

Should you upgrade your software?

Many software vendors churn out upgrades to their programs every 18 months. As the market for graphic design software matures, it becomes difficult for vendors to innovate and produce truly useful upgrades. You may feel that your current software is “good enough”. So should you purchase the latest upgrade? Here are some points to consider.

- *Does the new version provide features that increase productivity or enhance your creativity? If so, is there enough benefit to offset the cost?*
- *Does the software “play well with others”? Is the software compatible with your operating system and other critical software?*
- *Is the new version stable? Wait a few months after the initial release to allow “early adopters” to discover the inevitable bugs in the upgrade.*
- *How will the upgrade run on your hardware? Software often becomes larger and slower as new features are added. Check your processor speed, hard drive*

space, and RAM memory specifications against manufacturer specifications.

- *What version will your coworkers be using? If you upgrade (or don't upgrade) will you be able to exchange files with coworkers and freelancers?*
- *How well do you know your current version? If you plan on using seminars, conferences, classes, or books to learn more about your software in the upcoming year, it will be difficult to find training resources and expertise for old versions of software.*

Keith Gilbert provides training & support services to help graphic designers and communicators convey print and Web messages effectively. Gilbert Consulting, 651 633-7148 www.gilbertconsulting.com