

Hold the front page

Do you want to do your own publishing? **Give the designer in you a free hand** and check out what we've got to say on both the small user and professional packages available. Ken McMahon reports.

Of all the design-based activities that have benefited from digital technology, desktop publishing is the most mature. DTP was born in 1985, with the release of PageMaker for the Apple Mac – the Windows version followed two years later. Thirteen years on and things look very different. The basic activity of arranging words and pictures on the page remains, but the tools with which that task is accomplished have changed, in method and scope, beyond recognition.

As with most design activities the market has divided into two.

Professional packages, costing anything from £200 to more than £1,000, provide the means to produce commercial colour publications of any length and technical complexity. This market is dominated by Quark XPress which is used to design and produce artwork for the vast majority of magazines, books, mailers, advertisements and other paper-based publications all over the world. PCW is produced using XPress. But Adobe hopes to wrestle a sizeable chunk of this market away from Quark with InDesign which it released in September last year.

For those who want to produce publications at home and business users whose occasional need for stationery and marketing materials doesn't justify the cost and time investment required by a professional package, there is an increasing range of applications, or more commonly software suites, available that score highly in the usability stakes. Although these are less powerful and flexible than their professional counterparts, they are becoming increasingly sophisticated, with advanced typographical features, the ability to create and edit graphics and output for four-colour and spot-colour printing.

Given their increasing sophistication, ease of use has become an important differentiating factor. They all provide some form of help and guidance as well as a collection of templates for common design projects. It is the standard of these materials and guidance as well as the quality of the interface that separates the excellent from the merely adequate.

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• DTP packages reviewed by Ken McMahon.

ILLUSTRATION TOM GREEN

Adobe InDesign

At last, a product worthy of **issuing a challenging** to the redoubtable Quark XPress.

In June 1999, when we last looked at desktop publishing packages, we evaluated an early beta copy of Adobe InDesign. It looked very good, and since its release last October, it has lived up to its early promise.

InDesign's market is easily defined. It is aimed at people and organisations that currently use Quark XPress.

Ordinarily, gaining a foothold in a market dominated by a virtual monopolist wouldn't be easy. Adobe's 'in' is that it produces other fundamental packages for design and production – Photoshop and Illustrator.

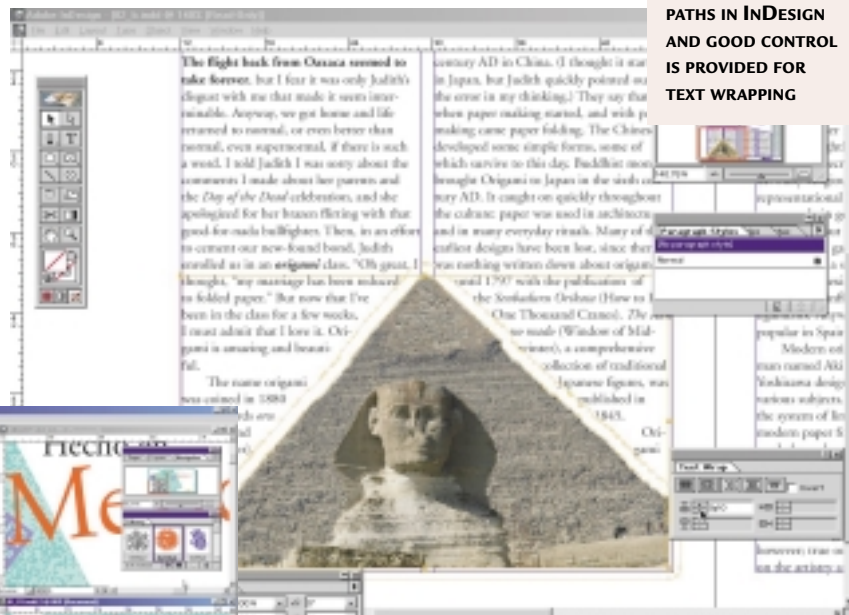
Secondly, it developed PostScript – the page description language for creating output on everything from a humble 300dpi laser printer to most of the high-end pre-press imagesetters.

Lastly, Adobe is developing its portable document format (pdf) into a pre-press wrapper which will probably become the standard method by which digital artwork travels from the studio to the printing press.

InDesign's interface will be familiar to Photoshop and Illustrator users. There is a main tool palette with keyboard shortcuts consistent with Illustrator and Photoshop. The layers palette works in just the same way, allowing you to rearrange layer order, lock layers and turn them on and off. There is also an XPress-style library of drag and drop frames, vector and bitmap graphics.

The navigator palette provides a quickly accessible method of panning and zooming and you can open several views on one document.

Like Quark XPress, InDesign uses frames to hold content. Unlike XPress, the frame doesn't define the content. In other words a frame can contain either text or a picture – you just press Ctrl & D and select what you want to go in it. InDesign frames can be nested and



FOUR VIEWS OF THE SAME DOCUMENT. LAYERS CAN BE TOGGLED ON AND OFF, LOCKED AND REARRANGED, JUST LIKE ILLUSTRATOR AND PHOTOSHOP

compounded and elements remain editable. So it's possible, for

example, to compound two frames so that one punches a hole in the other. It is also possible to import Illustrator and Photoshop files, so you can drag an image from

either onto an InDesign document.

In its early days digital typography did not have a good reputation. XPress improved things a lot and InDesign goes even further, providing typographical exactitude that matches hot metal and photomechanical technologies that preceded it.

At the core is Adobe's multi-line Composer, which achieves superior justified text by evaluating not just single lines of text, but looking up and down a column to assess the impact of changes in word and letter spacing. The result is that typical problems, such as very tightly spaced lines followed by very loose ones, are eliminated. 'Optical Margin alignment' automatically outssets punctuation marks so that the edges of justified columns appear cleanly aligned.

One of the obstacles to widespread adoption of InDesign is the legacy of XPress documents. Quark users will not be eager to migrate unless they can be

sure they can continue to edit and update their old files. Consequently Adobe has put considerable effort into ensuring XPress files will import into InDesign with minimum fuss.

Inevitably, there are imperfections. Colour gradients, text on curved paths, compound paths, tinted greyscales, and pictures with clipping paths can all create problems for InDesign. However, none of these are insurmountable. The test is whether InDesign's advantages outweigh the time and cost involved in manually updating Quark documents.

InDesign does have some bad points. For one thing it makes heavy demands on hardware and you'll need a fast machine with plenty of RAM to work at anything above a crawl. Another is that it will only print to a PostScript printer, though given the availability of software PostScript rips this isn't insurmountable.

YOU CAN EASILY CREATE CLIPPING PATHS IN INDESIGN AND GOOD CONTROL IS PROVIDED FOR TEXT WRAPPING

PCW DETAILS

★★★★★

Price £469 (£399 ex VAT)

Contact Adobe 020 8606 4001

www.adobe.com

Good points Flexible, powerful typography and layout tools

Bad points Power and memory hungry, PostScript printers only

Conclusion A very worthy contender to XPress' throne



Quark XPress 4.1

A hasty bug fix to counter opposition, but a **true upgrade** Xpress 5.0 will appear later this year.

For about a decade there has been only one choice of page layout software for professional designers – Quark XPress.

Adobe InDesign poses a serious threat to XPress and Quark knows it. Its first response was to try and buy Adobe and having been unsuccessful it's now concentrating on improving XPress in order to maintain a dominant position.

Quark has just released version 4.1 of XPress and we managed to get one of the first evaluation copies. The last major upgrade, from 3.32 to 4, was in October 1997. Version 4.1 is just a staging post on the way to XPress 5.0, which Quark says will ship late in 2000.

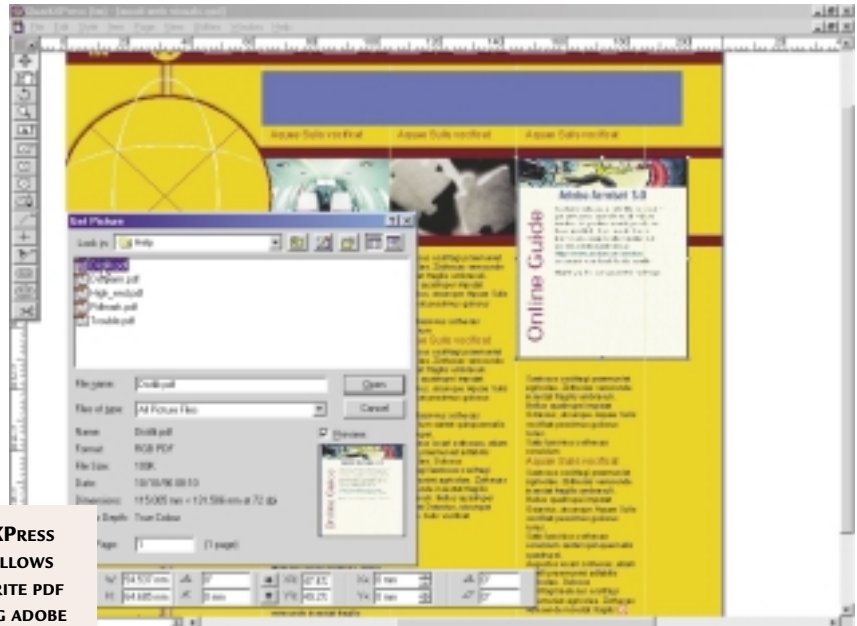
New features are thin on the ground, what has been included is mostly in the form of Xtensions. These include Quarklink – a web-based updater, HTML import and export filters, a pdf import filter, superstep and repeat and Scissors.

Quarklink is currently little more than a pre-configured mini-browser. The headlines palette displays news and updates about Quark and third-party Xtensions. A submenu, which Quark will be able to update, lets you access Quark tech support web pages and send email. Future versions will allow software updates, but there's no mention of the

page you want to import. This is limited to version 3 and earlier, so if you're producing pdfs using version 4 you'll need to save them in version 3 format if you want to put them on XPress pages.

You can now also write pdfs directly from within XPress. The software doesn't write pdfs by itself (this will be a feature of 5.0) but uses Adobe Acrobat Distiller. You will therefore need to have either Acrobat Distiller 3.0 or 4.0 installed to be able to export pdfs. As the filter works

The rest is mostly free third-party extensions of varying quality and bug fixes. Updated pictures now import with updated clipping paths rather than the existing one as used to happen. Also you're no longer prompted to save when you've done nothing other than print. This latest version is more stable and you'll no longer experience a crash if you try to change character styles in the character attributes dialog, when you update a tif file with non-white areas



► **QUARK XPRESS 4.1 NOW ALLOWS YOU TO WRITE PDF FILES USING ADOBE ADOBE DISTILLER**
▼ **THE NEW XTENSIONS ALLOW SCALE, ROTATE AND SKIN TRANSFORMS**

with both 3.0 and 4.0, you won't necessarily have to upgrade to the latest version. One very useful option is the ability to create hyperlinks

from lists and indexes. You can also nominate a specific list to be used for the creation of bookmarks.

HTML export, said Quark, 'is not intended to be comprehensive'. For that, you'll have to wait until version 5, though there is of course avenue.quark – which converts XPress content into XML format. In the meantime what you're looking at is the export of XPress text into html format and vice versa.

The two remaining Xtensions worthy of note are superstep and repeat, that add teeth to the existing command by allowing scale rotate and skew transforms, and scissors, which provides a new tool for slicing up bezier paths.

clipping to an eps, or when copying and pasting text between documents.

Version 5.0 will deliver vastly improved table creation and editing, layers, the ability to include fonts in collect for output and a compositing engine that performs multi-line analysis.

PCW DETAILS



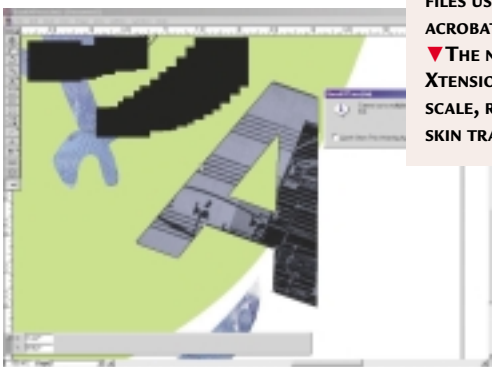
Price £816.62 (£695 ex VAT)
Passport – £1,032.83 (£879 ex VAT)

Contact Quark 01483 445566
www.quark.com

Good points Well-established, third-party Xtensions, multi-language support in Passport version

Bad points Disappointing upgrade with little of consequence added

Conclusion Upgrade for bug fixes, not new features



promised conflict resolver which was intended to offer fixes for bugs caused by software conflicts.

Support for Acrobat pdf comes in two forms. The first is an import filter which lets you place pdfs on the page like any other graphic – you create a picture box, press Ctrl & E and select the pdf. Obviously this only works with single pages, with multi-page documents you can specify the

Corel Ventura 8

Good for handling **long documents and varying column widths**, but falls behind on **typographics**.

In the late 1980s Ventura Publisher was one of a number of layout applications that capitalised on Windows to provide wysiwyg page layout for specialist publishing applications. Ease of use wasn't high on the list of priorities because producing these publications by conventional means (using embedded codes to format text and layout) was never easy and the mere fact that you could see the results on screen was a big step forward.

Ventura developed and built on its reputation for being able to handle long documents well. Publishers of technical manuals, legal documents, and reference books liked it because it coped with multi-part documents easily, enabled several authors to work co-operatively on one publication, and provided tools for automatic referencing and tables of contents.

Since it bought Ventura in 1993, Corel has made a fine job of maintaining it. Successive releases have strengthened and added to its array of long document publishing features. Corel has also tried to integrate Ventura with Draw and PhotoPaint.

But despite efforts to make it more accessible, Ventura isn't the package you'd choose for magazine or newsletter production – it's too complicated. On the other hand, if you regularly produce documents that run to several hundred pages, go through several revisions and require collaborative input from many individuals this is the way to do it.

Formatting in Ventura is tag-based. Tags are used to apply formatting styles to each layout element from pages through frames, paragraph and line styles to characters. Ventura's master page styles are also applied via tags.

PCW DETAILS



Price £339.57 (£289 ex VAT)

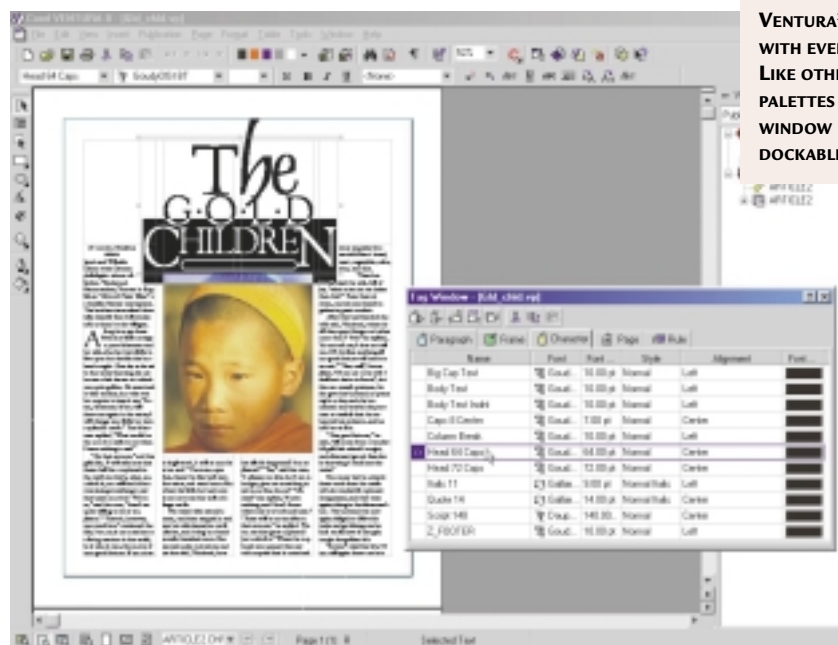
Contact Corel 00161 3728 0826

www.corel.com

Good points Long document features, web features, Corel integration

Bad points Complicated, steep learning curve

Conclusion For long complex, multi-authored projects and existing Corel users



VENTURA'S TAGS WITH EVERYTHING. LIKE OTHER PALETTES THE TAG WINDOW IS DOCKABLE

Page tags provide a very flexible method of setting up master page guides. Firstly, you can define different page tags for left and right-hand pages. You can also set different column widths on the same page. Most packages will only let you split the page into equal columns, but Ventura lets you create, say, an outer column that's narrower than the two inner columns. In most other packages you would have to create three equal columns on the master pages, then drag guides to indicate where you wanted the real columns to begin and end.

In previous versions of Ventura, formatting could only be applied to an individual paragraph by using an override, which resulted in two text modes – now you can apply changes to either specific paragraphs, or the tag itself. It's also now possible to preview changes before applying them. Having altered a paragraph style you can either apply the changes to the existing paragraph tag, or create a new tag based on the updated properties.

Ventura's grid features are less impressive, owing more to illustration than page layout. It's as though they've been grafted on from Draw without a thought for typography requirements.



ARTISTIC TEXT CAN BE CONVERTED TO PATHS AND RESHAPED OR, AS HERE, CONVERTED TO A FRAME INTO WHICH A PICTURE HAS BEEN DROPPED

While it's easy to align elements to the grid, type doesn't so much take a back seat as get left behind in the car park. There is no baseline grid on which to align type.

Ventura provides good typographic effects in the form of artistic text, which can be converted to bezier paths and then node edited. You can also convert artistic text to a frame which can then accommodate text or pictures.

Internet features have been radically enhanced. It's now possible to create hyperlinks to specific chapters and document files. There's support for frames, cascading style sheets, ftp, mailto protocols and image maps. Index entries converted to HTML include links to every mention of that entry in the entire document, rather than just the first entry, as was the case in version 7.

PageMaker 6.5 Plus

If you need to produce catalogues that are likely to undergo **layout changes**, this could be for you.

It's hard to believe that PageMaker once competed with XPress for domination of the professional publishing market. When Adobe merged with Aldus in 1994 the battle was already lost and Adobe repositioned it as a DTP solution for office professionals – people producing reports, flyers and catalogues.

Version 6.5 introduced powerful new features including document-wide layers, text and graphic frames, import of native Illustrator files, support for Acrobat 3 and web publishing features.

The Plus version adds content in the form of templates, illustrations in Illustrator format and 300 high-resolution photos. A template and picture palette gives easy access to the material and a toolbar provides shortcuts to commonly used features.

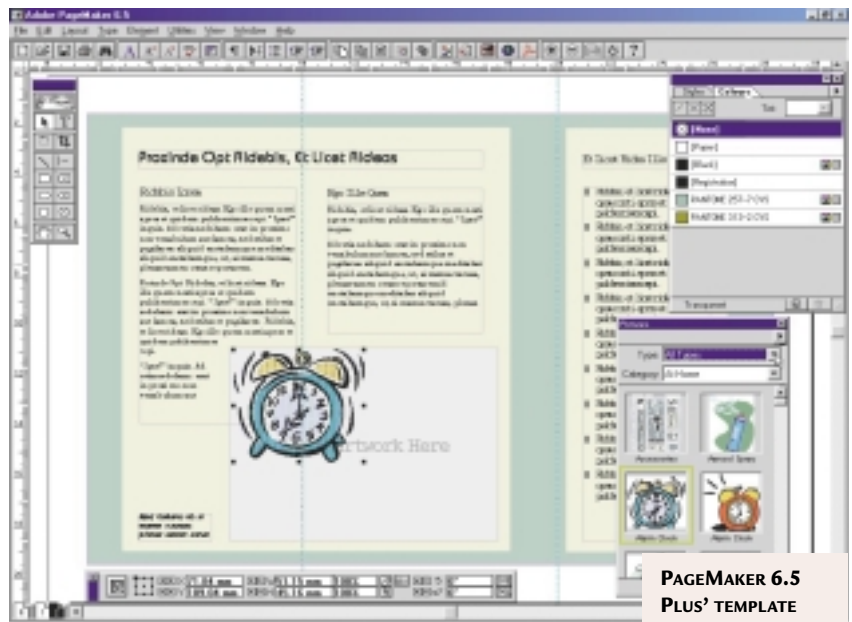
6.5 Plus ships with Photoshop 5.0LE, Acrobat Distiller and the Type-on-call CD with 220 free fonts. The redesigned interface makes it look a lot like Illustrator and Photoshop. Most features are accessed through interactive tabbed palettes.

A fairly unique feature is automatic layout adjustment, which also appears in InDesign. If you need to change the size or format of your document this useful feature rearranges all the page elements so that they fit the new layout.

This works better in some situations than others, depending on the original positioning of the elements and the degree of layout change required. PageMaker repositions and resizes objects with reference to margin, column and ruler guides.

Many of PageMaker's newer features are implemented as

**THE DROP CAP
PLUG-IN PRODUCES
LESS THAN INSPIRING
RESULTS**



**PAGEMAKER 6.5
PLUS' TEMPLATE
COLLECTION IS
NOTHING TO WRITE
HOME ABOUT, BUT
THE PICTURE
PALETTE IS A
WELCOME ADDITION**

plug-ins, though the quality of these is variable. The drop cap plug-in, for example, displays a simple dialog in which you enter the number of lines and click an apply button. This plug-in failed on every occasion to produce a decent drop cap that didn't require considerable post-plug-in editing to make it presentable.

One useful plug-in is the grid manager. This lets you set page margins and column grids individually for left and right pages and set up a baseline grid to which text and graphic elements can be aligned. Build Booklet is an imposition manager which allows you to arrange multiple spreads on a single sheet for commercial printing, re-order spreads, add and remove pages and even compensate for creep – where margins

move outwards at the front and back of large publications due to the bulk of the paper.

The Save for Service Provider runs a pre-flight to check for missing fonts, broken links to graphics and correct printing inks before saving all the necessary files to disk.

Adobe has included two converter applets for MS Publisher (97 and 98) and Quark XPress files. A certain

amount of tidying up will be required, but the simple XPress and Publisher documents we tried came across with few problems.

Support for web publishing is good. The new hyperlinks palette makes creation and testing of links a quick and simple process. An enhanced HTML export plug-in allows you to choose pages for export and automatically downsamples graphics to 72dpi and converts them to gif or jpeg format.

PageMaker will never match Publisher 2000 for ease of use, but in combination with Photoshop LE and Acrobat, PageMaker 6.5 Plus provides a powerful suite of publishing tools both for paper-based publications and the web.

PCW DETAILS

★★★★

Contact Adobe 020 8606 4001
www.Adobe.com

Price £351.33 (£299 ex VAT)

Good points Auto layout adjustment, web features

Bad points Poor-quality content

Conclusion A halfway house between pro and home packages

MS Publisher 2000

If your life depended on producing a publication in 10 minutes, this is the package to choose.

Publisher is part of Microsoft's Office 2000 suite, though you can also buy it as a standalone application, or twinned with PictureIt 2000, Microsoft's image-editing application. This latest release both adds relevant new features and builds on Publisher's reputation for ease of use.

The first thing you see when Publisher launches is the catalogue which displays big template thumbnails. You can

choose templates based on wizards or design, and there are also blank ones.

New quick publication wizards help you produce single-page poster-style documents almost instantly; a new catalogues section has been added and 10 new master sets expand the range.

Having chosen a basic template, the wizard helps you select a colour scheme, column layout, print options and so on. You can use the wizard to modify the design, or to add elements – for example a calendar, or customer order form.

New touches are a measurements palette, that provides fast access to text properties like tracking, scaling, and line spacing, and the ability to flip pictures.

Facilities for commercial printing have been greatly improved with support for CMYK and Pantone spot colours, automatic and

manual trapping control and a 'pack and go' feature which collects all the elements and will copy them to several disks for delivery to an output bureau. There's also a publication checker which, though not up to the standard of professional pre-flighting, will highlight any obvious design and print problems.

The web-publishing wizard now includes more design templates, backgrounds and animated gifs.

PCW DETAILS

★★★★

Price £78.72 (£67 ex VAT)

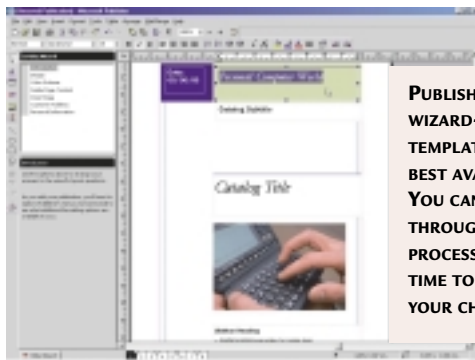
Contact 0345 002 200

www.microsoft.com

Good points Simple interface, great templates, wizard web tools

Bad points Depressing absence of competition

Conclusion Ease of use and excellent templates make this one a winner



PUBLISHER 2000'S WIZARD-BASED TEMPLATES ARE THE BEST AVAILABLE. YOU CAN GO BACK THROUGH THE PROCESS AT ANY TIME TO CHANGE YOUR CHOICES

GSP Power Publisher

If you're a small business user, this is an easy way to produce professional stationery and flyers.

In a previous life Power Publisher was GSP Pressworks, then GSP updated it and incorporated it in a publishing suite including Designworks 3.5 – a vector draw application, a photo editor, address book and clip art collection collectively called Power Publisher 3.

Like most publishing packages aimed at the home and small-business user, Pressworks makes extensive use of wizard-based templates (called page pilots) so that lack of design know-how is less of a problem than it would be if you had to start from scratch.

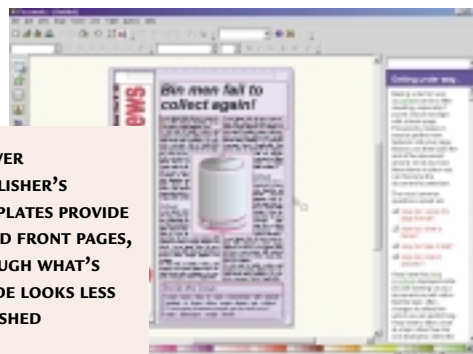
The page pilots are not as good as MS Publisher's wizards, but they do offer a choice of different layouts, font schemes and colours.

What's more, the templates on which they are based provide a reasonably wide range of appropriate material. The business stationery page pilots, for

example, include basic templates for letterheads, business cards, compliments slips, fax headers and so on.

There is a fair collection of conventional templates for everything from Avery labels to CD inlay cards.

Having got past the template stage further guidance is provided by the help assistant – a context-sensitive window to the right of the editing area – which provides information relevant to the particular tool or command you select.



POWER PUBLISHER'S TEMPLATES PROVIDE GOOD FRONT PAGES, THOUGH WHAT'S INSIDE LOOKS LESS POLISHED

Editing tools are reasonably versatile, frames can contain either text or pictures that can be grouped together, rotated and locked in position on the page.

Powertext allows you to apply a range of text effects including 3D extrusions and, like PagePlus, Pressworks has a built-in photo-editing applet for basic image editing, but no special effects filters.

A recent upgrade to version 3.04 fixes a number of bugs, including improved handling of powertext and a fix so that Pressworks runs on Windows NT with the Year 2000 patch installed.

PCW DETAILS

★★★

Price £49.95 (£42.50 ex VAT)

Contact 01480 496 575

www.gspltd.co.uk

Good points Templates, help assistant

Bad points Inflexible, limited

Conclusion Falls well short of Publisher

Serif PagePlus 5.0

Clever editing for **logos and good proofing** are combined with a very a low price, but little else.

Serif PagePlus 5 is a budget DTP application in need of a facelift. The Professional edition includes lots of power features like spot and process colour separations, trapping control and table and logo design modules. On its release over two years ago, this kind of control was unheard of in packages for the non-professional user, but now they are commonplace.

Serif's interface also looks jaded. It is very Office-like, with a standard, context-sensitive grey toolbar along the top and another down the side.

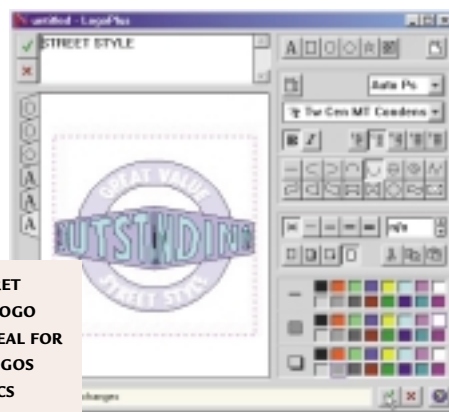
PagePlus uses basic templates in combination with a wizard to build the bare bones of a publication. The wizard adds little, other than allowing you to choose from a limited number of styles and colour schemes and placing your company details at appropriate places.

The template collection too leaves a lot to be desired. While you might be prepared to use the party and domestic

stuff, the business templates are woefully inadequate.

The saving grace is LogoPlus, a perfect little applet which provides a layered editing window with a set of tools for creating logos and other graphics. There's a decent library of logos, stamps and flashes that you can edit and the tools and interface strike the right balance between power, flexibility and ease of use.

Another area in which Serif started ahead of the competition is proofing features. PagePlus includes spell checking, layout checking and proof-reading wizards. Until it gets an upgrade, though, newer applications like Publisher have better features and are easier to use.



SERIF'S SECRET WEAPON – LOGO PLUS – IS IDEAL FOR CREATING LOGOS AND GRAPHICS ON-THE-FLY

PCW DETAILS



Price £48.52 (£39 ex VAT)

Contact Serif 01625 539 494

www.serif.com

Good points Logo Plus, proofing

Bad points Templates, wizards, interface

Conclusion Lowest price, lowest quality

PrintMaster 8.0

A neat, well thought-out package with **loads of content**, let down only by its poor templates.

PrintMaster Home Premier 8.0 is comprehensive, consisting of no fewer than 11 CDs, nine of which contain templates, clip art, fonts and other content. As well as the PrintMaster application you get Serif Drawplus 3, Broderbund's Photo Organizer 1.4 and an address book and event reminder.

Printmaster is quite good for creating quick, simple projects. You start at the 'hub' which offers three

options – ready-made documents, 'with help' guided projects and 'brand new' blank templates.

The 'with help' projects are wizard-driven, but limited in scope. The newsletter is typical: first you choose from business, educational or personal.

Regardless of which you choose, you are next given three options – classical, contemporary and whimsical, and then the number of pages and that's it.

The only difference between the three initial categories is content. The

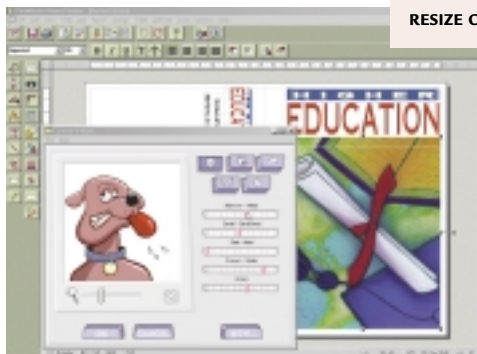
business newsletter is for a travel agent, the personal one is about gardening, but there's no evidence that any thought has gone into making the design appropriate, and renders them virtually useless for business.

The interface is well designed and features big tool buttons with hint panels to tell you what they are and an uncluttered editing window. In addition

to the usual text and graphic tools there are some interesting diversions. The best of these is Cartoon-o-matic, which lets you edit cartoon characters by means of sliders that control the size and shape of limbs and facial features.

Also included is PhotoWorkshop, which allows you to retouch and apply filter effects to bitmap images and includes red-eye removal, colour balancing and basic cut-out tools.

CARTOON-O-MATIC IS A NIFTY LITTLE TOOL WHICH LETS YOU EDIT AND RESIZE CARTOONS



PCW DETAILS



Price £70.45 (£59.99 ex VAT)

Contact The Learning Company

01444 246 333

www.mindscapeuk.com

Good points Loads of content, clean and modern interface, Cartoon-o-matic

Bad points Thoughtless template design

Conclusion The Official Opposition to MS Publisher 2000



Electronic publishing

If you plan to build **your own website**, ensure your DTP package has the tools to let you do it.

If you want to create a website, the best way is to use a dedicated HTML authoring tool such as Macro-media's Dreamweaver or PageMill.

For home users, having web authoring tools built into a desktop publishing suite means you don't have to pay for and learn to use another package which essentially does the same thing.

The four packages aimed at the home and small-business user all provide the tools and guidance necessary to produce simple, but attractive websites. MS Publisher 2000 strikes a good balance between ease of use and creative flexibility and now has a substantial library of backgrounds and animated gifs, though this kind of content is freely available all over the web.

Both Pressworks and PagePlus use a similar wizard approach to Publisher, but

the results are less polished. Page Plus has very good facilities for producing animated gifs and scrolling banners and PressWorks has attractively designed templates, but is let down by poor editing tools.

For professionals, developers are including basic web functionality, such as the ability to include hypertext links combined with an HTML export filter.

Ventura 8 supports such HTML features as frames, image maps, cascading style sheets, ftp, news and mailto protocols. Index entries are automatically linked to every occurrence of the word within the document – an improvement on version 7 which only linked to the first occurrence.

PageMaker 6.5 has a new hyperlinks palette and plug-ins provide HTML import and export features. The export

filter works on both text 'stories' and complete pages. PageMaker converts images to gif or jpeg when you export to HTML or create a pdf and you can also drag page elements from PageMaker onto PageMill, Adobe's web authoring package.

XPress 4.1 ships with Quark's new HTML export filter, the beta of which has been available on the Quark website for some time. This filter is limited to import and export of text only, you can't turn an XPress page or document into HTML.

Instead, Quark has opted for a much more ambitious and intelligent way of automatically repurposing content for the web, *avenue.Quark*. This provides a route for moving content from XPress pages into XML (Extensible markup language) format. XML uses labels to describe data, for example.

Beginners' guide to design

Want your publication to make **a good impression**? Follow our guidelines and you'll be successful.

By following a few simple guidelines you can make your publications more presentable, inviting and professional. As well as providing a more enjoyable publication, following basic layout principles also makes your job much easier.

Use a column grid. Split your page into two, three or four columns and align all page elements to them. Try to keep body copy text within the column measure, though you can run headlines across several columns for impact.

Pick two typefaces – one for body text and another for headings – and stick to them. One convention is to use a serif face for body and sans serif for headings.

Don't be tempted to change the point size to get text to fit your layout. Once you start down this road the integrity of your design will start to crumble. The same goes for leading (line spacing) and horizontal scaling. You can get away with a little bit of tracking to save the odd line or two.

If your text doesn't fit you have several options, depending on whether you have too much or too little. You can

cut it, write more, add or remove other elements. Look to pictures, pull quotes, cross heads, and graphics to adjust the length of the layout until everything fits. Avoid overuse of bold and italic and never use all capitals for emphasis.

Use style sheets – they make life easier and ensure consistency. Define style sheets for every typographical element from body text and headlines to captions, intros, pull quotes and crossheads.

Break up long swathes of text with pictures, crossheads (subheadings in the body text) pull quotes (short 'sound-bites' from the body text set in a larger typesize between quote marks), box-outs (short pieces on a related theme) and anything else you can find.

Don't fill every square inch of the page. Leave adequate space between columns and around the elements on the page. Large areas of white space help to emphasise the individual parts of the page and give the layout balance. Either leave plenty of space around heading text, or leave an outside column blank.

Steal ideas from other publications. Take a look at how *PCW* is designed.

Other good sources of layout ideas are Sunday supplements, coffee table books, and just about any magazine.

Colour, used intelligently, can transform your publications. As with fonts, it pays to decide on a scheme using one or two base colours and build on that with tints. Colour can be used to provide visual clues as to content, but only if you use it consistently.

Solid colour can be used effectively on large display type, but avoid using it on body text. If you're using dark colours you can set crossheads, or pull quotes in white on a panel of the dark colour. You can use a tint, 40 per cent or so, to produce a box-out panel with black text.

Proofread your publication prior to printing to avoid embarrassing errors. Get a fresh pair of eyes to check it too. Other than typographical errors, check for widows and orphans (single words or phrases at the end of a paragraph, especially at the top of a new column, or the first line of a new paragraph at the bottom of a column), mis-alignments, pictures, incorrect page numbers and dates and overflowed text boxes.

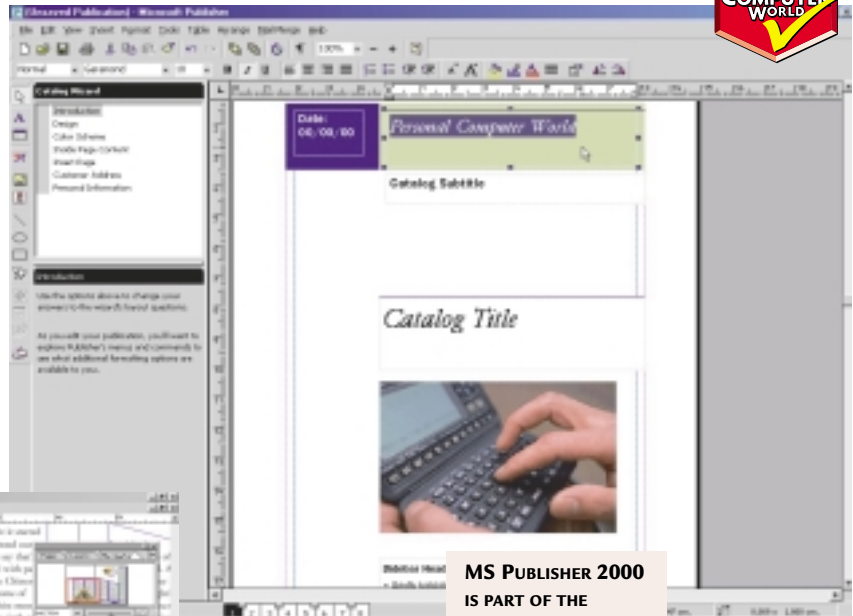
Table of features

PRODUCT	ADOBE INDESIGN 1.0	QUARK XPRESS 4.1	COREL VENTURA 8.0	PAGEMAKER 6.5 PLUS
MANUFACTURER	ADOBE	QUARK	COREL	ADOBE
Telephone	020 8606 4001	01483 455 566	00161 3728 0826	020 8606 4001
Web	www.adobe.com	www.quark.com	www.corel.com	www.adobe.com
Platforms	Win95/98/NT, MacOs	Win95/98/NT, MacOs	Win95/98/NT	Win95/98/NT, MacOs
Street price (ex VAT)	£469 (£399)	£816.62. (£695) Passport £879 (£1,032.83)	£339.57 (£289)	£351.33 (£299)
Style sheets	✓	✓	✓	✓
Colour management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Plug-ins	✓	✓	Quark Xtensions for bitmap effects	✓
Colour separation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scripting	✓	✗	✓	✓
Bezier tools	✓	✓	✓	✗
Clipping paths	✓	✓	✗	✗
Text on a path	✓	✓	✓	✗
Convert text to path	✓	✓	✓	✗
Auto table of contents	✗	✓	✓	✓
Auto indexing	✗	✓	✓	✓
Multiple users	✗	✓	✓	✗
Tables	✓	✗	✓	✓
Preflight	✓	✗	✓	✓
Collect for output	✓	✓	✓	✓
Layers	✓	✗	✗	✓
PDF	✓	✓ Needs Distiller	✗	✓ Distiller supplied
Web features	PDF creation	HTML text import and export	HTML export, image maps, Java	HTML import and export export animation and sound clips
				
PRODUCT	MS PUBLISHER 2000	GSP POWER PUBLISHER	SERIF PAGEPLUS 5.0	PRINTMASTER HOME PREMIER
MANUFACTURER	MICROSOFT	GSP	SERIF	MINDSCAPE
Telephone	0345 002 200	01480 496 575	01625 539 494	01444 246 333
Web	www.microsoft.com	www.gspltd.com	www.serif.com	www.mindscapeuk.com
Platforms	Win95/98/NT,	Win95/98/NT	Win95/98/NT	Win95/98/NT
Street price (inc VAT)	£78.72 (£67)	£49.95 (£42.50)	£48.52 (£39)	£70.45 (£59.99)
Style sheets	✓	✓	✓	✗
Colour management	✓	✗	✗	✗
Plug-ins	✗	✗	✗	✗
Colour separation	✗	✓	✓	✗
Scripting	✗	✗	✗	✗
Bezier tools	✗	✗	✗	✗
Clipping paths	✗	✗	✗	✗
Text on a path	✗	✗	✗	✗
Convert text to path	✗	✗	✗	✗
Auto table of contents	✗	✗	✓	✗
Auto indexing	✗	✗	✓	✗
Multiple users	✗	✗	✗	✗
Tables	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preflight	✓	✗	✗	✗
Collect for output	✓	✗	✗	✗
Layers	✗	✗	✗	✗
PDF	✗	✗	✗	✗
Web features	Web wizard, HTML	Web pilot, HTML export	Web, scrolling banner, animated gif & MS Web publishing wizards	Web templates, wizard and content, HTML export

Editor's Choice

If you are looking for an easy-to-use, inexpensive package for producing newsletters, fliers, catalogues or business stationery, the clear **Editor's Choice** is Microsoft Publisher 2000. Both novices and experienced users rely on templates to shortcut the often time-consuming and difficult process of designing from scratch. Publisher has some of the best templates included in either the home or professional packages we've reviewed.

The standard of guidance provided by Publisher's wizards is also of a superior standard. Firstly, they deliver real variety, providing much more than



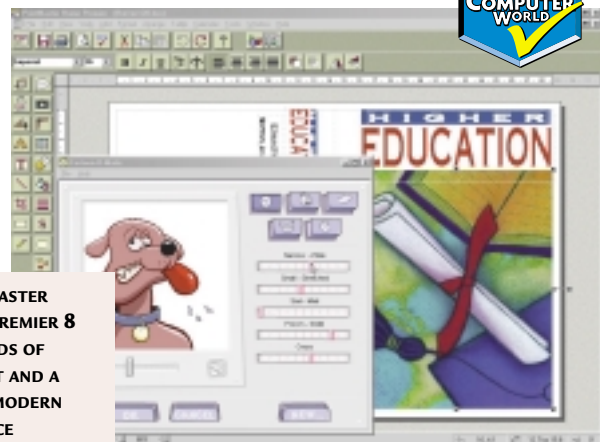
**MS PUBLISHER 2000
IS PART OF THE
OFFICE 2000 SUITE.
ITS REPUTATION IS
WELL DESERVED**

barriers to
tempting
Quark users

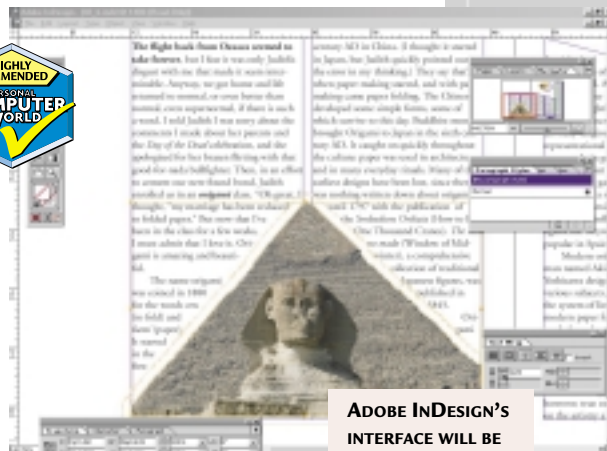
over to InDesign is the issue of file compatibility, but Adobe has paid close attention to this and most files import into InDesign with the minimum of fuss.

Finally, also recommended is Mindscape's PrintMaster Home Premier 8. This is the first look we've had at the package and its fresh approach combined with a wealth of content provides a welcome addition.

A well designed interface with big tool buttons and hint panels helps first-time users to easily get to grips with the package. The innovative Cartoon-o-matic, with its editable characters, only adds to the fun.



**PRINTMASTER
HOME PREMIER 8
HAS LOADS OF
CONTENT AND A
CLEAN, MODERN
INTERFACE**



**ADOBE INDESIGN'S
INTERFACE WILL BE
REASSURINGLY
FAMILIAR TO
PHOTOSHOP AND
ILLUSTRATOR USERS**

mere cosmetic changes to the base templates. What's more, they remain active so you can go back at any time and amend your choices.

The publication checker also helps to reduce the potential for nasty shocks when you get your finished product back from the printer and the ability to translate print content into web material is a bonus.

Finally, Microsoft has, and will most likely continue to support Publisher in the future, so regular upgrades are assured.

For professionals, Adobe InDesign looks an even more attractive bet and wins the first of our **Highly Commended** awards. In terms of features, InDesign is far in advance of anything the competition has, or is likely to have in the near future. The lengthy list includes document-wide layers, scripting, unlimited undo, five to 4,000

per cent magnification, 18ft wide spreads, limitless pasteboard, native editable import from Photoshop and Illustrator, nested editable frames, plus advanced typographic control.

Adobe's development of pdf as a prepress output format further strengthens the case for InDesign, which can export directly to pdf format.

PostScript Extreme, which has PostScript and pdf at its core, makes the job of preparing publications for output easier, less prone to error and more flexible, while at the same time eliminating the need to rework them for different media. In other words you can send the same document for output to a composite digital printer, commercial four-colour press and the web with no additional formatting.

One of the big