

Create perfect EPS files from InDesign

computer notes
from the road
by WILMA MELOT

Recently I've helped several papers convert to InDesign – mostly from PageMaker.

The transition has been fairly smooth; the biggest obstacle is making a PDF that works for any printer. This task seems to become more complicated as each month passes.

Newspapers receive ads in PDF format made from a wide variety of software and platforms. Unfortunately, not all PDFs are created equal, which is frustrating to those of us trying to open, place and print ads.

I've said this before, but it bears repeating: the best way to make a good PDF is to start with a document that has all links and fonts embedded. Once you're sure all pieces are there, make an EPS file and use Acrobat Distiller to create the final PDF.

I'm often asked why you just can't use InDesign's Export feature to make a PDF. It's not an easy question to answer but I've seen enough evidence to know it's not the right way to make a PDF.

I've seen entire pages fall apart when sent to the Imagesetter; ghosts of past ads mysteriously appearing; entire ads missing from the page; fonts replaced by the dreaded Courier, and type that bleeds into the next column. And then there's the whole CID font problem – fonts that embed in the PDF but InDesign can't print.

With all these problems, you're probably asking yourself why the people who created PDF software can't make one that works for everyone. It's a good question that, unfortunately, I don't have an answer for.

What I do have a solution for is a way to avoid midnight calls from your pressman saying the PDF is corrupt. The first step is to create an EPS or PS file from InDesign and then use Acrobat Distiller to make the PDF.

Distiller is the best way to create a PDF because it gives you control over the settings.

Let's look at the correct way to create a perfect EPS (encapsulated postscript) or PS (postscript) file.

There are two ways to go about this in InDesign. The easiest way is to go to File>Export and select EPS. This will bring up settings for creating the EPS. I've selected "Level 2" postscript since it works for more printers than Level 3. Make sure Color is set to "Leave Unchanged."

"Data Format" should be determined by your printer's needs. The selection of ASCII or Binary depends on the age of their Imagesetter.

Under the Advanced settings, change the Transparency setting to High. In the Inks Manager menu, make sure

all spot colors are converted to CMYK – unless you're actually running spot color. If your page or ad doesn't have any color, simply turn the color setting (under the General menu) to grayscale and bypass the whole color issue.

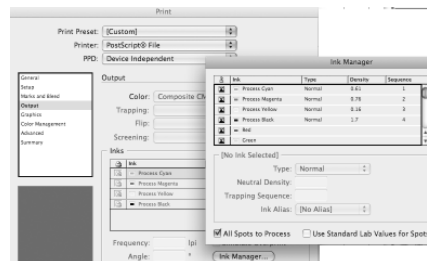
The old school method of making PS files from the Print command works just as well. Simply go to File >Print and look for the same options as above. The beauty of this workflow is that you can save the preset once it's set up and not worry about someone changing it.

If you use layers, note the "print layers" option. Also

take a look at the printer and PPD settings. In the Graphics menu, under Images, select All for send data, and in the fonts menu, under download, select "complete."

Under Advanced, change the Transparency Flattener needs to High Resolution.

Under Color Management, change Color Handling to "PostScript Printer Determines Color;" also check "Preserve CMYK Numbers."



To save the settings, click on the "Save Preset" button at the bottom of the box. Give it a name such as "My PS Files."

Now, take your PS or EPS file and drop it in Distiller with your PDF settings.

If you haven't already set your Distiller settings, ask someone who knows your press or use PDFx1a settings.

If the file fails to make an EPS, there's a problem on the page. Try removing pieces of the page (such as artwork or ads) one at a time until you find the problem.

In an emergency, run the file through Photoshop, converting it to a high resolution TIFF. It's not the best solution, but it will work in a pinch.

plugged IN

Check your Web mail

If you're one of those people who save old e-mails and use them as your contact list, heed my caution.

This is a very unwise practice, as several papers found out this month.

With all the phone company takeovers, you never know who will be hosting your Web mail. Sometimes the transition goes well and you're notified of the change. Unfortunately, that's not always the case.

Consider what you would lose if you had to start a contact list over from scratch. To avoid this situation, create a list of all the important e-mail addresses you need and store it on a disk or print it out.

Don't forget to check your Web e-mail for folders such as Bulk, Junk or Spam. If you have clients who say they sent you an e-mail but it never shows up, it could be going to bulk mail. You should clear these folders out occasionally so they don't build up and cause potential problems to your e-mail.

Build a droplet in Photoshop

In Photoshop you can build a desktop file called a droplet by using actions. To build a droplet, go to File>Automate>Build Droplet. Define the actions, which is a script of automated commands, then save it to the desktop. The next time you want those settings or actions in a photo, drag the photo onto the droplet and let it perform all the steps you defined.

Text tool to pointer tool

The new version of InDesign lets you jump from the text tool to the pointer tool just by hitting the escape button. Other shortcuts include hitting command (t), which takes you to the character control palette. Once there you can tab through the settings without taking your hands off the keyboard. Many palettes can be accessed this way – just use the keyboard command found in the menus. Want to save more time? Type in the name of the font you're looking for and it comes up. To leave the font area, just hit escape.

