QuarkXPress 8.0: Productivity, Efficiency and Return on Investment

Redefining the QuarkXPress Workflow

A Big Challenge

With the latest release of QuarkXPress, Quark is tackling a considerable challenge. How do you redefine and improve the user interface of a product that is used by millions of professionals around the globe on a daily basis without creating more frustration than perceived improvement? **How can you make users more productive without requiring them to learn a new user interface?**

This is a challenge most software companies face as their products age. One of the most frequent responses to this situation is: *Let's just reinvent everything. Our users are smart; they can handle a bit of change. And of course they will realize how wonderful our new product is; they'll be excited to learn it.*

Unfortunately, for the vast majority of users, particularly in deadline-driven production environments, the opposite is true. Their knowledge of a product is an asset, the key to their efficiency. **The last thing experienced users want is to have to re-learn how to do the most basic things.**

Quark attacked this challenge in a different way. While the visual aspects of the user interface have been profoundly redefined, the core logic of the product has remained the same. On the other hand, many basic techniques for creating layouts and manipulating objects have been extended to make them more efficient. Operations that needed several clicks or trips to the menu bar can now be obtained in a much simpler way. **More importantly, most of the changes are implemented in a completely self-explanatory way that virtually requires no training at all.** This means that most users will be able to pick up the improvements as they go, and they can benefit from the improved productivity without having to confront a steep learning curve.

About This Report

This report analyzes the results of a benchmark project conducted by Pfeiffer Consulting for Quark, **comparing user interface efficiency and workflow productivity of QuarkXPress 8.0 with earlier releases of the software, including QuarkXPress 6.5 and QuarkXPress 7.31.** To find out more about the benchmarks, as well as the software and hardware configurations, please refer to the *Methodology* sidebar on page 3.

If you are interested in a detailed discussion of hardware configurations and benchmark methodology, detailed descriptions of the productivity benchmarks as well as complete results of all benchmarks, please download the complete **QuarkXPress 8.0 Benchmark Report** at www.pfeifferreport.com.

Major Findings

- QuarkXPress 8.0 is a major new release of the page-layout application, and features **a re-designed, streamlined user interface,** as well as **seamless integration of interactive content creation.**

- Productivity benchmarks conducted for this report **show significant increases in efficiency across many common page-layout operations, as well as improved file import and object manipulation capabilities.**

- The cumulative impact of individual productivity gains **may provide a return on investment (ROI) of several thousand dollars per workstation** over previous releases of QuarkXPress.

About Pfeiffer Consulting

- Pfeiffer Consulting is an **independent technology research institute and consulting operation** focused on the needs of publishing, digital content production, and new media professionals.

- Download the complete **QuarkXPress 8.0 Benchmark Report** at **www.pfeifferreport.com.**

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Redefining Intuitive Design

Reinventing a Classic

When QuarkXPress began to replace traditional print-production methods on a large scale in the early nineties, its success was based on two unique qualities: typographic control that could rival dedicated composition systems, and a user interface that was modern, intuitive and highly efficient.

Since these early days of the digital media revolution, the technology landscape has changed beyond recognition. Modern cell phones have more processing power than a high-end PC of fifteen years ago, and the average laptop has screen real estate in excess of a production workstation of the late eighties.
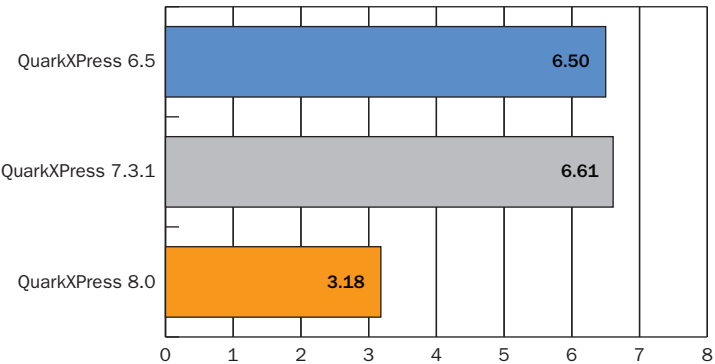
More importantly, our ways of interacting with digital tools has evolved enormously. The internet, ubiquitous interactive media, and millions of technology devices have shaped how we interact with technology today. This also means that what used to be a ground-breaking user interface fifteen years ago may seem outdated today. **In order to stay relevant, software needs to adapt and evolve— but it must do so without alienating existing users.**

Productivity Is the Ultimate Killer Feature

The key concern behind the new user interface of QuarkXPress was clearly to make the user more efficient without jeopardizing years of experience with the software. The redesign takes existing tools and expands their functional-
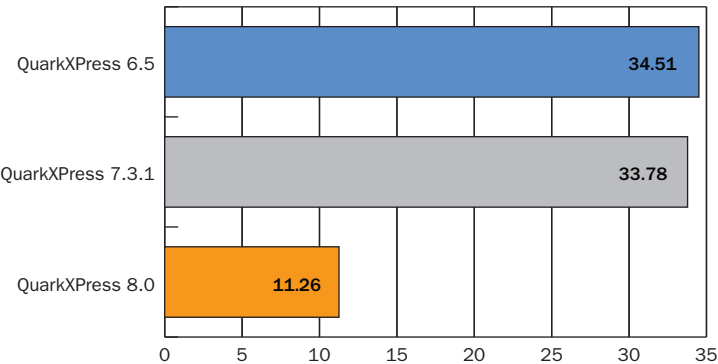
Efficiency Gains of Object Manipulation

Import Picture and Change Crop
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	6.50
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	6.61
QuarkXPress 8.0	3.18

Import Picture, Scale, Rotate, and Change Crop
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	34.51
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	33.78
QuarkXPress 8.0	11.26

The new content tool in QuarkXPress 8.0 combines access to several previously distinct operations without requiring a tool change or a trip to the menu bar. Depending on the handle that is used, one can scale and rotate either the box, or, in the case of a picture or graphic, the content. The impact on
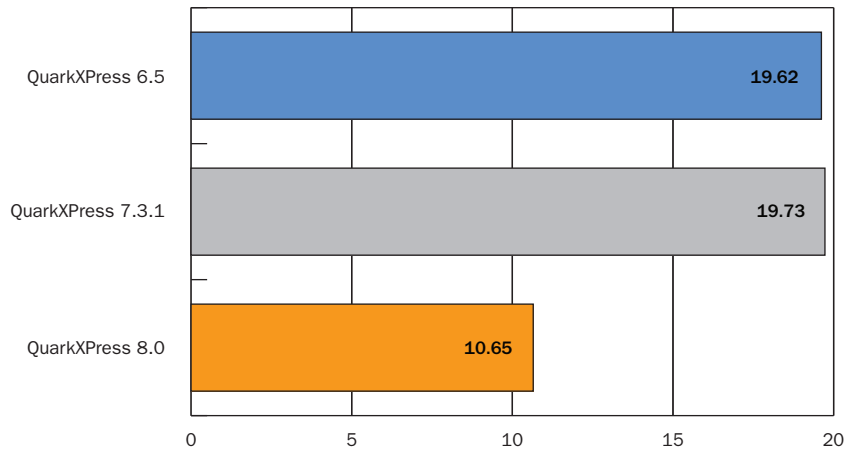
productivity of the new tool is significant: the chart on the left shows the time necessary to import and change the crop of a picture. The chart on the right shows time necessary to import, scale, rotate and change the cop of a picture. QuarkXPress 8.0 is more than three times faster than previous releases.

- This benchmark project was conducted by Pfeiffer Consulting for Quark. It analyzes productivity and efficiency increases of QuarkXPress 8.0, as compared with two previous releases of the software, QuarkXPress 7.31 and QuarkXPress 6.5.

- **About the benchmarks:** The benchmark project was comprised of a wide variety of efficiency and productivity measures, focusing on various functions and user interface improvements introduced by QuarkXPress 8.0. A total of 25 benchmarks was conducted. Benchmarks included measures of improved tool efficiency, picture import and manipulation, file handling, workflow integration, among many others.

- **Hardware platform and operating System:** All benchmarks were conducted on a 3.0GHz Mac Pro. The benchmarking system was equipped with 4GB of RAM and with the standard hard drive shipped with the computer. The system was reformatted using a single partition before testing. All benchmarks were run on a **standard, unmodified installation of Mac OS X 10.5.2 Leopard.**

- **About this report:** This benchmark analysis report **presents key data from the benchmark project.** To view the complete results, as well as detailed descriptions of the benchmark methodology, **please download the complete benchmark report from http://www.pfeifferreport.com.**

- For more information, please contact **research@pfeifferreport.com.**

Change Leading in Two Style Sheets vs. Change Baseline Grid Style
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	19.62
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	19.73
QuarkXPress 8.0	10.65

QuarkXPress 8.0 supports baseline grids and grid styles in individual boxes. Managing changes of baseline grids across a complex publication is significantly streamlined by this possibility, reducing the need to change individual style sheets when such a change occurs.
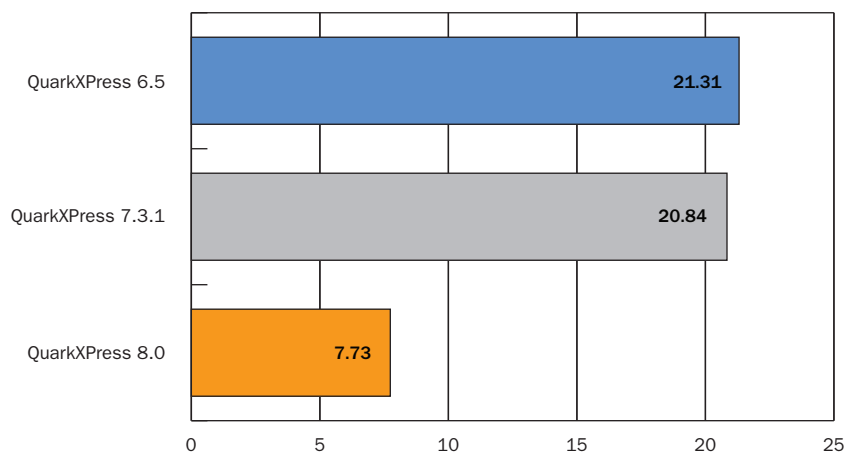
ity in an intuitive way, to make the user instantly more efficient at common tasks. This also recognizes one important fact: **the biggest productivity gains can be achieved by streamlining the operations we do over and over again.** Spectacular new features can be impressive, but if we remove one or two steps from an operation that is used dozens of times a day by a designer, that's when a new release empowers the user to achieve more faster.

The most spectacular example of this approach is the new picture tool in QuarkXPress 8.0: just through intelligent user interface design, it allows the user to crop, rotate, scale and reposition an image that has been imported, without ever needing to change tools, or to go to the menu bar. The user interface even informs the user about effective output resolution of the image, and thus helps to prevent problems downstream.

Needless to say, user interface enhancements such as this one have an immediate impact on productivity, as well as return on investment (See pages 6-7 for more information on the ROI of QuarkXPress 8.0). And don't forget that a more fluid user interface makes the user more creative as well.

Average of All Productivity Measures
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	21.31
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	20.84
QuarkXPress 8.0	7.73

A total of 25 individual productivity benchmarks were conducted for this projects. This chart shows the average time for all tests. (For a complete description of the benchmark protocols download the QuarkXPress 8.0 Benchmark Report at www.pfeifferreport.com.)

Page-layout Efficiency In QuarkXPress 8.0

- Productivity in page-layout applications **relies to a large extent on streamlined import and management capabilities of data and content** created in other applications.

- **Sophisticated drag-and-drop support for file import** provides significant productivity gains over previous releases of QuarkXPress.

- **Direct import of native Adobe Illustrator files in QuarkXPress 8.0 provides greater productivity** when working with vector graphics.

- **Seamless integration and creative control of interactive content** in the page-layout environment are key benefits of QuarkXPress 8.0.

Making the User More Efficient...

Unlike other graphic design programs, the page-layout program is essentially an integration environment for elements created in other applications. While it is theoretically possible to create all text and graphic elements from scratch in QuarkXPress, in practice the designer relies heavily on importing data and images created in other applications, word-processors, image processing software, spreadsheets, etc. Efficiently managing these external files is essential to a productive design process: **a page-layout program is only as good as its capacity to import, position, scale and manipulate different types of content and their containers.**
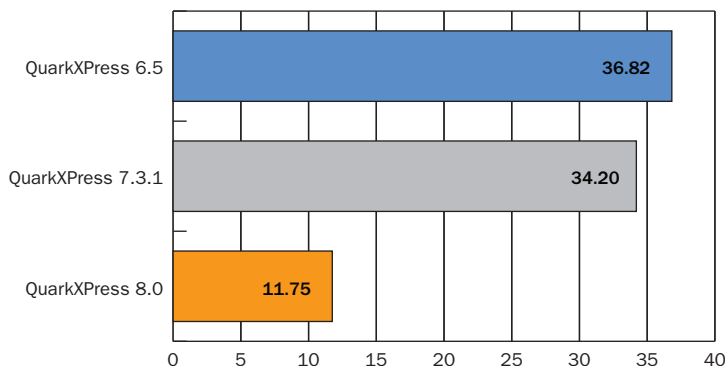
While QuarkXPress has always been very good at supporting external data, the new release adds a significant number of new possibilities in terms of integration and file handling. On the simplest level, QuarkXPress 8.0 extends the number of data types accepted by the program. **PDF compatibility has been extended to support PDF 1.7 files; Adobe Illustrator support eliminates the need to convert native Illustrator files into EPS format.** As far as multimedia content is concerned, interactive projects can be exported as Flash files. Support for Microsoft's Silverlight player is planned.

But from a productivity perspective, **the most significant enhancements in QuarkXPress are user interface improvements that can provide considerable increase in efficiency and creative design fluidity.**

File Management Productivity Gains

Import Individual Text Files Into 3-Column Grid
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	36.82
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	34.20
QuarkXPress 8.0	11.75

0　5　10　15　20　25　30　35　40

Direct Import of Native Adobe Illustrator File
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	20.82
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	19.83
QuarkXPress 8.0	4.84

0　5　10　15　20　25

QuarkXPress 8.0 adds several enhancements in terms of file import and management, including pervasive support for drag–and–drop file import, box–less file import as well as support for native Adobe Illustrator files. The chart on the left shows the productivity impact of column-sensitive drag– and–drop support for text import; the chart on the right compares importing a native Adobe Illustrator file with the time necessary to convert it to EPS or PDF format, indispensable in previous releases of QuarkXPress. In both cases, QuarkXPress 8.0 shows substantial productivity gains.

The Impact of the New User Interface on Workflow Efficiency

Switch Tools (Mouse vs. Direct Keyboard Selection)
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	22.19
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	22.16
QuarkXPress 8.0	8.71

0   5   10   15   20   25

Style Sheet Update: Simple Change
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	15.64
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	15.71
QuarkXPress 8.0	2.72

0   5   10   15   20

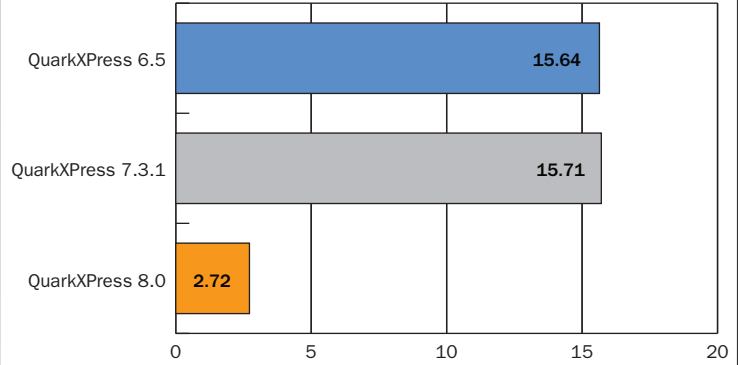*The redesigned user interface in QuarkXPress 8.0 has a direct impact on workflow and design efficiency. Some improvements, such as tool access, concern everyday operations; others automate operations that previously needed to be done manually. Selecting tools can now be achieved by typing a single letter,* *boosting efficiency of one of the most basic operations a user performs hundreds of times a day. (Chart on the left.) Updating style sheets to incorporate local changes can now be achieved by a single click, providing a very significant productivity gain. (Chart on the right.)*

Creative Multimedia Integration

Over the past few years, **Flash content has become an essential part of the creative toolbox,** resulting in a new and complex set of challenges for designers.

Most often, **interactive content needs to be integrated with printed media, sharing not only the creative vision, but assets, texts, fonts, style attributes, even color libraries and other data.** This integration, however, is complex and time-consuming. Texts and assets need to be exported for reuse in the Flash authoring environment; keeping copy synchronized is difficult and error prone; but most importantly, **Flash builds on a completely different skill-set and design logic than page-layout or graphics applications**, making it challenging for the designer to control the complete creative project.

QuarkXPress is the first page-layout application that integrates print with Flash authoring within the same project in a single application. **This results in seamless integration of both media types**, including synchronized text, style sheets, color libraries, pictures and more, between both environments.

On the most basic level, these capabilities mean significant productivity gains. **For designers, however, the key benefit is much more significant: to be able to create interactive content using the same tools he is already comfortable with.**

There is no more need for creating a box prior to importing a file: **Pictures and texts can be dropped onto a page** from the Finder or Windows Desktop, and QuarkXPress 8.0 also supports drag-and-drop file import from Adobe Bridge.
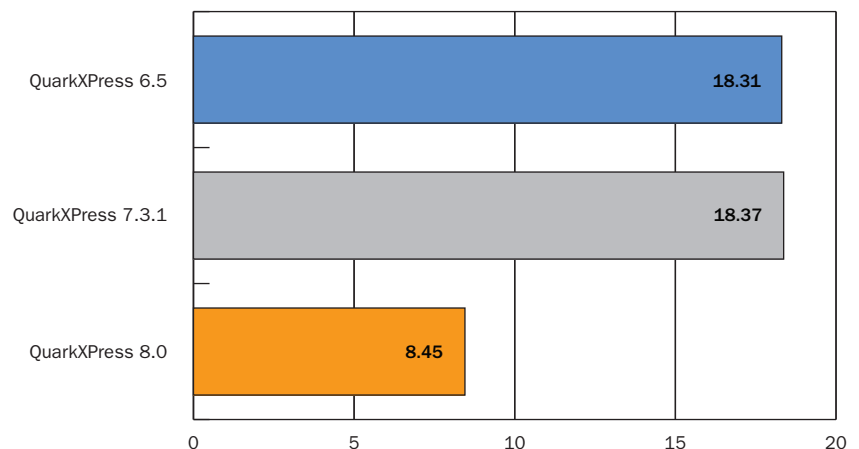
But the user interface enhancements go well beyond extending the possibilities of file import. A good example for this is column-sensitive text import. Imagine you have created a 3-column grid for a page, and you need to place three different text files on this grid. Previously, the only way to do this was to create three distinct boxes, and then to import each file individually into the right box. In QuarkXPress 8.0, the designer can simply drag the three text files onto the page, the program automatically creates text boxes corresponding to the column grid.

Beyond making the experienced designer more productive, these user interface enhancements also have a significant impact on the learning curve for newcomers to the program. By making the program more intuitive to use, **Quark is opening up the page design process to users who might not have considered using the program before, but may find it the best approach to manage print and interactive projects in an efficient way.**

Boxless File Import

Boxless File Import
Time scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

QuarkXPress 6.5	18.31
QuarkXPress 7.3.1	18.37
QuarkXPress 8.0	8.45

0   5   10   15   20

Unlike previous releases, QuarkXPress 8.0 does not require the user to create a box prior to importing pictures or text, streamlining page-layout significantly.

QuarkXPress 8.0:
Return on Investment of Productivity Gains

Major Points

- Productivity increases of **just a few seconds can provide significant ROI over time** if they occur on common, frequently repeated operations.

- Independently conducted productivity measures of QuarkXPress 8.0 **show significant productivity gains over QuarkXPress 6.5 and 7.31.**

- Key factors of improved productivity with QuarkXPress 8.0 are **a redesigned, more efficient user interface**, **better integration with other graphics application**, and **improved file import capabilities**.

- The cumulative impact of individual productivity gains **may provide an ROI of several thousand dollars per workstation over previous releases of QuarkXPress.**
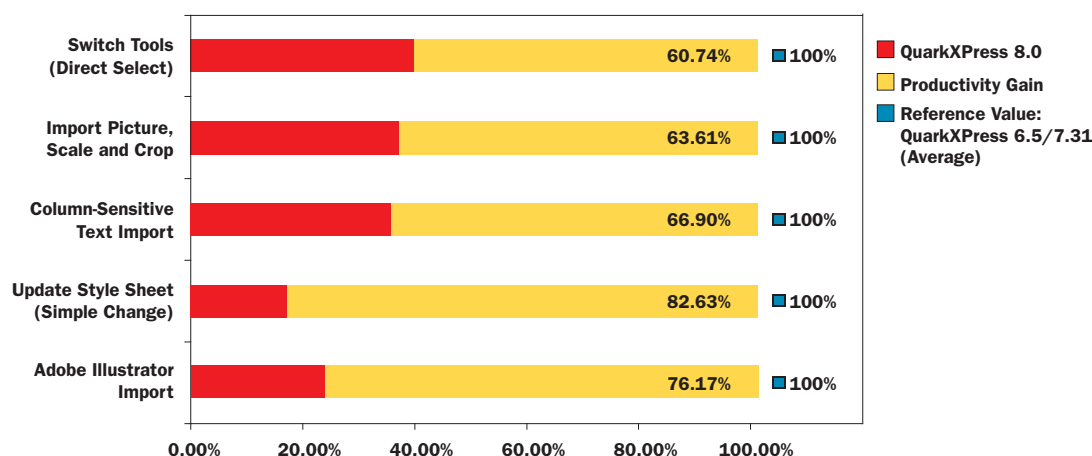
Measuring Return on investment (ROI)

What exactly is return on investment? Depending on who you ask, you are likely to get a completely different answer. While financial managers will take in account amortization rates and yearly spending plans, creative professionals may feel that the competitive edge a new software package provides them in the market place constitutes sufficient ROI to justify a purchase.

The ROI simulations presented on the next page take yet a different approach. They are based on the productivity benchmarks conducted for this project, and map individual time gains to the hourly rates of a user. In fact, Pfeiffer Consulting's research confirms that seemingly small productivity gains of repetitive operations can lead to very significant time savings and can create considerable return on investment. **The interesting aspect here is that the user usually tends to underestimate these savings; only when one conducts thorough productivity measures can one actually assess the overall efficiency gains.**

Let's just look at one example: each time a designer imports and crops an image with QuarkXPress 8.0, he saves 3.37 seconds over the same operation with earlier releases of the program. This may not seem like much, but if the designer performs this operation 10 times a day in the course of this work, the time savings are beginning to add up. In fact, at an hourly rate of $100, the designer will have generated an ROI of $206.15 in the course of one year—through one single operation the shaves a few seconds off a common process. **Once you add a variety productivity gains, it becomes clear that, however small the individual time savings may seem, they can represent thousands of dollars of return on investment over the course of a year.**

The Impact of Integrated Functionality on Productivity

Switch Tools (Direct Select)	60.74% ■100%
Import Picture, Scale and Crop	63.61% ■100%
Column-Sensitive Text Import	66.90% ■100%
Update Style Sheet (Simple Change)	82.63% ■100%
Adobe Illustrator Import	76.17% ■100%

■ QuarkXPress 8.0
■ Productivity Gain
■ Reference Value: QuarkXPress 6.5/7.31 (Average)

This chart shows productivity gains of QuarkXPress 8.0 over QuarkXPress 6.5/7.31, based on the productivity benchmarks conducted for this research project.

The increase in productivity is expressed as percentage, and uses the average time necessary to achieve a result in a QuarkXPress 6.5/7.31 workflows as reference value.

Calculating Return on Investment Scenarios (per Workstation)

	Productivity measures QuarkXPress 6.x / 7.3.1 (Average, Time in seconds)	Productivity measures QuarkXPress 8.0 (Time in seconds)	Time saved over QuarkXPress 6.x / 7.3.1 (seconds)	Productivity gain (%)	ROI generated (1 hour @ $100)	ROI generated (1 hour @ $200)	ROI generated (1 hour @ $300)	ROI generated (1 hour @ $400)
Incremental Productivity Gains (Return on Investment Generated by Individual Operation)								
Switch tools (Direct select vs. mouse)	2.22	0.87	**1.35**	**60.77%**	$0.04	$0.07	$0.11	$0.15
Import picture and change crop	6.55	3.18	**3.37**	**51.48%**	$0.09	$0.19	$0.28	$0.37
Import picture, scale and change crop	20.26	7.37	**12.89**	**63.63%**	$0.36	$0.72	$1.07	$1.43
Position one ruler guide precisely	10.04	4.72	**5.31**	**52.94%**	$0.15	$0.30	$0.44	$0.59
Boxless file import	18.34	8.45	**9.89**	**53.93%**	$0.27	$0.55	$0.82	$1.10
Direct import of Adobe Illustrator file	20.32	4.84	**15.48**	**76.19%**	$0.43	$0.86	$1.29	$1.72
Style sheet update (simple change)	15.68	2.72	**12.96**	**82.65%**	$0.36	$0.72	$1.08	$1.44
Style sheet update (multiple changes)	32.82	2.58	**30.24**	**92.14%**	$0.84	$1.68	$2.52	$3.36
Import text file into column grid	11.84	3.92	**7.92**	**66.19%**	$0.22	$0.44	$0.66	$0.88

ROI Projections Based on Incremental Productivity Gains	Time saved (seconds)	Number of occurrences/week	ROI generated (1 hour @ $100)	ROI generated (1 hour @ $200)	ROI generated (1 hour @ $300)	ROI generated (1 hour @ $400)
Switch tools (Direct select vs. mouse)	**1.35**	200	$7.49	$14.99	$22.48	$29.98
Import picture and change crop	**3.37**	50	$4.69	$9.37	$14.06	$18.74
Import picture, scale and change crop	**12.89**	10	$3.58	$7.16	$10.74	$14.32
Position one ruler guide precisely	**5.31**	40	$5.90	$11.81	$17.71	$23.61
Boxless file import	**9.89**	25	$6.87	$13.74	$20.60	$27.47
Direct import of Adobe Illustrator file	**15.48**	10	$4.30	$8.60	$12.90	$17.20
Style sheet update (simple change)	**12.96**	20	$7.20	$14.39	$21.59	$28.79
Style sheet update (multiple changes)	**30.24**	5	$4.20	$8.40	$12.60	$16.80
Import text file into column grid	**7.92**	20	$4.40	$8.80	$13.20	$17.60
Total ROI generated/week			**$48.63**	**$97.26**	**$145.89**	**$194.52**
Total ROI generated/month			**$194.52**	**$389.04**	**$583.56**	**$778.08**
Total ROI generated/year			**$2,139.73**	**$4,279.46**	**$6,419.19**	**$8,558.92**

QuarkXPress 8.0: Productivity, Efficiency and Return on Investment

QuarkXPress 8.0: Milestone Innovations for QuarkXPress Workflows

Functionality	Description	Productivity Benefit
Picture Tool	The redesigned picture content tool in QuarkXPress 8 allows the user to see cropped parts of an imported image. Using object handles, the picture or the box can be rotated, scaled and positioned without changing tools.	*The new Picture Tool streamlines one of the most common operations in page design by intuitively extending the user interface model of the previous versions of the program.*
Boxless File Import and Extensive Drag-and-Drop Support	Pictures and text files can be dragged directly onto a QuarkXPress 8.0 layout from any Macintosh Finder window, Windows Desktop or folder, as well as from Adobe Bridge.	*Boxless file import and drag-and-drop support significantly increase productivity during the creative phase as well as during the production process.*
Item Styles	Item Styles allow the user to save complex sets object attributes in a style sheet that can be used to quickly format objects, and automatically apply changes to every object linked to the style.	*Item Styles increase productivity significantly when creating designs that rely on identically formatted objects, such as side-bars and repetitive design elements.*
Native Adobe Illustrator Support	QuarkXPress 8.0 can directly use native Adobe Illustrator files (using the .ai extension).	*Native Adobe Illustrator support eliminates the need to convert Illustrator files to the EPS or PDF format for use in a QuarkXPress layout, thus streamlining integration with Adobe Illustrator.*
Hanging Characters	QuarkXPress 8.0 offers sophisticated support for hanging punctuation, including Hanging Character Styles that can be included in style sheets.	Prior to version 8.0, hanging punctuation could only be simulated by manually fine-tuning margin settings and character position in an extremely cumbersome way.
Grid styles and item-level baseline grid	QuarkXPress supports baseline grids not only for an entire document as previous releases, but allows creation of page and box-specific baseline grids, as well as grid styles.	*Box and page-level baseline grids and grid styles make it much more convenient and significantly less time consuming to enforce coherent text alignments in complex publications such as magazines, newspapers and brochures.*
Extensive Support for Asian Languages	QuarkXPress 8.0 offers full support for Japanese, Korean, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, including advanced character spacing and layout grids. Any version of QuarkXPress 8.0 can open a file containing Asian text.	*Asian language support in QuarkXPress 8.0 eliminates the need to convert Asian sections in a multi-lingual publications to EPS in order to be displayed and printed with a non-Asian release of the software.*
Interactive Layout Spaces with Flash Export	A QuarkXPress 8.0 project can integrate interactive layouts that can be exported to Flash format. All layout types can share assets, style sheets, color definitions and synchronized text, among other attributes.	*Integrating the creation of interactive content with print design tools significantly streamlines the creation of creative projects for multiple output channels, and gives the designer control over both print and interactive content.*