

hort cuts!

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To continue the alternating basics/XPert column, this issue I'll run through some of the top time-saving keyboard shortcuts. Although they are all documented, who actually reads manuals? XPress 3 was supplied with a handy overlay for extended keyboards showing all the F-key commands and a three-sided keyboard shortcut chart. XPress 4 comes with a booklet that is not quite as convenient to use.

The standard Apple commands for New Document (⌘-N), Open (⌘-O), Close (⌘-W), Save (⌘-S), Print (⌘-P), Copy (⌘-C), Paste (⌘-V), Quit (⌘-Q) etc are all there, as are the standard commands for modifying type Bold (⌘-B), Italic (⌘-I) etc (although it is better not to use the type modifiers as they can cause all sorts of problems and disappointments when it comes to output).

Once your document is open you want to use the menu bar as little as possible to speed up your work. You can even reduce the amount you use your mouse. Changing your views is easily controlled by key-strokes and mouse clicks. ⌘-1 gives you 100%, ⌘-0 (zero) gives you 'Fit in window', ⌘-alt-click takes you to 200%. If you want to easily close-up on a specific area press control and marquee the area with the mouse, this will blow it up to a maximum of 800% (in XPress 4). You can scroll between pages using shift-page up or page down. Shift-F6 will give you thumbnail views. This is handy for when you have pages from one document that you need to transfer to another. Providing the pages are the same size, place the documents side by side in thumbnail view then simply drag the relevant page(s) to the other document placing them exactly where you need them, as you would with the Document Layout palette.

If you don't have the luxury of a large (19"-21") monitor then you can easily clear up the clutter of palettes using F-keys. F10 for document layout, F11 for style sheets (and shift-F11 to edit style sheets) and F12 for colours (shift-F12 to edit colours). If you want to hide/show guides then press the F7 key. ⌘-I will hide/show invisible characters to help you find double word spaces or rogue carriage returns. If your page starts filling up with guide rules you can easily remove them by option clicking on the rulers. This works page by page and the page you want to clear must be 'touching' the ruler.









To speed up the use of dialogue boxes, apart from using the key commands to activate them use the tab to go from one box to the next, or shift-tab to go back, you can use the keyboard, instead of the mouse, to OK (return or enter), Cancel (⌘-.), Yes (⌘-Y), No (⌘-N) or Apply (⌘-A).


You can also do some calculations in the dialogue boxes. For example: you need a text box with five columns 32mm wide with a 4mm gutter, so in the Modify box (⌘-M) where it says width type in $5*32+4*4$ and XPress will calculate the size for you (after all we are using computers!) You can also enter the same calculation in the Measurements palette as well. The commands you need are + for addition, - for subtraction, / for division and * for multiply. You can even mix different measurements, e.g. $5*2''+4*12\text{pt}$. These calculations are also handy when you have to create a multi-page rollfold, with shortened pages to allow for folding, e.g. $99+99+98+97+96$.

Not having any layering facility in XPress is frustrating, especially after working with other graphics/illustration programs. Apart from using one of the many XTensions available (e.g. QX-Tools or XPert Tools) you can cycle through the layers using ⌘-alt-shift and clicking on the subsequent layers, then either bring them to the front (F5), send to the back (shift F5) or bring forward one level at a time (alt F5) or send backward (alt-shift F5). Not perfect but it works.

Once you start working with your text or images then using the keyboard can really start speeding you up and changing the way you work. Assuming that you have formatted your text using properly set up Style Sheets (which will be covered in the very near future) but you need to tweak it to fit better then the following shortcuts will be useful. Double-clicking will select a word, triple-clicking - a line, four clicks - a paragraph and five clicks will select the whole story/text chain. The arrow keys can also be used, in conjunction with combinations of modifier keys, to highlight text. For example; ⌘-shift-arrow down will highlight from the current cursor position until the end of the para while ⌘-shift- arrow up will take you to the beginning of the para. Without the ⌘ the same combination will take you to the end or beginning, respectively, of the line. And so on.

Once you've highlighted your text you can increase it in preset size range (7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 18, 24, 36, 48, 60, 72 etc) using ⌘-shift-> or decrease it using ⌘-shift-<. Or in one point increments with ⌘-alt-shift-> (up) or ⌘-alt-shift-< (down). These commands will also have the same effect on rules. Images in a box can be increased or decreased by increments of 5% with ⌘-alt-shift-< or ⌘-alt-shift-> combinations. You can increase the leading by one point with ⌘-shift-” or 1/10th of a point with ⌘-alt-shift-” or decrease it by the same amounts with ⌘-shift-: and ⌘-alt-shift-: respectively. You can give it a bit of baseline shift with ⌘-alt-shift-minus(-) to move it down one point or ⌘-alt-shift-+ to

move it up one point. If you need to track it tighter use -shift- for .05em or -alt-shift- for .005 em. To track it out the same amounts use -shift- and -alt-shift- respectively. If you need to modify the characters' horizontal scaling by either 5% or 1%, use -] or -alt-] to increase or -[or -alt-[to decrease.

One other useful shortcut, if you need to insert a Zapf Dingbat in the copy, is -shift-Z then the character. This will insert the Dingbat and then revert back to the font you were using.

This is by no means a complete list of short cuts in XPress but a short summary of the ones that you will use everyday. Take time to read through the guide that comes with the program, try to use them everyday so that they become second nature and watch your productivity increase. Remember that not all programs have the same commands, or that the same command will have a completely different action. Different language versions also use slightly different commands which are also relative to their different keyboards. Adobe has made a great effort for consistency throughout its product range. Macromedia FreeHand 8 offers another solution by allowing you to either select the same Keyboard shortcuts of the program you are most familiar with, FreeHand's standard set or a completely customised set.

reebie of the month

Another one from Quark this month <http://www.quark.com>. This XTension is for those who use QuarkXPress Passport, the multi-lingual version of XPress. Called Babel it allows Passport users to produce different language versions of a document within the same document. This ensures absolute consistency from one language to the next. Each language is set on its own "layer" and then output as a separate plate at the repro stage. But note that it will only work with Passport. At just under 7Mb you have really got to want to use it to download it.

Also don't forget to check out the Markzware site (<http://www.markzware.com>) which has a new free XTension every month plus regular updates to FlightCheck and its other XTensions.

Updater

After taking so many years to bring out version 4 of XPress it looks like version 5 could be out before the end of the year. It is rumoured to be in beta at the moment. With the imminent arrival of Adobe's K2, and all its promises of integration with the rest of the Adobe graphics line, XPress 5 will have to offer something special, and a lower price (see last issue). To give Quark credit it has had a wish list posted on its website for quite some time, to which submissions did receive personal replies. It will be interesting to see if Quark is really listening to its users and how many suggestions have been incorporated. We will keep you informed of any news.

If anyone has a questions or XPress related subjects they would like covered then

please e-mail me.

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