Long-awaited QuarkXPress 7 disappoints reviewers

The highly awaited QuarkXPress 7 has been released, but, unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be living up to the anticipation it created.

The newest version isn't even Intel native and runs slowly under Rosetta – even slower than the 6.5 version on the Power PC Macintosh machines. However, rumor has it that the Intel native version will be released soon, perhaps even this summer. For those of you who already purchased Quark 7, the good news is that the upgrade to the Intel version will be free.

In an effort to catch up with InDesign, Quark added many of Adobe's features, as well as a few new ones of their own.

However, most of the new features are directed at making collaboration within large work groups easier. Some of the state's larger newspapers might find them useful. As for smaller newspapers, Quark just gave them some new graphic features and added support for the PDFx workflow.

QuarkXPress 7 retails for $749; upgrade, from any version, is only $249.

To run Quark 7, you're going to need Mac OS X v10.4 (Tiger) or later; PC requirements call for Microsoft Windows XP. Hardware requirements include a CD-ROM drive for the install, minimum of 128MB total RAM and 250MB available hard disk space. Personally, I think you're going to want more RAM than they suggest.

Following is a look at the new features:

• **SYNCHRONIZATION** now manages graphics and shapes, not just text, across a project, which means changes in one instance are reflected in all. And XPress 7 now lets you decide whether to synchronize just the content, just the box attributes, or both. This approximates InDesign CS2's object styles, which allow consistent formatting of objects.

• **IF CHARACTERS ARE MISSING** from the current font, the new Font Fallback feature substitutes the same characters in a different font on screen. This allows you to see the text, though you'll still need the missing font to print it correctly.

• **ALIGN OBJECTS** relative to the page's boundaries, not just to the selected items' boundaries.

• **APPLY EFFECTS FILTERS** to alpha channels, so you can adjust an imported image's transparency in all kinds of ways. (Reports I read say this doesn't work too well.)

• **CHECK A FILE FOR CONSISTENCY** and create new files that automatically comply with a user's needs. Job Jackets can be updated on the fly with changes made by art directors, color management specialists and output professionals for a reliable, automated workflow.

• **CENTRAL MEASUREMENTS PALETTE** provides quick access to a selected object's

attributes and offers many more controls than previous versions. As you start working with an object, the palette displays only the controls appropriate to the current selection. This contextual approach lets you avoid using dialog boxes for most of your work – a real time-saver.

• **SWITCH MODES** in the measurements palette – for instance, from text formatting to frame formatting – without having to change tools first.

• **A PALETTE SYSTEM** now offers easy access to functions such as drop shadow and tab controls.

• **InDESIGN-INSPIRED INTERFACE ENHANCEMENTS** include color outlines to indicate an object's layer, the ability to open several windows for the same document (or, in Quark's case, to create multiple document views as well as multiple document panes).

• **A LOCK FUNCTION** that lets you lock the attributes and position of objects independently.

• **MAINTAIN PICTURE ATTRIBUTE CONTROL** such as rotation and scaling when you substitute a new picture.

• **NEW COLOR-PROOF PREVIEW** mode, dockable palettes and palette sets (similar to InDesign's workspaces) for saving different interface configurations.

• **CREATE PDF/X-COMPLIANT FILES**, save PDF and other output settings as reusable styles and embed fonts in EPS files. It also supports Unicode format for symbol consistency as documents traverse platforms and languages. PDF/X, JDF, and PPML: New output formats for Quark.

• **TRANSPARENCY** and **DROP SHADOWS** – finally. Unfortunately, Quark hasn't provided a preview option in the dialog box to view settings as you experiment; instead, you must click on the 'Apply' button each time you want to see your settings in action.

• **TYPOGRAPHICALLY** XPress now boasts a palette for easy access to special characters, support for OpenType font attributes, a menu option for inserting special spaces and options to manage ligatures in each paragraph style rather than just globally. However, Quark-

XPress 7 still can't convert consecutive hyphens to em dashes. This new version still lags behind InDesign in several key areas, including paragraph-based composition and shade styles based on masters.

• **NEW UNDO LEVELS**, guide management, and optical margin alignment with hanging punctuation.

• **COMPOSITION ZONES™**. More than one person can work on a single layout at the same time. You can define a portion of a page, a whole page or even an entire layout as a Composition Zones piece, and then export that piece as a separate project file. Other users can then work on their zone as if it were a regular QuarkXPress layout. The original layout is automatically updated when the file is saved. This live peer-to-peer collaboration lets large or small groups work the way they want — over a network, through e-mail messages.

• **MORE CONTROL OVER IMAGES**. Quark now integrates with industry-standard file formats such as native Adobe® Photoshop® (.psd) images. Quark Vista™ XTensions software, included with QuarkXPress, adds industrial strength image-editing effects to QuarkXPress. You can create special effects and correct images with adjustments to brightness/-contrast, color balance, and hue/saturation. You can use it to soften image masks for perfect compositing of images and background layouts. QuarkVista enhancements continue to expand your capability to edit images within the context of a Quark layout rather than going back to Photoshop, and you can create alpha masks.

• **COLOR MANAGEMENT** has been changed completely. There are more advanced options than ever before, but Color Setups and Quark Job Jackets allow settings to be easily shared and automatically updated. Now there are more PANTONE™ spot color libraries than any comparable software that can even control spot colors in Adobe Photoshop files.

• **SMART TRANSPARENCY** and color space options allow spot colors to be accurately printed despite complex print and PDF workflows. Always-on color management, PostScript Level 3 in-RIP color management support and an integrated GretagMacbeth™ color engine with support for black point compensation.

• **TABLE FEATURES** have been enhanced to support splitting tables, running headers and footers, and transparency controls that extend to individual cells and borders. Combine text and graphics and benefit from tight integration with Microsoft Excel for both design and content-driven grids.

Generic scanner software

For those of you with a used scanner and no software to run it, try this easy-to-use software package from VueScan available at:

http://www.hamrick.com/vsm.html

It gives you higher quality scans and deals with more types of files than most standard scanner software.

VueScan supports more than 500 scanners and 209 digital camera files and there's even a free download to try it out.

It changes nothing on your system, installs nothing in your operating system and all other scanner software will continue to function. Versions for Mac OS10.2 or later, Mac OS 9, Linux and most Windows versions are available.

The Standard Edition retails for $49.95 and includes one year of upgrades. The Professional Edition sells for $89.85 and adds raw scan files, ICC profiles, IT8 color calibration and unlimited free upgrades.

Picture rescue from cards

I receive several panic calls when photos are lost from media cards due to reformats, deletions or corruption.

There is hope for those lost photos. Picture Rescue can recover files in multiple formats including JPEG, TIFF, GIF and RAW. Additionally, it recovers most digital camera movie formats.

Picture Rescue works with most USB and Firewire cameras and most media card formats and adapters.

It's available for the Mac platform only. Minimum requirements include Mac OS 10.2.3 or later. For $59, Picture Rescue is one utility that most newspapers will want to have on hand. Try the demo before you buy at www.prosofteng.com/products/-picture_rescue.php

SanDisk ImageMate

If you need to replace your old card reader because it doesn't see the files on your new camera, try this card reader: SanDisk ImageMate 12-in-1 Memory Card Reader.

It's capable of reading nearly every card imaginable – at least until they invent a new one. The ImageMate 12-in-1 Card Reader/Writer works with existing USB ports. Write and read data from flash memory without connecting your digital device directly to a computer. Available at most discount stores for around $30.