



Real People Reviews by Daniel M. East

Product: InDesign CS 3.0.1

Manufacturer/Vendor/Developer: Adobe

MSRP: \$699.00/upgrade \$169

Review date: June 11, 2004

PULL QUOTE: "the results are nothing short of job security."



DESCRIPTION (What's it do? What's it got?): The "little brother" no more to the CS applications suite, InDesign is THE page layout application for design professionals. Full integration with Adobe's other applications and the familiar Adobe interface, this latest update to 3.0x for CS is not retro-save enabled, but once you "go CS," the results are nothing short of job security.

MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: PowerPC G3, G4 or G5; OS 10.2 or later; 128 Mb RAM; 350 Mb avail. hard-disk space; CD-ROM drive; 256 colors @ 1024X768 video; QuickTime 6x or later

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Having the longest patent list on a splash screen award aside, InDesign CS is a great answer to the question, "is there a page layout application that produces the output I need for the ways that I need them?" While this is clearly a professional application, with a little help and patience, even advanced AppleWorks users will enjoy creating impressive output that grows as the user's learning curve evolves.

LIKES : The improvements in ID3 are many since both its introduction and v2 releases. Many of the newer features are now my favorite features in ID3 as I was a slow convert, still relying on Illustrator for much of my design needs. Now, with the integration of the CS suite, all of the components of my design work come together seamlessly in ID3 and go out in whatever form I need -- from press-ready packages to PDF form to web design -- and the

results speak volumes about this application.

I really like the addition of the Story Editor which provides far greater control over text styles and text management. Next, the ability to incorporate my other CS suite items and edit them on the fly from within ID3 is a huge time saver. After seeing Adobe's Terry White at the MacDesign conference in Chicago, 2004, I was very impressed by the use of Nested Styles so that consistency to a paragraph text layout style is easily maintained. ID3 now incorporates transparency, blend modes and a far superior PDF export to any competitor's product for this purpose. For those who miss the days of PageMaker, there is even an ID3 "PageMaker Edition" with a plugin pack that features things like data merge, template browsing and a build booklet feature. I love the "collapsible palettes" so that my screen is clear while working and my palettes are available on demand with a simple click. The continuity and cohesiveness with all of Adobe's products is outstanding and familiar.

DISLIKES : My only real gripe about ID3 is that you cannot legacy save (save as an older version) as you can in Illustrator and Photoshop. While I like the Quark-esque control palette, I had what appeared to be corrupt preferences and it would just lock at the top after each launch - an easily remedied situation. Also, even though importing QuarkXpress docs is doable, it is not 100% accurate in terms of text spacing, sizing and style.

HOW DOES THIS PRODUCT COMPARE? : Ok, we know this battle between Quark and Adobe has lingered far too long. To me, that answer is simple: if you are upgrading to OS X as a Quark user and are happy with that, QuarkXpress 6.x will do just fine; however, if you are purchasing full versions the answer is clear. Adobe CS *anything* is your best bet for professional and effective design. Moreover, QuarkXpress comes in priced at nearly \$1,000.00 compared to Adobe InDesign CS at just \$699.00.

WHO MIGHT ENJOY THIS PRODUCT? In my opinion, if you are an upgrading graphics professional who has moved to OSX, Adobe CS plays nicely with QuarkXpress 6.1 for OSX; however, if you are purchasing for the first time on a nice new Mac G5 then you'll love the entire Adobe CS package and, in particular, InDesign to take your work to the most places while saving you time (which is, after all, your product) and producing excellent results online, on paper and in print.

TEST SYSTEM: Apple Titanium PowerBook G4 500 - 1Gb RAM - 10.3.4

FINAL THOUGHTS: I have to say that I was a bit concerned about running ID3 on my old and rapidly aging TiBook, but was very pleasantly surprised by the zippy performance. All aspects of ID3 show Adobe's dedication to quality and a willingness to make the improvements people want and need from version to version. I can't wait for ID4!

OVERALL RATING: 4.5 out of 5 stars EXCELLENT
For more information, visit: www.adobe.com

Daniel East is the founder and president of The Mid-Atlantic Apple/Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs); a member of The Apple Consultants Network (ACN); a member of The Apple Developer Connection (ADC); contributing editor, Macsimum Perspective; contributing reporter, MacDesign magazine; co-host, "PC Talk Radio;" a speaker/presenter and a freelance columnist for several Mac publications.

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