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QUARK SOFTWARE WORKFLOW SOLUTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION



# Working with PDF in QuarkXPress

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PDF has truly become a mainstay of the graphics industry, and many industry experts have indicated that in the next few years it will replace PostScript in print production. Already, PDF is widely regarded as the medium of choice for web distribution. To meet the need for creating PDFs, QuarkXPress 6 has greatly enhanced the ability to handle PDFs and to save jobs as PDF. QuarkXPress 7 will offer further enhancements, but for this article, we will deal strictly with what QuarkXPress users can do with PDF today. We will refer only to PDFs intended for print production.



While many have criticized Quark for moving too slowly to adopt PDF, this March the company joined the standards-setting Ghent PDF Workgroup (GWG) <http://www.ghentpdfworkgroup.org>. The group is actively working to establish industry standards for the use and handling of PDFs including creating PDF output specifications for real-world production environments. Juergen Kurz, Quark's senior vice president of product development said at the time, "The significant level of real user involvement in Ghent PDF Workgroup is the reason Quark joined. We're dedicated to supporting industry open standards that are important to our customer."

Before QuarkXPress 6, PDFs could not be imported without using third-party XTensions such as QX-Tools (<http://www.ononesoftware.com>). Quark also released its own XTensions, PDF filter 1.1, which can be downloaded from the web site. The XTensions can be used for importing PDFs into QuarkXPress 4.X and 5.X, but as of version 6, PDF is simply another of the many formats QuarkXPress recognizes.

## Things to Watch Out For

There are a few things to consider when importing PDFs. Remember: not all PDFs are created equal and the vast majority of PDFs are not really suitable for print production and therefore, not good candidates for importing into QuarkXPress for high-end output.

- ▶ First, the resolution and color space used by imported PDFs is an important condition when it comes to the final output. Are the fonts fully embedded? Is the file in the CMYK color space? Are there color profiles embedded? Is transparency used in the PDFs?  
Note: although PDFs exported directly from QuarkXPress cannot have transparency attributes, PDFs created in other programs may contain transparency data that QuarkXPress may not read properly.
- ▶ You can bring in multiple-page PDFs one page at a time. QuarkXPress will allow you to select the page you want to import in a dialog box and will provide a preview of the selected page if one is available.
- ▶ Remember that a PDF can be raster or vector or both, and today's illustration and imaging software can create vector and raster images and layers and/or transparency. A Photoshop® image that contains text that has been rasterized at 300 DPI and flattened might work when imported into QuarkXPress, but may not give you the text resolution you are looking for. However, a file that has been exported from Photoshop with vector text and transparency layers can cause all sorts of issues when QuarkXPress flattens them.

## Why No Transparency?

QuarkXPress 7 will have transparency capability, but for now, the way QuarkXPress creates a PDF is through a Jaws PDF distiller from Global Graphics. It behaves pretty much the same as Adobe's® Distiller® product, but the results are not always identical; and the version of the Jaws distiller in QuarkXPress 6 cannot handle transparency. It simply wasn't engineered to do that.

At press time, it had not yet been officially announced how QuarkXPress 7 will handle transparency, only that it will be among the new features.

### WORK AROUNDS

Industry trainer, James Lockman of Working Words and Graphics in Gorham, ME, advises users to change QuarkXPress' preferences from DIRECT TO PDF to CREATE POSTSCRIPT for later Distilling. This will actually switch the PostScript interpreter QuarkXPress uses. Instead of exporting directly to a PDF, QuarkXPress will write an EPS file that can be brought into Acrobat Distiller for creating the PDF. To change this preference, go to PREFERENCES

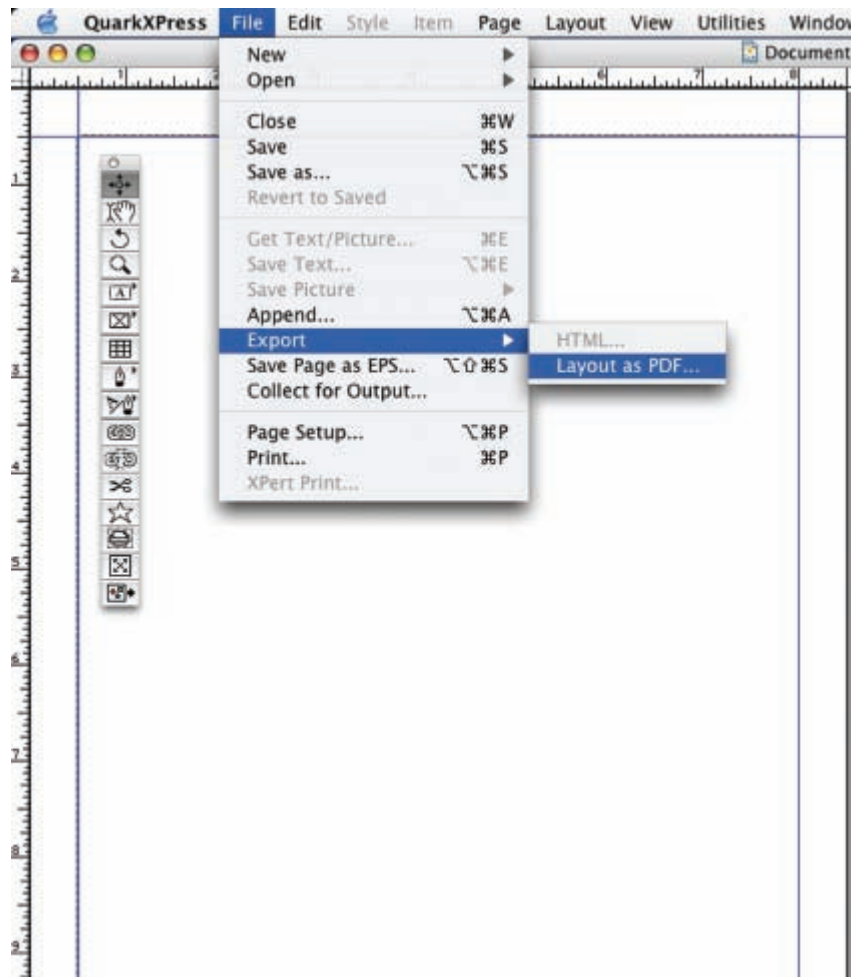
▶ PDF ◀ CREATE POSTSCRIPT FOR LATER DISTILLING.

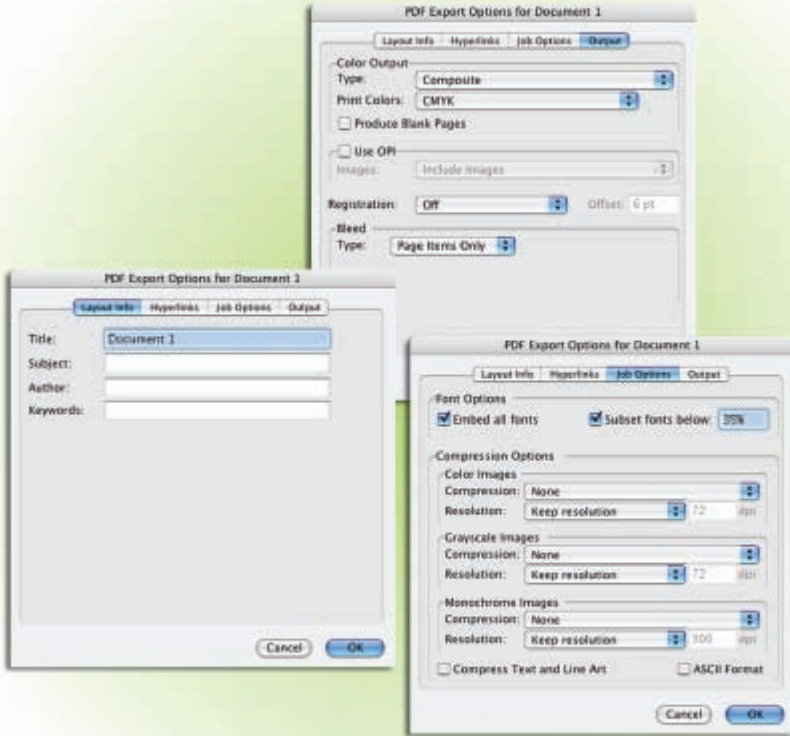
## Another Caution

There is another caution. While Acrobat Distiller is capable of handling transparency and layers, that does not necessarily mean your RIP will be able to process the file. You may need to experiment with a few different processing workflows to find a way to create a file your RIP can process.

This indeed has become one of the biggest prepress headaches when it comes to processing PDFs. It is not immediately obvious how a PDF has been created or what it may contain. This is one of the areas the GWG and Quark are trying to address by creating PDF specifications for print production. If all of the PDFs going through your workflow are in compliance with the PDF/X-1a standard, the chances are it will be able to get through your workflow. Although even the GWG admits that it is possible to create a PDF/X-1a compliant file that will not print very well.

Another problem with PDF that Lockman points out: files created through QuarkXPress' PDF export cannot contain embedded halftone information. That's not a problem for most printers who prefer to strip out any such data anyway, but could create significant problems for screen printers.





### Export PDF Does Work Well for Most Jobs

Having pointed out all of the situations where the export to PDF function in QuarkXPress v6.X may not be adequate for print production, the fact remains that for most jobs, it really works quite well. If there is not transparency involved and you are creating a PDF from your own QuarkXPress files for your own output (and thus, know what it is you are actually dealing with), the export to PDF function can be a much quicker way of creating PDFs, avoiding the second processing step.

QuarkXPress gives you several options for configuring the PDFs you wish to export, though not nearly as many as Acrobat Distiller. The defaults indicate that QuarkXPress really had web and office output in mind when creating the options. There is a tab for hyperlinks that allows you to include hyperlinks and export lists and index data as hyperlinks, but the job options and output tabs are the most important for print output.

### Setting Up PDF Export

You probably won't want to use QuarkXPress' default settings for exporting PDF for print production. The first thing you'll want to do is uncheck the SUBSET FONTS button. While keeping this button checked will create a smaller file, it will also severely hamper your ability to make text changes in the file later on, and that can come back to haunt you at the worst possible time in the production schedule.

It may seem to make sense that the default compression setting under this tab is none, but most of us will want to use some kind of compression even for high-end output. Although JPEG and ZIP are both lossy compression schemes, setting this on AUTOMATIC ZIP/JPEG HIGH will give you a file that has no loss in quality that is discernible by the human eye, but is substantially smaller than an uncompressed file. Of course, before you choose a compression setting, you need to know what your output RIP can handle. If you don't know what RIP will be handling the output, choosing a compression setting of none and creating a substantially bigger file may be the best option.

It is probably obvious that for high-end output you do not want to do any image downsampling, and QuarkXPress' default setting of KEEP SETTING is the way to go. You will also want to leave the ASCII setting unchecked unless you are using an ASCII RIP, which would be very rare. Compressing text and line art doesn't really do much to reduce the file size. Even though it may be safe to check this button, the possibility that doing so might give you problems down the road, though small, may not be worth the fractional savings in file size.

Under the output tab, you can choose composite or separations. The choice you make here determines the choices available in the print colors pull-down menu. If you have selected TYPE ▾ SEPARATIONS you will be able to select from used process and spot, all process and spot, and convert to process. Your choice will depend on the output device and intent.

If you select TYPE ▾ COMPOSITE, your choices are black and white, grayscale, RGB, CMYK, device N, or as is. For most pre-press operations you will want to select CMYK unless it is specifically a spot color job. However, you may encounter files that are supposed to print in black only that have color elements, and selecting grayscale is a quick way to force all the elements of the job to print black. The black-and-white selection will do the same thing for text-only jobs; but if there are raster images involved, choose grayscale.

#### MORE MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

QuarkXPress v6.X allows you to downsave to version 5, however, many 6.0-specific attributes are lost or altered, including some that can affect PDF creation.

- ▶ Select COMPOSITE COLOR OUTPUT (tab) ▾ AS IS and settings default to the RGB color space in the print dialog box, the save page as EPS dialog box, and the PDF options dialog box.
- ▶ Select COMPOSITE COLOR OUTPUT (tab) ▾ DEVICEN output and the composite color space is changed to composite CMYK.

## How to use DeviceN

To specify DeviceN composite color for a PDF:

1. Choose PREFERENCES ▸ PDF ▸ OPTIONS ▸ OUTPUT (Mac) or EDIT ▸ OUTPUT (Windows).
2. Choose a PostScript composite-color PPD from the printer description pop-up menu.
3. Select COLOR OUTPUT (tab) ▸ TYPE (pop-up menu) ▸ COMPOSITE.
4. Choose PRINT COLORS (pop-up menu) ▸ DEVICEN.
5. Specify all the other PDF settings for the project, and then click OK.
6. Click OK to close the preferences dialog box.

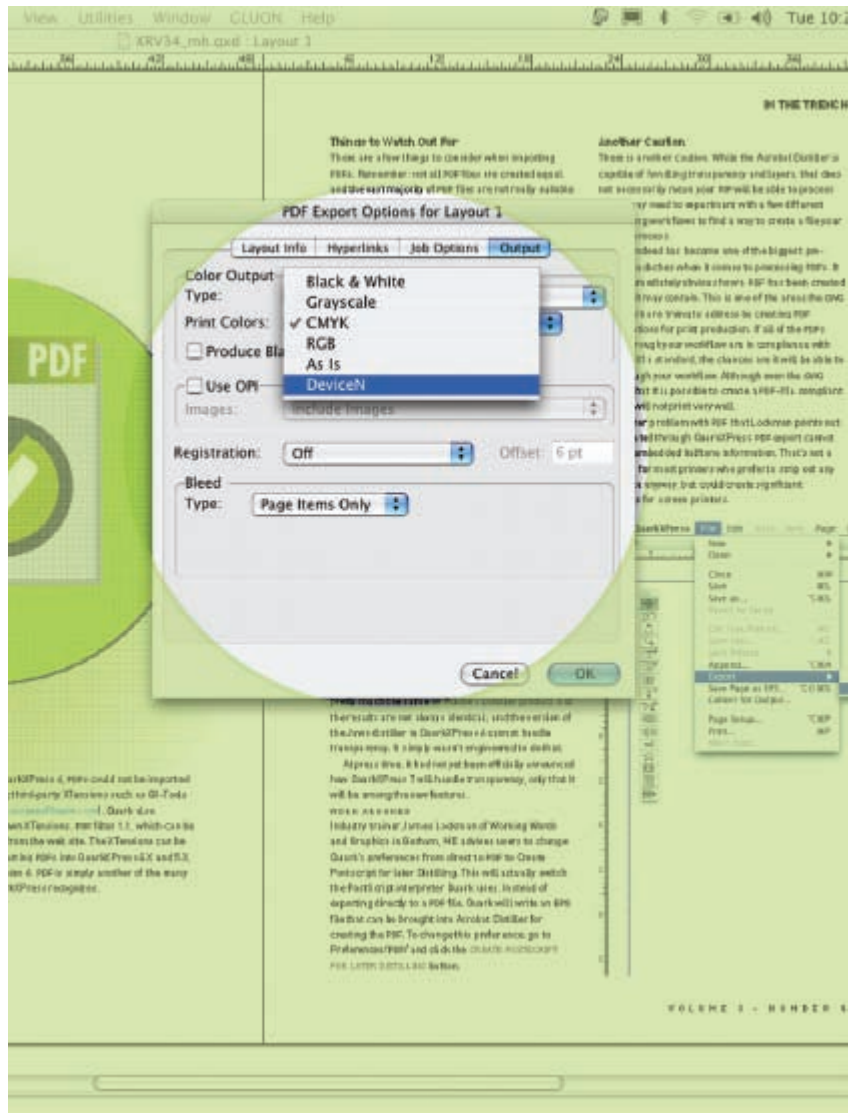
### A COUPLE OF PDF TOOLS

Quark recently entered into a marketing partnership with Enfocus® (<http://www.enfocus.com>), and that company has a couple of must-have tools for PDF print production. The first is Instant PDF, a product that goes well beyond QuarkXPress' PDF settings. The software allows you to create a set of PDF rules and export them so your customers can use them. The truth is, there are a lot of different ways to create PDFs and only one of them is right for your particular workflow. Instant PDF allows you not only to create the set of rules, but it also enforces those rules by certifying properly created PDFs. The product examines the file before it creates the PDF to make certain all of the rules have been followed. If so, it gives the stamp of approval and if not, it will both reject the file and give the person creating it the reason it did not pass and some suggestions for fixing the problem.

The other Enfocus product is PitStop, which has become the industry standard for correcting and editing some of the most-common problems with PDFs. It is certainly not an excuse for making PDFs incorrectly, but it does allow pre-press professionals an opportunity to do a considerable amount of editing and tweaking and can turn some unprintable files into printable files.

callas software (<http://www.callassoftware.com>) also makes a handy tool called PDF colorconvert that provides a very simple mechanism for changing colors and color space within a PDF. It is very much a one-issue product, but it does exactly what it is supposed to, quickly and easily. It is even smart enough to automatically make a copy of the original document in case the color correction being made is not exactly what was intended.

Other products worth checking out include ARTS PDF's Crackerjack and Aerialist (<http://www.pdfplanet.com>), and Quite Software's (<http://www.quitesoftware.com>) Quite A Box of Tricks, Quite Imposing, and Quite Revealing. For other printer's spreads options, check out ALAP's (<http://www.alap.com>) Imposer Pro for Acrobat.



**Quark is dedicated to supporting industry open standards that are important to their customers.**

Alternatively, all of these products are available in a single shopping trip to <http://www.xchangen.com>.

While these products are designed for essentially the same purpose — working with PDFs — each has its own special function, some of which are absolutely essential in a prepress environment and some of which may not apply at all to your workflow. Check them all out carefully. They are relatively expensive products and you don't want to pay for more than you really need.

## PDF is the Future

If you have been brought into the PDF world kicking and screaming, it's probably time to stop fighting it. PDF is something you will be dealing with for years to come, and the more you know about how to deal with PDFs, the smoother your output will be. ☒