

Pathways to Print

The Complete Series for Desktop Publishing



Robin McAllister

Pathways to Print:

The Complete Series for Desktop Publishing

For preparers of desktop published documents for printing

Robin B. McAllister



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Contents

Introduction to Desktop Publishing

A realignment of responsibilities	5
An extreme shift in responsibility	6
A change in viewpoint	7
What you need to know before you ever sit down	9
Front ends and back ends	9
Resolution	10
The output process	11
Fonts	11
<i>Understanding the basics of PostScript</i>	12
Standardization is good	12
<i>About type</i>	13
Generations of type	13
PostScript fonts	14
Printer fonts and screen fonts	15
TrueType fonts	15
Managing fonts on the computer	16
Viewing fonts	16
<i>Know what you're working with</i>	17
WYSIMOLWYG (What You See Is More Or Less What You Get)	18
Designing for efficiency and effectiveness	21
Document size	22

Document structure	22
Type and text	25
<i>Managing type</i>	27
Hyphenation and justification (H&J)	29
Preparing graphics	33
Controlling file size	33
Cropping, scaling, and rotating	33
Blends	36
Efficient and effective scanning	39
Ten steps to a good scan	42
Coping with color	45
What is color?	45
Problems in specifying color	46
Hue, saturation, and value (HSV)	48
Color perception	49
Working with color	49
<i>Manipulation of color images</i>	49
Control	49
Windowing environment	50
Intelligence	50
Types of color production	50
<i>Spot color</i>	50
<i>Process color illustrations and scans</i>	50
<i>Hi-fi color</i>	51
Solutions to color production	51
Preparing documents for hi-res imaging	53
Types of files	55
About file links	57
Legal and ethical considerations	61
Ownership and usage	62
Copyright	62
<i>Copyrightable works</i>	63
<i>Copyrightable categories</i>	63
<i>Rights of copyright holders</i>	63
Software	64
Fonts	65

Design for Production

Designing for efficiency and effectiveness	73
Defining efficient and effective design.	74
Targeting results	75
Defining resources	77
Defining documents	77
What is a good document?	79
Paper and design	83
Standard sheet sizes	84
How is paper weight determined?	86
Paper color	87
Paper finishes	88
Working with color	91
Spot color	93
Process color	96
Nontraditional printing	99
Managing the varieties of color	99
Design dos and don'ts	101
Designing with text	109
The production process	116
Use typographic characters	118
Serif versus sans serif	121
Line length, spacing, and readability	123
Preparing graphics	125

Type Management

Type basics	135
The basics of type	137
Measuring type	139
Font technologies	143
Type 1 PostScript	143
<i>Multiple Master fonts</i>	146
<i>Benefits</i>	146
<i>Drawbacks</i>	146
TrueType	148
<i>Benefits</i>	149
<i>Drawbacks</i>	149
QuickDraw GX	149
Type and printing	151
How fonts are named	151
Font matching	154
Printing fonts	154

Managing fonts on the computer.	159
The mechanics of font access	164
Managing type in documents	167
Working with style	173
Work with the program, not against it	178
<i>Paragraph indents</i>	178
<i>Bulleted lists</i>	178
<i>Sentence spacing</i>	180
<i>Paragraph spacing (vertical)</i>	180
<i>Ruling options</i>	181
Type that looks good.	183
Using line length and spacing effectively.	190
Font foundries and distributors	193

Scanning and Image Manipulation

Scanning basics.	209
Setting up the system	211
Hardware considerations.	211
<i>The computer</i>	211
<i>Storage</i>	213
<i>The monitor</i>	214
<i>The scanner</i>	215
Our production environment	216
Compensating for dot gain on press.	220
System setup	221
Test the setup	226
Scanning line art.	229
Cleaning up line art scans in Photoshop	232
Cleaning up line art scans in vector-based programs.	233
Scanning grayscale images	237
Working with grayscale scans in Photoshop	244
<i>Identifying image characteristics</i>	244
<i>Adjusting for reproduction</i>	246
Compensating for imperfections	261

Trapping

The need for trapping.	277
Design versus production	278
Traditional and desktop trapping methods	279
Basics of trapping on the desktop	283
Trapping by design	287
Trapping in illustration programs.	289
Creating vector-based graphics.	290

Creating the trap manually	292
<i>To spread an object into the background, or choke the object</i>	292
<i>Trapping lines creates a different set of problems</i>	294
<i>Trapping to multiple backgrounds</i>	295
<i>Overprinting — How it works</i>	296
Automatic trapping functions	297
<i>Illustrator</i>	297
<i>FreeHand.</i>	299
<i>What makes these changes so important.</i>	299
Trapping in Adobe Photoshop	301
Trapping in QuarkXPress	305
QuarkXPress's three kinds of trapping	306
Guidelines for trapping text	314
Guidelines for trapping objects	315
Guidelines for trapping frames	316
Guidelines for trapping bitmapped images	316
Guidelines for trapping EPS images.	319
Guidelines for trapping blends	319
Guidelines for trapping everything	320
Trapping in Adobe PageMaker	323
Overriding the default.	324
<i>Object-level overprinting.</i>	324
<i>Color-level overprinting.</i>	325
<i>Working with black</i>	326
Working with PageMaker's trapping routine	328
<i>Process colors.</i>	328
<i>Spot colors.</i>	329
Trapping a publication	329
<i>Trap widths</i>	329
<i>Trapping thresholds</i>	330
<i>What you should know about the ink setup</i>	331
<i>Troubleshooting.</i>	333
Conclusion	335

Color

Making desktop color work	343
The issues involved	344
How we look at color.	347
What happens? And why?	348
<i>Film.</i>	348
<i>Camera</i>	350
<i>Scanner.</i>	352

Monitor	352
Printing: Process color	352
Printing: Hi-fi color	353
Color systems	355
Defining color objectively	355
CIE colorspace	355
HSV	357
Comparing color palettes	359
Color perception	361
Calibrating color	365
The monitor: Part of the problem, or of the solution?	366
Gamma adjustment made easy	368
Color management systems	375
Device-dependent color systems	375
RGB model	375
CMYK model	376
The color wheel	377
Device-independent color	377
L*a*b model	378
Color gamuts	379
What we need is a way to manage color	380
ICC and ColorSync 2	380
Color management systems	382
How we work with CMSs	384
Managing color with black	385
Vectors, rasters and images	389
Bitmapped (raster) images	390
Object-oriented (vector) images	391
Bitmapped and object art and trapping	392
Trapping object art	392
Trapping bitmapped images	393
File formats and data compression	395
Compressing data	397

Quality Assurance

Managing quality: An overview	405
QA versus QC	407
QA in the preimaging environment	408
QA in the output environment	409
QA in the production environment	411
Setting up the working environment	412
Using the right tools	420
Type selection to ensure quality	426

Controlling graphics	431
<i>Raster-based graphics</i>	432
<i>Vector-based graphics</i>	440
Preparing files for high-resolution imaging	445
<i>Prepare the files correctly</i>	445
<i>Provide enough information</i>	448
QA in the output environment.	453
What You Get Is What You've Got (WYSIWYG)	454
The service bureau's internal QA	455
Quality control — When there's a problem with the job	459
Quality assurance is everybody's business	459
Cooperation assures satisfaction	463
<i>The project</i>	464
<i>The process</i>	464
<i>Review.</i>	467
Calibrating the service bureau to the customer	467
Color management systems	469
Education	470
PostScript errors: Basic fixes.	473
Undefined Error: Offending Commands (various)	475

The Business Side

Business and legal considerations.	483
What is the ideal kind of work?	484
<i>Direct mail/marketing</i>	484
<i>Newsletters</i>	484
<i>Advertising</i>	485
<i>Technical documents</i>	486
<i>Database-driven publications</i>	487
<i>Books</i>	487
<i>Magazines</i>	488
<i>Compare and contrast</i>	488
What are we willing to do?	489
What kind of clients do we want to work with?	489
<i>Advertising agencies/design firms</i>	490
<i>The graphic arts industry (printers)</i>	490
<i>Corporate</i>	490
<i>Publishers (book)</i>	491
<i>Publishers (magazine)</i>	491
<i>Directory producers</i>	491
How do we want to work?	492
<i>Freelance.</i>	492

<i>Captive vendor</i>	492
<i>Employee</i>	493
What kind of investment are we willing to make?	493
<i>Setup expenses</i>	494
<i>Hardware</i>	494
<i>Software</i>	495
A legal note	496
Setting up for business	499
A look at organizational structure	499
<i>Corporations</i>	499
<i>Partnerships</i>	500
<i>Sole proprietorships</i>	501
<i>Trade names</i>	501
Planning for business	502
<i>Workflow</i>	502
<i>Cash flow</i>	504
<i>Paper flow</i>	512
Creating forms that work	515
Buying forms	515
Selling forms	518
Production forms	526
The client chase	537
How to reach customers	538
<i>The Direct Approach</i>	538
<i>The Indirect Approach</i>	539
How to make sure the customers we get are the customers we want	540
<i>Research the prospect's business</i>	540
<i>Research the prospect's ability to pay</i>	541
Pricing strategies: Responsibility to customers, ourselves and the industry	543
<i>Bases for fees</i>	543
<i>Fee arrangements</i>	544
How to build clients	545
Legal and ethical considerations	547
Software	547
<i>The moral issue</i>	548
<i>The legal issue</i>	548
<i>Responsibility</i>	549
Copyright	549
Glossary	555

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Contents

A realignment of responsibilities	5
An extreme shift in responsibility	6
A change in viewpoint	7
What you need to know before you ever sit down	9
Front ends and back ends	9
Resolution	10
The output process	11
Fonts	11
<i>Understanding the basics of PostScript</i>	12
Standardization is good	12
<i>About type</i>	13
Generations of type	13
PostScript fonts	14
Printer fonts and screen fonts	15
TrueType fonts	15
Managing fonts on the computer	16
Viewing fonts	16
<i>Know what you're working with</i>	17
WYSIMOLWYG (What You See Is More Or Less What You Get)	18
Designing for efficiency and effectiveness	21
Document size	22
Document structure	22

Type and text	25
Managing type	27
Hyphenation and justification (H&J)	29
Preparing graphics	33
Controlling file size	33
Cropping, scaling, and rotating	33
Blends	36
Efficient and effective scanning	39
Ten steps to a good scan	42
Coping with color	45
What is color?	45
Problems in specifying color	46
Hue, saturation, and value (HSV)	48
Color perception	49
Working with color	49
<i>Manipulation of color images</i>	49
Control	49
<i>Windowing environment</i>	50
Intelligence	50
Types of color production	50
<i>Spot color</i>	50
<i>Process color illustrations and scans</i>	50
<i>Hi-fi color</i>	51
Solutions to color production	51
Preparing documents for hi-res imaging	53
Types of files	55
About file links	57
Legal and ethical considerations	61
Ownership and usage	62
Copyright	62
<i>Copyrightable works</i>	63
<i>Copyrightable categories</i>	63
<i>Rights of copyright holders</i>	63
Software	64
Fonts	65

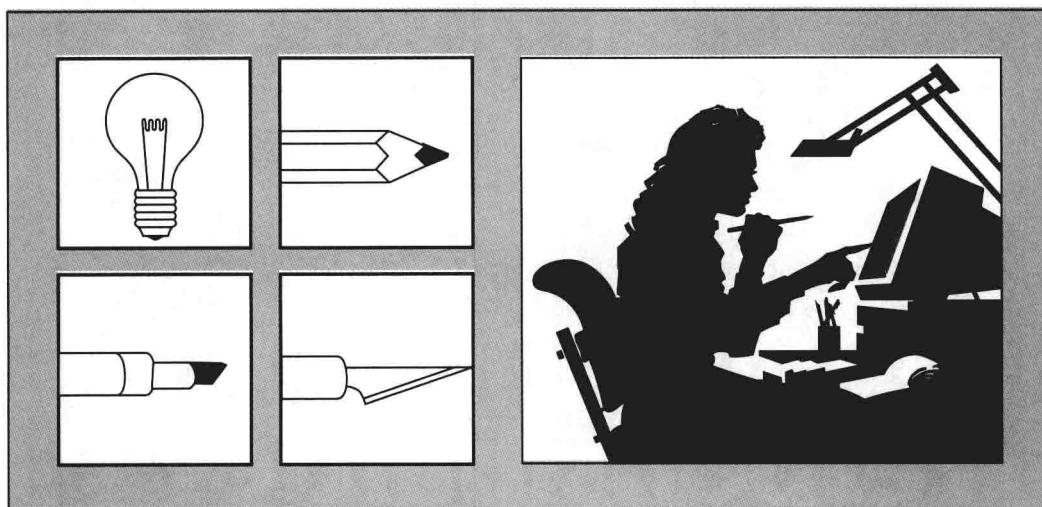


A realignment of responsibilities

A very few years ago, document preparation involved clearly defined activities undertaken by specialists in specific disciplines. Designers, writers, illustrators, and photographers formed the **creative group**. The **composition group** was comprised of typographers, pasteup artists, image assemblers, color separators, and lithographic camera operators; together they translated the creative group's ideas and images into a printable format. Printers and finishers (the **print group**) were responsible for creating the final ink-on-paper publication.

The emergence and popularity of desktop publishing (DTP) brought about a change of attitude—far more than it did a change in the realities of document preparation. Emphasis shifted from standards, artistry, and productivity to control, immediacy, and price. Ads hyping DTP create the illusion that all disciplines required to produce quality documents can be combined into one person, with the help of one or two software programs — the 20th-century Renaissance person!

Software gives us the tools to build pages, create illustrations and manipulate photographs. It is our responsibility, however, to learn to use the tools well. To become proficient in the use of illustration, image manipulation, and page layout programs, one must acquire an understanding of the program, invest the necessary time in initial instruction, and practice, practice, practice. This, of course, presupposes that the person already has a detailed understanding of the disciplines being undertaken.



To optimize DTP, *workgroups* should prepare long or complex documents—the variety of tasks required are usually too varied and too complex for any one individual to perform successfully. The highly developed skills from a base of contributors are linked together by telecommunications, network or “sneakernet,” lowering the barriers of time and portability that existed when “traditional” methods were used.

An extreme shift in responsibility

In the traditional prepress production cycle, work was allocated as follows:

Creative group responsibilities

- Technical and artistic correctness of original material
- Design of the document
- Sizing and cropping of photos
- Proofreading to ensure that no errors were introduced by the compositor

Composition group responsibilities

- Accurately reproducing editorial content
- Following design instructions
- Ensuring typographic excellence
- Making changes as directed
- Photographing line art, continuous-tone, and four-color art and photographs
- Inserting art and photos on pages as specified
- Ensuring quality of film or photographic paper
- Timely delivery