8 Manipulating Objects

In this chapter:

8 Manipulating Objects

Informed Designer provides a variety of commands and features that allow you to manipulate objects. This chapter describes how to select, reposition, and resize objects with the Pointer tool. You'll also learn how to manipulate objects using the commands in Informed Designer's Arrange menu, and how to use the Specs palette and the Clipboard.

Selecting Objects

Before you can manipulate an object on your template, you must select it first. With Informed Designer, you can select objects in one of two ways: by using the Pointer tool, or by using the object selection commands (Select All and Select Same) in the Edit menu.

Note When more than one object on your drawing is selected, all subsequent object manipulations that you perform are applied to all of those objects. Make sure that you select the right objects before you choose a command.

Using the Pointer Tool

The Pointer tool selects objects in a variety of ways. Before you can use the Pointer tool, you must first select it on the tool palette. Since the Pointer tool is used regularly, Informed Designer offers a shortcut for selecting it. In addition to clicking it on the tool palette, you can select the Pointer tool by pressing the key located at the top-left corner of your keyboard (either Escape or ``'). You can also select it temporarily by holding down the Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) key. See "The Tool Palette" in Chapter 6 for more information.

Selecting a Single Object

You can select a single object either by clicking it with the Pointer tool, or by drawing a selection rectangle around it.

To select an object by clicking, position the pointer over the object and click the mouse button. Handles appear on the object's corners to indicate that it's selected.

To select an object by drawing a selection rectangle, position the pointer outside of the object, then click and drag the mouse to surround the object with a *selection rectangle*. When the object is completely enclosed, release the mouse button.

Selecting Multiple Objects

You can select multiple objects by Shift-clicking the individual objects, or by drawing a selection rectangle around them.

To select objects by Shift-clicking, hold down the Shift key as you click the individual objects. Holding down the Shift key causes any previously selected objects to remain selected.

To select objects using a selection rectangle, position the pointer outside of the objects that you want to select, then click and drag the mouse to completely enclose them. This technique is useful when the objects you want to select are positioned near each other on your template.

Forcing a Selection Rectangle

Often you might want to draw a selection rectangle to select one or more objects that are positioned in front of other objects on your template. If the objects behind those that you want to select cover other areas of your template, you might unintentionally select and drag one of them when you attempt to draw the selection rectangle.

To prevent this from happening, hold down the Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) key while drawing the selection rectangle. The Pointer tool will act as though there are no objects under the position where you click to begin drawing the selection rectangle.

If you hold down the Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) key to force a selection rectangle, all objects that are completely enclosed within the rectangle will be selected when you release the mouse button. If you hold down the Alt and Control (Windows) or Option and Command (Mac OS) keys instead, all objects that intersect the drawn rectangle will be selected.

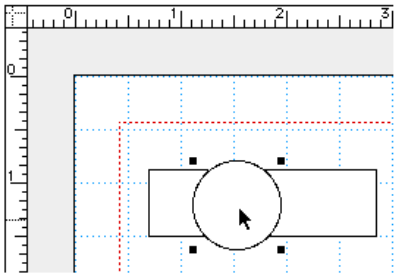
Selecting Through Objects

When you click the pointer to select an object, the front most object that lies below the pointer is selected. Often you might want to select an object that is obscured by other objects. Instead of moving these objects to reveal the object that you want to select, use the Control (Windows) or Com-

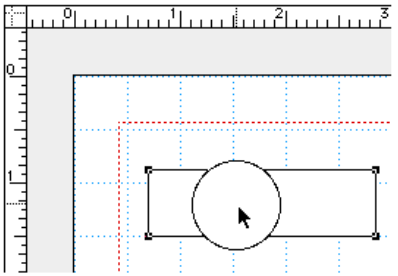
mand (Mac OS) key to select through an object. Each time you select while pressing the Control/Command key, the object immediately behind the one currently selected is chosen.

For example, if you draw an oval over top of a rectangle and select the oval, clicking the oval again while holding down the Control/Command key causes the rectangle to be selected instead.

Clicking a selected object while holding down the Control / Command key…



…selects the object behind it.



When selecting through an object, the pointer must be positioned over the region where the two overlapping objects intersect.

The Select All and Select Same Commands

Use the Select All and Select Same commands to select objects on the current page of your template.

Select All

The Select All command selects all the objects on the current page of your template. Functionally, this command is equivalent to selecting all objects with the Pointer tool. To use this command, choose **Select All** from the Edit menu.

Select Same

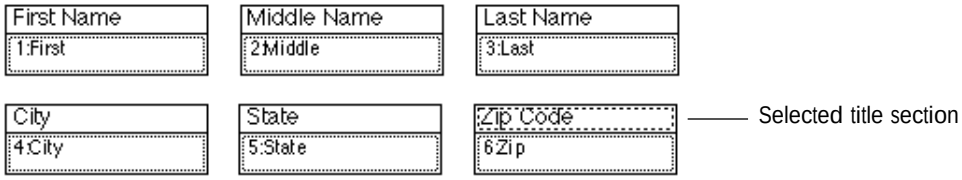
The Select Same command selects all objects of given type. For example, if a rectangle and a line are currently selected, then the Select Same command will select all other rectangles and lines on the current page of your template.

To use the Select Same command, first select one or more objects on your template, then choose **Select Same** from the Edit menu. Informed Designer will select all remaining objects on the current page of your template that are of the same type as the ones you originally chose.

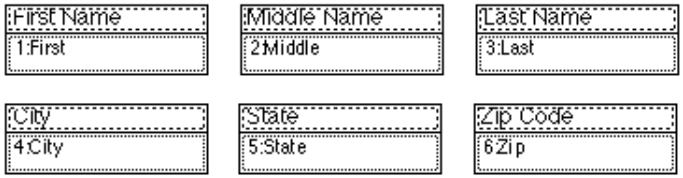
The Select Same command works differently when you work with fields or tables. If you're editing a field or a table, and a part of that object is selected (such as a cell or dividing line), then the Select

Same command will select the same parts in all other fields or tables on the current page of your template.

Choose the Select Same command…



…to select the same components on all other fields.



Deselecting Objects

To deselect all currently selected objects on your template, click on an area of your template that contains no objects, or double-click the Pointer tool on the tool palette.

To deselect a particular object on your template, click the object with the Pointer tool while holding down the Shift key. All other currently selected objects will remain selected.

Clearing Objects

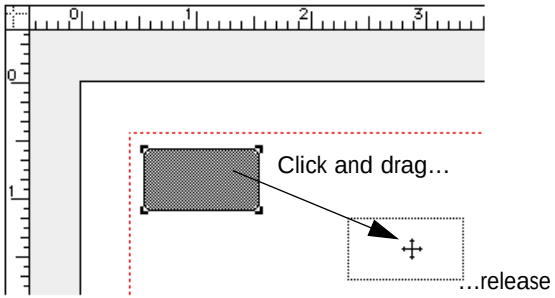
To clear an object from your template, first select it. Then clear it by using one of these methods:

- press the Backspace or Delete key
- choose **Clear** from the Edit menu
- choose **Cut** from the Edit menu

The Cut command places the selected object on the Clipboard and then clears it from your template.

Repositioning Objects

After drawing an object, you may want to reposition it to a different location on the page. An object is repositioned by dragging it with the Pointer tool. Informed Designer gives you the choice of how the object is displayed as you drag.



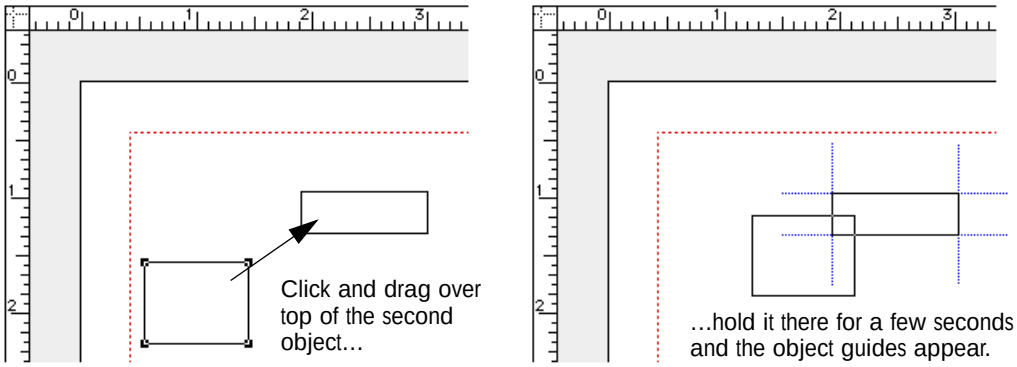
If you click and drag an object immediately, an outline of the object appears and follows the movement of the mouse as you drag. When you release the mouse button, the object is drawn at its new position.

Alternately, if you pause briefly before dragging the mouse, the pointer and all handles will disappear and the object will be drawn in detail as you drag. This method is particularly useful for repositioning text because the text itself remains visible as you drag the mouse.

You can constrain the direction of dragging by holding down the Shift key. The object's motion will be constrained in either the horizontal or vertical direction depending on the initial motion of the mouse.

Object Guides

Informed Designer's Object Guides feature makes it easy for you to align one object with another when dragging. To use this feature, click the object that you want to move, and drag it towards the object that you want to align it with. Drag the selected object until the pointer is over top of the second object and hold it there for a few seconds. Object guides appear around the second object, and remain there until you release the mouse button. As you position the selected object, it will snap to the object guides to ensure perfect alignment with any edge of the second object.

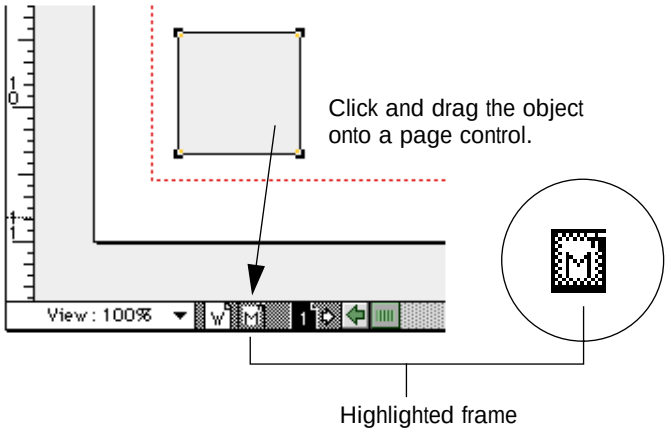


Note The Align and Distribute commands, as well as the Arrow keys, can be used to reposition objects. For more information, see “Aligning Objects”, “Distributing Objects”, and “Nudging Objects” later in this chapter.

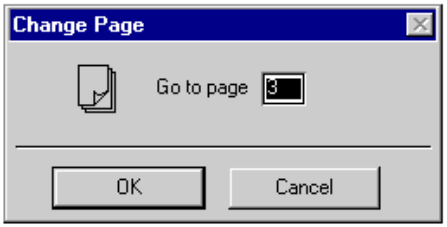
Moving Objects Between Pages

Earlier in this chapter, you learned how to reposition objects by simply clicking and dragging them from one position to another on a single page. Informed Designer provides a similar feature that makes it just as easy to move objects from one page of your template to another.

To move an object from it’s current page to a different page, simply click and drag the object onto one of the page controls at the bottom of the drawing window. When a highlighted frame appears inside the page control, release the mouse button.



If you drag an object onto the work or master page controls, Informed Designer moves the object to the same position on that page and automatically displays the page. If your template has more than two numbered pages, Informed Designer will display the Change Page dialog box when you drag an object onto the numbered page control.



Enter the number of the page that you want to move the object to and click ‘OK.’ Informed Designer moves the object to the same position on that page and automatically displays the page.

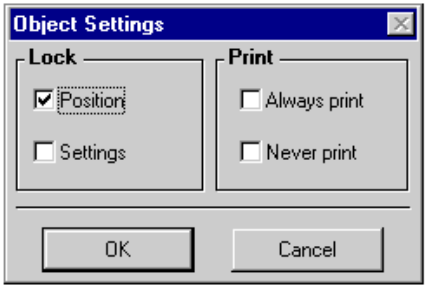
If your template only has two numbered pages, you won’t see the Change Page dialog box when dragging an object between those pages. Instead, Informed Designer will automatically move the object to the “other” page of your template. For example, if you drag an object from page 2 onto the numbered page control, the object will be moved to page 1, and that page will be displayed. Similarly, when moving objects from the work or master page to a numbered page, the Change Page dialog box will only appear if there is more than one numbered page on your template.

This feature is particularly useful for moving a cell between pages, because you can do so without deleting the cell as you would when using the Cut and Paste commands. Since Informed Designer will not allow you to ‘Cut’ a cell that’s used in the formulas of other cells, you would have to remove formulas before cutting, and add them back after pasting. This is unnecessary when using the click and drag method.

For information about moving objects from one place to another using the Copy, Cut, and Paste commands, see “Using the Clipboard”, later in this chapter.

Locking an Object’s Position

You can lock an object’s position to prevent it from being moved or resized accidentally. To lock an object’s position, select the object, then choose **Object...** from the Settings menu. The Object Settings dialog box appears.



Click the ‘Position’ checkbox under the Lock heading. Click ‘OK’ to dismiss the Object Settings dialog box.

As a shortcut to using the Object command to lock an object’s position, you can select the object and click the lock button on the Command palette.

If you attempt to reposition or resize a locked object by dragging with the Pointer tool, Informed Designer will change the pointer to a lock. This indicates that the object is locked and cannot be dragged. When you use commands that reposition or resize objects, any objects that are locked are not affected.

For information about the other settings available on the Object Settings dialog box, see “Locking an Object’s Settings” in Chapter 7, and “Objects and Printing” later in this chapter.

Resizing Objects

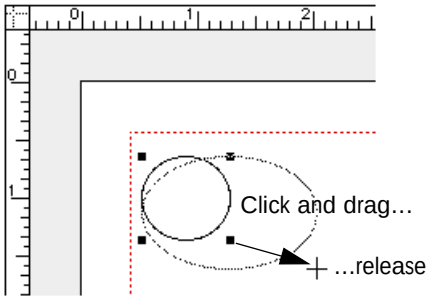
A selected object can be resized by using any of the following three methods:

- Pointer tool
- Resize command
- Specs palette

This section describes how to resize objects using all three of these methods.

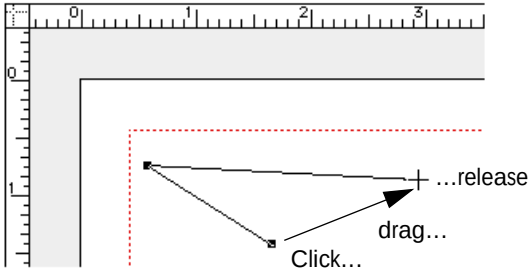
Resizing with the Pointer Tool

You resize a selected object by clicking and dragging any of its handles with the Pointer tool. As you drag, Informed Designer draws a gray outline of the object, which shrinks and expands with the movement of the mouse to indicate the object's changing size. If you pause briefly after clicking a handle, Informed Designer will hide the pointer as you drag.



Resizing Lines

You resize a line by selecting it, then clicking and dragging one of its end point handles.

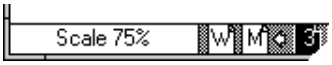


If you hold down the Shift key while resizing a line, the line will be constrained along the vertical, horizontal, or diagonal (45°) directions, depending on the position of the mouse as dragging occurs.

Resizing Boxes, Ovals, Arcs, and Polygons

You resize boxes, ovals, arcs, and polygons by clicking and dragging any corner handle of the object.

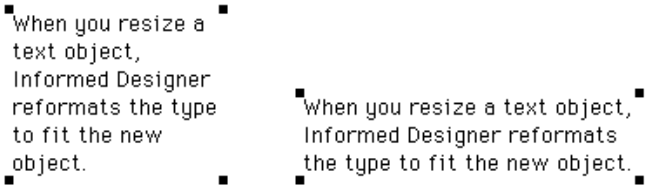
If you hold down the Shift key while dragging, resizing is constrained along the horizontal, vertical, or diagonal axes depending on the movement of the mouse. Resizing horizontally or vertically scales the object in that direction only. If you hold down the Shift key while resizing diagonally, the new object is scaled equally in both directions, resulting in a new size that's proportional to the original. As you drag while holding down the Shift key, the information box displays the current scaling percentage.



When resizing a polygon with the Pointer tool, Informed Designer scales the object in the same way as described above. More specifically, Informed Designer resizes the smallest possible rectangle that completely encloses the selected polygon. You can resize a polygon in any direction, and if you hold down the Shift key, the operation is constrained to the horizontal or vertical axis, or proportionally. To reposition individual vertices of a polygon, use the Reshape Polygon command in the Arrange menu. For more information see “Reshaping a Polygon” in Chapter 6.

Resizing Text

You resize text objects the same way that you resize boxes, ovals, rectangles, and polygons—by clicking and dragging a handle.

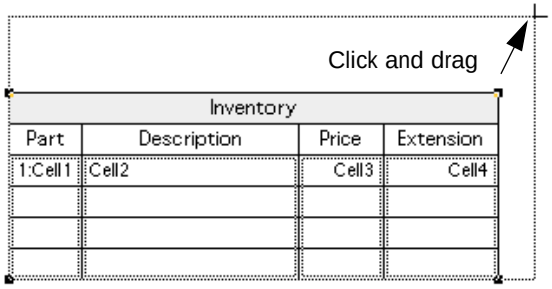


When you resize a text object, Informed Designer automatically reformats the type inside the object to fit the object’s new size.

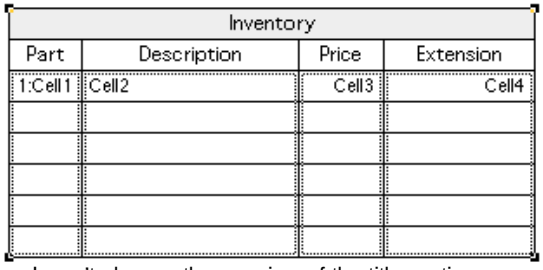
If you resize a text object too small, Informed Designer will automatically extend its bottom edge so that all text in the object is visible. Likewise, if you make a text object too long, Informed Designer will snap its bottom edge up to the last line of text.

Resizing Fields and Tables

When you resize a field or table using the Pointer tool, Informed Designer adjusts the size of the object while preserving the spacing of the title sections. An example is shown on the next page.



Resizing a field or table with the Pointer tool…



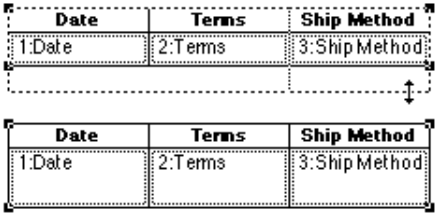
…doesn't change the spacing of the title sections

When you drag the edge of a field or table, any title sections move as well. If you hold down the Control (Windows) or Command (Mac OS) key while dragging the edge of a title section, the size of that section changes. You can also change the size of a title section by clicking and dragging the section's dividing line with the Pointer tool.

Holding down the Shift key while resizing a field or table constrains the motion of the resize operation to the vertical, horizontal, or diagonal axes, depending on the motion of the mouse. Scaling diagonally results in an object that is resized proportionally to the original. As you hold down the Shift key and drag, the Information box displays the current scaling percentage. For more information on resizing parts of fields and tables, please see "The Field Tool" and "The Table Tool" in Chapter 6.

Resizing Multiple Objects

Often you will want to resize more than one object by the same amount. For example, you might want to change the height of three adjacent fields. Informed Designer allows you to select more than one object, and then resize them all with one motion. Simply select each object, then resize one of them to the desired size. All selected objects will be resized by the same amount.



Select the objects, then click and drag to resize.

The spacing of the title section remains the same…

…and all selected objects are resized equally.

As multiple objects are resized, Informed Designer will constrain the new size to ensure that any object doesn't become too small or too large.

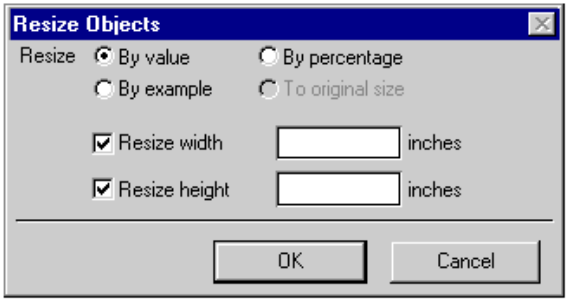
Resizing with the Resize Command

The Resize command resizes one or more selected objects.

You resize an object in one of three ways:

- explicitly (by specifying the object's new dimensions)
- by percentage (by specifying a percentage to enlarge or reduce)
- by example (by clicking another object of the desired size)
- to its original size (available for imported graphic objects)

To resize an object, first select it and then choose **Resize...** from the Arrange menu. The Resize Objects dialog box appears.



The width and height of the selected object can be resized independently. Do this by clicking either of the 'Resize width' or 'Resize height' checkboxes.

If you select the 'By value' radio button, you can specify the new width or height of the selected object by typing values in the text boxes. For example, you might enter a value of 5 inches for the height and 3 inches for the width of a selected object. The unit of measurement corresponds to the current ruler setting. However, you can enter the value in any units you like; Informed Designer does the conversion for you.

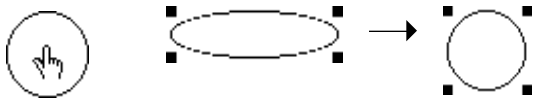
Similarly, if you select the ‘By percentage’ option, the selected object is resized to a percentage relative to its current size. For example, you might want to scale an object to half its present size. Simply enter ‘50’ into each text box. Click ‘OK’ to perform the resize.

The resize ‘By example’ option allows you to change the size of an object to the size of a different object on your template. To use this method, follow the instructions below.

1. Select the object that you want to resize.

2. Choose **Resize...** from the Arrange menu, select the ‘By example’ option, then click ‘OK.’

3. With the pointing hand, click the object that’s the correct size. The size of the selected object will change to match the size of the object you click.

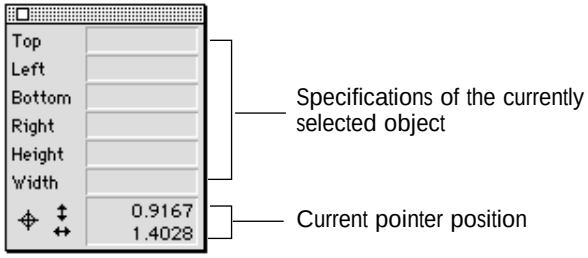


The resize ‘To original size’ option is available only if you’ve selected at least one object that corresponds to an imported graphic such as a Mac OS picture. This option resizes the object to its original pasted or imported size. (You can also double-click the object with the Pointer tool to resize it to its original size.

When using the Resize command, Informed Designer won’t allow you to reduce the size of an object below its minimum size (for example, setting the width of a box to zero inches), or enlarge an object larger than the size of the drawing area. If you try, Informed Designer will alert you with an error message and cancel the Resize command.

Resizing with the Specs Palette

The Specs (specifications) palette is a drawing aid that helps you resize and reposition objects on your template. Use the specs palette to position or resize an object if you know its exact dimensions.



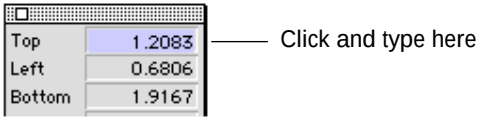
The Specs palette displays coordinate information pertaining to the pointer and any currently selected objects. Like the Tool palette, the Specs palette can be displayed, hidden, or dragged, but not resized. When visible, the Specs palette always displays the pointer's current position, unless the pointer is over the Specs palette or outside of the drawing window.

When the Specs palette is displayed, the units of measurement correspond to those currently set on the ruler.

Using the Specs Palette

To use the Specs palette, first display it by choosing **Specs** from the Show submenu under Layout. When the Specs palette is visible, a checkmark appears next to the Specs item in the Show submenu. To hide the Specs palette, choose **Specs** again or click its close box.

You can resize an object by changing any of the parameters displayed in the text boxes on the Specs palette.



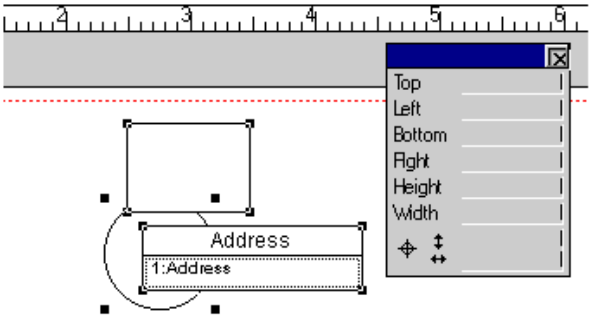
To change an object's parameters, type a new value in the appropriate text box, then press Tab or the Enter (Windows) or Return (Mac OS) key. The new value will be applied to the selected objects. Pressing Tab or Enter/Return moves to the next text box. Pressing Shift-Tab moves to the previous text box, and pressing Enter on the numeric keypad leaves the Specs palette.

When you alter any of the Top, Left, Bottom, or Right parameters, the object's corresponding edge always reflects the change. If you change the Height or Width parameters, the change always affects the bottom or right edge. For example, if the width of a table is five inches, and you type '6' into the Width text box on the Specs palette, the right edge of the table will be extended by one inch.

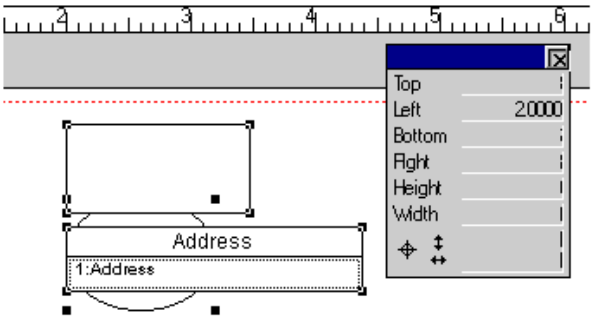
If more than one object is selected, the Specs palette shows only the values that are common to all objects. This means that a text box will be blank if its value is different for each of the selected objects. For example, if two objects of the same width are selected, the specs palette will show the corresponding width. However, only if their edges are aligned exactly will values appear in the top, left, right and bottom text boxes.

The figures below show the Specs palette and three selected objects. Since the dimensions and positions of each object are different, all text boxes in the first figure show blank values. When a value of '2.0' is entered in the 'Left' text box, the left edge of each selected object is moved to the 2 inch mark on the horizontal ruler.

When you type on the Specs palette…



…the change is applied to all selected objects.



As with all other resizing operations, you can't enter values that would reduce the size of an object below its minimum, or enlarge an object so that it lies off the drawing area. If you try to enter a value that is too large or too small, Informed Designer will warn you (with a beep) and leave the original value unchanged.

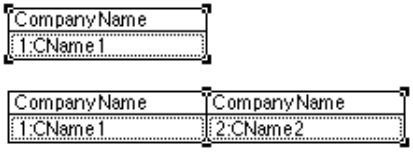
Duplicating Objects

Often you'll want to create new objects that are similar, if not identical, to other objects on your template. Rather than redrawing an object by hand, you can use the Duplicate and Replicate commands to create one or more duplicates of an existing object.

Duplicate

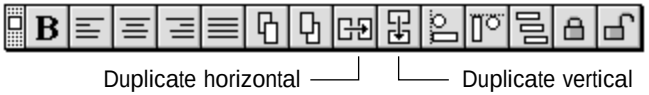
The Duplicate command duplicates one or more selected objects. It's useful for making a single copy of an object.

To duplicate an object, first select it and then choose **Duplicate** from the Arrange menu. For each selected object, Informed Designer places a copy directly to the right of the original. The original object is deselected and the new object is selected.



If you hold down the Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) key while choosing the Duplicate command, the duplicate object will be placed directly below the original. If you reposition a duplicated object and immediately duplicate it again, Informed Designer uses the distance between the copy and the original as the offset for the next copy.

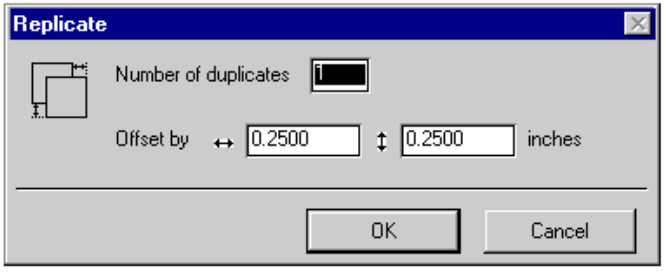
As a shortcut to choosing the Duplicate command, you can select an object and click either the 'Duplicate horizontal' or 'Duplicate vertical' buttons on the Command palette.



Replicate

The Replicate command duplicates one or more selected objects an arbitrary number of times. Replicated objects are created at evenly spaced intervals that you can set.

To replicate an object, first select it and then choose **Replicate...** from the Arrange menu. The Replicate dialog box appears.



Use the ‘Number of duplicates’ text box to specify the number of copies that you want to make, then enter the horizontal and vertical offsets in the ‘Offset by’ text boxes. These values indicate the distance between each subsequent duplicate.

You can enter negative offsets as well. A negative offset causes a new object to be placed in the opposite direction of a positive offset. This means that positive horizontal and vertical offsets will place a duplicate object below and to the right of the original, whereas corresponding negative offsets will place a duplicate above and to the left instead.

After you enter the appropriate values, click ‘OK.’ To cancel the Replicate command, click ‘Cancel’ instead.

Duplicating Cells

When you duplicate cells on a template (either field cells or table cells), you should be aware of the following situations and how Informed Designer handles each one.

If you duplicate a cell, the new cell can’t have the same name as the original (all cell names must be unique). Informed Designer will adjust the new cell name to ensure that it’s unique.

Each newly duplicated cell receives the next available tab position. For example, if there are 15 cells on your template with tab positions 1 through 15, and two of those cells are duplicated, the two new cells will have tab positions 16 and 17.

If you’re duplicating a cell that has a calculation, check, or tab formula, and that formula refers to cells that are also being duplicated (remember their names will change), then when you perform the duplication, the formula will be adjusted so that all cell references refer to the duplicate cells rather than the originals.

For example, suppose that your template has two cells, cell1 and cell2, and that the value of cell2 takes the value of cell1 (cell2 = cell1). If you duplicate the two cells together, then you’ll get cell3 and cell4 where the value of cell4 is calculated as the value of cell3 and not the value of cell1 (cell4 = cell3).

Aligning Objects

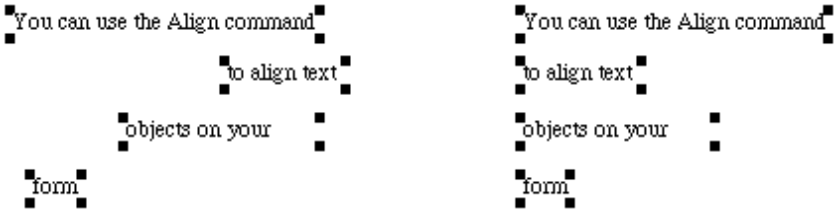
You can align objects on your template to each other, to the drawing, or along the lines of the drawing grid by using the Align command.

To align a set of objects, first select them and then choose **Align...** from the Arrange menu. The Align Objects dialog box appears.

Aligning Objects to Each Other

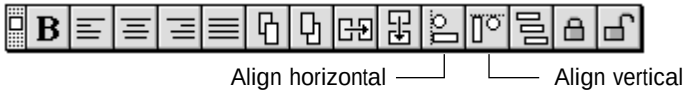
To align a set of objects to each other, click the ‘To each other’ radio button. Choose the axes along which the alignment will occur by clicking the ‘Align horizontal’ and ‘Align vertical’ checkboxes. You can align objects along one or both axes.

If you check the ‘Align horizontal’ checkbox, then the alignment will take place along the horizontal axis—that is, in the left-to-right direction. Click the ‘Left’ radio button to align the objects along the left side of the leftmost selected object. Click the ‘Right’ radio button to align the objects along the right side of the rightmost selected object. If you click the ‘Center’ radio button, the objects’ centers will be aligned along a path that lies roughly halfway between the leftmost and rightmost selected objects.



Similarly, you can click the ‘Align vertical’ checkbox to perform the alignment along the vertical axis. The ‘Top’ radio button aligns the objects along the top edge of the topmost selected object. The ‘Bottom’ radio button aligns the objects along the bottom edge of the lowest selected object. The ‘Center’ radio button aligns the objects’ centers along a path that lies roughly halfway between the uppermost and lowest selected objects.

As a shortcut to using the Align command, you can quickly align a set of objects by clicking the alignment buttons on the Command palette. Clicking the ‘Align horizontal’ button aligns the objects along the left edge of the leftmost selected object. Clicking the ‘Align vertical’ button aligns the objects along the top edge of the topmost selected object.



Aligning an Object to the Drawing Area

The align ‘To each other’ option is available if you’ve selected more than one object to align. With only a single object selected, the ‘To each other’ option changes to ‘To drawing.’ Use this option to align an object to the edge or center of the drawing area. Click the ‘Align Horizontal’ or ‘Align vertical’ checkbox (or both) to choose which direction to align in. Then choose the edge or center to align to by clicking the appropriate radio button (Left/Center/Right, or Top/Center/Bottom).

Moving Objects on Your Template

When aligning objects to each other, you can optionally move the selected objects to a specified position on the drawing area by checking the ‘Move to’ checkbox and entering the desired coordinates. Enter the coordinates in any units that you like; Informed Designer performs the appropriate unit conversion for you.

Informed Designer combines the ‘Move to’ coordinates with the options that you’ve selected in the ‘Align horizontal’ and ‘Align vertical’ sections of the Align Objects dialog box. For example, if you click the ‘Left’ radio button and enter ‘2.5’ in the ‘Move to’ horizontal text box, Informed Designer will align the left edge of the selected objects with the 2.5 inch mark on the horizontal ruler. If you

click the ‘Center’ radio button and enter the same coordinate, Informed Designer will try to align the center of the selected objects with the 2.5 inch mark on the horizontal ruler.

Aligning Objects to the Grid

To align a set of objects along the drawing grid, select the ‘To grid’ radio button. The upper left corner of all selected objects will ‘snap’ to the nearest grid lines, whichever are active.

You can also align and move objects by dragging them with the Pointer tool. For more information, see “Repositioning Objects” earlier in this chapter.

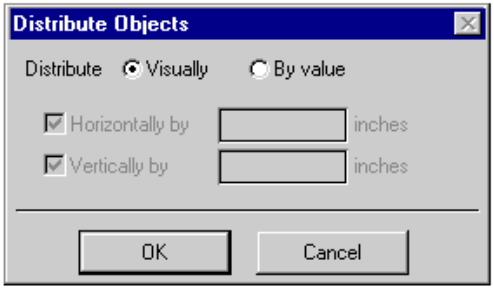
Distributing Objects

Often you’ll need to evenly space a set of objects across an area of your template. You might be separating related fields of information, or you might be redistributing a set of newly replicated objects. Rather than tediously placing each object by hand, Informed Designer provides a simple and efficient way to do this.

The Distribute command evenly distributes a set of selected objects along an arbitrary path. This path is determined by you and may be specified in one of two ways: visually (with the help of the mouse), or by a specified value.

Note While editing a table, you can use the Distribute command to evenly distribute the table’s columns. For more information, see “Distributing Columns” in Chapter 6.

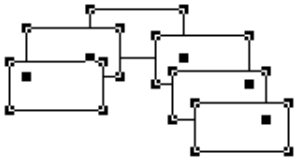
To distribute a set of objects, first select them and then choose **Distribute...** from the Arrange menu. The Distribute Objects dialog box appears.



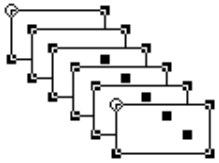
Distributing Objects Visually

When you distribute a set of objects visually, you align them along a path that's drawn with the Pointer tool.

To distribute a set of objects visually, select the 'Visually' radio button and click 'OK' to continue. You'll see the drawing window again with the selected objects in *distribute mode*. The selected objects will assume an initial distribution path where they are offset (in both directions) from each other by a fixed amount. The line of distribution depends on the initial placement of the selected objects. All objects remain selected, but on the upper-left corners of the topmost and lowest objects, you'll see a circular handle.

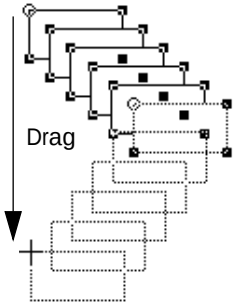


Select the objects and choose the Distribute command.

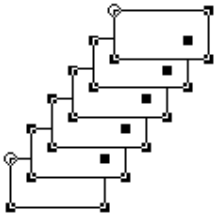


After you click 'OK', the selected objects assume an initial distribution.

Using the mouse, click and drag either of the circular handles. While you drag, an outline of the selected objects appears, indicating the position of the objects as the mouse is moved. When you achieve the desired distribution, release the mouse button. The objects remain selected and will be distributed along their new path.



Click and drag a circular handle to distribute.



When you release the mouse, the objects assume their final position.

If you hold down the Shift key while adjusting the path, the resulting path will be constrained to the horizontal, vertical, or diagonal (45°) axes.

While the objects are in distribute mode, you can move or resize the objects normally using the Pointer tool. The selected objects will remain in distribute mode until they're deselected.

Distribute by Value

If you know exactly how far apart you want to distribute a set of selected objects, use the 'By value' option. If you check this option, you can specify the vertical and horizontal offsets with which to distribute the objects. Select either of the 'Horizontal' or 'Vertical' checkboxes (or both) and type the desired values into the associated text boxes.

When performing the distribution, Informed Designer will separate all objects along their upper-left corners by the given offsets. Positive vertical and horizontal offsets place each subsequent object down and to the right. The same negative offsets place each object above and to the left.

As a shortcut to choosing the Distribute command, you can quickly distribute a set of selected objects by clicking the 'Distribute' icon on the Command palette.

Rotating Objects

Use the Rotate command to rotate one or more selected objects. Objects can be rotated 360 degrees in 90 degree increments.

All object types can be rotated with the exception of fields and tables. If you select a field or a table, or if a set of selected objects contains a field or a table, the Rotate command will be unavailable.

To rotate an object, first select it then, choose **Rotate** from the Arrange menu. The selected object is rotated 90 degrees.

The Rotate command is useful for placing vertical text on your template. To rotate a text object, select it with the Pointer tool, then choose **Rotate** from the Arrange menu.

A rotated text object can be edited in the usual manner. When you click the object with the Text tool, Informed Designer will rotate the text upright (back to zero degrees), and allow you to edit the text. When you press Enter on the numeric keypad, or deselect the object, it will return to its rotated orientation.

Grouping and Ungrouping Objects

There may be times when you want the ability to treat a set of objects as a single object. For example, suppose that you've drawn a logo on your template, and the logo consists of a collection of individual lines, rectangles, and text objects. Grouping these objects together allows you to treat the logo as if it were a single object. Informed Designer gives you this ability with the Group and Ungroup commands.

Grouping Objects

The Group command forms a single object that's composed of a set of selected objects.

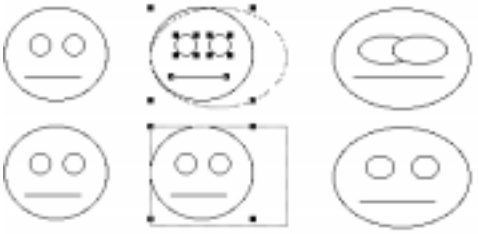
To group a set of objects, first select them and then choose **Group** from the Arrange menu. Informed Designer surrounds the objects with handles at each corner of the group's smallest enclosing rectangle.

Since a grouped set of objects is treated as a single object, it's manipulated accordingly. This means that you can perform any operation on a grouped object (such as selecting, moving, or resizing) that can be performed on an individual object.

Note If a group contains a locked object, then the group itself behaves as if it were locked. For more information about locking objects, see "Locking an Object's Position" earlier in this chapter.

All commands to manipulate a group, with the exception of resizing and rotating, function exactly as though the objects in the group were selected individually. For example, changing the font of a selected group will set the font for all text, field, and table objects in the group.

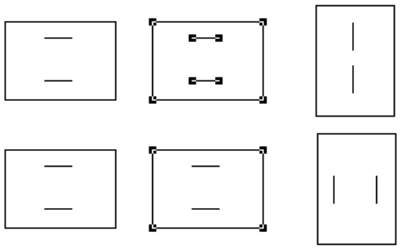
When you resize a grouped object, Informed Designer ensures that the size and relative spacing of the individual objects that make up the group remain unchanged. This is unlike resizing multiple selected objects where each object is resized by the same amount and the position of each object doesn't change. The figure below illustrates how a grouped and ungrouped set of objects are resized.



Resizing four selected objects

Resizing a grouped object

When you rotate a grouped object, rather than rotating each object in the group about its center (without moving its position), the group as a single object is rotated about its center.



Rotating three selected objects

Rotating a grouped object

To manipulate a single object within a group, first ungroup the group (see next section), change the object, then regroup the objects.

Ungrouping Objects

The Ungroup command separates a grouped object into the individual objects that comprise it. Ungroup is the opposite of the Group command.

To ungroup a grouped object, first select it and then choose **Ungroup** from the Arrange menu. All objects that comprised the group will be individually selected.

The Ungroup command is useful when you need to work with a single object within a grouped object. For example, you might want to edit a text object that's part of a grouped object. Use the Ungroup command to ungroup the object. After editing the text, use the Group command to regroup the objects.

Moving Objects Through the Drawing Plane

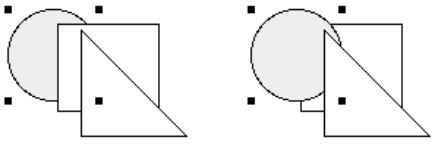
Each object on your template resides in its own layer on the drawing plane. This means that all objects have a relative front to back ordering—or stacking order—on your drawing.

Often while editing a template, you might need to change an object's stacking order. For example, some objects might be partially obscured by others or you might want to bring an object to the front of a drawing so you can edit it. With the object layering commands (Bring Forward, Bring To Front, Send Backward, and Send To Back), Informed Designer gives you the ability to easily manipulate an object's front-to-back ordering.

Bring Forward

The Bring Forward command moves one or more selected objects closer to the front of the drawing plane.

To move an object closer in the drawing plane, first select it and then choose **Bring Forward** from the Arrange menu. The selected object is moved in front of the object immediately above it. The object remains selected.



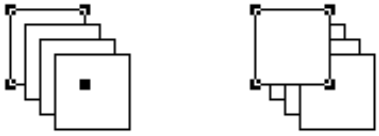
If you apply the Bring Forward command to a set of objects, then each object in the set is moved in front of the object that lies immediately above it. However, the relative stacking order of the selected objects doesn't change.

As a shortcut to choosing the Bring Forward command, you can click the 'Bring Forward' button on the Command palette.

Bring To Front

The Bring To Front command moves an object directly to the front of the drawing.

To bring an object to the front of the drawing, first select it and then choose **Bring To Front** from the Arrange menu.

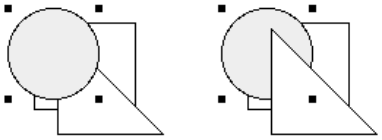


If two or more objects are selected, they are moved as a group to the front of the drawing. Their relative stacking order is not changed.

Send Backward

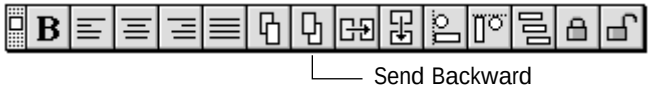
The Send Backward command moves one or more selected objects farther back in the drawing plane.

To move an object backward in the drawing plane, first select it and then choose **Send Backward** from the Arrange menu. The selected object is moved behind the object immediately below it. The object remains selected.



If you apply the Send Backward command to a set of objects, each object in the set is moved behind the object that lies immediately below it. The relative front-to-back order of the selected objects is left unchanged.

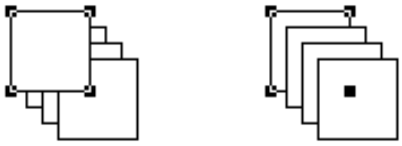
As a shortcut to choosing the Send Backward command, you can click the ‘Send Backward’ button on the Command palette.



Send To Back

The Send To Back command moves one or more selected objects to the back of the drawing.

To send an object to the back of the drawing, first select it and then choose **Send To Back** from the Arrange menu.



If you select two or more objects, they're moved to the back of the drawing as a group. Their relative stacking order, however, is always preserved.

Nudging Objects

As in all drawing, it's important to position objects accurately on your template. Although the mouse is often accurate enough, there are times when you might like greater precision over object placement combined with greater ease of manipulation.

With the Arrow keys, Informed Designer allows you to move and resize objects precisely without using the mouse. Use the Arrow keys whenever you're doing detailed work or whenever you want maximum control over object sizing and placement.

Nudging an Object's Position

To nudge an object, first select it and then press the appropriate Arrow key (up, down, left, or right arrow). You can nudge more than one object at a time by first selecting all objects and then pressing the key.

When you nudge an object, you move it by a distance of 1 pixel at the current view of the drawing window. If the current view is set to 100%, this means that each time you nudge an object, its position changes by a distance of 1/72nd of an inch (because most monitors have a resolution of 72 dots—or pixels—per inch). Similarly, if the current view is set to 200%, nudging an object moves it 1/144th of an inch. At the largest possible view (1600%), nudging an object repositions it by a distance of 1/1152nd of an inch.

Nudging an Object's Size

You can also nudge the size of an object. First select the object and then press the desired Arrow key (up, down, left, or right arrow) while holding down the Shift key. Instead of moving the object, the object's bottom or right edge will resize one pixel in the corresponding direction.

You can resize more than one object at a time by first selecting all objects and then pressing an Arrow key while holding down the Shift key.

As with all resizing commands, you can't nudge the size of an object below its minimum size or larger than its maximum size.

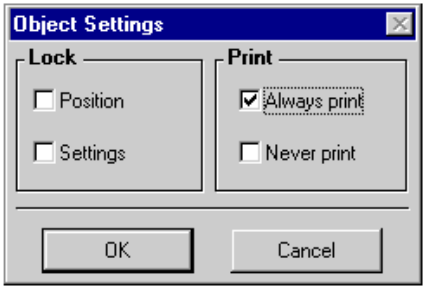
Objects and Printing

In Chapter 11, you'll learn about printing templates and Informed Designer's print options. When the Informed Filler user prints a completed form, options are provided to hide the template or the data. The *template* refers to the graphical objects such as lines, boxes, and text labels. The form's *data* refers to the information that's entered in each cell to complete the form. For information about Informed Designer's print options, see Chapter 11, "Printing Forms".

By using the Object command, you can set additional print options for any object. You can choose to hide an object so that it doesn't print. This is useful if you want an object to appear on the screen, but not on the printed template. For example, you might want to label the different parts of your template to help the person who fills it out.

Alternately, you can choose to always print an object, even if the Informed Filler user prints a form with its layout hidden. This option is useful when using preprinted forms. For example, you might want a graphical object—such as your company logo—to print in addition to the form's data.

To change the print options of an object, choose **Object...** from the Settings menu. The Object Settings dialog box appears.



Click either of the 'Always print' or 'Never print' checkboxes. You can't use both options at the same time. After making your selection, click 'OK.' To cancel the Object command, click 'Cancel' instead.

For information about the other settings available on the Object Settings dialog box, see “Locking an Object’s Settings” in Chapter 7, and “Locking an Object’s Position” earlier in this chapter.

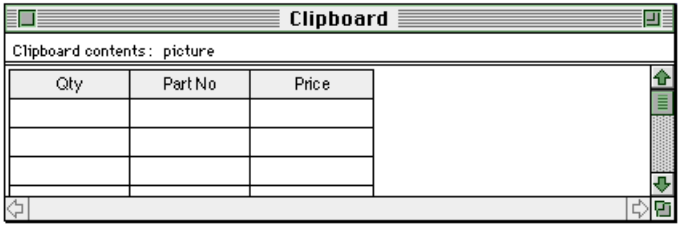
Using the Clipboard

The Clipboard is a temporary holding place for graphics and text. Commonly, you’ll use it to perform one of these functions:

- move objects from one area of a template to another
- move objects from one page of a template to another
- move objects from one template to another
- to transfer artwork and text from other applications into Informed Designer
- to transfer artwork created with Informed Designer into other applications

You can use three commands to transfer objects to or from the Clipboard. The Cut and Copy commands place the selected objects onto the Clipboard. The Paste command transfers the contents of the Clipboard onto your template. These commands are described below.

If you are running Informed Designer on a Mac OS compatible computer, you can display the contents of the Clipboard by choosing **Show Clipboard** from the Edit menu. Informed Designer shows the Clipboard content in a window.



Like any Mac OS window, you can position the Clipboard window anywhere on your screen by clicking and dragging its title bar. You can hide the Clipboard by clicking the window’s close box or by choosing the Close command while the window is active.

Moving Objects Onto the Clipboard

Use the Cut or Copy commands to move objects onto the Clipboard.

To move an object onto the Clipboard, select it and choose either **Cut** or **Copy** from the Edit menu. Your selection will be transferred to the Clipboard. If you choose Cut, the selected objects will also be removed from your template.

The Copy command is more commonly used to transfer objects to the Clipboard. When you want to remove an object from your drawing, use the Clear command instead. See “Clearing Objects”.

Pasting Objects From the Clipboard

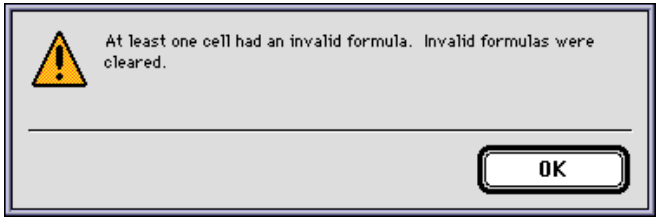
To paste the contents of the Clipboard onto your drawing, choose the **Paste** command from the Edit menu. A copy of the Clipboard’s contents will be positioned at the center of the drawing window.

If you hold the Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) key down while choosing the Paste command, Informed Designer will place the objects at their original positions (that is, the position they were when you cut or copied them). This feature is useful for copying objects from one page of a template to another. After copying an object on one page, pasting it on another page while holding down the Alt/Option key will ensure that it’s positioned at the same location as the original.

Pasting Informed Objects

When pasting objects created with Informed Designer, you should be aware of the following conditions and how Informed Designer handles each one:

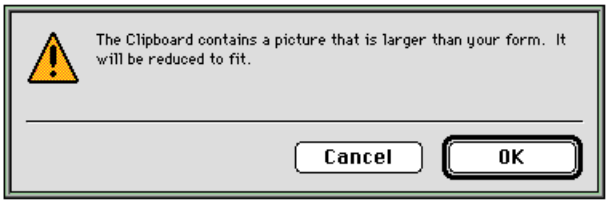
- If the Clipboard contains Informed objects that are larger than the drawing area, Informed Designer won’t paste those objects onto your template. Instead, you’ll be alerted with a warning message. If you click ‘OK’ on the message dialog box, the paste operation will continue, but only those objects that fit entirely on the drawing area will be pasted. If you click ‘Cancel’, the paste command will be cancelled.
- To prevent duplicate cell names from occurring on your template, cells on the Clipboard are renamed (if necessary) before they’re pasted. The naming conventions used to name the new cells are the same as those used for duplicating or replicating existing cells. Likewise, a newly pasted cell receives the next available tab position (see “Duplicating Cells” earlier in this chapter). If a cell being pasted contains a formula that references a nonexistent cell (a cell which was not copied from the original template), Informed Designer will alert you with a message.



When you click ‘OK’, Informed Designer will clear the invalid formula before pasting the cell.

Pasting Graphic Objects

A graphic object is treated as a single object and is pasted in the usual manner. However, if the Clipboard contains a graphic object that's larger than the drawing area (in either direction), you'll see a warning.



If you click 'OK', the large graphic object will be reduced proportionally and pasted onto your template. If you click the 'Cancel' button, the paste operation will be canceled.

Pasting Text

You can paste text in two different ways: as a new text object, and as text inserted into an existing text object.

If you're not editing a text object when you choose the Paste command, the text on the Clipboard will be pasted as a new object, and centered on the drawing window. If the text is pasted while you are editing a text object, the text on the Clipboard will be inserted at the current insertion point of the selected text object.

Using Drag and Drop

"Using the Clipboard" earlier in this chapter, explains how you can use various commands and the Clipboard to transfer material between different templates and different applications. If you're using a Mac OS compatible computer with System 7.5 or later installed, the "drag and drop" method provides an even easier way to do this.

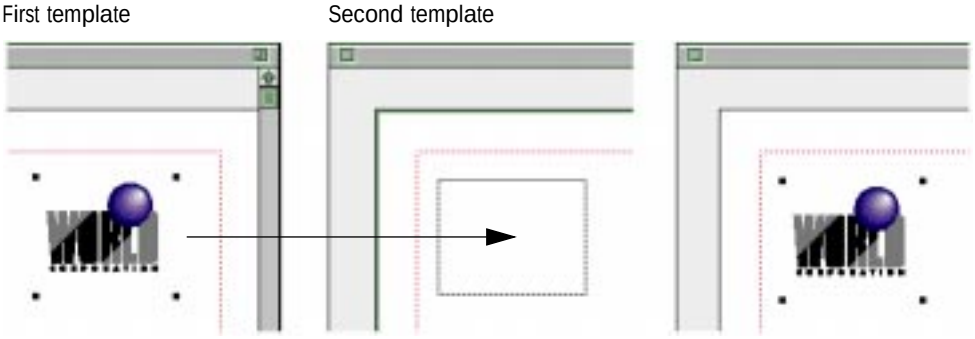
As its name implies, the drag and drop feature consists of selecting an item, "dragging" it with the mouse, and "dropping" it at another place.

Although this section only describes the manipulation of objects from one template to another, you can also use drag and drop to perform other tasks such as:

- moving files from other applications onto your template
- moving material created with Informed Designer to other places

For a detailed description of using drag and drop for these tasks, see Chapter 9, "Using Graphics".

To use drag and drop to copy objects from one template to another, the drawing windows for both templates should be visible on your screen. Select the object that you want to copy from the first template, then drag it onto the drawing window of the second template. When a highlighted border appears around the edge of the second template's drawing area, release the mouse button. The selected object remains at it's original location, and a copy is placed at the current mouse position on the second template.



Click and drag the original object.

Release the mouse button when a highlighted border appears around the window.

A copy of the object is placed in the second location.