

It seems that every time you turn around, there is some newer faster computer chip from Intel or some new version of your primary graphics software promising better performance. Upgrading your computer hardware and software is one of the best investments you can make in your business. Knowing when and how to upgrade is the key. The following article will give you a detailed financial analysis of why it is such a good investment to upgrade both your computer system and graphics software.

Importance of a Fast Computer:

For anyone engaged in graphics, their computer is their primary tool. Faster newer computers process graphics faster. For instance a Pentium 4, 3 Ghz computer with 512 Mb of RAM is over 6 times faster than a Pentium 2, 450 Mhz with 256 Mb of RAM. This means much less time processing graphics and waiting for your graphics software to save documents, open documents, print documents, import clip art, etc... If you are waiting for your slower computer to process, you are wasting both time and money. Since your computer is one of your primary tools in making a living, you need to have a fast, productive computer in order to maximize your productivity.

Your time is simply too valuable.

Importance of Maintaining a Current Operating System

Windows XP and Windows 2000 are universally recognized as the two best operating systems that Microsoft has ever developed. Windows XP is especially user-friendly, highly stable and optimized to run the latest software. 100% of all new software is being developed to run on Windows XP. This means that if you run any new software on older operating systems such as Windows 98, Me or 2000, you will have a lower level of stability and performance. We do not suggest upgrading an older computer to Windows XP. The best way to upgrade is by purchasing a new computer. You will have much fewer hassles. You need to be aware that some of your older software and hardware may not be compatible with Windows XP. For instance, Smart Designer 9 and CorelDRAW 9 are not compatible with XP and will require you to purchase an upgrade. You need to check with your software and hardware suppliers before purchasing a new computer to determine if your products will be compatible. The best way to do this is to consult the Microsoft web site or the web sites of your hardware and software suppliers for Windows XP compatibility. If you are tired of looking at "blue screens" and rebooting your computer, you will really like Windows XP.

Importance of Staying Current with CorelDRAW

CorelDRAW 7 came out in 1997, over 7 years ago. A lot has happened in the computer world in the last 7 years. Software has become much faster, more stable and vastly more powerful. If you are using even one or two year old versions of CorelDRAW you are probably getting left in the dust. CorelDRAW 11 and 12 are the best versions of CorelDRAW ever released. They have dozens of new productivity features for anyone engaged in screen printing, sign making, awards, embroidery and digital printing. People tend to be afraid of new technology. The learning curve for any new version of CorelDRAW can be a bit frustrating at first. However, the benefits far outweigh the negatives. CorelDRAW 11 and 12 are simply much more productive software programs for editing and coloring vector graphics. In fact, CorelDRAW 11 and 12 can convert process into spot colors with a single mouse-click. This feature is huge for anyone working with spot colors. We know that people

tend to get comfortable with that old familiar version of CorelDRAW, but you are really missing the boat. Its time to get out of your comfort level, spend a little time learning the new CorelDRAW version. Remember, the general features in each CorelDRAW version are the same. What is different is the additional features and the location of menus. Once you get oriented to the new menus, it really is an easy transition. Your old familiar tools and menus are still there, there are just new features and tools to learn. This is how you become more productive. Most people use less than 10% of the tools and features of CorelDRAW. If you using only 5% more of the features of CorelDRAW, you can dramatically increase your productivity. Making the jump is a lot easier if you invest in good training tools. Digital Art Solutions has the best training manuals and interactive training CDs on the market. Digital Art Solutions also hosts a variety of training seminars and bootcamps. For more information on upgrading to CorelDRAW 12 with additional training products from Digital Art Solutions, check out: the CorelDRAW 12 Graphics Suite Value Pack at www.smartdesigns.com .

Importance of Staying Current with Smart Designer

Every time Corel introduces a new version of CorelDRAW, we have to completely rework Smart Designer to insure compatibility with the new version of CorelDRAW. When we created Smart Designer 12, we rewrote the entire software. Smart Designer 12 is an entirely new version of the software. Every feature has been improved. The template feature has undergone the most improvements. Templates now change live on screen. The best part is, any design you ever created in CorelDRAW can be edited as a Smart Template. Smart Designer upgrades are not simply compatibility upgrades, but major improvements to the software with dozens of new features. If you want to insure the best level of graphics productivity, purchasing the current version of Smart Designer is a wise investment. We have never heard anyone say they liked the older version better. Smart Designer 12 is the state of the art in productivity software for graphics production.

Direct Return on Investment

It is easy to see that by having the latest operating system, CorelDRAW version, Smart Designer version and computer, you can greatly increase your productivity. This is all nice, but the real benefit is the annual savings you earn by investing in newer software and hardware. The math is pretty simple, if you reduce your time spent on producing artwork, your costs go down, and your productivity goes up. It really doesn't take much to start saving both time and money. Please review the following two tables to get a relative idea of the cost savings involved with upgrading your hardware and software.

Key Questions When Upgrading Computer Hardware:

- 1) How many hours a week do I spend producing graphics on my computer?
- 2) How much time per week is wasted while waiting for my computer to process graphics while I am working?
- 3) What is my hourly cost for producing graphics?
- 4) What is the cost of a new computer system?
- 5) How long will it take for me to recoup my investment on a new computer?

This table illustrates the annual savings based upon working 20 hours a week on graphics.

Computer Configuration	Hours per week spent on graphics	Time Wasted Waiting on Computer to Process Graphics	Average Hourly Cost For Graphics	Cost of Lost Productivity Per Week	Time to Recoup \$1,500 Investment for Pentium 4, 3.0 Mhz with 512 RAM and New 17" Monitor	Annual Savings After Recouping Initial Investment
Pentium 1 200 Mhz with 64 Mb of RAM	20 hours	10 hours	\$20 hour	\$200	7.5 weeks (1.75 months)	\$8,900
Pentium 2 450 Mhz with 128 RAM	20 hours	8 hours	\$20 hour	\$160	9.4 weeks (2.25 months)	\$6,820
Pentium 3 900 Mhz with 256 Mb of RAM	20 hours	6 hours	\$20 hour	\$120	12.5 weeks (3 months)	\$4,740
Pentium 4 1.8 Ghz with 512 Mb of RAM	20 hours	4 hours	\$20 hour	\$80	18.75 weeks (4.5 months)	\$2,660
Pentium 4 3.0 Ghz with 512 Mb of RAM	20 hours	2 hours	\$20 hour	\$40	This is the recommended system you should be upgrading to	

Analysis:

As you can see, you can easily recoup your initial investment in a new computer within a few short months. If you spent 40 hours a week on graphics, you cut recoup your investment twice as fast. Every dollar saved after recouping your initial investment goes straight to your bottom line! This is why it is so vitally important to have the fast computers when creating graphics.

Time is money and wasted time is wasted money.

Key Questions When Upgrading Graphics Software:

- 1) How many hours a week do I spend producing graphics on my computer?
- 2) How much time per week am I losing to lost productivity due to older graphics software with less productivity and features?
- 3) What is my hourly cost for producing graphics?
- 4) What is the cost of upgrading my graphics software?
- 5) How long will it take for me to recoup my investment on my new graphics software?
- 6) How much money can I save on an annual basis by upgrading?

This table illustrates the annual savings based upon working 20 hours a week on graphics.

Computer Configuration	Hours per week spent on graphics	Time Lost due to less productive graphics software	Average Hourly Cost For Graphics	Cost of Lost Productivity Per Week	Time to Recoup \$400 Investment for CorelDRAW 12 Upgrade and Smart Designer 12 Upgrade	Annual Savings After Recouping Initial Investment
CorelDRAW 5 With Smart Designer 5	20 hours	10 hours	\$20 hour	\$200	2.5 weeks	\$10,000
CorelDRAW 7 With Smart Designer 7	20 hours	8 hours	\$20 hour	\$160	3.2 weeks	\$7,920
CorelDRAW 9 With Smart Designer 9	20 hours	6 hours	\$20 hour	\$120	4.2 weeks (1 month)	\$5,840
CorelDRAW 10 or 11 With Smart Designer 10.11	20 hours	4 hours	\$20 hour	\$80	6.25 weeks (1.5 months)	\$3,760
CorelDRAW 12 With Smart Designer 12	20 hours	2 hours	\$20 hour	\$40	This is the recommended system you should be upgrading to	

Analysis:

As you can see, you can easily recoup your initial investment in upgraded graphics software in a few short weeks. If you spent 40 hours a week on graphics, you cut recoup your investment twice as fast. Again, every dollar saved after recouping your initial investment goes straight to your bottom line! This is why it is so vitally important to stay current with your graphics software.

In Conclusion:

In other words, the other older you computer system and software, the more money you are losing to lost productivity. Lost productivity also costs you in terms of the service you can provide your customers. The time and money producing graphics goes straight to your bottom line. Less time spent on art production also enables you to spend time on sales and marketing to grow your business. A faster computer and more productive software is a great investment in your business.

Suggested Resources:

Computer: Dell 4700 Series Desktop Computer – Approximately \$800 from the Dell Outlet

Windows XP Home Edition (Pro Edition is not necessary unless you have a complex network)

Pentium 4, 3.0 Ghz Processor (the computers brain for processing data)

512 Mb of SDRAM (the internal memory of the computer for running programs)

80GB Ultra ATA/100 7200RPM Hard Drive (stores your files)

CD-RW Burner (backup your files and burn them to a CD)

64 Mb Graphics Card (required to quickly process graphics)

Network Interface Card (needed for high speed internet connection)

17" CRT Monitor (a 17" LCD monitor is easier on the eyes but will cost you around \$250)

Purchase a Refurbished Dell Computer from Dell online:

The best values in new computers can be found at the Dell online outlet. These computers have been reconditioned to "better than new" condition. Digital Art Solutions purchases most of our computers from the Dell outlet. This is a great way to save up to 30% on a new computer. To purchase a refurbished computer with full warranty, visit the Dell Outlet at:

www1.us.dell.com

Order a New Dell Computer by Phone from Dell Small Business:

You can also contact Regina Hagland at Dell by phone (800-879-3355 ext 88379). She is the Small Business Rep assigned to Digital Art Solutions and can assist you in configuring and purchasing your new computer. Please mention that you are a Digital Art Solutions customer so that Dell can access the Digital Art Solutions recommended system specifications.

CorelDRAW 12 Graphics Suite Upgrade:

Do not purchase the stand-alone version as you will not get Photo-Paint or Visual Basic for Applications. Although the stand-alone version is less money, you get only CorelDRAW and not the other productivity software included with the Graphics Suite. Digital Art Solutions sells a specially packaged version of CorelDRAW 12 Graphics Suite with additional training products and one year phone support for \$199. To purchase an upgrade, click here: www.smartdesigns.com .

Smart Designer 12 for CorelDRAW 10, 11 or 12 Upgrade:

Smart Designer 12 is the latest version of Smart Designer optimized for CorelDRAW 10, 11 or 12 and Windows XP and 2000. This software contains hundreds of improvements compared to previous versions. To review the highlights, click here: <http://www.smartdesigns.com>

Purchase for \$399 by calling Digital Art Solutions at 1-800-959-7627

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