How to prepare files for print

Preparing files for printing involves the following steps:

- Setting printer settings

- Using Preflight to confirm that the file has all components necessary for printing

- Packaging the files for printing

For more information on printing, see the Adobe Print Resource Center at www.adobe.com/go/print_resource.

Printing to a printer

You set printer settings through the Adobe InDesign CS4 Print dialog box. In the following steps, you set printer settings and then print to your printer.

1. Start InDesign and open the document to be printed.

   The Print dialog box appears (**Figure 1**) with the General area selected in the left pane.

2. Under Pages, select the pages you want to print.

3. Under Options, make sure Visible & Printable Layers is selected.

   This means everything you see in your InDesign document will print.

4. In the left pane, choose Setup.

   The Setup area of the Print dialog box appears (**Figure 2**).

5. Under Paper Size, choose Letter.

   This the default size paper loaded in most printers. Alternately, you can select the dimensions of the paper in your printer.
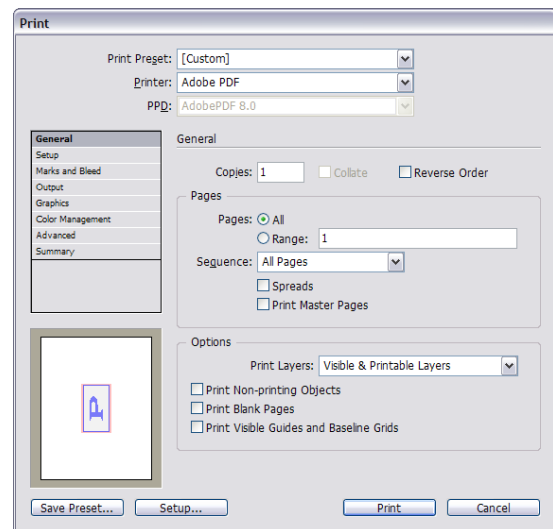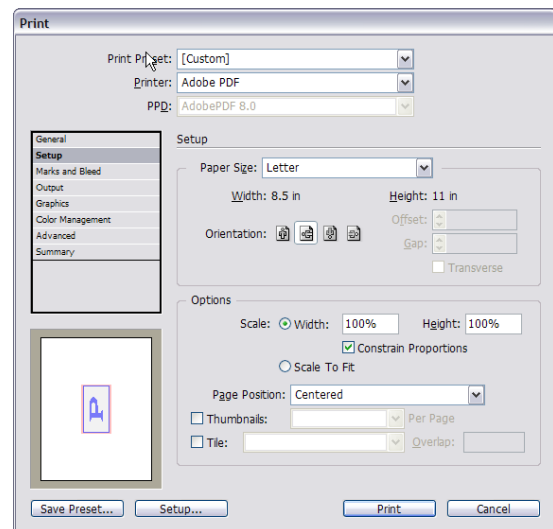

Figure 1 Print dialog box

Figure 2 Setup area of Print dialog box

6. In the left pane, choose Marks And Bleed to display the Marks And Bleed area of the Print dialog box.

7. Select All Printer's Marks (**Figure 3**).

   This tells InDesign to print all the marks that let you cut your document to your desired size. See **Figure 5** for an example of marks.

   Because printers do not print to the page edge, you will usually need to crop your document after printing. *Crop marks* show you where to cut your document.
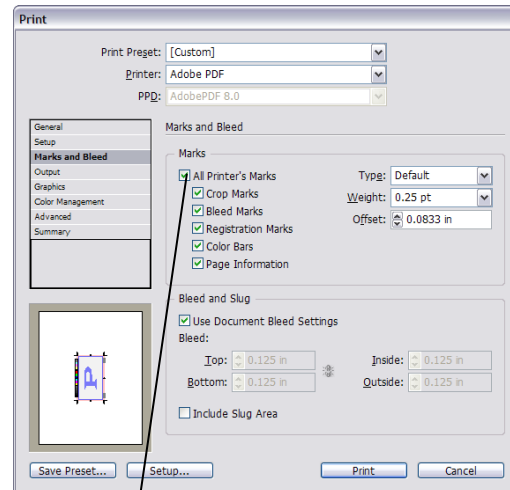
8. Select Output in the left pane.

   The Output area of the Print dialog box appears (**Figure 4**).

9. In Output settings, make sure Composite RGB is selected.

10. Leave the other settings unchanged, and click Print to print the document.

    When the document prints, it shows all of the printer's marks (**Figure 5**).

All Printer's Marks option

Figure 3 Marks And Bleed area of Print dialog box

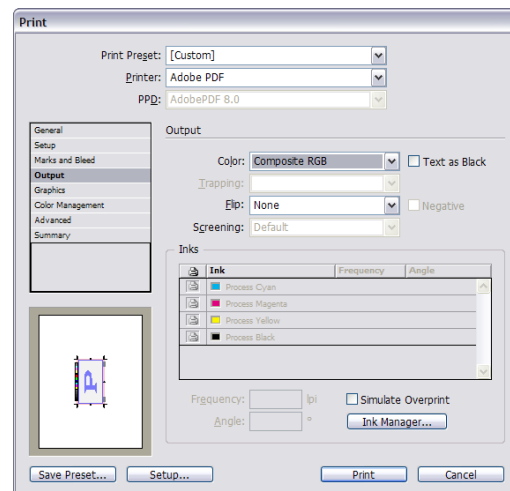**Figure 4** Output area of Print dialog box

Figure 5 Printed file

Sending files to a print vendor

Unlike your printer at home or school, print vendors have very specific requirements for what they will print. These requirements have been established to ensure the printed copies you receive look the way you expected. As you gain experience as a designer, you will find that meeting these requirements results in fewer problems with print vendors. After all, you're paying a lot of money to get your designs printed.

Most print vendors accept print projects in one of two formats:

- *PDF/X-1:* A special kind of PDF that restricts PDF features (such as comments) that might interfere with the print process.

- *Native files:* The set of files you used to create your InDesign document. These include the InDesign file itself, any fonts used in the document, and any image files used in the document.

Preparing a PDF/X-1 for a print vendor

The PDF/X-1 file format is widely used by print vendors in the United States. PDF/X-1 is a PDF file that excludes everything that might interfere with producing a quality print job, such as RGB images, annotations, form fields, and comments. For more information, see www.pdfx.info/ or the Adobe Acrobat user manual.

Note: Because PDF/X-1 excludes all RGB images, you need to be sure the images in your InDesign document are CMYK. It is best to convert images to CMYK TIFFs in Photoshop before placing them in an InDesign file.

To prepare a PDF/X-1 file:

1. Start InDesign and open the document you want to prepare for a print vendor.

2. Choose File > Export.

   The Export dialog box appears (**Figure 6**).

3. Specify a name and location for the file.

4. Specify Adobe PDF in the Save As Type menu (Windows) or the Format menu (Mac OS).
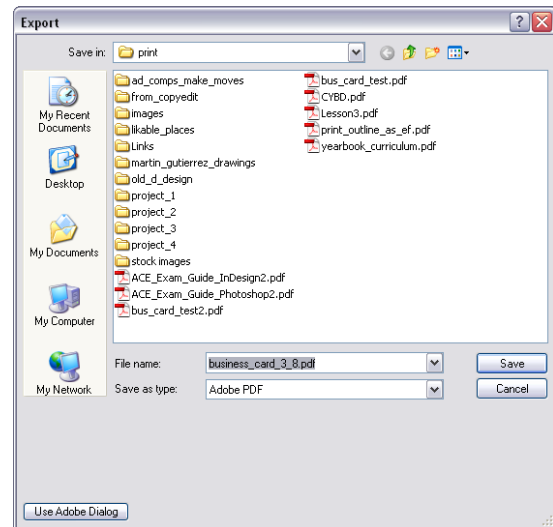
5. Click Save.

Figure 6 Export dialog box

The Export Adobe PDF dialog box appears.

6. From the Adobe PDF Preset pop-up menu, choose PDF/X-1a:2001 (**Figure 7**).

7. Leave other settings unchanged, and click Export.

   A message will appear that shows you the progress of the export.

8. When the export is complete, browse to the location of the exported file and open the file.

   The PDF looks like any other PDF, without comments and other features.

9. Close the file without saving.

   Note: Be careful not to save the document in Adobe Acrobat 9. Saving the document could change the settings, meaning the document would no longer conform to the PDF/X-1a:2001 standard.
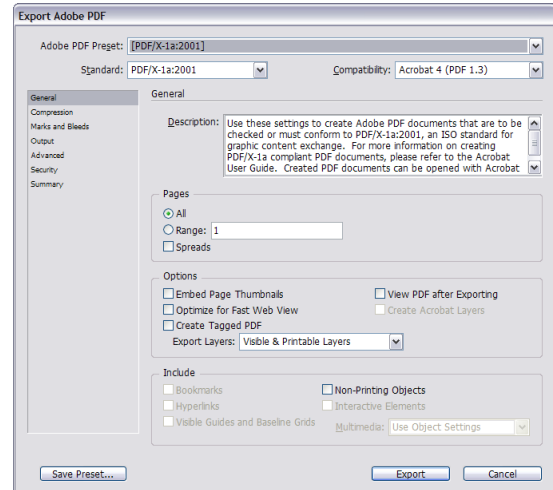
Figure 7 Export Adobe PDF dialog box

Sending native files to a print vendor

Some print vendors may require you to send native files to be printed. *Native files* consist of the following:

- The InDesign file for the project

- Any images used in the project

- Any fonts used in the project

To prepare native files, first check that all of the appropriate files are available, and then package these files in one folder to send to the print vendor.

Using Preflight

Use a feature of InDesign called Preflight to confirm that all graphics and fonts used in the file are available for printing.

1. Choose File > Preflight (Windows) or Window > Output > Preflight (Mac OS).

   The Preflight panel appears.

2. To review Preflight errors, click a triangle to expand the list.

   Problems are listed according to error type and page number. For this print job Preflight encounters one missing image link and several missing fonts (**Figure 8**).

3. In this example, the logo.psd link is missing. Double-click on the image file in the Preflight panel to help locate the broken link within the InDesign layout.
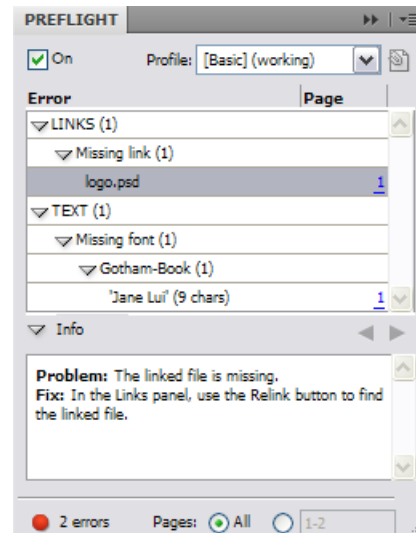
4. Choose Window > Links.

Figure 8 Error area of the Preflight panel

The Links panel shows all images placed in the document. Broken links are flagged with a question mark symbol (**Figure 9**).

5. In **Figure 9**, the logo image is missing. To locate the image on your system double-click the question mark icon.

    If the image is not on your system, you should copy the image to your system before continuing to prepare the package. Without the image file, your print vendor will not be able to print your document correctly.

    The Locate dialog box appears (**Figure 10**).

7. In the Locate dialog box, browse to the location of the missing image.

8. Select the image and click Open.

    The Locate dialog box closes.

9. Return to the Preflight panel.

    The Missing link error is resolved; however a Missing font error remains. Double-click the text string in the Preflight panel to help locate the missing fonts within the InDesign layout.

10. Choose Type > Find Font.

    Select the missing font names in the Fonts In Document list. (**Figure 11**).

11. To replace a font, select the new font you want to use from the Replace With list, and do one of the following:

    *   To change just one occurrence of the selected font, click Change. This option is not available if multiple fonts are selected.

    *   To change the font in that occurrence, and then find the next instance, click Change/Find. This option is not available if multiple fonts are selected.

    *   To change all instances of the font selected in the list, click Change All. If you want any paragraph or character style that includes the font being searched for to be redefined, select Redefine Style When Changing All.

    When there are no more occurrences of a font in your file, its name is removed from the Fonts In Document list.

12. Return to the Preflight panel and confirm that all preflight errors have been resolved.
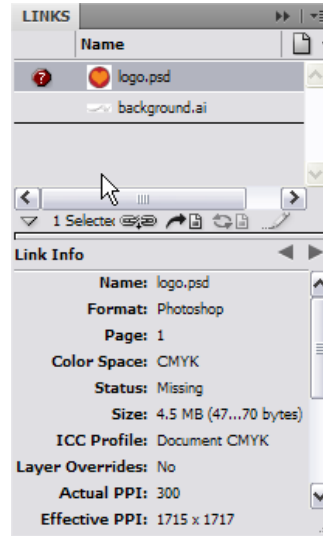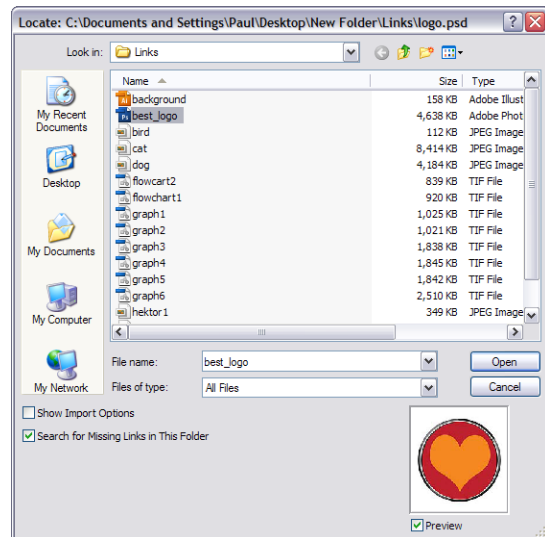

Figure 9 Preflight Links and Images category
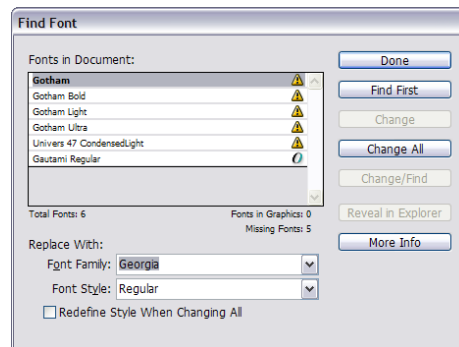

Figure 10 Locate dialog box

Figure 11 Find font dialog box

Packaging files for a print vendor

When you *package* a file, you collect into one folder all of the assets a print vendor will need to print the file. You could do this manually, but the Package utility in InDesign makes this process much easier.

To package a file:

1. Choose File > Package.

    The Printing Instructions dialog box appears
    (**Figure 12**).

2. Enter the following information:

    -   Your contact information, including company,
        address, email, and phone number.

    -   Any instructions for printing, such as number of
        copies or when the print vendor should call you.

3. Click Continue.

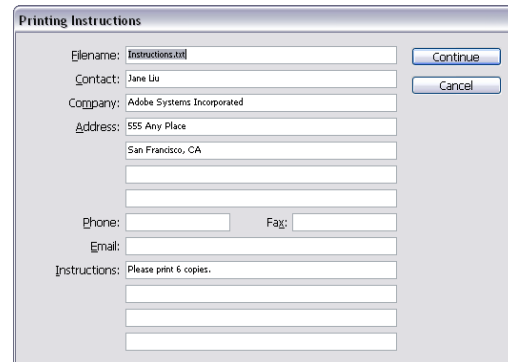   The Printing Instructions dialog box closes.

Figure 12 Printing Instructions dialog box

The Package Publication (Windows) or Create Package Folder (Mac OS) dialog box appears (**Figure 13**).

4. Select the following options:

    - Copy Fonts

    - Copy Linked Graphics

    - Update Graphic Links In Package

5. In the Package Publication dialog box, browse to a folder for the packaged document.

6. Click Package (Windows) or Save (Mac OS).

    A dialog box appears warning you about copying fonts. Many font companies, such as Adobe, let you send a copy of your font to the printer. Check your font license to be sure.

    Although most print vendors will have a copy of the font you're using, you send them the font to make sure it's the correct one.

7. Click OK in the Warning dialog box.

    InDesign creates the document package.

8. Close or minimize InDesign. Navigate to the folder on your system where you placed the package (**Figure 14**).

    The folder contains an INDD file, a text file with your instructions, a Font folder, and a Links folder.

9. Open the Links folder.

    You should see files for the images you've included in the document.

You can now submit the package to a print vendor.
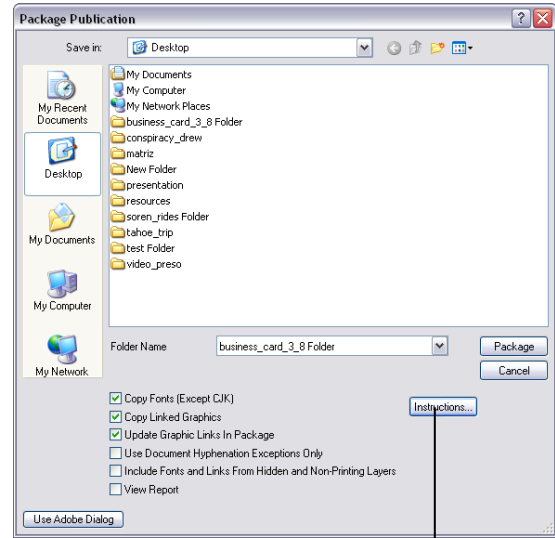
Instructions button
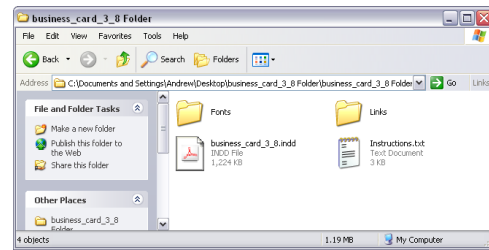
Figure 13 Package Publication dialog box

Figure 14 Folder containing package