Photoshop CS2 : Up to Speed, ISBN: 0321330501

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Photoshop CS2 - Up to Speed was written for users of Photoshop CS (v8.0) who plan to or have just upgraded to CS2. The longer you have been using CS the more you will appreciate and benefit from this book. Expert Photoshop user/author/teacher Ben Willmore had access to the Adobe Photoshop design team to review chapters and technical issues which resulted in an in-depth and accurate detailed description of the changes made in CS2 (v9.0).

Each chapter starts out by providing an overview, and a section called "Where's My Stuff". From there each topic in the overview is explained in detail. Visually the book is well written and easy to read - using bold colored text, and colored screen captures (with additional descriptions below each screen capture). Occasionally the small screen captures can be difficult to read. There is an overwhelming amount of information contained within each chapter. Ben covers all types - what's new, what's changed, what's been removed, changes to menus and keyboard shortcuts.

The 1st chapter provides lots of details on Bridge but may be better served from a DVD based video explanation. Bridge is a very visual application. The 2nd chapter on General Tweaks covers numerous miscellaneous tweaks that is a must read for CS2 upgrade users. Chapter 3 covers the new Layers palette in fine detail. Chapters 4 and 5 on Smart Objects and Variables respectively are worth the price of the book alone - well done Ben. Chapter 6 covers small gems (WYSIWYG Font Menu, Smart Guides, Animation Palette, Swatches, PDF-X, Adobe Stock Photos) sufficiently. From here the next chapters cover photographic related topics (Camera Raw 3, High Dynamic Range imaging, Retouching & Filter Enhancements, Small Gems). These chapters are clearly explained through a thorough use of screen captures and photos.

Summary: If you are a long time Photoshop CS user then this is the 1st book you should buy and read. Ben covers every area (except ImageReady which had essential no changes and Version Cue) in great detail and leaves no area untouched. Since there is an overwhelming amount of information (changes) described in this book (that's a good thing) I would suggest while and or after reading each chapter to bring up CS2 and go over the information just covered. Also, you do not need to read the book in the order in which it was written. Choose the areas you are interested in most first then come back to the other chapters. Finally, if there is one suggestion I would make to the author for the next version of "Up to Speed" consider creating a DVD based visual guide to describe the changes going from CS2 to CS3 to accompany/supplement the written book.
Overall I highly recommend this book for the target audience just described and the price of the book with an online discount is a bargain.