

InDesign Document Conversion Tip

Save Countless Hours of Stylesheet Formatting Time

Is the daunting task of converting your existing documents the only thing preventing you from making a commitment to an InDesign workflow? Are you anxious to take advantage of superior typographic features, including Open Type support?

Help is on the way. The application of new stylesheet attributes to converted documents need not be a painstaking process. Use the following steps to get the job done in a fraction of the time you originally envisioned. This assumes that you've consistently used stylesheets in your pages to date.

Step 1: Evaluate and convert one representative document from your current page layout software to InDesign. Now adjust all stylesheet attributes that will literally make the new pages "rock." Do not hold back! New typeface, leading, H&J, tracking values, etc. Take time to describe the "ideal" appearance, then prepare to leave inconsistencies and the inferior typography behind.

Step 2: Open the remaining legacy documents with InDesign, save to the folder of your choice and close. There is no need to make any adjustments to their stylesheet definitions.

Step 3: Re-introduce yourself to the "Book" feature, one of the most powerful and under-utilized workflow solutions native to Adobe InDesign. We're going to use it in a slightly different way than you see in the conventional documentation. Create a new Adobe InDesign Book (**File**→**New**→**Book...**) and save with an appropriate name. Include your "Style Master" document by using the "Add documents" icon at the bottom of the palette or selecting **Add document...** from the palette menu. The icon in the Book palette designates it as the style source for the book.

Step 4: Add the remaining InDesign "converted" documents to the book. Note that you can assign multiple documents simultaneously. After selecting and clicking the "Add" button, you will see them all displayed in the book palette.

Step 5: Confirm that the "StyleMaster" document still holds the "Style Source" status within the book (designated by the icon). (*See Figure Below*)

Step 6: IMPORTANT!

Select **Synchronize Options...** from the palette menu. You have the ability to Synchronize Trap Styles and Swatches as well as all of the listed styles. For our example, we would elect to "uncheck" Swatches and Trap Styles at this time and click OK.

Step 7: Test the process by clicking to select any document in the Book palette (with the exception of the "Master"). Choose **Synchronize Selected Documents** from the palette menu (*see Figure Below*). You'll see a "successfully completed" dialogue when the synchronization is done.

Step 8: When you are certain that your style attributes have been properly applied to the "test" file, shift-click to select several documents and repeat the Synchronization process. Congratulations! You've applied intricate style specifications to numerous documents without even having to open them again.

OOPS! Last-second "tweaks" to the master page style specs? Repeat the steps as often as needed.

This method was developed by Jim Cooper, a veteran publication consultant who has applied his editorial, database, and print-workflow experience for RR Donnelley and Pindar Systems clients. More recently, he served the Midwest as a Quark Applications/Services consultant.

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