

# InDesign CS4

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All of the CS4 applications sport a new common interface which I find a big improvement over the previous design. The actual work area seems quite large and the tools and panels are very accessible, collapsed all around the perimeter. There are a substantial number of new features in this latest version of InDesign. Adobe has them all listed with details and Flash demo movies at <http://www.adobe.com/products/indesign/features/?view=topoverall>.

I just completed a 24 page publication and thought that this would provide a great opportunity to check out a few features that would make my future workload lighter and also allow me to WEBerize my document. During the document creation process I can get distracted and end up with graphics that don't have the desired dpi or have been scaled in a skewed or non-proportional manner. Overflowed text can also escape my attention as well as a host of other little details.

So, isn't it nice that the Preflight feature has been beefed up to watch for all these issues and more. This utility has gone through a complete rewrite, adding some much needed options. Just as important, once activated, it runs in the background always checking for my errors against the profile I defined for the document.

The program ships with a Basic Profile that is used if no other has been defined. I defined one according to my needs for

sending the B/W doc to a professional printer. The best part of Preflight for me is that the errors are accompanied by explanations and suggested fixes, listed in the info section of the panel. Also, just a double-click brings you to the problem in the document, already selected. As corrections are applied, the entry disappears from the Preflight error list!

The addition of Smart Guides makes it easy to align multiple images on the page without having to resort to a maze of blue guidelines. As I adjust the horizontal position of an image with respect to its neighbors a horizontal line appears, letting me know that it is centered. There is also a new AutoFit feature to assist with scaling images.

The Links Panel has also gone through an update. You can customize what info appears for each link in the panel options. In addition to file data, you can activate a thumbnail view. When dealing with not-quite-descriptive file names such as DCM\_0398.jpg, this is more than a little helpful when working with linked images. And, when multiple copies of the same image have been placed in a document, they are now grouped under one entry on the list, which expands to give details on the individual placements. I certainly like that approach.

For me, being able to export my InDesign layout directly to a Flash format is just about my favorite new feature, second only to Preflight. If you have the Flash CS4 program and a Flash developer handy, export to the XFL format. Every spread is exported to a separate frame in Flash and the export process includes dialogs with options to select to indicate how to handle content.

Personally, I like the option to export directly to the SWF Flash file format, thereby avoiding the need to invest in yet another program (Flash CS4). InDesign comes packaged with page transitions and pre-built buttons containing actions for navigating the document.

The simplest way to gain access to these interactive features is to load the Interactive workspace through Window > Workspace > Interactive. I saved my press-ready file with a new name. I was ready to add the necessary objects that would make the file ready to post online. I loaded the left and right master pages of my document. Next I dragged a Next button



and a Previous button onto each page of my document from the Sample Buttons Library panel accessed on Windows through Window > Interactive > Buttons. The buttons come packaged with events and resulting actions such as rollover and click states.

Next I set the page transitions. Everyone's favorite is the Flash-only Page Turn transition, and it was my pick also. There is an Apply to All Spreads icon for assigning one transition to all the spreads, or you can apply different transitions to the spreads manually.

When you export as SWF, a Flash movie is created that can be played in a browser that has the Flash player installed (most modern browsers do). Once the file is named and saved, an export dialog appears with options for setting the pixel size of the movie, which pages to include, text options, a setting for the interactivity options to include transitions and hyperlinks for the navigation and lastly the compression settings to find the best balance between best image quality and reduced file size.

And there you have it! A brief sampling of just four of the multitude of new features that have made my DTP experience a whole lot easier.

**About:** *InDesign CS4*

**Vendor:** Adobe  
[www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

**Price:** Buy US \$699, \$587 @ Amazon; Upgrade from US \$149  
30-day trial version available at Adobe's website

**Requires:** System requirements for Windows and Mac [here](#).