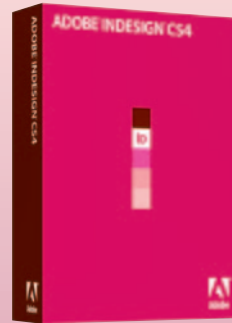


InDesign

MAGAZINE 26

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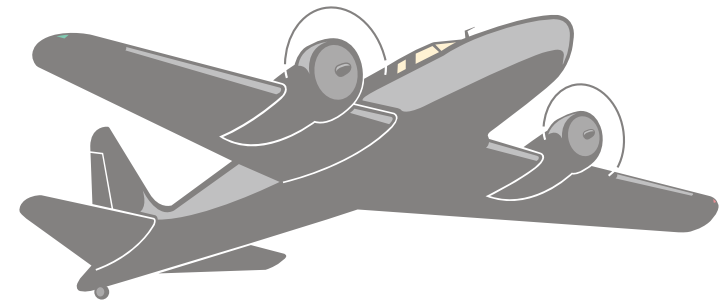
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InDesign CS4: A Whole New Preflight

It's a new fusion between design capability and the laws of printing. Call it "InDesignflight"!

by RUSSELL VIERS

If you used InDesign's preflighting in previous versions, you might have been... underwhelmed. But with CS4, InDesign and powerful, built-in preflight software are a pairing as strong as peanut butter and chocolate, milk and cookies, maybe even as good as the Captain and Tennille.

CS4 is not only capable of preflighting a comprehensive list of potential problems, but it does it while you work—like a pre-preflight.

You can set up the Preflight to watch you work and warn you of potential problems as they occur, not at the last moment, just before your deadline... Unless, of course, you cause a problem just before deadline.

This article will guide you step-by-step through the creation and implementation of a basic preflight profile and show you how to read an error report. What it won't do is go in depth on all of the preflight profile—we'll save that for a future article.

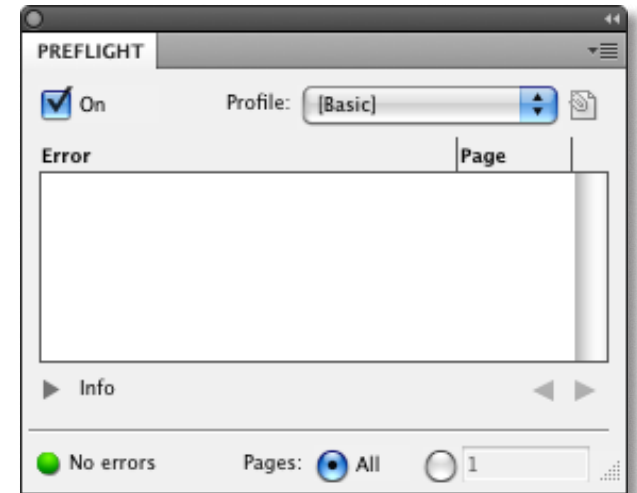
For this, your first profile, let's say your document is going to be 8.5 x 11 inches, full bleed, black plus one spot color, and printed on an offset press at 150 lines-per-inch (lpi).

Your documents may be very different than this—that's okay, after you've finished this exercise you can go back and create a new profile customized for your workflow.

1 Open the Preflight Panel

Open or create an InDesign document. Choose **Window > Output > Preflight** (or press Command-Option-Shift-F/Ctrl-Alt-Shift-F). In the panel that opens, select the On checkbox to make sure the preflight feature is functioning (Figure 1). In fact, while you're there, make sure that Enable Preflight for All Documents is selected in the panel menu.

Figure 1



2 Create a New Profile

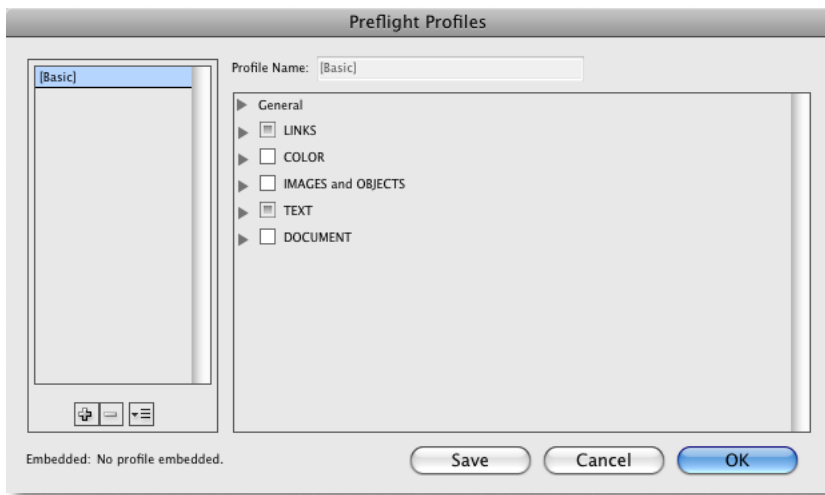
From the Preflight panel's flyout menu, choose Define Profiles. The Preflight Profiles window that opens is the control center of this powerful new function (Figure 2). From here, you can create profiles to whip documents into proper behavior. Unfortunately, it looks and acts surprisingly unlike other InDesign dialog boxes.

To create a new profile, click on the "plus" (+) icon on the left side of the Preflight Profiles window.

Name your new profile and click the Save button (this saves the profile in the list of profiles, but doesn't close the dialog box).

In the guts of this window you'll see six sections: General, Links, Color, Images and Objects, Text, and Document. Click on the triangle to the left of each of

Figure 2



these to expand that category and see the hidden preflight options.

As you can probably guess, to activate a preflight option, click in its checkbox. Many of these options also offer sub-options, such as minimum resolution, so look for additional twirly-triangles to click on.

3 Set up the Color Tab

Expand the Color category and you'll see a seven preflight options. In this case, your document should be black plus one spot color, so select the checkbox labeled "Cyan, Magenta or Yellow Plates Not Allowed." That tells InDesign to allow only grayscale, spot color, duotone, and multichannel graphics.

Next, tell InDesign to allow only one spot color by turning on the Spot Color Setup checkbox and clicking its triangle to see its options. In the Maximum Spot Colors Allowed option, enter 1 as the value (Figure 3).

4 Assign Image Resolution

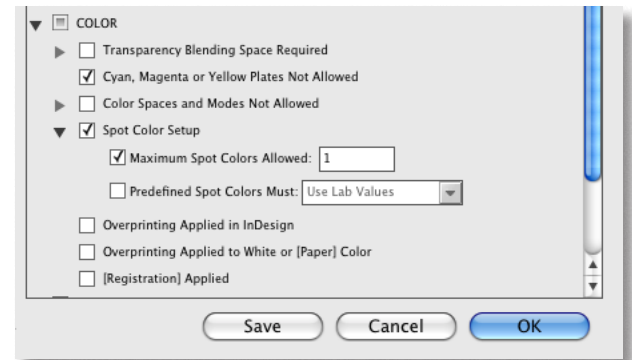
Expand the Images and Objects category, activate Image Resolution, and expand it to see six minimum and maximum resolution options for color, grayscale, and 1-bit images. In this profile, select only the Color Image Minimum Resolution checkbox and the Grayscale Image Minimum Resolution checkbox.

What Is a Profile?

A profile is a set of rules for your document. You can make a profile simple, like one that looks just at image resolution; or you can make a complicated profile that checks a dozen or more aspects of a document. It's tempting to make a profile with every option turned on, but you'll quickly find that causes more hassle than it solves. Instead, look at where your problem areas tend to be, and incorporate just those into your profile. For example, in a newspaper environment, setting a profile to alert you every time a spot color is placed on a page is unnecessary if your Print Style is already set to Convert All Spots to Process at output time.

Alternately, make two or more profiles that check different things, and choose each one only when you need to.

Figure 3

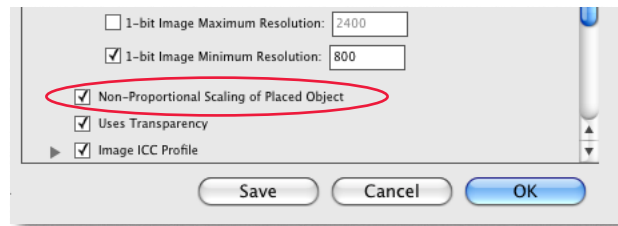


To find out the required resolution value to enter here, a nice chat with your printer or service bureau might be in order. Most people live by the formula of halftone line screen (lpi) x 2 for optimum resolution; so for this project that bit of math tells gives you 300 ppi.

But just because 300ppi is optimum doesn't mean all images not at that resolution should cause an error. I've always used the formula of lpi x 1.25 as the lowest image resolution for print, which means you can enter 190 in both the Color and Grayscale Minimum Resolution fields. (You need a much higher resolution for raster graphics with sharp edges, such as bitmapped clip art, however.)

5 Prevent Stretched Photos
Just in case, click on the Non-Proportional Scaling of Placed Images checkbox, too (Figure 4).

Figure 4



6 Create a Proper Bleed
Many InDesign users either forget to create a bleed guide or neglect to bleed objects far enough off the page to that guide. Preflight can find these problems, but you have to set it up in two different categories in the dialog box.

First, while you're still in the Images and Objects category, activate and expand the Bleed/Trim Hazard checkbox (Figure 5). By turning this option on, you've told InDesign to keep an eye out for the objects you

want to bleed off the page and to alert you if they don't extend far enough.

Now expand the bottom-most category, labeled Document, and turn on the Bleed and Slug Setup checkbox (Figure 6). This checks to ensure that bleed guides have been set up in the Document Setup dialog box.

Figure 5

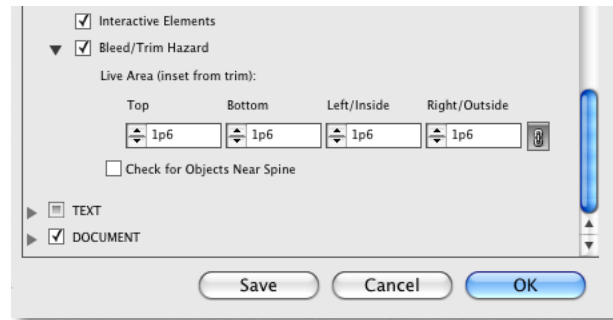
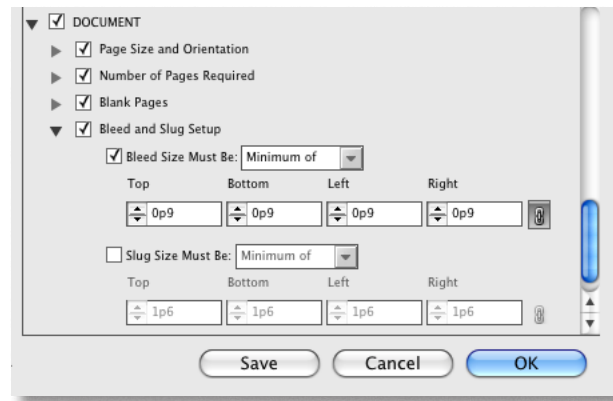


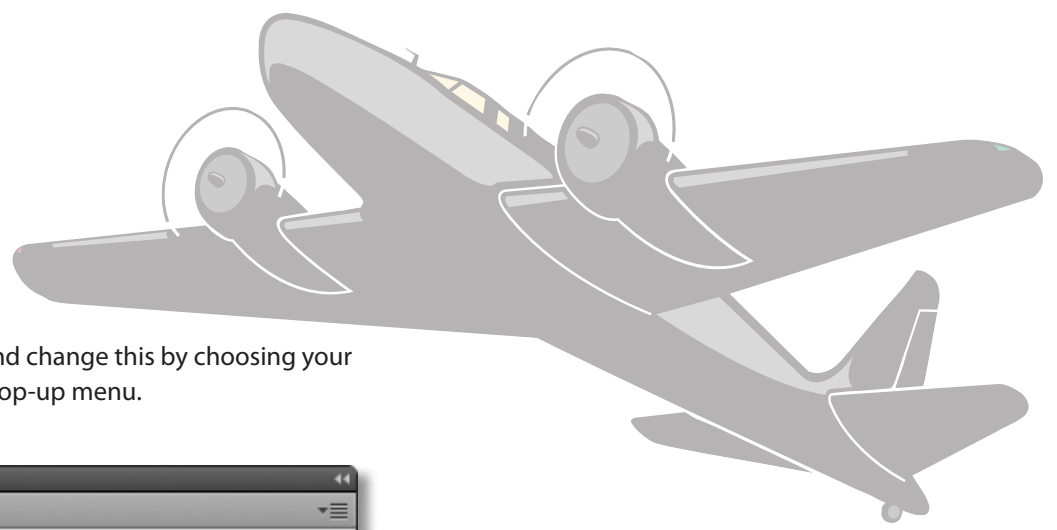
Figure 6



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7 Export Your Profile

Click the Save button to save your profile, but don't exit this window yet.

When you clear your preferences, InDesign tosses any profiles you've made. Therefore, it's a good habit to export your profiles so you can reload them when you need them. Exporting is also useful when you want to share a profile with a colleague. I often give profiles as gifts.

Remember that "plus" button you clicked on in the beginning of this lesson? To the right of it is the Delete Profile button and the Preflight Profile pop-up menu (Figure 7). Click the pop-up menu, and select Export to save your new profile.

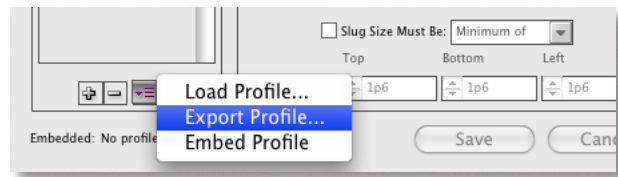
Notice the option to Load. This is great if your printer or service provider sends you a profile that matches the specifications of a job you're preparing to create. Just load it and make it the working profile.

Click OK to exit the Preflight Profiles dialog box.

8 Assign Your Profile

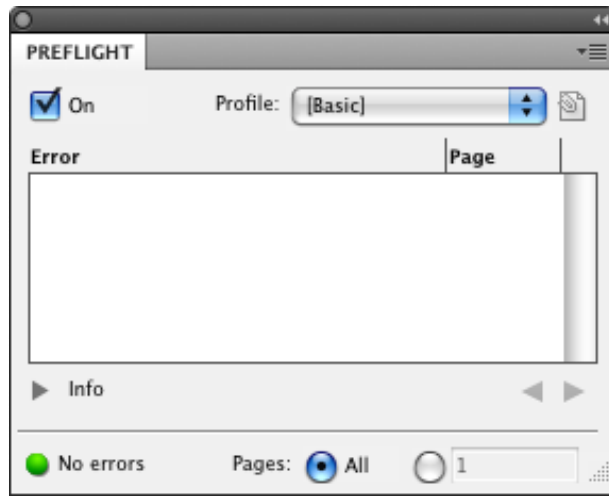
Now it's time to test out your profile. Create a new document, but don't set up a bleed in the New Document dialog box. You may notice that the Profile pop-up menu in the Preflight panel still displays [Basic]

Figure 7



(Figure 8). Go ahead and change this by choosing your new profile from the pop-up menu.

Figure 8



9 Super-Assign Your Profile

Note that choosing your profile from the Profile pop-up menu makes it active in this document only. To make it active in all new documents, choose Preflight Options from the Preflight panel flyout menu, and choose your profile in the Working Profile pop-up menu.

You'll also notice a checkbox labeled Embed Working Profile into New Documents. If you select this, InDesign will actually embed your profile into all new documents—that means others who work on the document will have the same profile. However, if you're the only person working on the file, or you

just don't like to share, leave it turned off and they can create their own profile or load the one you just exported.

10 Look for Errors

Your profile should now be alerting you that you didn't create bleed guides in this file. Where's the alert? Look down: You can look at the bottom of the Preflight panel, or at the bottom left of your document window. Adobe was pretty clear about this one: Big red dot, number and the word "error" (Figure 9).

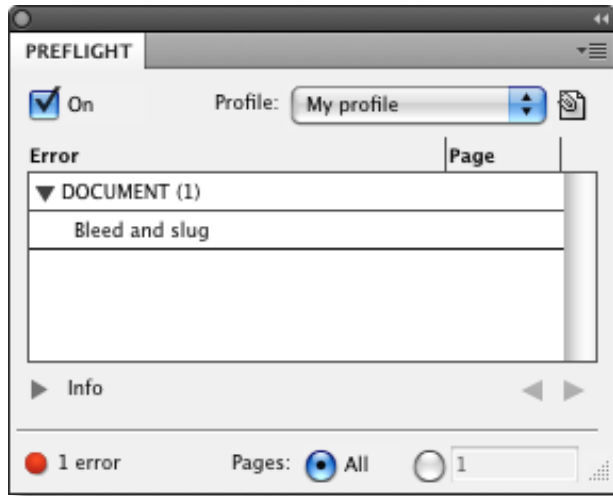
Figure 9



To view the specific error, open the Preflight panel (if it isn't already). The Error list shows the word Document, indication that a violation has occurred in that category. Click on the triangle on the left to reveal the error itself—in this case, it should read Bleed and Slug (Figure 10, next page).

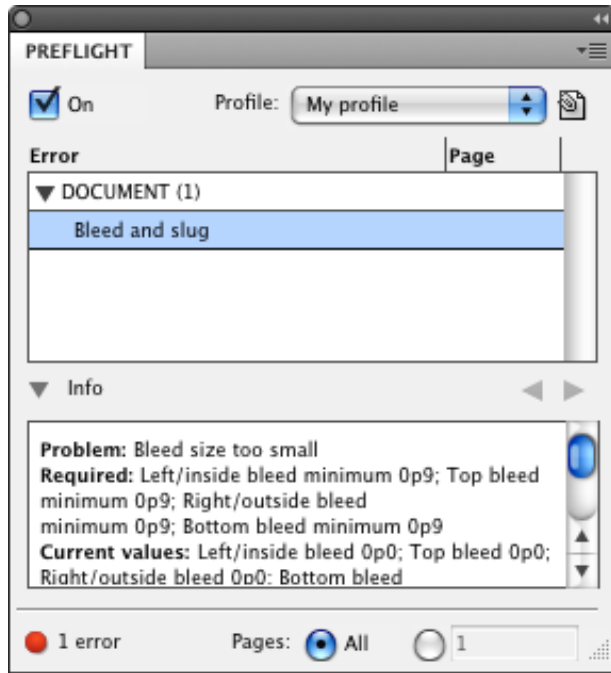
If you want even more specific information, click the triangle next to the word Info, near the bottom of your panel. The Info area expands, listing the Problem, the required value (based on your profile),

Figure 10



the current value, and then even a little suggestion on how to fix it (Figure 11).
If you have more than a handful of problems, it's faster to digest by choosing Save Report from the Preflight panel menu. That tells InDesign to create an easy-to-read PDF listing all the violations.

Figure 11



11 Mess Up Your Document Some More
Go ahead, have some fun. Place full-color images, enlarge them beyond the minimum resolution you set, scale a photo without holding the Shift key, create a bunch of spot colors, and assign the colors to boxes and type.

Now save your report, read it, and fix all the problems. The bottom of your InDesign window should be free of errors.

Russell Viers is a reasonably nice guy. You can find out more about him at www.russellviers.com.

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