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Viers shows InDesign CS2 in OKC

Russell Viers' workshop on InDesign last month was – as always – a jolting experience. He was in his normal mode of throwing information at us as fast as you could throw a candy bar to the back of the room.

His rapid fire approach to teaching covered a wonderful amount of InDesign CS2 features and left us wondering how much we could retain.

Viers is an Adobe Certified Training Provider as well as a freelance designer. His consulting and training services have been sought out on an international level.

I often maintain that if you see it once you should immediately go home and try to use it right away. By doing this you can retain quite a bit. I should practice what I preach. It's now a few weeks and hundreds of miles from Viers' workshop so bear with me as I try to recall his tips.

I was grateful that I took good notes – and that Viers had an excellent handout. I did retain what I found most interesting in the workshop – a good explanation of how InCopy works (see article below).

The first day of Viers' workshop was full of InDesign CS2's new features.

The class of around 100 oohed and aahed at such things as the new Anchored Objects menu, which lets you place objects within text and maintain their position relative to the publication's spine or the text frame itself. This is a great feature for long documents and could have some applications for newspapers.

Something all newspapers should be using is the Dynamic Spell Checker, which lets you know right away if you've misspelled a word. There's even an auto correct mode that lets you define words that you misspell all the time. Just define the word and it auto corrects the spelling.

You can even create your own dictionary for words that the checker may not know – such as city or proper names. Combine this with the story editor and it virtually eliminates the need for a word processor program separate from InDesign.

This program even does a word count and allows you to type in tables.

One of the new features is the much asked for fit frame proportionally. It's truly amazing and will keep your photo at a 1:1 ratio.

Viers had plenty more tricks up his sleeve, which kept his audience appreciative.

One of his best tips was just a "snippet" of what CS2 is capable of performing. InDesign allows you to export objects as snippets, which can be shared with your co-workers or reused in other documents. When you place or drag a snippet into a layout, InDesign recreates the original objects, their formatting and relative positioning on the page.

Another feature of value to newspapers is InDesign's ability to save page setups, such as ad sizes, in the New Document Setup. Imagine setting up all your standard ad sizes so the final PDF of the ad you make doesn't need to be cropped. Eliminating all that white space in PDFs really helps the layout person who is building the pages.

Viers also demonstrated object styles, a new feature you're sure to love when you upgrade to CS2. It works somewhat like a library for objects you create in the program.

Viers also showed the group how to use Contextual Menus, which are available in previous versions of InDesign. These menus pop up when you Control + Click on a Mac – or use the right click on a two-button mouse.

computernotes from the road
by WILMA MELOT

Contextual menus are a real time saver and helpful feature.

During the two-day session, Viers covered setting up documents and templates as well as styles and nested styles. He showed us how to convert documents from Quark or PageMaker.

He demonstrated how to copy and paste Illustrator files into Indesign, which makes the object become editable and no longer linked to the original Illustrator file.

One of the best things he covered, in my opinion, was how different versions of PDF files work with flattened transparencies. Although it's complicated, here's the gist of it: If Acrobat 5 or 6 is used, the files do not have to be flattened. However, if you make the file compatible with Acrobat 4, you need to understand how your file is going to be flattened when the PDF is made.

Newer versions of Acrobat do not flatten the PDFs. When you place a PDF in an older program and try to re-PDF the page for a rip, you may get funny results like screened type.

However, to make the file user-friendly for everyone, you need to make the PDF compatible with 4.0. Just be aware of the way files are going to flatten.

This is frustrating for users with new equipment who want to use the latest version. Unfortunately, not everyone has the latest and greatest so you need to make it work for everyone.

InCopy provides solution to smaller newspapers

Bells and whistles went off when Russell Viers began talking about InCopy.

I immediately thought of several papers that could use this software right now. At $249, it's an inexpensive work-around for papers that can't afford three copies of InDesign at once.

InCopy is a small program that interacts with InDesign creating a live edit workflow.

One user has a full copy of InDesign for page layout while two other users type stories from the main document.

The main user can update the stories at any time as well as see the status of the story in progress while working on another part of the paper. You can even send each other notes with InCopy.

The software has a 10-user limit without third party plug-ins. I can see it working well in a small work group and it could be a way to train new employees.

Ideally you would buy the same version of InCopy as your version of InDesign. However, InCopy CS is no longer available. The good news is that InCopy CS2 is backwards compatible with InDesign CS, although you have to add an extra step of saving the file as an InCopy Interchange (INX) file and opening it in InCopy CS.

InCopy serves as a text editor on par with Word. You can even make it look like the old Compugraphic's green screen. (How many of you can even remember the Compugraphic screen?)

With InCopy, you can create and reference multiple dictionaries; have active dynamic spell-checking; use text macros to speed entry of frequently used phrases in your copy; manage styles from the keyboard and position marker text so you can easily jump to it using a shortcut.

Several third party vendors have implemented plug-ins for larger workgroups. Check it out at: www.adobe.com/products/-incopy/systemsintegrator.html.

Olympus C-5500 Sport

I've talked to several people lately who are looking for a relatively inexpensive camera that's good enough to shoot sports.

There's really not such a camera. However, the Olympus C-5500 Sport Zoom is rated fairly high.

The reviews I read said it will stop the action on those football players running down the field toward you.

The auto burst mode captures seven frames in approximately five seconds without flash – not bad for a little camera.

It has a 5x optical zoom, good exposure control, aperture, shutter-speed priority, full manual modes and the normal automatic modes.

Image quality is good for a camera in this price range. I saw it for $280, but the normal retail is around $350.

Happy camera hunting!

How to find more memory

I have a special place in my heart for people out there trying to paginate their papers with only 64MB of RAM.

Not having enough RAM can create all kinds of file problems so the next time you have a few spare dollars, add some RAM to your machine.

Here's how to find more memory:

If you have a Mac, go to Apple.com>support>specifications and locate your computer model for the type of DIMMs you need.

The next step is to locate the RAM. You can either call your favorite computer dealer or, if you're brave enough, go online to one of the Macintosh warehouse sites.

Have your Apple System Profiles on your computer open when you place the call so you can tell the sales person your computer's speed and model.

Double check the sales person's suggestion with what you found on the Web. However, sales people are usually knowledgeable on what type of RAM you need.

If you're adventurous, you might even consider installing your own RAM. Apple can tell you if your computer model is easy to upgrade or if you should take it to your dealer.

If the computer you're using is really old, it's probably not worth putting $100 of RAM in it. But, if you're going to hang on to that old G3 and try to paginate, spend some cash on the RAM to make your life a little easier.

Hint: When buying a new machine get as much RAM as you can afford. It will serve you well in the future.