

Fluid Content: Breaking Down the Barriers of a Single-Application Workflow

These days, creative professionals work in two primary layout applications (QuarkXPress and Adobe InDesign)—often passing files back and forth between the two. Fortunately, there's a series of inexpensive tools to make the process far more efficient and cost-effective.

By Gretchen A. Peck

It's a two-application world for creative professionals. No longer is the creative workflow dominated by a single developer (Quark's ubiquitous QuarkXPress application).

Today, Quark shares the market place with Adobe and its Adobe Creative Suite, which includes Adobe InDesign. Each program boasts its die-hard fans, but increasingly, graphic arts professionals don't have the simple option of choosing to work with one versus the other. Rather, they're finding they need to be equipped to create and process content from both software solutions.

Time is money

Terry Rydberg is a graphic design instructor at Waukesha County Technical College in Milwaukee, as well the region's Adobe InDesign User's Group chapter representative. In these roles, Rydberg instructs not only her graphic design students but also other creative professionals on how best to utilize the creative application, how to create reliable graphics files, and how to work most efficiently.

"With the launch of [Adobe] InDesign CS, I made the switch from QuarkXPress and have never looked back," Rydberg recalls. "Today, I exclusively use InDesign. At the college, we require all students to learn InDesign, and offer QuarkXPress as an elective for graphic design students."

Following her recent emigration to the Adobe Creative Suite, Rydberg faced a common dilemma among graphic artists today: What to do with all the legacy content previously created in QuarkXPress?

"I have 20 years of design projects and educational curriculum created using QuarkXPress," she explains.

Opening a legacy QuarkXPress file in Adobe InDesign is not a seamless process. Formatting and other file attributes may be lost in the process, and often, designers are forced to recreate the files altogether.

"When I read about [Markzware's] Q2ID in a magazine article, I realized that it was the solution to all the problems I was having updating archived QuarkXPress files," Rydberg recalls.

Markzware's Q2ID (QuarkXPress to Adobe InDesign) is a plug-in for Adobe InDesign. It enables graphic designers to convert a QuarkXPress document to an InDesign file with a single click. All of the file's original attributes and elements are preserved, including page positioning, color models, fonts and styles, images, copy and more.

"I immediately purchased and downloaded the software and have never had to use QuarkXPress again. I never upgraded my QuarkXPress, and it is no longer on my computer," Rydberg confides. "Q2ID works very well. There are some nuances that one must work around. For example, sometimes, there is a slight shift in the positioning of elements. ... Tiny adjustments need to be made, but this is minor compared to beginning a file 'from scratch.' Q2ID has saved me hours and hours of production time."

For creative professionals who require the reverse approach—those who prefer to use QuarkXPress but also receive, and have to work with, files in native InDesign format—Markzware offers ID2Q (InDesign to QuarkXPress), and a brand new application, PUB2ID, for converting pesky Microsoft Publisher documents into InDesign

files.

“I regularly recommend Q2ID to my students and design professionals. We featured Q2ID at our November InDesign User Group meeting. Because I write InDesign textbooks, I frequently receive emails from readers who wonder if there is a way to convert QuarkXPress files to InDesign. I always recommend Q2ID.”

Gretchen A. Peck is an industry reporter, whose beat is the international graphic arts, publishing and printing communities.