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Quark

As Adobe prepares to roll out its K2 page layout software — now officially known as *InDesign* — the graphics industry asks: Is this the beginning of the end for Quark's monopoly?

BY DAN BRILL

THE TOLLING OF THE BELL HAS BEGUN. SINCE THE RISE OF desktop print production at the beginning of this decade, *QuarkXPress* has been the only page layout software good enough to satisfy the needs of graphic designers in high end color desktop publishing.

Despite Quark's arrogant corporate attitude, in spite of its infamous lack of customer relations, regardless of its painfully slow and unpredictable product development cycles, *QuarkXPress* has held a virtual monopoly on sophisticated desktop print design and prepress.

Why? The answer is simple: *No competition.*

But Quark's proprietary positioning is about to be challenged by a product that's quietly been under development for the last five years — a piece of software that capitalizes on the current generation of computer processors, that is feature-rich as well as user-friendly, that fits the requirements of a modern PostScript workflow, and that comes from the one software company that can guarantee full compatibility with *Photoshop*, *Illustrator*, *Acrobat*, *PageMaker*, *CyberStudio* and *ATM* — and with any true PostScript RIP. In June, Adobe Systems will release the most ambitious product it has ever introduced to

the desktop publishing community, a program which up until now has been known only by its code name, K2 — but which, by the time you read this, will have been unveiled at Seybold Boston as: Adobe *InDesign*.



Killer

MOVING BEYOND QUARK

Although I was on hand for both Steve Jobs' brief demonstration of K2 at Seybold San Francisco last September and for a select non-disclosure session held at Apple Canada in December, it wasn't until I spent some time at Adobe's Toronto offices a short while ago playing with a beta version of *InDesign* that I really got a feel for just what a "Quark-killer" it might be.

InDesign is not an upgrade to or a rewrite of any existing product. It's brand new C++ programming, written in a new fully object-oriented code called "Shuksan".

InDesign is designed with extensibility in mind. The basic kernel for this application is an incredibly small 800K.

Adobe says that *InDesign's* scriptability potential will be more inviting than ever seen before, and anticipates a horde of AppleScript implementations to supplement *InDesign's* basic core of functions.

Initially Adobe will provide a very comprehensive set of tools that goes far beyond what we've seen in any desktop application to date, Adobe's included. Shuksan architecture will be open to developers to write plug-ins for any specialized function or feature imaginable, much the same as Quark XTensions have enriched the functionality of *QuarkXPress*. Except that instead of working within the constraints of PostScript, *InDesign* developers will be able to take advantage of object-oriented code to produce plug-ins which are faster, more efficient and easier to write. (The beta version of *InDesign* that I looked at even had an "Easter egg" command that brought up a window showing all its active plug-ins, although it didn't let you turn them on and off.)

INTRODUCING AN OBJECT-ORIENTED DESIGN ENVIRONMENT

The simplest way to understand the difference between *InDesign* and PostScript applications which have preceded it is to look at the traditional dividing line that has always existed between type and graphics. With object-oriented code, that line goes away.

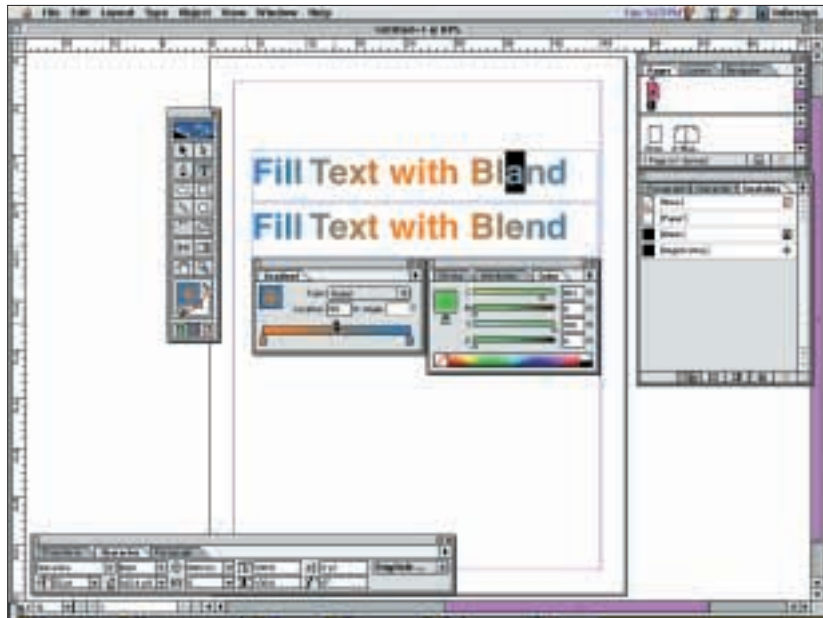
InDesign doesn't distinguish between importing text or graphics — an object is an object. There are no text boxes or picture boxes. A Beziér pen tool lets you create or reshape both text and picture frames at will; text will automatically reflow to conform to the shape of the frame.

For the legions of designers who depend on the holy triumvirate of *QuarkXPress*, *Illustrator* and *Photoshop*, it will come as good news to hear that *InDesign* will import native *Photoshop* and *Illustrator* (or *PageMaker*) files directly — in fact, just drag-and-drop or copy and paste artwork onto *InDesign* pages. Forget

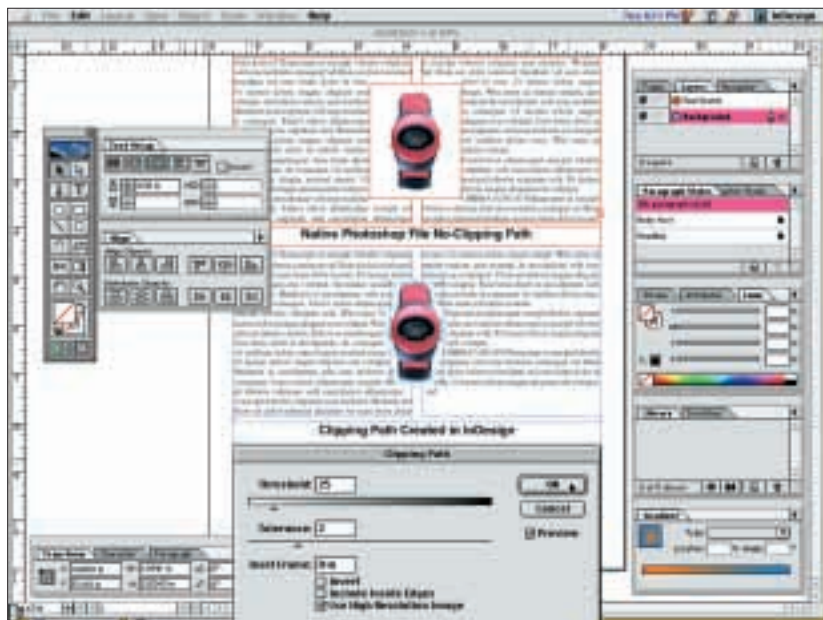


Designing with fully object-oriented architecture. In Adobe *InDesign*, almost anything you can do to graphics, you can do to text, and vice versa. Take one or more text frames, group them with a graphic, rotate them, flip them, scale them, shear them, skew them, fill them, distort them — and the text still remains fully editable. Create a shape by hand or by using an existing graphic or a piece of type, and fill it with text — or with pictures. Or paste a frame within a frame within a frame — *InDesign's* architecture lets you intermix type and graphics freely.

about converting files to EPS or TIFF — and *InDesign's* architecture not only reads other Adobe files, it also lets you perform basic graphics editing and update them live and automatically from inside the program.



Illustrator gradients included. Adobe has included *Illustrator's* gradients palettes, with CMYK sliders that let you custom tweak colors. But remember, just because you want to fill type with a gradient, it doesn't mean you have to Create Outlines that eliminates your text's editability. Change a letter, a word, a font — *InDesign* maintains the integrity of your gradient perfectly. It even lets you run a gradient through text outlines.



Full clipping path support. Create clipping paths around objects, and they're real, either simple or compound editable paths, with transparency in interior holes that will show what's behind. But as Quark users have discovered, a clipping path isn't much use if you're trying to create it around an image that's only at screen resolution. When you bring an image into *InDesign*, you can choose to display it at any resolution you want. So if you only need 72 dpi, you can have it, but if you need full 300 dpi resolution because you want to see detail in full or you have to draw a path, go ahead and bring in the high res picture to work with. And when you do, you'll be able to zoom in up to 4000%!

It goes without saying that *InDesign* will import *Acrobat* PDFs into an *InDesign* page with the same viewability and scaling capabilities as if they were EPS or TIFF; you can choose to Place PDF (leaving the data static and uneditable) or Open PDF, which will convert the data to *InDesign's* format and give you what Adobe describes as "light" editability.

And here's a relief: rotate or resize an element that's hanging off the pasteboard *without* having to move it. Try that one in Quark!

InDesign's maximum page size is a humongous 18 feet by 18 feet! (Great feature if you're doing billboard layouts, I suppose.) Or for those with miniature requirements, you can actually make a page as small as one pica square.

And since even *InDesign* is susceptible to crashes, there's also a document recovery feature that gives you a shot at retrieving your pages in a worst-case scenario.

LAYERS, GRADIENTS AND UNDOS

InDesign gives you layers, and a *Photoshop*-like Layers palette that lets you drag-and-drop to re-order them (as opposed to Quark's awkward "Send Backward" and "Bring Forward" commands). Just as in *Photoshop*, layers can be turned on and off (useful for creating multiple versions of a document in one file) — but an extra feature with *InDesign* is that each layer's bounding box can be highlighted with a different color to make it easier to distinguish. Not only that, but each layer can have its own set of guides and grids, and you can make them disappear when you want by specifying custom view thresholds. Sets of guides can also be stored in a Library palette.

A Links window is always available in case you need to see where an image is hiding on your hard drive. But the live link between *InDesign* and *Photoshop* or *Illustrator*, along with the ability to work with native file formats, means you can edit or alter images easily and see the results of your changes immediately, without having to first resave files to EPS or TIFF.

There's functionality built into this program that surpasses just about anything Quark has to offer. For starters, it has unlimited multiple undos which, like *Illustrator*, let you go back and back and back...at least until you hit Save. I don't know how much RAM that will take, but hey! It's nice to have the option.

Like Quark, *InDesign* works with Master Pages — but it has what you might call "cascad-

ing” Masters that allow you to model “children” from your Masters, and if you revise your “parent” page, it will automatically update all the offspring at the same time. While we’re on the subject, *InDesign* accommodates up to ten pages per spread.

It also offers you *Photoshop*’s Navigator window so you can see where you are on the page without zooming out, plus simultaneous multiple views of a document, so you can view the effects of kerning or editing while you’re working up close on the same page or a different page.

The scaling dialog box has a nifty feature that not only allows you to resize using absolute numbers or percentages, but also handles simple mathematical functions. That means that if you want to apply addition, subtraction, multiplication or division to any set of numbers, *InDesign* will do the calculations for you.

MAGNIFICENT TEXT CONTROL

InDesign’s typography controls impressed me at least as much as any other feature set in this product. Lest we forget, when Quark stole the market from *PageMaker*, a large part of its sway centred on its superior typography.

Adobe has provided as complete a collection of type formatting functions as you could ever hope for. *InDesign* has dictionaries, spell checking and H&J’s for over 20 languages and language versions — including French Canadian.

It has the requisite setups for both paragraph and character style sheets that allow you to specify not just basic attributes like font, size, leading and color, but also more advanced options for ligatures, baseline shift, overprint settings, or even a different language, with corresponding spell checking and hyphenation — and yes, character style sheets can be based on paragraph styles (and vice versa). In fact, creating a new style sheet is as simple as clicking on text; up comes a dialog box that asks you to give it a name, and you’re done.

But *InDesign* goes one step further and, borrowing from *FrameMaker*, lets you write compound style sheets. For example, if you’re doing a catalogue where you want to format heads in Garamond Bold 14 pt., followed by subheads in Frutiger Italic 10 pt., followed by body copy in Frutiger Light 9 pt., you can create one style sheet that will perform that routine with each hard return.

Justification control is equally impressive. *InDesign*’s multi-line composer dialog box where you can specify how many lines you’d like the composer to look back or ahead, and how many text flow alternatives you want it to consider. As you create or edit your text, the software searches for the optimum arrangement of word and line breaks that delivers

the most pleasing text composition.

I was particularly delighted to see how *InDesign* handled linked text. How many times have I been working with six or eight linked text boxes in a Quark document, and had to relink all the boxes after deleting the first one?

InDesign has the smarts to understand that if one of the text blocks in the middle of a chain is eliminated, it should relink to the next location in the chain. Or if you want to reorder the links, just click on the text blocks in the order you prefer and your linking order will change automatically.

So what’s missing?

Well, there’s no applying text to curved paths as you can in *Illustrator*. There’s no opacity controls for fading an object back or setting progressive fades. While *Illustrator*’s gradient tools are included, its blends palette is not. And although *InDesign* supports multiple undos, there’s no *Photoshop*-like History palette for selectively deleting steps.

Also, two of my personal requests are absent: Title Case for text (which would be very useful for variable data applications), and an option to flow text from the end to the beginning so text overflow can be attacked from either direction (although *InDesign* solves that one with its multiple page view feature).



Advanced kerning and ligatures. *InDesign*’s kerning tables go beyond standard metrics to include an option to kern optically — regardless of size or font style. *InDesign* also supports hanging punctuation, so you can get those quote marks and commas to sit outside the text body where they belong and avoid having them throw off centered text.

FEEDING THE PRESS AND THE WEB

For print production, *InDesign* will certainly tighten up PDF workflows, not just because of its ability to readily take in PDF, but also because Shuksan code can be distilled directly to PDF *without* being converted to PostScript first.

Acrobat 4 supports PDF 1.3 print specs

ADOBE SYSTEMS HAS ANNOUNCED that *Acrobat* 4.0, which supports the new PDF 1.3 printing specifications, will ship in the second quarter. *Acrobat* 4.0's user interface will sport a revised layout (pictured above) and the incorporation of keystroke shortcuts common to other Adobe products. Adobe has also dropped "Exchange" from its *Acrobat* nomenclature.



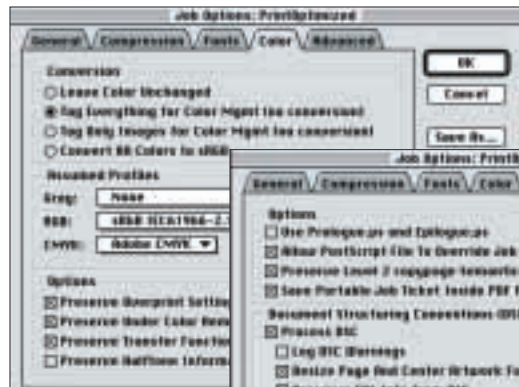
Acrobat 4.0 is targeted squarely at the corporate sector, with new features such as PDFMaker, a PDF creation utility for a range of business applications; Web Capture, which lets users capture web pages as PDFs; and Digital Signatures, which permits users to add authentications to PDF documents. All three of these new features will only be available in the Windows version. As well, *Acrobat* 4.0 adds a new annotation feature which allows users to append stamps, notes, or even sound files to a PDF.

PDF 1.3 file specs allow the graphic arts market to take advantage of *Acrobat*'s support for PostScript 3 features. *Distiller* 4 Job Options can now be set up according to three sets of criteria: ScreenOptimized, PrintOptimized or PressOptimized (for high end print requirements); multiple Job Options may be saved and exported; and there is built-in support for Portable Job Tickets as well as ICC profiles.

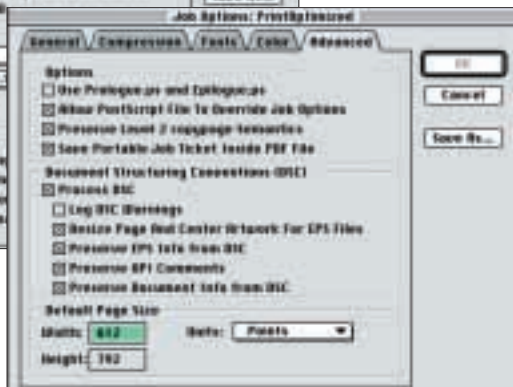
Acrobat 4.0 for both Mac and Windows will sell in Canada for about \$375. Check www.adobe.com for further details.



Acrobat Distiller now distills three primary types of PDF: for the screen, for printers, and for press.



Acrobat Distiller 4's Color and Advanced Job Options dialog boxes have added new options supported by v1.3 specs.



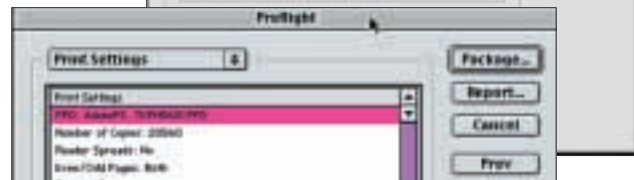
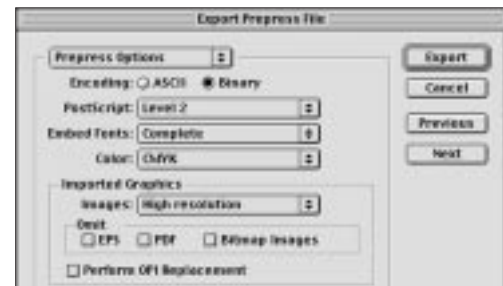
InDesign's file export choices are PDF, EPS, Prepress or HTML. Choosing PDF gives you your pick of job option settings for Screen, Printer or Press, just as you'll find in *Acrobat* 4 or *Illustrator* 8; Prepress lets you set bleeds, crops, color bars, registration marks, etc. before generating a PostScript dump, with options to embed fonts, perform OPI replacement, save as ASCII or Binary, specify PostScript Level 1 or 2, set graphics resolution, and omit EPS, PDF and/or bitmap images.

The traditional Command-P print command will let you produce PostScript separations just as you would with *QuarkXPress*.

Trapping will be supported within the application; as well, in-RIP trapping controls will be implemented through a third party plug-in.

InDesign incorporates two features that should especially please printers and service bureaus. The first is *InDesign*'s image optimization feature; it only sends the data required for printing, meaning it will both automatically downsample over-res or scaled images to the required resolution, and it will discard any image data that isn't visible. Gone are the days of downloading that 80MB background image that's almost en-

Export Prepress Options, Preflight Print Settings and Create Package dialog windows.



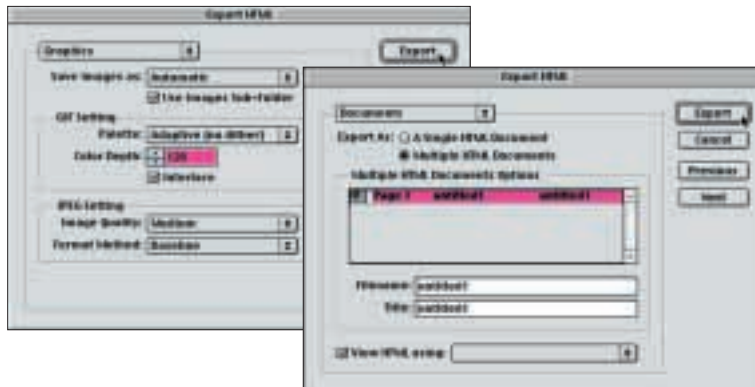
tirely covered by a flock of other elements on the page. *InDesign* just takes what it needs and jettisons the rest.

The other cool feature is built-in preflighting (which is directly accessible from the Print dialog box) for catching, among other things, those pesky RGB images and missing fonts. Pre-flighting will include the ability to perform fixes as well.

A "Package" function collects all the elements of your job — including fonts and output profiles — for delivery to your prepress provider. If you select Package without troubleshooting first and *InDesign* finds a problem, it will alert you and ask if you want to perform pre-flighting.

In an intelligent demonstration of appreciation for the necessity to multi-purpose pages, Adobe has also written an HTML export option which should be a boon to designers everywhere. When you export to HTML, *InDesign* gives you a choice of Automatic, JPEG or GIF conversion for your graphics. Selecting Automatic tells the program to look at each image and, based on its color palette, decide whether it should be JPEG (24-bit) or GIF.

(right) **HTML Export.** *InDesign's* dialog windows for converting graphics (to JPEG or GIF) and documents (single or multiple).



Functions still to come? A major notable missing ingredient is imposition. Word is that it will ship with at least a beta plug-in for creating impositions.

QUARK STAYS MUM

Not long after the last issue of *GRAPHIC EXCHANGE* was released, I had a call from Bob Monzel and Don Lohse at Quark, public relations manager and product manager respectively, concerning the article I wrote on PDF WORKFLOW: TWO YEARS LATER.

Bob seemed a bit miffed at me for saying that Quark had promised the release of *QuarkXPress 5* in the first half of this year (although it has been mentioned in trade press reports for some time). I offered to write a correction saying that Quark would *not* release *QuarkXPress 5* in the first half of this year, but that didn't seem to go over too well either. I also offered to print a letter from Quark clarifying its status, but Bob declined this invitation.

However he was quite right. Quark has *not* announced the release of *QuarkXPress 5* in the first half of this year. They have not denied it either. In fact, Quark, in classic Quark fashion, has revealed absolutely *no* information about *QuarkXPress 5*, nor is it likely they will.

Don wanted me to know that "within days" Quark would be posting on its website an updated version of its PDF Filter XTension (still in beta) that would finally offer full support for high res PDFs in *QuarkXPress*. As of this writing (in mid-February), it hasn't appeared.

When the subject of K2 came up, Don made the comment, "Would you trust any version 'one-oh' release?" Well, I don't know, Don, but I know I wasn't real thrilled with a certain 'four-oh' release, either.

QuarkKiller

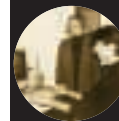
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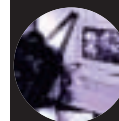
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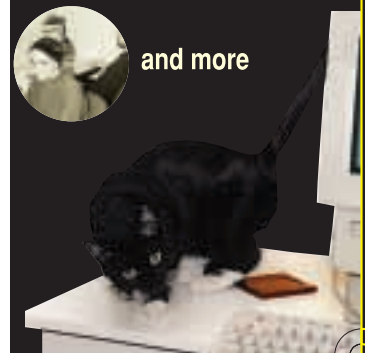
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Magazines Canada is a not-for-profit organization supporting the Canadian consumer magazine industry. (By the way, dMACS is pronounced "dee-maks".)

The difference in cultures between Quark and just about every other software company in the world is astounding. While Adobe prepares to roll out *InDesign*, having previewed it extensively across the continent, Quark continues to wrap itself and its products in a veil of secrecy — revealing nothing, promising nothing.

Is it any wonder that so many *QuarkXPress* users have been so curious about what K2 has to offer?

Quark's latest strategy to fend off Adobe has been to take a "jam-the-box-full" approach. In two recent manoeuvres, Quark struck deals with Corel, to offer a *QuarkXPress/CorelDraw 8* bundle for \$1095 (US), and shortly thereafter Macromedia, with a European announcement that Quark would be bundled with *FreeHand*.

IS INDESIGN REALLY A QUARK-KILLER?

A description of a superior page layout software package would make for an interesting, but not necessarily compelling, story (raise your hand if you remember *VivaPress Professional*) — except for the fact that Adobe is behind it.

However even Adobe might have a difficult time persuading *QuarkXPress* users to break their established habits to learn a new application, no matter how good it looks.

Ah, but in a triumph of marketing savvy, Adobe has carefully constructed a plan to make the transition from *QuarkXPress* to *InDesign* as painless as possible.

Adobe engineers have produced a filter for *InDesign* that they say will open and convert any *QuarkXPress* 3.3-4.04 document with a very high degree of accuracy — with Quark character and paragraph style sheets intact. Ironically, it appears that the main stumbling block could be *InDesign's* superior type handling capabilities — potentially resulting in unexpected text reflows.

A feature sure to grease the wheels of change is an *InDesign* option that lets users set default keystroke shortcuts to match Quark's. On the other hand, Adobe's new unified cross-application interface means that anyone familiar with *Illustrator* or *Photoshop* should find it relatively easy to jump into *InDesign* without relearning a lot of basic commands.

But the real incentive will be in dollars and cents. *InDesign* will be priced competitively but no less than the going market value for desktop applications — unless, of course, you're a registered *QuarkXPress* user.

The magic "competitive upgrade" price is yet to be finalized, but look for Adobe to make Quark users an extremely "compelling offer" to jump ship.

InDesign will be fully cross-platform, although it will only run under Mac OS 8.5 and Windows 98 or NT.

But in June, when the bell sounds to signal the next round in this battle of desktop application giants, don't be surprised if Quark tries to take a whack at Adobe below the belt. After all, you can be sure Quark founder Tim Gill remembers what happened to a company named Aldus. *