orking With Style

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One of the fundamental functions incorporated into XPress, and many other graphics and text editing applications, is style sheets. These allow you to set character and paragraph parameters for speed and consistency in text formatting. Yet it is amazing, to me, how little they are used or are used incorrectly.

In XPress 3 there were only paragraph style sheets. This meant that when a style was applied it affected the whole paragraph. If you wanted, for example, to make the first word in every paragraph in bold caps you would have had to have done each one individually. Of course there were XTensions (ALAP XPert Tools and Extensis QX-Tools) that offered character style sheets but it was not until the release of XPress 4 that they were incorporated into the program. Unfortunately even character style sheets don't alleviate all the work as you still have to select the text you want to format. If it is a consistently repetitive style, like the one mentioned, it may be better to also incorporate the use of XPress Tags or AppleScript. (These will be covered in future articles.)

The use of style sheets comes into its own in editorial and brochure work, where there are mixed and repeated styles like body copy, heads, sub heads etc. When starting a new page design from scratch, it is the ideal moment to spend a little extra time creating the style sheets to save working time later. There is one of those Chinese sayings about when you have to spend the day chopping wood, spend the first seven hours sharpening the axe. And it couldn't be truer in this case.

You've spent days, or even weeks, choosing the right typefaces for the body copy, headlines etc. You've got the leading looking just how you want and the tracking on the headlines is really there. So now all you need to do is create the style sheets.

he easiest way is to highlight a word then select Edit -> Style Sheets or use Shift-F11 and click New Paragraph. This will automatically put all the specs into the new style sheet. All you have to do is give it a name. One important step that many people overlook is creating a Character Style Sheet for the new Paragraph Style. All you need to do is click on Character Attributes -> New and the specs will be there already, all you need to do is give it a name, which should be the same as the paragraph style, just to keep things simple. By doing this it makes it a lot easier to edit your Style Sheets at a later stage, if need be. To create the next Style sheet in the same manner you need to save your new styles then close the Edit Style Sheets window and select the next piece of text you want to add.

haracter Style Sheets are just that. They allow you to apply a Style to a single character (like a drop cap), a whole word or even a whole sentence, within a Paragraph Style. And you can use Based On when creating a new style, so you can have a bold or italic version of your body copy Style.
There are some other features that should be looked at to make your use of Style Sheets a little easier. First, Keyboard Equivalents. This allows you to assign a combination of keys as short cuts (see Issue 11 for more on this). Most of the F keys are already assigned, although they can be augmented with modifiers, which in this case is by using the Control key in combination with others. Most people tend to use the Numeric Keypad for Style Sheet short-cuts. I recommend that modifier keys (⌘, alt, shift, control or a combination of any of these) are always used. There is nothing more frustrating than entering some numbers from the keypad and finding your layout has completely changed and you've gone too far for Undo to work.

'Based On' is a way of creating a sub-set of Style Sheets. If you need to have, for example, bullet points with hanging indents within your 'body copy' then you create a new Style Sheet called, say, Bullets, click the Based On and select "body copy". This creates a Style Sheet with identical specs. You then edit the relevant parameter, which in this case would be Left Indent and First Line (to create the hanging indent). The advantage of this over just duplicating the Style is if you change any part of the body copy specs they are automatically carried through to any other Style upon which it is

based.

The other function that is a bit of a mystery to most people is the Next Style option. This only works if you are entering text directly in XPress. Basically it activates the selected Style after a 'carriage' return (new paragraph). If you set up a Style Sheet for a Sub-head normally you would then go on to 'body copy', so by making 'body copy' your Next Style in the Sub-head Style Sheet then this happens automatically, but as I said, only when you are typing in XPress.

There is one feature of Style Sheets that is new to XPress 4 (apart from Character styles) is the way Style Sheets can be appended from other documents. In XPress 3 this was possible but it brought in all the Styles from the other document. It is now possible to select just the Styles you need. Another useful feature incorporated in the same function is the ability to compare Styles. By Shift-clicking or ⌘-clicking (if they are non consecutive items) Styles then holding the alt/option key the Append button becomes Compare and brings up detailed specifications of both Styles.

nce you have created your Style Sheets it is just a matter of importing the text and systematically applying the styles using either the Keyboard shortcuts you've created or accessing them from the Style Sheets palette (F11). If you modify text that has a Style Sheet applied to it (by changing the size or tracking, for example) a small + appears next to the Style in the palette. If you want to restore the text back to the unmodified Style you need to hold the option key when you click n the style in the Styles list. If you don't do this it won't override the modifications you made.

By using properly formatted Style Sheets together with well designed Master Pages you will be able to easily produce consistent layouts easily and productively. I'll run through setting up Master Pages in the next issue.

Freebies
In a previous issue I mentioned an XTension called Font Collector which, at the time, only worked with XPress 3.3. Now it has been upgraded to work with version 4. So if you don't want to fork out for pre-flight software, either because you can't afford it or you just know that you have done everything right, this will collect all the fonts used in the document, including those in EPS files, when you do your Collect for Output. It is, unfortunately, a separate action, accessed from the Utilities menu. This slight inconvenience is outweighed by its function and price. Remember to check your font licence, and ensure your bureau/repro house also has a proper licence as well, before downloading fonts. Available from http://www.meadowsinfo.com
A Lowly Apprentice Production (ALAP) has introduced a free XTension that will convert layers created by other developers' XTensions, such as Scitex Layers, Layer It! and QX-Layers to the XPert Layers format. The ConvertLayers XTension is ideally suited for use in studios and service bureaux where files arrive with all different sorts of layers, as it

allows users to easily convert these files to be usable with XPert Layers. Available from
http://www.alap.com

Updater
ALAP has released two of its most useful (and popular) components of XPert Tools as
individual XTensions. XPert Layers (see Freebies) and XPert Scale address two of the
weaker areas of XPress 4 without the need to purchase the whole XPert Tools suite.
Although the individual prices seem a little high compared to the whole of XPert Tools 1,
at least you are not paying for a lot of redundant software. (See review in XPhiles Issue
9)

Quark has announced that a CD only installer version of XPress 4.04 is available for
owners of the new G3s and iMacs. At present it is only available in the US English
version but other versions are in the pipeline. This is a start, at least. But what of the
other things I mentioned in Updater in Issue 10? It appears that Adobe has designed its
'Quark killer' InDesign to be modular, as I suggested XPress should be, with third party
developers providing the specialist tools as plug-ins. And it will come at half the price of
XPress. Adobe are being quite realistic in their projections for InDesign's success,
expecting around 2 years before they take the lead. But as we all know that's a hell of a
long time in the digital world. The next few months will be very interesting, seeing what
Quark will offer in retaliation to maintain its user base.

If anyone has a questions or XPress related subjects they would like covered then
please e-mail me.
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