

InDesign Fails to Impress

Over the last 30 years, QuarkXPress® stalwart Gary Edwards has watched the evolution of graphic design from paste-up to Letraset press type to PageMaker to the early days of QuarkXPress. Despite forays into InDesign®, Edwards keeps returning to his favorite tool: QuarkXPress.

"I love its simplicity," says Gary Edwards, Creative Director of HOT SPOTS Kiosks & Multimedia. "I'm old school. Graphic arts is a combined learning experience of architecture and fine art, so I like to bring the different pieces to the table and experiment. QuarkXPress is the closest thing to a light table, T-square, triangles, and waxer."

Putting QuarkXPress to the Test

HOT SPOTS Kiosks & Multimedia, based at Lake Tahoe in Northern Nevada, is a high-end ad agency specializing in the recreation and travel industries. For clients across the globe, HOT SPOTS produces touch-screen kiosks, Web sites, DVDs, logos, multimedia, and print collaterals. Print projects — including catalogs, brochures, direct mail, business cards, coupons, ads, newsletters, and regional magazines — make up about 25% of the company's business. The Media Design Studio has four full-time graphic artists plus three freelancers, all using Macintosh® G4 computers — and all using QuarkXPress.

"HOT SPOTS contracts for roughly 60 to 75 substantial print projects each year," says Edwards. "The largest piece the staff and I ever built in QuarkXPress was a 208-page CMYK catalog for a company in Mexico City, recreated in four languages, and printed in Winnipeg, Canada. Talk about a need for a versatile, simple, multi-compatible — and most important — stable program."

The other key to HOT SPOTS dedication to QuarkXPress is its reliability and stability. "Working with outside vendors is no problem," says Edwards, citing the ease with which QuarkXPress files RIP hassle free.

Expert Tools for Expert Results

"Our experienced team of designers specializes in the use of color and typography in professionally producing exactly what you require..." the HOT SPOTS Web site boasts. To produce this high-end artwork, Edwards maintains that artists should "use the tool that excels at a particular function. I like to work in Photoshop and then import the pictures. I like to work in Illustrator and then import the graphics. That's where QuarkXPress comes in. It's like having a typesetting machine, camera room, and a paste-up board right on your table."

Edwards admits to trying InDesign a few times. "I never got into it. It's just a gigantic program like CorelDraw with everything in there — too many bells and whistles in one program. When you try to combine too many things, you lose something in the mix. You can do everything in one program, but it's slower, less responsive. The simpler you keep a tool, the more accurate you can be with it."

Edwards lauds QuarkXPress for its legendary simplicity, especially when working with type. "For anyone very into typography, you're going to love working in QuarkXPress. Your ability to manipulate fonts is fantastic — and easy. I've always enjoyed the ability to manipulate text and layer boxes as well."

QuarkXPress Industry Standard

After graduating from the California Architectural Apprenticeship program and studying at Sonoma State, Edwards started in paste-up and then learned PageMaker. In the late 1980s, during a business trip to San Francisco, he discovered QuarkXPress. The buzz at the time: QuarkXPress was rapidly becoming the industry standard. "I rapidly became a Quark lover," says Edwards. "For its simplicity, importing ability, lack of RIPping problems, and stability."

"It's still the industry standard in page layout," Edwards says.

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