

Pub2InD Review
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In the Commercial Printing industry, we run into quite a wide range of customers. Many use the up-to-date, professional level, page layout programs like Quark Xpress, and Adobe InDesign. There are those who have not upgraded lately, and are using older version, and some are still using Adobe PageMaker (an OS 9 only program). Then we have the customers who can not afford, or justify the expense of these, and they use MS Publisher. I guess because it is bundled with MS Office Small Business, and higher. Publisher has always been the bane of Prepress Departments. Here is a program that is so close to being a viable desktop publishing program, but seems to always fall a little short on the professional tools, and Windows Postscript drivers have always been troublesome to me.

We now have an answer. Enter Pub2ID, an InDesign Plugin from Markzware, that can open a Publisher document right in InDesign. Markzware, is best known for their award winning preflight software, FlightCheck, which most Prepress departments could not live without. They also offer many conversion plugins, such as Q2ID, and ID2Q, along with other utility type softwares.

Pub2ID works on the fly, as you open a document with InDesign (File>Open). It reads the elements from the Publisher document, and rebuilds them in a new InDesign document. The current release, version 1.5.1, can read from Publisher versions 2002 through 2007, and works with InDesign CS2 or CS3. Here's the good part. It works on both PCs and Macs! That's right, you can open a MS Publisher document right into InDesign on a Mac.

While Pub2ID does a incredible job at this conversion, there are some drawbacks. Three in peticular that are difficult to overcome, are Page Backgrounds, Word Art, and cross platform fonts. Page Backgrounds and Word Art don't really exist in the native document, they are created when you print. The fonts are just something you have to deal with, as with anytime you jump platforms. One option would be to have a font-hopping utility, but that has legal implications, depending on who you talk to. I suppose, this makes a case for doing conversion in the PC version of InDesign. Not every printshop is going to have that. In that case, it would be more important than ever, to get supplied lasers or proofs from he customer, when the job is submitted. On the subject of Word Art, there is the option of right-clicking, and converting the Word Art to a picture while still in Publisher, and link it, but the resolution would be questionable at best.

OK, so that being said, I highly recommend downloading the PUB2ID User Guide (<http://www.markzware.com/pub2id/documentation.php>) to review the limitations. It is a good read, and Markzware is very forthcoming with what you can expect to achieve with the conversion.

Although there are no demo versions available at this time, Markzware will graciously process a test conversion for you. Visit the web site for more information on having the done.

When I first heard about this plugin, I was curious just how many jobs come into our shop this way. So I quickly did a search for ".pub" on the "Live Jobs" server, and was surprised to 16 of them. This really was an eye opener to the prevalence of Publisher documents that are out there. Personally, I applaud Markzware for taking on this task... who else could have done it? Just think of the doors this plugin will open!