# XPress Online

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You've been working with a client for years, producing all their print material - brochures, reports, direct mail, the whole lot. You have a massive archive of XPress files of all this material, most of it you thought would never see the light of day again, after putting it in the hands of the printers. Now they've woken up, only to get caught up in this desire for an online presence. They want all their material available on the Web, and fast. You have neither the time nor inclination to buy and learn a new program. Freelancers aren't a viable, cost effective solution either and you're never going to dissuade your client.

To help you out I'm going to run through some methods of getting XPress files on-line. I'm no expert when it comes to creating web-ready documents, in fact I'm a complete ignoramus when it comes to HTML, DHTML, CSS, etc., so if I can get it to work it has to be alright. One thing's for sure, I've understood that if you're starting from scratch, use a dedicated program (e.g. GoLive CyberStudio, NetObjects Fusion or Macromedia DreamWeaver). If you are in the situation described above, read on.

here seems to be two types of programs to achieve the desired result. XTensions that convert the XPress document to HTML for viewing with a standard browser, or those that require additional software to read the resulting file. The two main options here are Adobe Acrobat and QuarkImmedia. There are certain advantages to using these routes, even if they do require their own (free) readers. For a start both offer multipurpose documents. With Immedia you get a multimedia/CD-ROM presentation which can also be exported as a web ready document. You can even establish links between the CD version and web site to allow for constant updating of information. Although Immedia is not an industrial strength multimedia package like Macromedia Director, it does have the advantage of a familiar interface environment and it is also very intuitive. There is no scripting language to learn so you can produce something quite reasonable straight out

of the box. Using the QuarkImmedia Viewer the whole project can be viewed on the net as if it was on CD, with all the same effects, and no Java needed either!

Although there were a few annoying anomalies in version 1, most have been addressed in version 1.5. Version 1 can be found for around £80, either bundled with XPress 4, or even 'de-bundled' from some mail order houses. Upgrades to 1.5 are around £150. There are examples and links to Immedia sites, plus downloadable Viewers at http://www.quark.com/quarkimmedia We will have an in depth look at Immedia at some time in the future.

Adobe Acrobat has grown from strength to strength, and the promise of version 4 looks set to take it into a new realm. It is becoming an almost indispensable tool for digital artworkers. The fact that a document can be saved as a tiny cross-platform   file without any problems with fonts is a boon in itself. Great for e-mailing digital proofs. The files will even print out perfectly on non Postscript PC printers.

It has never been particularly easy creating PDF (Portable Document   Format) files from XPress. Quark has been working with Adobe to amend this situation, and PDF XTension (beta) is a result of this, but it still requires Acrobat Distiller. With LaserWriter 8.5 (and above) there is an option write a PDF file in the 'Save as File' option that works really well, and will even let you save with crop marks, but you still need Distiller. However, if you buy the package you also get Acrobat Exchange, a more sophisticated version of the free Acrobat Reader, which allows you to do minor text edits and more importantly created URL links. These documents can then be read online with the Acrobat Reader plug-in for your browser. This is how the PDF version of 1984 Online is created. Using XPress and Acrobat together will also be covered more fully in another issue.

o there we have two methods of getting your Quark documents online, maintaining the typography and without doing any major extra work to your existing files. Now to run through some of the XTensions that will turn your XPress files into HTML. Here there are two main contenders, Extensis BeyondPress 4.0 (£325) and Challenger XT 2.0 (£299). Other alternatives include WebXPress from Gluon (£149) and HexWeb XT (£349) (a bundle version which includes HexWeb Typography costs £395). If you want to go down this route your best bet seems to be Beyond Press 4. Extensis are producing an amazing array of very functional XTensions and Plug-ins for all the major graphics software and this is no exception.   It will support both DHTML and HTML, and even allow you to assign HTML attributes to XPress objects. It will automatically convert images to GIF or JPEG with a large range of user definable preferences. Even type can be converted, to maintain the typography of headlines etc. It also supports Cascading Style Sheets and Dynamic Fonts to help improve the typographic quality of your Web pages. For a more dynamic site it will let you import Java applets, QuickTime movies and animated GIFs directly into XPress and give live preview as well. There is even Site

Management built in.

Once all the preferences have been set up and any links, animations etc created it is just a click to export your document to HTML. Potential problems are flagged during export, and the final file is opened in the browser of your choice for previewing. Certainly a robust, although a little expensive, way to get your documents online. It can even be used to create web pages from scratch. A demo version can be downloaded from http://www.extensis.com Challenger XT 2.1 offers similar capabilities including the ability to export as XML (Extended Markup Language). There is a demo version of this available from the HexMac site at http://www.hexmac.com I can only suggest that you download these demos and try them for yourself to find which one you are more comfortable with, and works how you want, if creating Web pages from XPress is your want.

There is one other alternative which isn't specifically for XPress - Terry Morse's Myrmidon.

his is installed as an Extension in the System Folder and appears in the Chooser, so that any document that can be printed can be converted to HTML. It will convert images to GIF or JPEG. It can detect all URLs and convert them to links plus all the other basic conversion options you need. It also supports CyberStudio's visual editing. The best thing is it can be bought online for just $69. A fully working demo, good for 25 conversions, can be downloaded from http://www.terrymorse.com

So there's your choices. Acrobat is an indispensable tool for anyone working in graphics and publishing, and will become more so. Immedia is an entity unto itself. I like it, other people hate it. What more can I say. The other export XTensions work exceedingly well and are probably worth getting if you work exclusively with XPress and need Web pages that incorporate all the latest Web technology. If you are doing a lot of Web work already and are conversant with the nuts and bolts of HTML, or CyberStudio, Myrmidon is probably your best bet as it gives you conversion capabilities beyond XPress, without a high price tag. Even if you are doing just occasional Web pages and are already an XPert then go with Myrmidon. You'll get results without being heavily out of pocket.

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