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Creative Suite 3 full of new features

Every two years since 2003 Adobe has released a new version of their flagship suite of applications.

At the end of April, Adobe is maintaining the trend by releasing Creative Suite 3.

The release comes almost two years to the date of CS2, which was released April 28, 2005. CS1 made its debut in October 2003.

Although the price tag is a bit on the hefty side, it might be worth the cost to your newspaper.

In this column, I'll be taking a look at the creative driven bundle starting with InDesign.

Among the new and enhanced productivity features available in InDesign CS3 are the abilities to multi-file place, quick apply, faster frame fitting and a visual pages panel.

The great minds at Adobe apparently heard our complaints, because the many problems occurring when working with long multi-page documents have been resolved. Programmers have also made improvements to advanced bullets and numbering, running headers and footers, and synchronized master pages.

Document searches are vastly improved, as you can now save searches you often use. In addition, changes can be applied to text and object attributes can be made across more than one document.

In CS3 you can also save layouts and use them in other InDesign documents. This feature is great because you no longer have to make PDFs of your ads built in InDesign to place them in other InDesign documents. The links will even hold when you place the file into another InDesign document.

A powerful machine is needed to run InDesign's latest upgrade. Here are the requirements for Windows:

- PROCESSOR: Intel Pentium 4, Intel Centrino, Intel Xeon, or Intel Core Duo (or compatible) processor
- OPERATING SYSTEM: Microsoft Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or Windows Vista Home Premium,

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Business, Ultimate, or Enterprise (certified support for 32-bit editions)
- MEMORY: 512MB recommended for Windows XP; 1GB recommended for Windows Vista
- HARD DRIVE SPACE: 1.8GB of available hard-disk space
- GRAPHICS: 1,024x768 monitor resolution with 16-bit video card
- OTHER REQUIREMENTS: DVD-ROM drive; QuickTime 7 software required for multimedia features; Internet or phone connection required for product activation. Note: the software will not work unless you have the computer connected to the Internet. Once activated, the software works only on the machine on which it was activated.

And now for the Mac requirements:
- PROCESSOR: PowerPC® G4 or G5 or multicore Intel processor. No more running it on low end computers like G3s
- OPERATING SYSTEM: Mac OS X v.10.4.8
- MEMORY: 512MB recommended for PowerPC based system; and 1GB recommended for Intel based system
- HARD DRIVE SPACE: 1.6GB of available hard-disk space
- GRAPHICS: 1,024x768 monitor resolution with 16-bit video card
- ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS: DVD-ROM drive; QuickTime 7 software required for multimedia features; Internet or phone connection required for

product activation. Note: the software will not work unless you have the computer connected to the Internet. Once activated, the software works only on the machine on which it was activated.

As with InDesign CS3, Photoshop CS3 also has new and improved features.

The best thing is how it now runs natively on Intel and PowerPC-based Macs and Microsoft Windows XP and Windows Vista systems. This native ability makes running Photoshop faster.

Other new features include:

• Smart Filters, which let you add, adjust and remove filters from an image without having to resave an image or start over to preserve quality. Nondestructive Smart Filters allow you to visualize changes without altering original pixel data.

• New tools called Quick Selection and Refine Edge let you make selections fast. Just loosely draw on an image area, and the Quick Selection tool automatically completes the selection for you. Then fine-tune your selections with the Refine Edge tool.

• Palettes are now arranged in self-adjusting docks that can be widened or narrowed. This is an effort to fix the interface so that palette management will maximize screen space.

• Increased speed and superior conversion quality using the Adobe Photoshop Camera Raw plug-in, which now adds support for JPEG and TIFF formats; several new tools including Fill Light and Dust Busting; and support for over 150 camera models.

• The option to convert color images to rich black-and-whites, adjust tonal values and tints. Experiment with the included black-and-white presets, or create and save your own custom presets to achieve the best results. For newspapers, this may be the best new feature.

plugged IN

CS3 UPDATES PRICES

One of the first questions I ask when hearing about an upgrade is, "How much is this going to cost?"

Like me, a lot of you will have some sticker shock after looking at Adobe CS3's price tag. But sometimes the advantages and improvements of an upgrade outweigh the cost.

The new release allows the Mac version of CS3 to run natively on both Intel-based processors as well Power PC.

If you own a PC computer, take a look at the new features to see if they're worth the upgrade price. The speed increase alone might be worth it.

No mater how you look at it, it's expensive to upgrade.

Don't forget when budgeting for CS3 upgrades that you have to buy one copy per machine.

Note: CS3 comes in many different software bundles, some containing three or four programs. You can also buy individual program upgrades if you don't need all the programs.

Adobe CS3 Design Premium includes:
InDesign CS3 (page layout and ad building)
Photoshop CS3 Extended (Photos)
Illustrator CS3 (art design)
Acrobat 8 Professional (handles PDF's)
Flash CS3 Professional (web animation)
Dreamweaver CS3 (web building)
Retail price: $1,799.00
Upgrade price from Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Flash or Dreamweaver: $1,599.00
Upgrade from Creative Suite Premium 2.3: $440.00
Upgrade from Creative Suite or Macromedia Studio: $599.00

Adobe CS3 Design Standard includes:
InDesign CS3 (page layout and ad building)
Photoshop CS3 (Photos)
Illustrator CS3 (art design)
Acrobat 8 Professional (handles PDF's)
Retail Price: $1,199.00
Upgrade price from Creative Suite Standard or Premium: $399.00
Upgrade from Photoshop, Illustrator or InDesign: $899.00

After you pick yourself up off the floor, notice they are releasing a new suite called Master Collection with all the above software, plus a few other programs, for $2,499.00.

Check surge protectors before spring thunderstorms take you down

Does your old surge protector need to be replaced? I ask this every spring because I inevitably receive phone calls from papers that lose equipment and data during a lightning storm because of bad surge protectors.

When you're checking your surge protector, note what is or isn't plugged into it.

If your computer is connected to phone lines via modem, you should get a surge protector that has a phone-line input jack.

Be sure that any additional Internet utilities are running through a surge protector. This includes routers, hubs or switches. These need to be on at least a surge protector (if not a battery backup) so you do not lose your Internet every time a power spike or brownout strikes.

Also, look at the power cord that comes out the back of your computer. Did someone plug it into a plain power outlet so they could plug in a space heater last winter?

This sounds a little nitpicky, but a simple

visual check could save you lots of time and money.

If you have a cable line, consider a cable surge protector. Surges on these lines can do just as much damage as surges over power lines.

You should be able to find a variety of surge projection devices in your town.

To find out what your unit is capable of you need to check out its Underwriters Laboratories (UL) ratings. UL is a non-profit company that tests electronic products for safety. If a protector doesn't have a UL listing, it's probably little more than a power supply. Be sure that the product is listed as a transient voltage surge suppressor.

On a listed surge protector, you should find a couple of ratings. Look for:

• Clamping voltage. A clamping voltage of more than 400V is too high; look for one that is 300V or lower.

• Energy absorption/dissipation. This

rating, given in joules, tells you how much energy the surge protector can absorb before it fails. A higher number indicates greater protection. A rating of at least 600 joules should work for most purposes.

• Protectors that respond in less than one nanosecond. More than one nanosecond of lag time before a protector kicks in could fry your computer.

• Protectors with indicator lights to tell you if the protection components are functioning. All surge protectors burn out after repeated power surges, but they will still function as power strips.

As always, the most effective way to save your equipment during a lightning storm is unplugging your computers when the clouds start rolling in. I know the Cherokee Messenger and Republican's staff does this, and that is why their computers haven't been fried in the past.

APC, Belkin and Monstor Cable are trusted brands to consider. Good luck!