How to prepare files for print

Preparing files for printing involves the following steps:

- Setting printer settings
- Using Preflight to confirm that the file has all components necessary for printing
- Packaging the files for printing

For more information on printing, see the Adobe Print Resource Center at www.adobe.com/go/print_resource.

Printing to a printer

You set printer settings through the Adobe InDesign CS6 Print dialog box. In the following steps, you set printer settings and then print to your printer.

To print to a printer:

1. Start InDesign and open the document to be printed.
2. Select File > Print.

   The Print dialog box appears (**Figure 1**) with the General area selected in the left pane.
3. Under Pages, select the pages you want to print.
4. Under Options, make sure Visible & Printable Layers is selected in the Print Layers menu.

   This means everything you see in your InDesign document will print.
5. In the left pane, choose Setup.

   The Setup area of the Print dialog box appears (**Figure 2**).
6. In the Paper Size menu, select Letter (Windows) or US Letter (Mac OS).

   This the default size paper loaded in most printers. Alternately, you can select the dimensions of the paper in your printer.

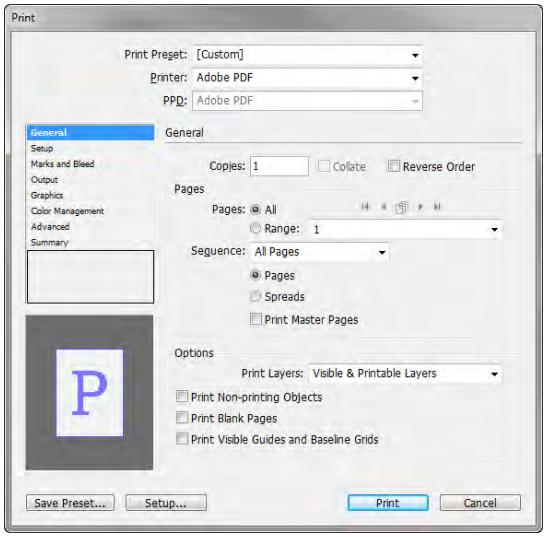

Figure 1 Print dialog box, General area

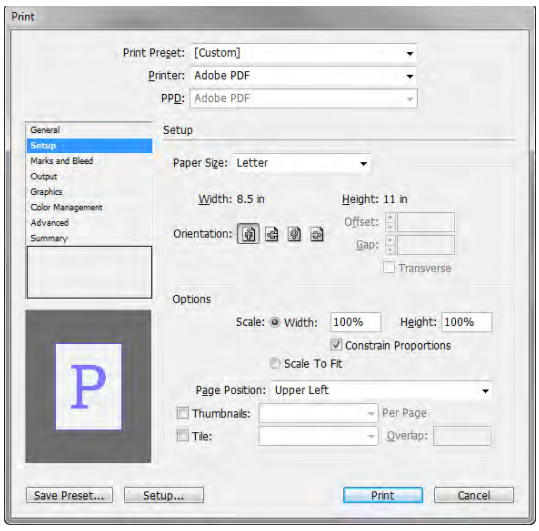

Figure 2 Print dialog box, Setup area

7. In the left pane, choose Marks And Bleed to display the Marks And Bleed area of the Print dialog box.
8. Select the All Printer's Marks option (**Figure 3**).

   This tells InDesign to print all the marks that let you cut your document to the desired size. See **Figure 5** for an example of marks.

   Because printers do not print to the page edge, you will usually need to crop your document after printing. *Crop marks* show you where to cut your document.
9. Select Output in the left pane.

   The Output area of the Print dialog box appears (**Figure 4**).
10. In Output settings, make sure Composite RGB is selected in the Color menu.
11. Leave the other settings unchanged, and click Print to print the document.

    When the document prints, it shows all of the printer's marks (**Figure 5**).

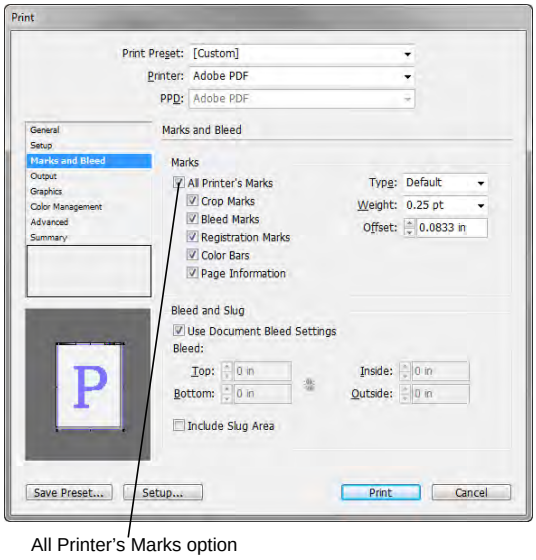

Figure 3 Print dialog box, Marks And Bleed area

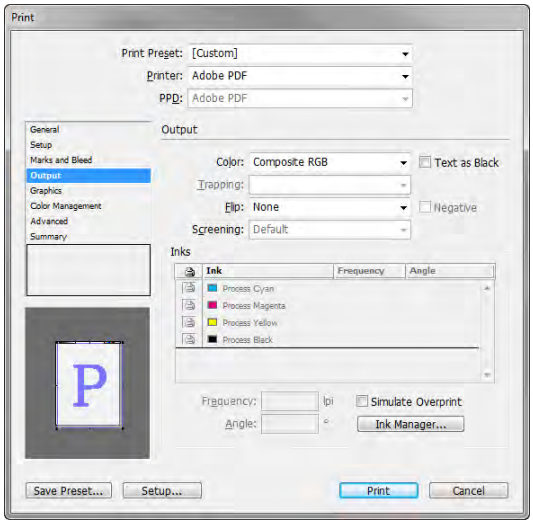

Figure 4 Print dialog box, Output area

Figure 5 Printed file with printer's marks

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Sending files to a print vendor

Unlike your printer at home or school, print vendors have very specific requirements for what they will print. These requirements have been established to ensure the printed copies you receive look the way you expected. As you gain experience as a designer, you will find that meeting these requirements results in fewer problems with print vendors. After all, you're paying a lot of money to get your designs printed.

Most print vendors accept print projects in one of two formats:

- *PDF/X-1:* A special kind of PDF that restricts PDF features (such as comments) that might interfere with the print process.
- *Native files:* The set of files you used to create your InDesign document. These include the InDesign file itself, any fonts used in the document, and any image files used in the document.

Preparing a PDF/X-1 for a print vendor

The PDF/X-1 file format is widely used by print vendors in the United States. PDF/X-1 is a PDF file that excludes everything that might interfere with producing a quality print job, such as RGB images, annotations, form fields, and comments. For more information, see www.pdfx.info/.

Note: Because PDF/X-1 excludes all RGB images, you need to be sure the images in your InDesign document are CMYK. It is best to convert images to CMYK TIFFs in Photoshop before placing them in an InDesign file.

To prepare a PDF/X-1 file:

1. Start InDesign and open the document you want to prepare for a print vendor.
2. Choose File > Export.

   The Export dialog box appears (**Figure 6**).
3. Specify a name and location for the file.
4. Specify Adobe PDF (Print) in the Save As Type menu (Windows) or the Format menu (Mac OS).
5. Click Save.

   The Export Adobe PDF dialog box appears (**Figure 7**).
6. From the Adobe PDF Preset pop-up menu, choose PDF/X-1a:2001.
7. Leave other settings unchanged, and click Export.

   A message will appear that shows you the progress of the export.
8. When the export is complete, browse to the location of the exported file and open the file.

   The PDF looks like any other PDF, without comments and other features.
9. Close the file without saving.

   Note: Be careful not to save the exported document in Adobe Acrobat X. Saving the document could change the settings, meaning the document would no longer conform to the PDF/X-1a:2001 standard.

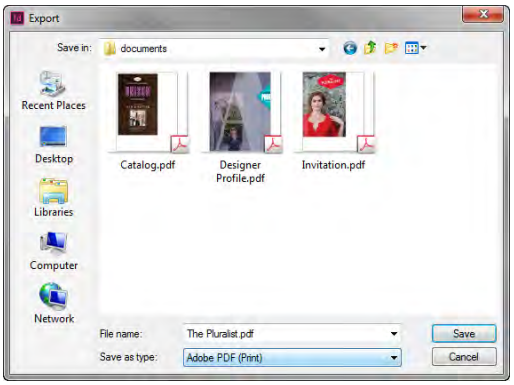

Figure 6 Export dialog box

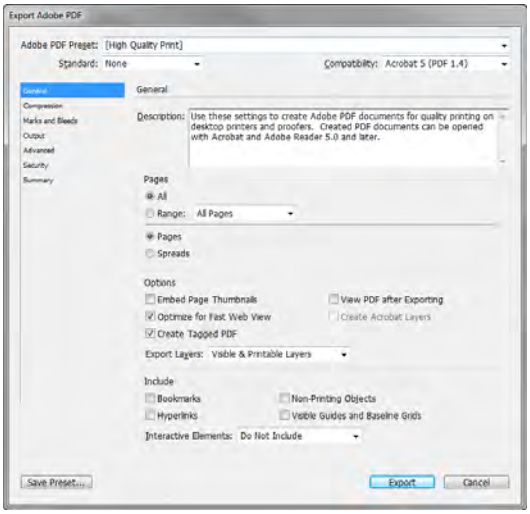

Figure 7 Export Adobe PDF dialog box

Sending native files to a print vendor

Some print vendors may require you to send native files to be printed. *Native files* consist of the following:

- The InDesign file for the project
- Any images used in the project
- Any fonts used in the project

To prepare native files, first check that all of the appropriate files are available, and then package these files in one folder to send to the print vendor.

Using Preflight

Use a feature of InDesign called Preflight to confirm that all graphics and fonts used in the file are available for printing. *Preflight* is the industry-standard term for performing a quality check on the document.

While you edit your document, the Preflight panel warns of problems that can prevent a document or book from printing or outputting as desired. These problems include missing files or fonts, low-resolution images, overset text, and a number of other conditions.

To take advantage of live preflighting, create or specify a preflight profile in the early stages of creating a document. If Preflight is turned on, a red circle icon appears in the status bar when InDesign detects any problems. You can open the Preflight panel and view the Info section to get basic guidance for fixing the problems.

To use Preflight:

1. Double-click the Preflight icon at the bottom of the document window. The Preflight icon is green if no errors are detected or red (**Figure 8**) if errors are detected.

   The Preflight panel appears.

   For this print job Preflight encounters one missing image that appears in two places (**Figure 9**).

2. In this example, the Alice Ritter drawing image link is missing. Double-click the image file in the Preflight panel to help locate the broken link within the InDesign layout.

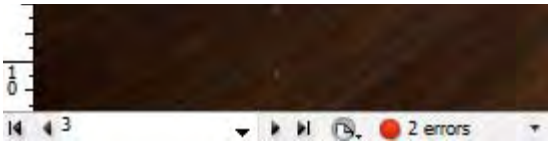

Figure 8 Preflight icon in document window

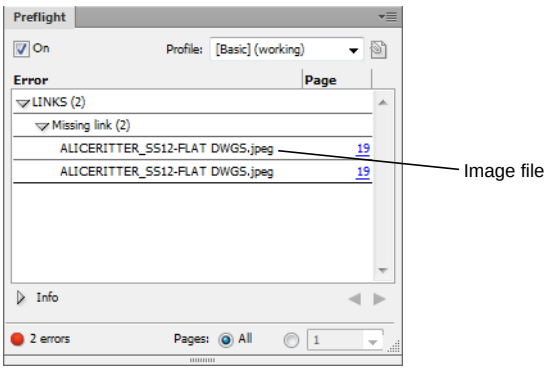

Figure 9 Error area of the Preflight panel

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3. Choose Window > Links.

   The Links panel shows all images placed in the document. Broken links are flagged with a question mark symbol (**Figure 10**).

4. In the example (**Figure 10**), the Alice Ritter drawing image is missing. To locate the image on your system, double-click the question mark icon.

   If the image is not on your system, you should copy the image to your system before continuing to prepare the package. Without the image file, your print vendor will not be able to print your document correctly.

   The Locate dialog box appears (**Figure 11**).

5. In the Locate dialog box, browse to the location of the missing image.

6. Select the image and click Open.

   The Locate dialog box closes.

7. Return to the Preflight panel and confirm that all preflight errors have been resolved.

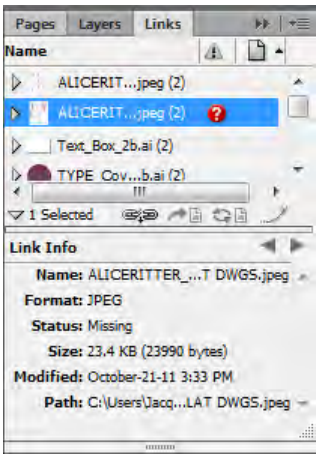

Figure 10 Preflight Links and Images category

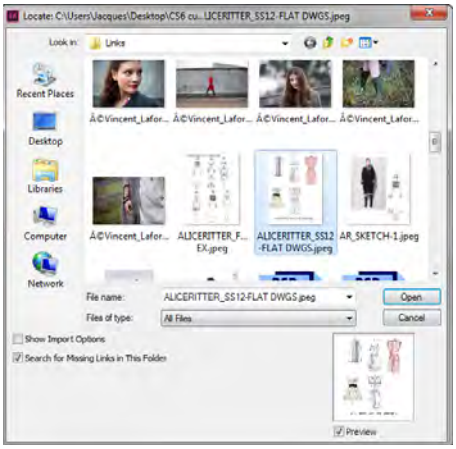

Figure 11 Locate dialog box

Packaging files for a print vendor

When you *package* a file, you collect into one folder all of the assets a print vendor will need to print the file. You could do this manually, but the Package utility in InDesign makes this process much easier.

To package a file:

1. Choose File > Package. (If Package does not appear in the File menu, try choosing a different workspace, such as Window > Workspace > Advanced.)

   The Summary area of the Package dialog box appears (**Figure 12**). An alert icon indicates any problem areas.

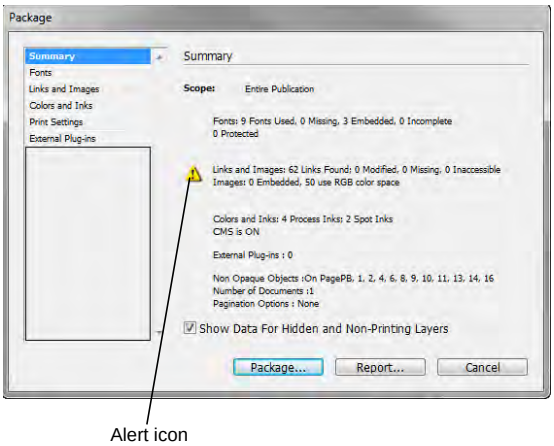

Figure 12 Package dialog box, Summary area

2. If you're notified of problems in the Package dialog box, do one of the following:
   - Click Cancel, and use the Preflight panel to resolve problem areas.
   - In the left pane, click the problem area (such as Fonts) and then correct the problem. When you're satisfied with the document, begin the packaging process again.
3. When there are no problems, click Package in the Package dialog box to begin packaging.

   The Printing Instructions dialog box opens (**Figure 13**).
4. Fill in the printing instructions. The filename you type is the name of the report that accompanies all other packaging files. Enter the following information:
   - Your contact information, including company, address, email, and phone number.
   - Any instructions for printing, such as number of copies or when the print vendor should call you.
5. Click Continue.

   The Printing Instructions dialog box closes.

   The Package Publication (Windows) or Create Package Folder (Mac OS) dialog box appears (**Figure 14**).
6. Select the following options:
   - Copy Fonts
   - Copy Linked Graphics
   - Update Graphic Links In Package
7. In the Package Publication dialog box, browse to a folder for the packaged document.
8. Click Package.

   A dialog box appears warning you about copying fonts. Many font companies, such as Adobe, let you send a copy of your font to the printer. Check your font license to be sure.

   Although most print vendors will have a copy of the font you're using, you send them the font to make sure it's the correct one.
9. Click OK in the Warning dialog box.

   InDesign creates the document package.

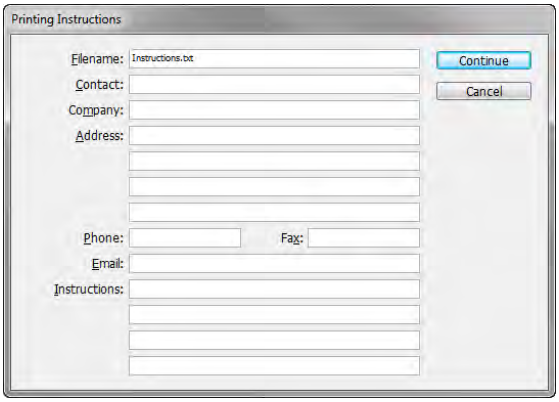

Figure 13 Printing Instructions dialog box

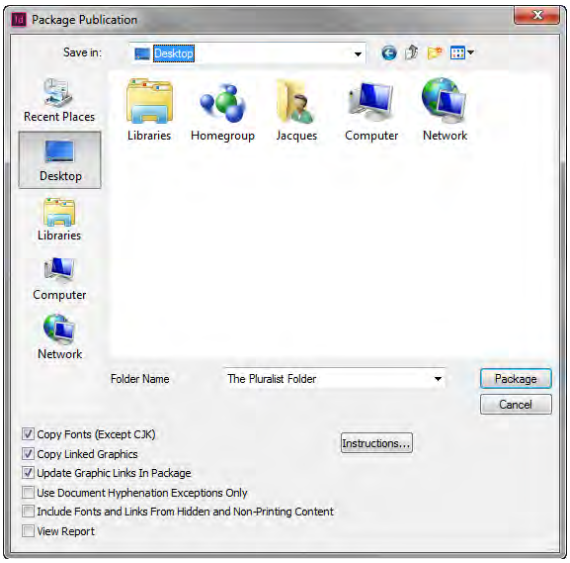

Figure 14 Package Publication dialog box

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10. Close or minimize InDesign. Navigate to the folder on your system where you placed the package (**Figure 15**).

The folder contains an INDD file, a text file with your instructions, a Font folder, and a Links folder.

11. Open the Links folder.

You should see files for the images you've included in the document.

You can now submit the package to a print vendor.

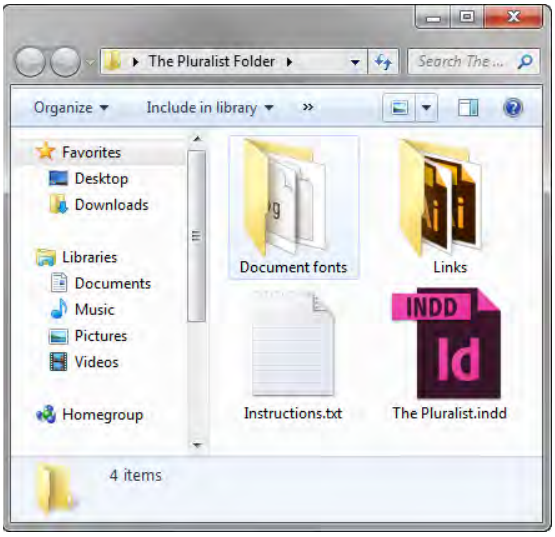

Figure 15 Folder containing print package