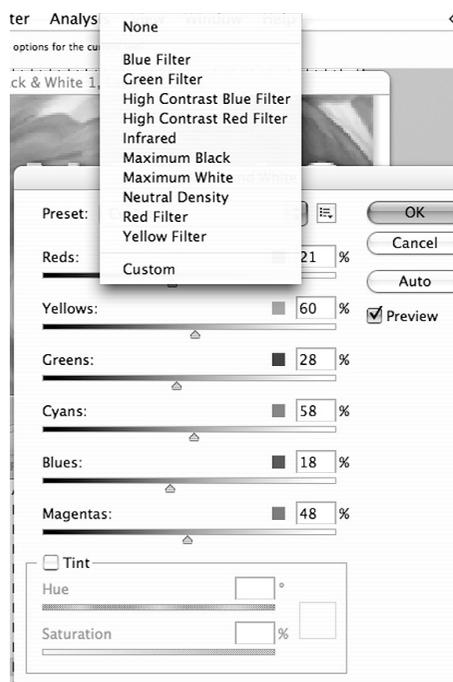
computernotes
from the road

by **WILMA MELOT**

negatives, which can be "developed" in Photoshop or similar programs.

The new version supports over 150 camera models as well as JPEG and TIFF formats.

Another beneficial update is the new "Enhanced PDF support." This will allow more control over the size of PDF pages opened in Photoshop.

In an attempt to streamline printing using the most popular color printers – Canon, Epson or HP – Adobe has created more options for color output in the print command. Including more printing options on a single screen reduces the amount of digging to print a simple document.

Photoshop CS3 has also taken a lesson from InDesign and now allows users to edit vector images directly in Photoshop.

Even after you save a file they still remain editable. This improves the ability to do nondestructive scaling and rotating, including smart objects in vector graphics.

Another tool that InDesign CS2 users will be familiar with is the Library feature. Just like the layout program, Photoshop will allow users to save designs into a library or your Smart Objects Palette for future use, instead of recreating an object or style each time you need it.

This is a time saver for those who still build their ads in Photoshop.

In this version of Photoshop, Adobe has

given more options for converting photos from color to black and white.

One important change is that adjustment menus have moved to the Layers Menu, under New Adjustments Layer.

This new method allows for more manual control over the levels of color saturation as well as loaded preset filters for quick and automatic conversions.

Another improvement to black and white conversions is Adobe's modifications to the channel mixer. Additional options and included presets make it easier to use.

Also packaged in CS3 is an improved cloning and healing tool. New features make correcting damaged photos quicker and easier, with better results. Just a few new features include: creating precise positioning with multiple source points, scale and rotate in the new Clone Source palette.

You can also stitch together multiple images with great ease using the new auto align layers command.

By automatically aligning multiple image layers, Photoshop's Photomerge quickly analyzes details and moves, rotates or warps layers to create a clean, editable image.

I can see this being used for some front page photos – maybe panoramas of flood scenes or sporting events.

One last improvement papers will be able to take advantage of in the upgrade is the improved selection tool.

This allows you to loosely draw around a portion of an image you wish to select and Photoshop finishes the job. After the quick selection tool is used, you can fine-tune your selection by selecting the refine edge tool.

In my opinion this was a much needed toolset.

All the features that I've covered are in both versions of Photoshop CS3.

If you are trying to decide which one is best for your newspaper, I'd recommend the standard edition because – despite the lack of 3-D animation features – both programs are essentially the same.

plugged IN

Acrobat 8 updates

If you have Acrobat version 5.0 or higher, a separate serial number for the program and don't want to upgrade to the full version of Adobe's Creative Suite 3, Acrobat 8 is worth the money.

One of the most important issues Adobe resolved in the newest version is the cropping tool.

In older versions, to make sure information that was cropped out of documents didn't reappear, production departments around the state were having to redistill all PDF's that they received and/or cropped.

Adobe seems to have fixed the issue in the latest version and cropped documents now stay cropped when you place them in InDesign and older versions of Quark. This alone will save tons of time.

Developers have also made it possible to now send most documents from Acrobat 8 directly to the RIP without going through another program.

It is important to note that a single licensed version of Acrobat is needed for the upgrade.

With a little bit of Web surfing you can pick it for less than $160.

Going wireless?

Many newspapers are buying wireless routers because it is all that is offered in your town.

If you are considering this route, be sure when you purchase it to change the default password.

Changing the password protects your network from hackers or spammers.

When choosing a password, make sure it is at least six characters long and includes a combination of letters and numbers. Don't just make it your mother's name.

I recommend something like "twink25&sam@3." Passwords such as these are more secure and would take someone a long time to crack.

Do yourself a favor and write down all of your passwords and keep them at a secure, offsite location. I keep mine in a couple of locations, just in case.

Whoever setup your router should be able to help you with this.

Now may be the right time to upgrade software

A lot of my time on the road lately has been spent converting papers to newer versions of InDesign and Quark.

I know it is intimidating and scary to have to learn a new program, but trust me, it will save you time and money in the long run.

A majority of the upgrades I've been installing have been from Quark 4 and Pagemaker.

It is amazing to me that these programs have been out so long. The first versions of InDesign, which replaced Pagemaker, was released five years ago, in 2001, and Quark 4.1 was released in 1999.

Because most of the older generation of programs are beginning to not be supported, it is time to consider an upgrade before it is too late.

Currently you get a large price break when

you already own a version of a program, but in my opinion, time is running out for these savings.

Also, a lot of the older programs are beginning to not run well with the new operating systems and programs, such as the newer PDF formats.

If you decide to replace computers and software, you will most likely also be replacing things like scanners, hubs, switches and maybe even some of that old Ethernet cable that has been run over by your chair for the last few years.

Also think about your fonts. Newspapers are often still using fonts from the old Laserwriter IINT's, from 1989.

I know because I originally installed many of these on computers across the state.

Recently, when installing new hardware

and software, I have many papers switch to the new fonts that come with the new machine.

If you can not bare to do this and part with your trusty font sets, try to eliminate the oldest fonts or buy the newer versions.

Also be aware that as of now Indesign CS3 opens legacy PageMaker files. However, we may soon lose this ability.

Despite InDesign's ability to open the files, it doesn't necessarily mean that the fonts from 1989 will work.

I know it sounds like an all or nothing scenario, but there are solutions for everyone's needs.

Think of upgrades as an investment in your paper's future.