

Transcript: How to Choose the Best Illustration Software For You

Welcome to Unit 1!

I promised we would start at the very beginning, and that is exactly what we are going to do. And before we can ever begin making SVG cut files, we need SOFTWARE to design them in. This is critical, and we must install the proper software before we continue on.

Designers use two primary software applications to create SVG cut files — Adobe Illustrator (which I'll just call Illustrator) and Inkscape. You've probably heard of both at this point. But you may be wondering...

Inkscape or Illustrator? Illustrator or Inkscape? What's the difference? Which one is best for me?

I get this question often, and it's an important one. The illustration software you chose to work in is where you'll spend a lot of time -- possibly years to come -- so it has a lot of ramifications for your future.

First, let's start at the beginning. What are Inkscape and Illustrator? Both are vector-based illustration programs. Both can make SVG cut files. And both work on Windows and Mac OSX.

So what's the big difference? There are several. Let's go over each one.

1. PRICE: Inkscape is completely free. Illustrator is currently \$20.99/month.

2. SUPPORT: Inkscape is supported by the community; if you have a problem, you ask people in a forum for help. Illustrator, on the other hand, offers tutorials plus e-mail and phone customer support.

3. STABILITY: Illustrator is more stable for me on my iMac (running OSX 10.14). It's not a gigantic difference, however. Your mileage may vary, of course. If you are running the Ventura OS, Inkscape will not work.

4. RENOWN: Illustrator is the most widely recognized illustration software in the industry. Inkscape is gaining reputation and trust in the community, but is not at the same level. This matters if you plan to tell people what program you use, you want to list this skill on a resume, or want to do anything beyond freelance professionally (such as get a job in the graphic design industry).

So which one should I use?

I know what you're really wondering. Which one do I think you should use?

And this is a good question. This is really a choice you have to make for yourself. But here's generally what I think:

If you're just starting out and mostly want to make SVGs for personal use or on a casual basis for a blog, or money is an issue, go with Inkscape.

If you expect to be working in your illustration program a LOT and/or you want to take this to a professional level, and you can afford the price, go with Illustrator.

So I want you to know — and this is very important—you will get no judgment from me. Both are excellent programs that can do what we want! You should never apologize for what you are using.

Your choice is your choice, and it's an important one — and you should stick by it.

This is really important. I want you to give some thought. Weigh the pros and cons. I put a handy worksheet on the next page in this workbook to help you, if you're the type of person who likes to list the pros and cons.

And then you need to make a decision. Because your next step is to actually install you chosen software. So that we can get to the really cool part of playing with an SVG file. This will be your assignment at the end of this unit.