



Overview

Whenever taking a file to be printed, it's important to know exactly how the printer (Copy Spot, Alphagraphics, etc.) expects the document to be setup and saved. This tutorial provides instruction on how to first setup a full-bleed document in InDesign and then save it as a print-ready PDF.

Full-bleed document

"Full bleed" simply means that the ink runs to the very edge of the paper. Most printers can only print within 1/8" of the edge of a sheet of paper, leaving a white border on all four sides. That's why it's necessary to print a full-bleed 8.5 x 11 document on larger paper (i.e. 11 x 17) and trim down. To eliminate guesswork when trimming, crop marks are very helpful. Adding crop marks will be discussed in the PDF section later.

1. Setup bleeds

Start by opening a new document in InDesign by going to File – New – Document (Cmd N). In the dialog box that appears, choose an 8.5 x 11 document (or your own custom size). Click "More Options" in the right menu and type in the amount of bleed for all four sides of the page. Generally, a standard bleed is 0.125 inch (1/8 inch).

2. View or hide bleeds

Once the new document is created, the bleed will be represented by a thin red line, 1/8" beyond the edge of the page. All design work that will bleed off the edge should extend to this red line. The trim line is now the black border around the document. To hide the bleed and view what your document will look like after being trimmed, hit W or the Preview button at the bottom of the Tools palette in InDesign.

Page management

While working on a multiple-page document in InDesign, it's easy to add or delete pages and change page order. Go to Window – Pages to open the Pages palette and follow the steps to perform these three tasks:

Add pages by clicking the "Create new page" icon next to the trash icon at the bottom right corner of the Pages palette. To duplicate a page, drag it to the "Create new page" icon, and the exact same page will be inserted.

Delete pages by clicking on the page and then clicking the trash icon, or simply drag a page to the trash icon.

Change order of pages by dragging and dropping them to the desired position.

Color modes

When printing, you will need to make sure that your document is CMYK, but here are the four most common color modes and their uses:

RGB (Red-Green-Blue): This mode is optimized for display on computer monitors. Photos for the web and those uploaded to one-hour photo labs should be saved in the RGB color mode.

CMYK (Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Black): This process is the same as on a full color printing press. This means that this color mode will give the most accurate representation of what will be printed; remember, however, that a computer monitor is RGB, and CMYK color mode won't view perfectly on the monitor. When taking a file to be printed, it must be in CMYK.

Hex: HTML colors are defined using a hexadecimal notation for the combination of red, green, and blue color values. Each hex color has its own six-digit notation; for example, black is #000000.

Pantone: The Pantone Matching System is the definitive international reference for selecting, specifying, matching and controlling ink colors. Pantone colors will print exactly the way they appear in the Pantone color books, regardless of the way they appear on the screen.

The easiest way to determine values for color swatches is to use the eyedropper in Photoshop to sample the color. Double click the sampled color so that the Color Picker window appears. To find the Pantone number, click "Color Libraries" and make sure the Book drop-down shows PANTONE.

Packaging files

Creating outlines will preserve the appearance of fonts when working on different computers. Saving a document as a PDF will do the same. One disadvantage to creating outlines, however, is that the text is no longer editable, and often, changes will need to be made; if not now, it's likely they will need to be made in the future.

Packaging a file in InDesign is a great solution. In the packaging process, InDesign will save the original file, all fonts, links, and printing instructions (if desired) in a single folder.

Simply go to **File – Package**. Hit Continue when the Printing Instructions dialog box opens. It is not necessary to enter the requested information.

PDF types

As mentioned above, saving as a PDF will preserve the appearance of fonts. Sometimes a document with drop shadows or transparencies will appear differently when saved as a PDF, so be sure to preview the PDF after saving. A few adjustments may fix the problem. For our purposes, there are two main types of PDFs: Press Quality and 150 Quality.

Saving as a PDF

To save an InDesign document as a PDF, go to File – Export and change the format to Adobe PDF. Follow these specific steps to finish exporting the two types of PDFs mentioned:

a. Press Quality:

Use this option for high-resolution printing. This will give you 300 dpi. In the Adobe PDF Preset drop-down menu, choose Press Quality. Under “Marks and Bleeds” at left in the Export Adobe PDF window, make sure to check the “Crop Marks” and “Use Document Bleed Settings” boxes to finalize the PDF.

b. 150 Quality:

Use this option for viewing from a website, to yield a small file with good image quality. (Use this method for uploading your Product Redesign book to I-Learn and your website.) In the Adobe PDF Preset drop-down menu, choose Press Quality, but then under “Compression” change the following settings for all images (color, grayscale and monochrome):

