



QuarkXPress 7 holds edge over new InDesign CS3 features

QuarkXPress® 7 has set a new standard for creating and publishing pages for both print and electronic media by providing:

- A consistent, streamlined design workspace for multiple media
- True two-way collaboration
- Innovative technologies to support error-free output

Adobe InDesign® CS3 is limited to:

- Web export capabilities that are less powerful than they were in InDesign CS2
- Collaboration tools that are one-way only
- Depending on Acrobat® to catch PDF errors at the end of the production process

Missing from InDesign CS3

Although many of the features of InDesign CS3 seem to have been influenced by QuarkXPress 7, there are a few noticeable omissions that are part of QuarkXPress 7 but not the latest InDesign release. QuarkXPress 7 includes the following unique capabilities in addition to features that will be analyzed below.

- Customizable rules for avoiding press errors
- Integrated support for output of Macromedia® Flash® by Adobe® (via the optional Quark Interactive Designer™ component.)
- XML-based job templates and Job Tickets
- Automated color management
- Customizable and shareable text settings (H&Js, Kerning Pairs etc.)
- Synchronized content across a document or a complete cross media campaign
- Support for JDF during the creative process

InDesign CS3: New features in context

I. Creative Effects and Controls

InDesign CS3 features: Item Effects, Gradient Feathers. Item Effects are visual effects, like inner glow or bevel and emboss, that can be applied to an object's stroke, fill, and content. Gradient Feathers are masks that contain gradients so the objects fade into the background.

Quark comment: Quark pioneered the idea of allowing non-destructive graphic effects in layout. However, InDesign CS3 has taken a different approach and focused on modifying frames and text. While effects like bevel and glow are useful for 'quick and dirty' comps, the fact is that when professionals create such effects in Photoshop they prefer not to use the features that InDesign CS3 has borrowed because the results look 'canned.' Consequently, most designers will continue to use Photoshop and 'hand craft' these effects.

QUARK BRIEFING

Conversely, Quark's Picture Effects offer true production-quality image filters [Gaussian Blur, Sharpen] and image rendering that not only allow creative effects but also ease cross-media and device-independent workflows.

InDesign CS3 feature: Finer Transparency Controls. Transparency and blending modes can be applied on objects, strokes, fills, and content.

Quark comment: QuarkXPress 7 is still considerably more flexible because it puts transparency at a color level and is not limited to object, fill, stroke, and text. For example, QuarkXPress 7 can control the transparency of a single text character, or a single color in a gradient. This is not possible in InDesign. In addition, tables still have just a single transparency setting. InDesign doesn't allow runarounds around drop shadows, which QuarkXPress 7 does. Given that InDesign and QuarkXPress 7 are both used for long and complex documents like product catalogs, this is a major omission.

II. Productivity

InDesign CS3 feature: Multi-File Place. Multiple files can be imported at once from within InDesign or by dragging them in from the desktop or Adobe Bridge.

Quark comment: A useful feature for those cases in which a user has multiple images to place from a specified folder. In most cases, this is not how designers work. Also, placing content on a page using this feature only provides meaningful benefits in heavily templated workflows where users actually need to place multiple files in specific slots. QuarkXPress users can receive multiple file drag and drop capability via a free third party XTension.

InDesign CS3 feature: Visual Pages Panel. Thumbnails of pages in the Pages panel to navigate and arrange pages in a document. Pages can be moved within and between documents.

Quark comment: The free Quark® XPert Tools Pro bundle includes XPert Pilot. The XPert Pilot palette provides thumbnail-based previewing and navigation of QuarkXPress 7 Layouts. Dragging pages from layout to layout has long been a feature of QuarkXPress.

InDesign CS3 feature: Expanded Quick Apply. Access features by typing the first letters of a feature name to apply styles, menu commands, and scripts.

Quark comment: QuarkXPress has always allowed custom key commands to be applied to style sheets — and now also for XPert Item Styles — which in many cases is faster and more predictable than Quick Apply. QuarkXPress 7 also offers customizable XPert Toolbars which let users gather their most commonly used features in graphical toolbars.

InDesign CS3 feature: Faster Frame Fitting. Placeholder frames can be set up to automatically size incoming content to the frame.

Quark comment: QuarkXPress 7 offers single-keystroke commands to fit images.

InDesign CS3 feature: Table & Cell Styles. Tables can be formatted using table and cell styles. Formatting can be applied to specific areas of a table, such as its header, footer, and body.

Quark comment: Despite these useful text enhancements, tables in InDesign are still restricted in the way they place and crop images. Picture cells in QuarkXPress are as easy to work with as regular picture boxes.

III. Robust long document support

InDesign CS3 feature: Append Master Pages. Users can import master pages from existing documents.

Quark comment: QuarkXPress 7 can append layouts, which of course also appends master pages. QuarkXPress 7 can copy master pages from one layout to another via thumbnail drag. In QuarkXPress 7.2, master pages can even be contained in Job Jackets™, meaning that they can be synched between users.

QUARK BRIEFING

InDesign CS3 feature: Synchronize Master Pages in Book. Multiple documents or a book file can share master pages.

Quark comment: Elements in a book can be synchronized through Job Jackets (even style sheets and colors can be synchronized), and elements on a master page can be synchronized through Composition Zones™.

InDesign CS3 feature: Redefine Styles when replacing Font. When missing or unused fonts are replaced, the fonts in style definitions can be changed.

Quark comment: QuarkXPress 7 offers this function when completely replacing a font.

InDesign CS3 feature: Bullets & Numbering

Quark comment: This is useful functionality for long documents in particular and is provided by third-party XTensions® for QuarkXPress. However, the Job Jackets and Composition Zones features of QuarkXPress 7 offer maximum flexibility in dividing long documents while keeping them consistent, and QuarkXPress 7 features like XPert Find/Change, Item Styles and Shared Content are ideal for long, design-rich documents.

InDesign CS3 feature: Text Variables. Text can link to a text variable; when the variable is modified, all instances of the text are updated.

Quark comment: QuarkXPress 7 has two ways of synchronizing text. The first is through placeholder text, which allows users to synchronize content to an outside XML source. The second is through Shared Content. Synchronized items don't need a variable; the user can just select a box and synchronize both content and design attributes.

IV. Advanced Find/Change

InDesign CS3 feature: Text and object attributes can be changed across one or more documents. Includes master pages, footnotes, and locked or hidden layers. GREP pattern-based searches on strings of text can be performed.

Quark comment: Quark XPert Tools Pro Find/Change extends find/change functionality to item attributes in QuarkXPress 7. It includes properties such as the position of an item on a page, which InDesign Find/Change doesn't support. QuarkXPress 7 does not have GREP support, which uses a complex, programming-like syntax unsuitable for most designers.

V. XHTML Export

InDesign CS3 feature: Export InDesign content as XHTML.

Quark comment: QuarkXPress has offered comparable support for exporting HTML-tagged text since version 4. QuarkXPress 7 Web layouts can create XHTML, CSS and even XSLT templates that can be opened easily in Dreamweaver.

However, unlike InDesign, QuarkXPress 7 users are not dependent upon having Dreamweaver® or a similar tool to actually design content for the Web, QuarkXPress 7 can actually create finished, rich Web pages that can have dynamic content linking to their Print and Flash versions. This approach to cross-media publishing is unique to Quark and gives great creative power to designers. This combines with our XML functionality (below) to support both large and small scale design operations.

InDesign CS 2 users will note that "Package for GoLive" includes features which InDesign no longer supports, including that it is now impossible to export any vector items or special headlines created on the InDesign page.

VI. Workspace

InDesign CS3 feature: Self-adjusting Panels. Panels dock away as icons when not in use.

Quark comment: Though InDesign's palette implementation has been improved, the major difference between the two programs is — still — that QuarkXPress 7 uses fewer palettes. This makes working with QuarkXPress 7 easier and faster than working with InDesign, and we continually look for ways to improve the overall QuarkXPress user experience.

InDesign CS3 feature: Enhanced Control Panel. Context-sensitive Control Panel shows more options and can be customized.

Quark comment: The QuarkXPress 7 Measurements palette is still more context-aware than the InDesign control Panel and offers more controls in an easy to learn tabbed format.

InDesign CS3 feature: Customizable Menus. Menu commands can be hidden or colorized.

Quark comment: While QuarkXPress 7 doesn't have this feature per se, QuarkXPress offers better menu-related productivity through the XPert Toolbars XTensions in Quark XPert Tools Pro. This allows the user to create custom tool bars for every menu command.

InDesign CS3 feature: Style Group Management. Styles can be organized into groups in the styles panels. Styles can be loaded from other InDesign documents.

Quark comment: Style sheet management has been included in QuarkXPress for a long time, e.g. the ability to append style sheets from other documents. Additionally, in QuarkXPress 7, style sheets can be included in Job Jackets for easy distribution and even synchronization over several workstations. InDesign does not offer such a feature.

VII. Placed InDesign Files

InDesign CS3 feature: InDesign (INDD) files can be placed in another InDesign document with notification on updates to the linked INDD file.

Quark comment: QuarkXPress 7 offers a unified, dynamic solution for sharing both complete pages and portions of a page. InDesign CS3 users have to use static 'snippets' to share pieces of a page and use 'placed layouts' (which have to be created from scratch as a complete layout) if they want dynamic, live sharing. It is not possible to simply designate an existing side bar as a shared layout, for example.

Users of Placed layouts in InDesign have to individually update each instance in each document when the source layout changes. QuarkXPress users have the option to receive automatic live updates.

Furthermore, Composition Zones in QuarkXPress 7 are not limited to print media. This means that design blocks can be shared between print, HTML and Flash. Even more importantly, copies of the Composition Zones are retained internally and can be always accessed. In InDesign, if the referenced layout is lost, there is no way to retrieve the data. In many cases this would render the file unprintable.

In QuarkXPress 7, style sheets and colors can even optionally be kept synchronized between the parent and the child layout. This is extremely helpful when using the "document-in-document feature" for collaboration. Adobe's approach seems to be that users need to manually compare and synchronize resources like style sheets after having used this feature. Composition Zones can do this automatically using Job Jackets.

Although InDesign's placed layouts can be cropped and scaled, InDesign CS3 has essentially the same, minimal pre-flighting features as InDesign version 1 did in 1999 and there is no warning available to users about the risks of scaling layouts with embedded graphics.

VIII. Rule-based Layouts from XML

InDesign CS3 feature: Scripts can apply rules to automatically build page layouts and format text and graphics from XML content.

Quark comment: The ability to build pages by scripting from structured data is something that QuarkXPress has offered via AppleScript® for some time. Adobe notes that XSL, a well documented standard, can typically provide the same functionality as their XML rules functions. Many proven QuarkXPress Server applications already offer rich XML import and automated layout functionality.

QuarkXPress 7 also has rich import features for XML that allow multiple layouts to be populated with content and even optionally exported as PPML, which is not supported by InDesign. QuarkXPress 7.2 adds new functionality to build rich, XML-based templates that include references to external images, text, design rules and more.

IX. Integrated Cross Media Design

Quark Comment: Integration between InDesign and Photoshop/Illustrator® has not advanced noticeably in the new release. QuarkXPress 7 retains its edge in terms of Photoshop support and InDesign retains its lead in being able to support more variants of native .ai files (QuarkXPress 7 can work directly with Illustrator's native PDF format.)

However, importing images into a page layout file is not a significant pain point for today's designer. The bigger issue is deploying content across multiple media. InDesign CS3 continues to follow a model of separate tools for separate tasks, with loose integration via XML packets and support for native PSD/AI files in each tool. From this perspective the 'Creative Suite®' is really more of a 'Creative Bundle' of disconnected applications.

"Package for GoLive" has been replaced by XHTML for Dreamweaver. This is a one-way export operation, and is, in fact, not closely tied to Dreamweaver. QuarkXPress 7 users can easily provide XML or XHTML to Dreamweaver. There is no live linking between InDesign layouts and Dreamweaver. InDesign CS3 supports video and Flash *import* for the creation of interactive PDF. However, there is no support for exporting Flash from InDesign, or in synchronizing content or layout between the two. InDesign Snippets and Placed Layouts cannot be used inside Dreamweaver or Flash. The design environments for print, Web and SWF are disconnected islands.

Conversely, QuarkXPress 7 users with Quark Interactive Designer can simultaneously design with synchronized content for print, Web and Flash (SWF) . Users can import SWF, Flash Video, etc. Composition Zones can be shared dynamically between all media, and even between separate designers.

Conclusion

Competition between QuarkXPress and InDesign has led to some benefits for InDesign users, who receive improved transparency and a simpler user interface. However, QuarkXPress 7 still holds the edge in these areas.

Due to the arrival of Quark XPert Tools Pro and recent enhancements to Job Jackets, QuarkXPress has more design functionality than ever before, including some features which are now being introduced in InDesign CS3 and others that InDesign still does not offer.

The area where InDesign CS3 offers least improvement is in the integration of page layout into cross-media. Despite the Macromedia acquisition, InDesign users are still unable to create content for SWF, and the new XHTML features do not offer design capabilities as such, but simply a different way to export raw content for later design in Dreamweaver. QuarkXPress users are able to use a unified design environment with synchronized content for all three media types and still take advantage of standards-based output if they wish to integrate with external software.

QUARK BRIEFING

Contact Quark to talk with a QuarkXPress 7 expert and learn more:

Americas:

MacLean Guthrie
corporate communications director
mguthrie@quark.com
303-894-3371

Central Europe:

Sandra Guiard
public relations specialist
sguiard@quark.com
+49-40-853328-36

Northern Europe:

Denise Duffy
public relations specialist
dduffy@quark.com
+44-0-870-734-6614

Southern Europe:

Stéphane Malagnac
public relations specialist
smalagnac@quark.com
+33-1-56-43-44-18