

# Interactive InDesign

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With demand for interactive online content booming, Adobe continues to develop innovative software solutions that allow designers to work more effectively. Unfortunately, as the number of tools increases, so does confusion over which tools to use. In order to make some sense of Adobe's diverse software offerings, let's consider four types of users Adobe is targeting:

- Print designers transitioning into the online world by creating multimedia documents using tools with which they are already familiar (**InDesign**)
- Creative Individuals wishing to create rich multimedia content in an intuitive environment, without having to learn ActionScript (**Flash Catalyst**)
- Developers that use ActionScript and/or other programming languages (**Flash Professional, DreamWeaver, etc.**)
- Large companies looking for production and distribution services (**Digital Publishing Suite**)

Many of us fall into the first two categories, so it follows that we will focus first on InDesign, then possibly begin to explore what Flash Catalyst has to offer that InDesign doesn't. While it is possible to use Flash Pro without knowing action script, many of the more advanced features are available only through scripting. Both InDesign and Flash Catalyst offer easy-to-use tools to create content that would be more difficult to make in Flash Pro. Of course, for the experienced developer, Flash Pro offers many more possibilities.

## InDesign vs. Flash Catalyst

InDesign is intended to eventually bridge the gap between print and online media production. So why develop Flash Catalyst simultaneously? It seems at first glance the two products compete with each other in that they both offer intuitive interfaces for authoring interactive content, when compared with Flash Professional. However, while there is certainly some overlap between the two, Flash Catalyst is intended specifically for online multimedia production. It therefore offers many features that cannot not be reproduced in print. For example, Flash Catalyst can create text boxes with embedded scroll bars, while InDesign cannot. InDesign, on the other hand, is geared more to adding interactive features to otherwise printable designs.

InDesign's interactive capabilities, while limited compared to Adobe's other offerings, are often sufficient to create exciting media-rich content.

## Wallaby to solve the Flash/Apple Conundrum?

Apple and Adobe have an unfortunate history of not getting along, much to the detriment of their mutual user base. With Flash technology barred from Apple's portable devices, Adobe has scrambled to develop an alternative. The result is in beta stages, code named "Wallaby," which converts Flash files into HTML 5 / CSS 3 content. For more information, and a free download, visit:

<http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/wallaby>

## InDesign's Interactive Features

- **Hyperlinks:** Internal (within the same file) and external (URL and other files)
- **Bookmarks:** navigation aids for PDFs.
- **Buttons:** perform diverse actions when triggered, including opening files, changing states, and showing/hiding of other buttons.
- **Page transitions.**
- **Interactive page curl:** realistic Flash turning page effect, great for magazines.
- **Animation:** objects can move along motion paths, with optional opacity and rotation changes, when triggered by various events.
- **Multimedia:** embedded sound and video triggered by the user or by other events.
- **Multi-state objects:** a special group of objects that changes appearance when triggered.

## InDesign's Interactive Export Methods

InDesign can export to a variety of formats that support interactivity. A table listing which features are supported in each export option is at the bottom of the page.

**PDF(print):** CS5 separates PDF export into two dialogs. The print option still includes the ability to include hyperlinks and bookmarks, as well as the appearance (but not function) of buttons.

**PDF(interactive):** New export option for more complete support. Note that as of CS 5 this option always exports as spreads, and is therefore inappropriate for most documents using facing pages.

**SWF:** A playable flash file that can be embedded in an HTML or other document.

**FLA:** A file that can be edited in Flash Pro.

**EPUB:** for eBook Readers; their XHTML/CSS/image contents can be extracted and repurposed for general internet use.

InDesign CS5 support for interactive features across various export methods

	PDF(print)	PDF(interactive)	Flash (SWF, FLA)	EPUB/HTML
<b>Precise Layout</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Facing Pages</b>	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No
<b>Hyperlinks</b>	Yes, if enabled	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Bookmarks</b>	Yes, if enabled	Yes	No	No
<b>Buttons</b>	No (appearance only) <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Page transitions</b>	No <sup>3</sup>	Yes (in full screen view)	Yes	N/A
<b>Animated Page Turn</b>	No	No	Yes <sup>2</sup>	N/A
<b>Animation</b>	No	No	Yes	No
<b>Sound/Video</b>	No <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	No (Yes in 5.5)
<b>Multi-State Objects</b>	No (initial appearance)	No (initial appearance)	Yes	No

1. PDF(Interactive) will ALWAYS export a facing pages layout as spreads. Although there is a simple script that can be installed to enable single page export, it will also cause all buttons to disappear from the exported file. So if you have a facing pages layout with buttons and you need to export single pages, your only option is to convert a copy of your layout to single pages.

2. Flash export can optionally include interactive page curl for facing pages layouts—an attractive option for magazines.

3. These features were removed from the traditional PDF export dialog and are now only available in the PDF(Interactive) dialog. This can cause some problems, as described in note #1.