

Innovative Book Jacket Designer Glen Saville Helps Best Sellers Fly Off the Shelves

Starting his career as a general studio assistant who made tea and did basic paste-up jobs, Glen Saville worked his way up the ladder through various roles in publishing until he became art director at Simon & Schuster UK. Today, he's a talented freelance designer who uses a wide range of software — including QuarkXPress® 6.5 — to produce dynamic book jackets.

Technology Advances in Desktop Publishing

"In the mid-1980s, when I began working in design, desktop publishing was just beginning," said Saville. "With all the technology available today, it's hard to even describe how we worked. Everything was all handwork with film overlays and paste-up." His employer, the UK arm of Macmillan Books, decided to computerize. The art department received a bank of Apple® Macintosh® Quadra 840 AVs (with a "whopping 40 MB of RAM") and such design software as Adobe® Photoshop®, Adobe Illustrator®, and QuarkXPress.

Saville immediately recognized the breadth of the new possibilities.

"I soon saw that QuarkXPress was a revolutionary tool that was going to change the way we produced design," he said. "I'm a fast learner and could always see right away a vision of what I want to create, but before desktop publishing, it would take two or three days to turn my concept into something I could show a client. When I first got my hands on QuarkXPress, I discovered I could turn my concept into reality in a day — without film overlays, paste-up, or any of the other mechanical aspects that used to slow me down. And with just a click of a button, I could output full-color layouts."

Making Long Projects Easy

No matter what the project, Saville said he often finds himself turning to QuarkXPress for the solution. He especially likes the Book features in QuarkXPress:

"Books enable me to manipulate a large graphics-rich document without creating a gigantic file that's too big to manage," he said. "I love how easy it is to print large projects. The QuarkXPress Book is a very simple and easy-to-use feature that's easy to overlook, but once you discover it, you'll wonder how you got by without it."

As much as Saville likes the Book features for handling big documents, he likes the QuarkXPress 6.5 Projects Tabs even more.

"Combined, Books and Project Tabs make it incredibly easy to manage long, complicated documents," he said.

Saville also enjoys the ease of use with the synchronized text feature in QuarkXPress 6.5.

"Last year, I had a brochure and flyer project for which the text would be repurposed for a catalogue," said Saville. "If I'd had QuarkXPress 6.5, I would have been able to place the same text in several layouts by linking the text boxes to a single file. Then, I could have simultaneously updated all the text in every layout with a single mouse click. QuarkXPress 6.5 would have saved me so much time on that project. Not to mention the option of working on a Web version of the same catalog and synchronizing revisions to the text for both projects at the same time."

And Still Number One: QuarkXPress

Saville has stayed abreast of new advances in technology and trends in publishing applications. He's watched with interest as other software companies have challenged the industry domination of QuarkXPress, and he said he likes the fact that there's competition in the desktop publishing industry.

"It makes all the companies work hard to produce great software," he said. "There are some great features in other software applications, but you need to be cautious or you'll end up with the job going wrong. For instance, other applications allow you to import a Photoshop file with layers and transparencies into the software. But if you don't know how to set the file up properly — that means making your own transparency presets — then complicated files won't output correctly. Fine gaps will appear around the image — as well as other output problems. The text weight can change unexpectedly. Some designers and repro houses will know how to combat these problems, but anyone can be caught unaware. When sending these jobs to press, you've got to stay on your toes as the transparency feature can make it more difficult than with QuarkXPress to get reliable output."

Speed is also a determining factor in Saville's selection of software.

"If time is critical, then QuarkXPress is my preference," he said. "Other applications can make me wait ages for the screen to preview using its default preview, something that QuarkXPress handles much quicker."





Saville also loves the way QuarkXPress 6.5 handles Photoshop files, such as the ability to crop images for quicker printing with the new QuarkVista™ XTensions® software.

“Also don’t overlook the Web design features,” he said. “They are a great way to quickly get content online and are surprisingly powerful.”

Sticking with the Best Costs Less

Saville recommends that small publishers stick with QuarkXPress.

“In addition to a steep learning curve with outputting files, other publishing applications have hidden costs of training, and the down-time lost in learning to use it is something to seriously consider,” he said. “In contrast, QuarkXPress stays consistent year after year, with easy-to-use and intuitive interfaces, even after the big jump in features we saw between QuarkXPress 4.1 and the release of 6.5.”

“In my experience, I believe that a small publisher is going to get greater value from QuarkXPress than with other applications,” he said. “There’s the simple fact that QuarkXPress still is the best at making jobs simple and producing reliable output. That’s why, in my opinion, QuarkXPress is still a very hard act to beat.”

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