

Stepping Out With InDesign



About the Author

Annette Kirchner loved participating in paste-up for her high school newspaper. In college, she served as the graphic designer for a 40-page student-run magazine. In every job since 1994, Annette has utilized graphic design skills to create marketing and educational documents.

In 2009, Annette enrolled at the Santa Rosa Junior College to master the art of web design. She quickly realized that clients want more than just a website. They want graphics, videos, and animation. Many graphic designers have trouble “going digital” but Annette wants to be able to provide small businesses a one-stop shop.

Annette has already had the opportunity to apply many of the skills gained in the program. In 2011, she became a contractor for an eLearning firm, responsible for photograph manipulation, graphic representation of learning concepts, and course-specific media.

InDesign Skills

- * master pages
- * column guides
- * ruler guides, smart guides
- * repeating graphic
- * bleeds
- * layers
- * text frame options
- * text threading
- * imported graphics, text
- * spell check, basic editing
- * character styles, paragraph styles
- * tracking, leading
- * find/replace
- * import graphic into a frame
- * color, tints, kuler colors (CA poppy)
- * gradient swatches, basic feather gradient
- * transparency, blending modes
- * type on a path
- * text wrap
- * copying and stacking objects
- * special effects (drop shadow, bevels)
- * preflight panel

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What is InDesign?

InDesign is a powerful **desktop publishing program**. With InDesign I can create professional print and electronic documents. I can import assets (text and graphics) and use InDesign tools to arrange and style the assets to create a pleasing layout. InDesign possesses key document features such as facing pages, varying page sizes, and master pages. Layers are also available to assist in organizing assets within each document and I can also thread text and create text wraps.

What can you make?

Using InDesign I can create business cards, compact disc covers, postcards, letterhead, and multi-page documents (text books, brochures, directories). I can set up one document to include multiple page types. For example, within one document I can create a music company's business card, stationery, and cd cover. With InDesign I can also use preset templates or create my own templates. A template builds consistency among a set of separate documents.

A Sample Workflow

Cyndi Reese defines a "workflow" as the steps and programs required to create the finished product. InDesign offers two methods for workflow. One is the **Design package folder** (used for work-in-progress projects), the second is a **Portable Document Format (PDF)**.

The basic workflow for InDesign: create a document, import text and graphics, arrange them in a pleasing manner on the page, and save. If you need to move to another computer to complete your work, you would save your project as a **package**. If you have completed the document and are ready to send it to the end user, you would create the appropriate PDF document.

My Favorite Feature

My favorite InDesign features are those that allow me to develop **consistent designs**. I love the ability to format and style graphics and images – but these capabilities are also available within Photoshop and Illustrator. Master pages and column guides allow me to standardize pages. Character and paragraph styles provide a quick way to establish text standards within a document, as well as the ability to quickly edit that style.

This is Tricky!

Like many of the Adobe Creative Suite programs, InDesign has so much to offer. I find myself wondering how I will **make use of the most productive features**. I am now unclear on how I should best prepare graphics to import into InDesign. Should I create completed works of art in Photoshop or Illustrator and then import them into InDesign? Or is it better to import a less finalized version of a graphic so I can complete the final formatting within InDesign?

New to InDesign

If I assume the pupil is like me, new to InDesign but not desktop publishing, I would suggest a **quick tour**. Familiarize yourself with the InDesign lingo. Locate the text wrap tools, determine how to place graphics and text, learn the difference between column layout settings and text box settings. Next, find a sample of something you'd like to create and attempt to copy it. Be sure to choose something that utilizes advanced tools such as gradients, feathers, repeated objects, transparencies and color! Be sure to print a document once in a while to examine color shifts.

Here's my story...

I started this class with a background in desktop publishing and a familiarity with other Adobe Creative Suite programs. I had used InDesign, but I felt I was missing out on some of the key features. My instincts were correct. Desktop publishing has evolved significantly since I used Quark in college. I hope to use InDesign at work. At my eLearning firm we often provide print or electronic materials to supplement the eLearning modules. Yet, I think I will most value my InDesign skills when **creating documents for friends and family**. I made a 25th anniversary cd cover for friends and I prefer to make my own greeting cards. Thus far I have only used an image on the cover but perhaps in future I will create a more personalized line of thank you and note cards. *