PUBLISHING SOFTWARE

QuarkXPress 4.02

BY PETER DUDAR

ASTROPHYSICIST STEPHEN HAWKING IS LOOKING FOR A UNIFIED theory of everything in the universe. On a more down-to-earth level, graphic designers rhapsodize about a Unified Publishing Application. Think of it as *QuarkXPress*, *Photoshop* and *Illustrator* (plus *Director* and *Dreamweaver*?) rolled into one. Adobe is moving in this direction by creating a common interface for *Photoshop*, *Illustrator* and *PageMaker*. Problem is, *PageMaker* is no *QuarkXPress*.

Since shipping in 1990, *QuarkXPress* 3 became more UPA-like with a vast array of third party XTensions. Some of version 4's 75-plus new features incorporate functions previously available as XTensions. Other new functions, such as bézier tools and clipping paths will be familiar to users of vector applications like *Illustrator* and *Freehand*, or *Photoshop*-type image editing applications.

Some have voiced concern about the stability of *QuarkXPress* 4 — and Quark has released four updates since its release. Quark's Fix list (Windows95/NT, Mac OS) runs on for several pages and the fixes range from very minor to significant. Printing and Pictures are the largest problem categories.

However I ran QuarkXPress 4.01r1 and 4.02r1 on a Mac G3 under System 8.1 for several weeks with no crashes. And nothing else has gone seriously wrong. So I have no complaints here.

THE INTERFACE

QuarkXPress 4 looks just like version 3 with a few XTensions — icons and palettes are primarily unchanged. It seems that two principles have been applied here: if it ain't broke, don't fix it; and no messing up the interface with distracting color and shading. So, maybe the current interface isn't quaint — but it's timeless.

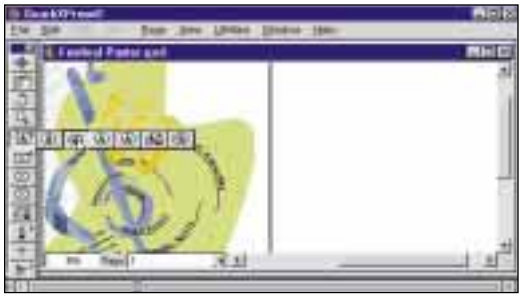
The tool palette has been subtly enhanced with pop-out selections added to existing tools, and new icons for bézier and text path tools. Until you get into certain bézier functions, the contextual Measurements palette is essentially the same as before. Drop-down menus have been augmented, not reconfigured. And version 3 keyboard commands still work. So *QuarkXPress* 3 users can actually go ahead and use version 4 without cracking open the manual. And new functions flow logically from established procedures, so you can pick them up quickly.

Page icons in the Document palette now display page numbers that you've assigned with the Section command, not just absolute numbering.

A new pop-up menu in the lower left corner of your window displays *Pagemaker*-like page icons, as a fast alternative to scrolling and clicking for pages in the Document palette.

And you can now zoom up to 800%, using menus or the Zoom tool.

Enhancements become more apparent when you get into menus or apply commands. Certain dialogue boxes have become contextual, using a folder tab metaphor. Accessing the reconfigured Modify dialogue with a photo, for instance, calls up these tabbed menus: Box, Picture, Frame, Runaround and Clipping. (Modify [Command-M or CTRL-M] is now the Swiss Army knife of Quark commands.) The Frame, Runaround and Clipping commands produce the Modify box with the relevant tab selected. And text-oriented commands, such as Leading, Formats, Tabs and Rules open the Paragraph Attributes box in similar fashion.



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The Get Picture dialogue now provides color info, dimensions, resolution, size, date and time for any file you highlight in its menu (DCS 2.0, EPS, JPEG, Photo CD, PICT and TIFF formats are supported). And you can get pictures (or multiple-select) with either the Content or Item tool.

You can now Apply all procedures before closing dialogue boxes. So adjusting a bit of type with Baseline Shift, for instance, no longer requires going back to the dialogue box over and over.

And *QuarkXPress* now has one user manual, instead of the awkward two-book system (*Using QuarkXPress* and *Reference Manual*) that shipped with version 3.

BÉZIER TOOLS

Bézier procedures in *QuarkXPress* 4 are a quick study, since they correspond more or less to those in *Illustrator* and *Photoshop*-type applications. Text boxes can now be defined with a click-and-drag pen tool or freehand drawing tool — same with picture boxes and lines. As with other applications, you can manipulate curve handles or points as you draw by using keyboard commands; plus, you can alter points and line segments afterward, using icons in the measurements palette. And your boxes or lines, even if non-rectangular, can be anchored to flow with text.

In *QuarkXPress* 4, a box is not immutably a box. The Item menu has two conversion submenus: Shape and Content. Shape commands let you convert item shapes or types. For instance, you can change a rectangle into a line or change an ordinary line into a bézier line.

A text box is not irreversibly a text box. Content commands let you convert text boxes into picture boxes and vice versa. Also, ordinary lines can be made into text paths.

Another conversion command, Text to Box (Style menu), is particularly amusing. It enables you to convert words into bézier-outlined picture boxes, then place pictures within the text outlines.

You can get dramatic (or tasteless) results by combining conversion commands with other functions. For instance, an oval text box could be converted into a bézier line (Item > Shape) — the text now runs along the outside of the oval. You then flip the text (Modify > Text Path) — and it now runs along the inside of the oval. Or, if you've converted text into a picture box (Style > Text to Box), you could change it back into a word-shaped text box (Item > Content > Text) and input copy within the letters.

Creating bézier text paths is so easy, I pray they won't turn up in every new QuarkXPress document. You just draw a line with the text path tool and add the words. The Modify dialogue box provides style options.

The Item menu now has complementary Merge and Split submenus. Merge includes *Illustrator*-like commands such as Intersection and Difference. The Union command merges overlapping items and also works on non-overlapping items, making them behave like a single entity. Join Endpoints unites adjacent bézier lines or text paths.

The Split submenu enables you to separate a multiple-path box into its constituents. For instance, a word that has been converted into a single bézier-outlined picture box can be split into boxes made of single letters.

Importing custom lines into *QuarkXPress* 3 and then applying them as pictures was annoying. Version 4's Dashes and Stripes dialogue lets you generate all sorts of single and multiple line variations, using graphic sliders and numerical entry boxes. You can duplicate and edit existing lines or append lines from other files. Once saved, they can be accessed in the measurements palette or within frame dialogues.

The Text to Box command lets you convert words into bézier-outlined picture boxes, then place pictures within the text outlines.

Group bounding boxes now have draggable handles, so you can simultaneously resize multiple items. As with single items, you use modifier keys to scale them proportionally or include line weights, pictures and text in the resizing.

But despite the move to make *QuarkXPress* a graphics contender, Quark has neglected to upgrade the application's simple gradients. And two tools that you find everywhere else just aren't here: a layer management palette and a soft shadow creator. You still have to Command-Option-Shift-click (Mac) or CTRL-Option-Shift-click (Windows) to select stacked items; or re-order them with Send to Back and Bring to Front commands — it's still primitive. (If you're not already using them, you might want to check out the third party XTensions *XPert Layers* or *Layer It!*.) As far as soft shadows are concerned, you'll need to get (or re-install) *Shadowcaster* or *Extensis QX-Effects*.

Or exit to *Photoshop*. A major time waster for page designers is creating graphics in outside applications, importing them, and then going back and forth between applications, making adjustments out of context. Adding sophisticated graphics tools to version 4 was supposed to minimize that. Well, at least the XTension-makers are still out there to bring Quark's intention closer to fulfillment.

CLIPPING PATHS

Quark's new Clipping dialogue generates several types of paths. Picture Bounds creates a path based on the rectangular boundary of the imported file; Embedded Path duplicates a picture-embedded path drawn in *Photoshop*; Alpha Channel creates a path based on an alpha channel built into a TIFF image; and Non-White Areas makes white backgrounds transparent. Path, Outset and Tolerance controls are there when applicable. Note that *QuarkXPress* does not affect the original high-resolution files; it stores the clipping paths within your document.

Using clipped images with the new Run Text Around All Sides option enables you to flow single-column text around one or more objects. (The option is in the Text dialogue, not in Runaround.)

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Long document features are: indexing, automated lists and book compiling. Index commands reside on a floating palette.

CHARACTER STYLE SHEETS

Character Styles enables you to apply formatting to any highlighted range of text independent of paragraph styling, and also alter that formatting globally. Unlike character style XTensions I've tried with version 3, Character Styles in *Quark* 4 are efficient and fully integrated into the floating Style Sheets palette along with paragraph styles. But like individually altered selections in version 3, you'll wipe out Character Style text formatting if you click the No Style paragraph option. The Style Sheets dialogue enables you to verify sheets currently in use. And the Append dialogue now lets you select only the styles you want from another file.

QuarkXPress 4 lets you search and replace style sheets, using a dramatically enhanced Find/Change palette. Search parameters can include text and/or attributes (including font, size and type style). But the palette still does only Find Next searches — there's no Search from Beginning of Document command. And to access the attributes, you expand the palette by unchecking the Ignore Attributes box, which may be the most counter-intuitive procedure ever devised.

LONG DOCUMENT FEATURES

Three new features in version 4 are going to cheer up long document publishers considerably — indexing, automated lists and book compiling.

Index commands reside on a floating palette, where highlighted text displays automatically. There, you can apply styles, redefine sequencing (for instance, placing "1998" under "N") and assign the entry to a level within the index. Sophisticated Scope options enable you to create cross-references or specify that your entry covers a number of paragraphs, a text selection, or all the text preceding a specific style sheet.

Since the Index XTension is not activated when you install *QuarkXPress* 4 you need to access Utilities > XTensions Manager to enable it. (Also turn on the CMS XTension if you intend to use color management features.) If you start overloading on XTensions, the new Manager lets you create custom sets.

Like Style Sheets, you set up Lists using the Edit menu — which makes sense, since Lists are groups of paragraph style sheets. To create a table of contents you could specify a list comprised of a Chapter Name style sheet and a Section Name style sheet. You would then redefine how a style sheet entry in your list outputs to the table of contents with yet another style sheet. A floating palette displays all the text associated with listed style sheets. Producing tables or any other kind of list with the palette is very simple — just make a text box and click Build.

In *QuarkXPress* 3, the only means of manipulating auto page numbers was the Section command. It worked only on single files, and numbering was all it did.

A *QuarkXPress* 4 Book is a set of sequentially numbered files that use the same style sheets, colors, H&J's, lists and custom lines. And a Book can be stored in a shared location so multiple users can access and edit its files (chapters). When you create a new Book (File > New > Book), a floating palette appears. To input a chapter, you just click a button and browse. Though the parameters reside in a separate Book file, this first chapter is the master for all that follow. So if you make a style sheet in a non-master file and decide to use it throughout the Book, you first append it in the master file. Then, you click the palette's Synchronize button, applying it to all the chapters. The Book palette automatically renumbers your pages as you add chapters and you can change the sequencing of your files using arrow buttons.

It seems strange, but the Book palette isn't accessed in the View menu like other palettes — it relates to the Book file, not what's onscreen. So if you close the palette, you have to re-open it using the File menu.

COLOR MANAGEMENT

EfiColor is now out; Kodak is in. *QuarkXPress* 4 now uses device-independent ICC-based (International Color Consortium) color management, provided with CMS QuarkXTensions software. Kodak CMM, Kodak PRECISION, and ColorSync color management system files are installed

on Macs; Kodak Digital Science color management system files are installed on Windows.

Version 4's Color Management Preferences dialogue box lets you select device profiles from Monitor, Composite Printer and Separation Printer pop-up menus. Then, when you import visuals, profiles become available in the Get Picture dialogue box. A Profile Information palette can also be called up to switch profiles for visuals already on the page.

QuarkXPress 4 supports Pantone Hexachrome color, a system that produces six color plates instead of four (CMYK, plus orange and green) and consequently emulates RGB color more effectively. You can also install Pantone Open Color Environment (POCE) XTensions software.

A Multi-Ink option lets you create custom colors by mixing process and/or spot colors in your current palettes.

PRINT MANAGEMENT

Features previously available as *QuarkPrint XTensions*, are now part of version 4. The Print dialogue has been enhanced with tabbed menus: Document, Setup, Output, Options, Preview and Profiles. The Output menu lets you override halftone values specified in the Edit Color dialogue using Frequency, Angle and Function pop-up menus. The Print dialogue also lets you access separate Printer Setup and Page Setup dialogues. (You'll still need Page Setup for PostScript options like Unlimited Downloadable Fonts.) The dialogue enables you to select continuous and non-continuous page ranges. Included is Quark's PostScript Error Handler, which indicates where a printing problem originates in your page and identifies the element (picture box, text box, line, etc.) causing it. In the Edit menu, a Print Styles dialogue, lets you edit, import and export reusable styles.

Font Usage and Picture Usage options are now combined in a tabbed box with a More Information check box. More Information provides the PostScript name, file name, font type and version number for a selected font; it provides the full path, file size, modification date, dimensions and color depth for a picture.

If you're sending files to version 3 users, you can save them in 3.3 format, but certain version 4 elements will not be retained. (Character sheets are deleted, but the text formatting survives. Bézier effects, of course, are not retained.)

Installing *QuarkXPress* 4 requires a CD-ROM and two floppy disks — an Installer Disk and a User Registration Disk that you later mail to Quark. Apparently, this strange procedure is supposed to cut down on illegal copying. Because of it, PowerBook owners can't install *QuarkXPress* 4 without an external CD-ROM drive.

STILL MISSING

Pagemaker users criticize *QuarkXPress* for not being up to par in text composition. Since the application composes text one line at a time without referring to other lines, it can end up producing successively loose and tight lines of text. So type color is inconsistent on the page. Beyond the inclusion of a new hyphenation dictionary, nothing has been done about text aesthetics.

QuarkXPress 4 still has no table editing controls. Quark advises picking up an XTension like *Tableworks* or *Entable*. Others point out that *QuarkXPress*' competitors don't require pricey extensions since they all create and edit tables in-house.

QuarkXPress 4 is the only major publishing application with no Web export capabilities. I find that incomprehensible. (One theory is that Quark is trying to make us buy *QuarkImmedia*, which produces proprietary non-HTML code, making it of zero interest to Web developers.) The only solution is third-party XTensions like *BeyondPress* and *HexWeb*. But for the price of an HTML XTension plus table XTension you could buy *Pagemaker 6.5*, with money left over for a really nice restaurant meal. Also, *PageMaker* exports files in PDF format and ships with Adobe *Acrobat Distiller*. Quark, so far, has released a PDF Export Filter, still in alpha version, which still requires *Distiller*.

Version 3 XTensions for Mac OS, if not redundant, are still likely to work; but check if upgrades that have been optimized for version 4 are available. *QuarkXPress* 4 has been rewritten in 32-bit code for Windows. Consequently, Windows XTensions all have to be recompiled and upgraded.

So, if you're using version 3, will you upgrade?

Sure you will — even if *QuarkXPress* 4 is still nowhere near the Unified Publishing Application we envision. With XTensions, it still defines the high end in print publishing. Because *Adobe Pagemaker 6.5* has a lower list price and doesn't require a heavy investment in extensions, it's tempting if you're buying from scratch. But personally, I'd still go for *QuarkXPress* 4.

Or you could wait for *K2*, a *Quark*-killer application that is said to be in the works at Adobe.

Supposedly, it's not a revision of *Pagemaker*, but an object-oriented application that will integrate into a PDF workflow. And it may even be combined with *Illustrator* and *Photoshop*. Let me play devil's advocate briefly: maybe it's not *that* important for publishing applications to bring more functions in-house. If you've got a professional system with lots of RAM, it's not a big deal to keep several applications running. Maybe integration is all that's needed. Working for a magazine, I exit *QuarkXPress* most often to use *Photoshop*, not *Illustrator*. And integrating *Photoshop* is a problem for Quark, because Adobe owns *Photoshop* — and it's ubiquitous. If *K2* pans out, it'll certainly up the ante at the high end. And we won't have to settle for merely OK upgrades from anyone — we'll experience publishing rapture.

QuarkXPress 4.0 retails for around $1100. Upgrades are available only from Quark for $300 (US); call (307) 772-7100. The 4.02r1 update can be obtained at **www.quark.com**. ✷