

InDesign CS5

eBook publishing made easy

The open EPUB format has come to the aid of aspiring digital publishers. **Tony Harmer** explains how to use it

The EPUB (electronic publication) format is an open standard from the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF), an association that has been formed from members of the digital publishing industry to develop a reliable standard for this exciting new form of publishing.

EPUB shouldn't be confused with the Digital Magazine format that's emerging; EPUB is designed for re-flowable content that will be optimised for the gadget displaying it, such as the iPad. If you're used to working with HTML standards or PDF accessibility, then you'll be quite familiar with the concept of re-flowable content, but don't worry if you're not because it's a fairly easy concept to grasp.

InDesign CS5 makes it really easy to get going with creating your own EPUB books, and this tutorial will cover all the basic concepts you'll need to begin straight away.



Tony Harmer

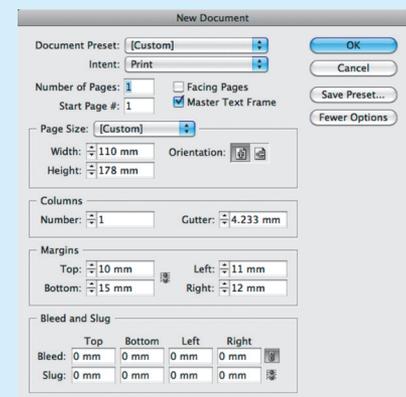
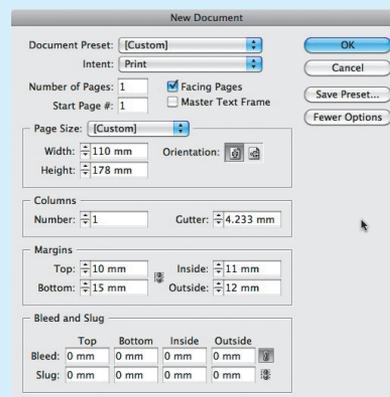
— An Adobe Certified Instructor holding over 70 certifications, and chapter leader for the London and Cardiff InDesign User Groups, Tony's blog on Design Premium topics is available at his website, www.tonyharmer.co.uk

Time needed

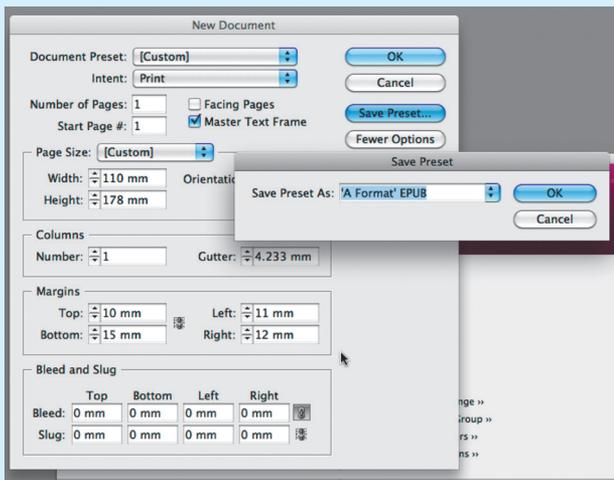
1-4 hours

Skills

- Set up styles
- Use anchored objects
- Use Smart Reflow
- Add a table of contents
- Export to EPUB



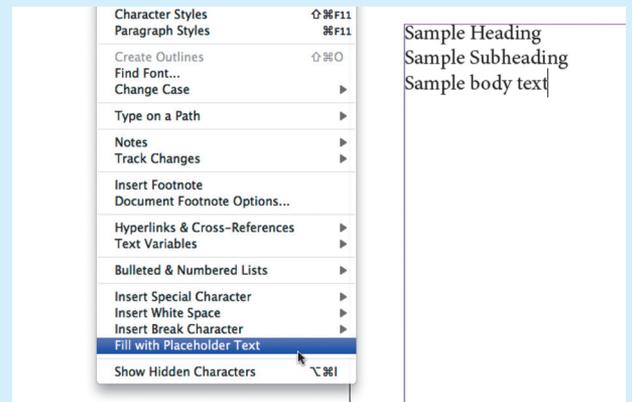
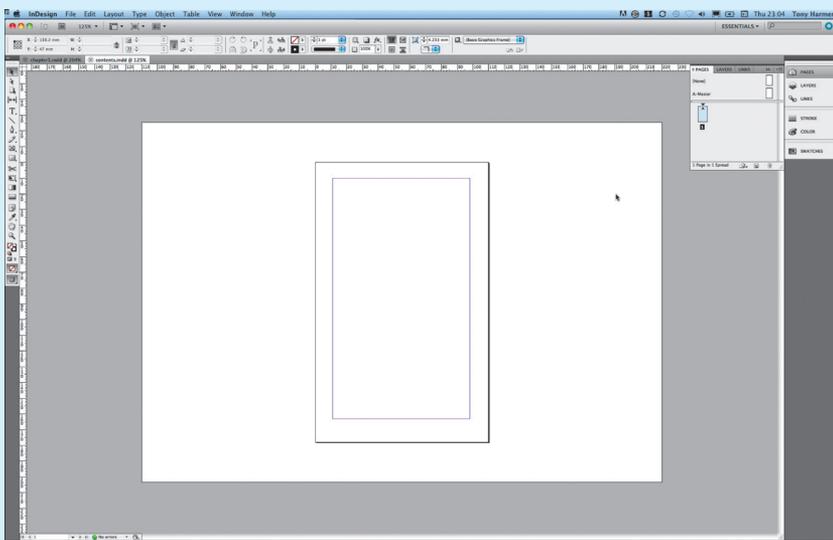
01 First, think about the length of your document and the number of images you'll be using. If the final EPUB size exceeds 300KB, consider breaking it down, perhaps by making each chapter an individual InDesign document and assembling them as a book file. We're going to do that here.



02—The physical document size doesn't really matter, because the 'pages' will be rendered by the device to its own screen size and resolution. I'm using a small 'A Format' paperback size of 110x178mm, portrait. Save this as a document preset and ensure that 'Master Text Frame' is selected.



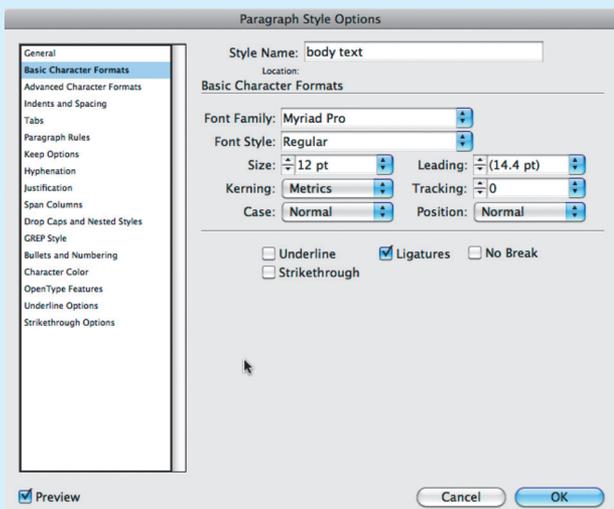
03—This first document is just going to have one page, on to which we'll place a single graphic for the cover. This must be only one object. Save this document and create another.



04—This new page will be for the table of contents. We'll complete it at the end, so for now it's enough to just save this as a file called 'contents.indd' and then create another new document.

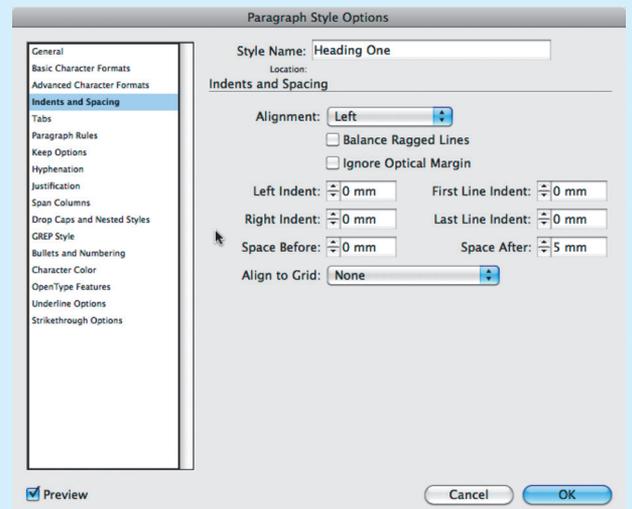
Items on master pages

Master pages items, such as running headers, footers and even page numbers, are off the menu. As the content will be different depending on the user's page and text sizes, the page numbers will change dynamically, and will likely be added by the reading device.

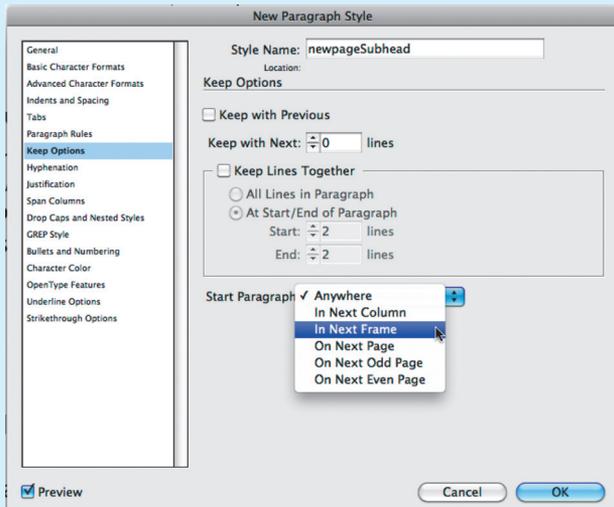


06—Make your paragraph styles; InDesign uses these as the basis for CSS style sheets that will be exported with the EPUB. You don't need to make too many decisions about typography because most EPUB readers enable users to override whatever you've decided to do anyway.

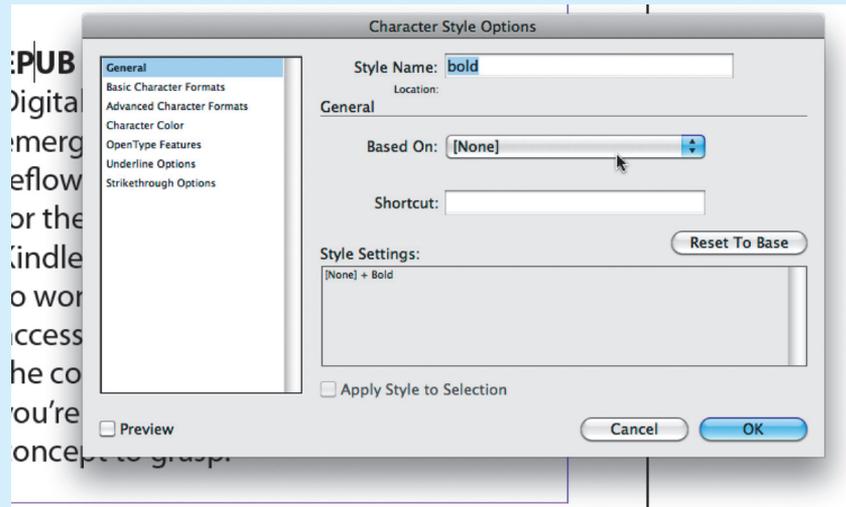
05—We're ready to begin adding new documents for each chapter. Because content is reflowed into one single text stream – regardless of how you lay it out in InDesign – this will make each section begin on its own 'page'. We need to build styles, so add some placeholder text to get started.



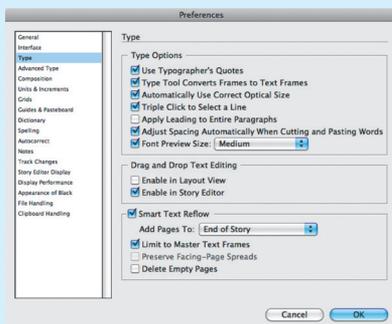
07—Don't use extra line feeds (carriage returns) or empty paragraphs between paragraphs – they will be ignored by the EPUB reader, so you'll need to use the Space Before and Space After options in Paragraph Style Options.



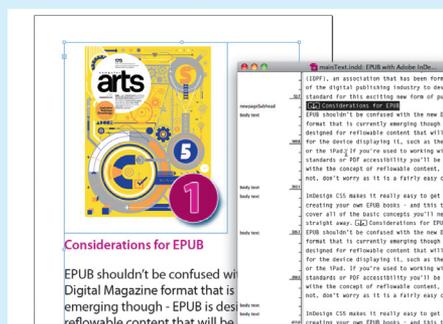
08 I'm creating another subhead style that will automatically start a new page, and I'll use this with my images in the flow of the text. Under Keep Options, from the Start Paragraph drop-down menu, choose 'In Next Frame'.



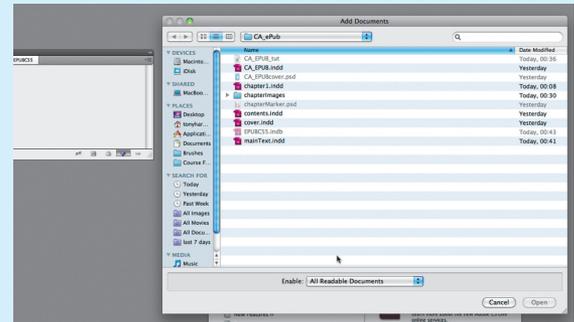
09 Everything you intend to display in the text needs to be styled – any local formatting will be discarded – so if you want bold or italic text inside your copy, you'll need to create specific character styles for those too.



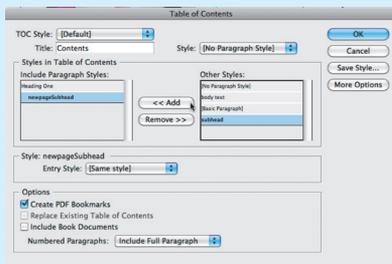
10 Next, go to Preferences and, in the Type category, ensure that Smart Text Reflow is enabled. This will automatically add pages to the document as required. You can now place or manually enter your text, and apply styles as required.



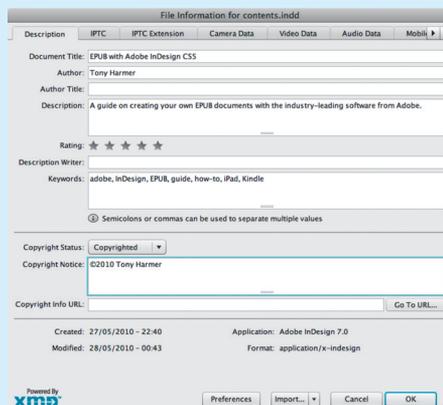
11 Images must be anchored to the text flowing with them. Place your image and then cut it to the clipboard; place a text cursor in the text at the relevant position and then paste the image in. It's a good idea to create a paragraph style with spacing attributes just for images.



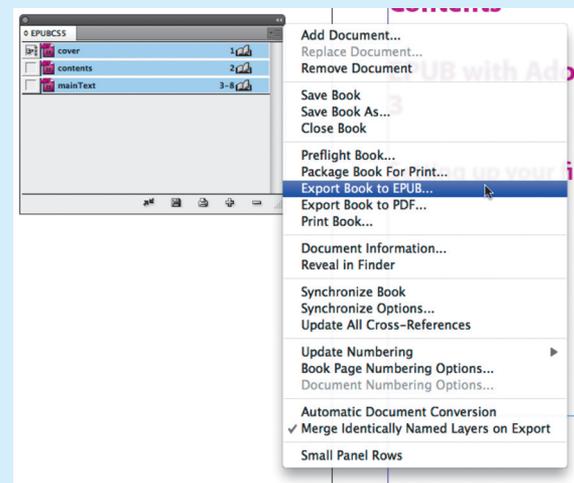
12 Now that's done, we need to bring it all together. Create a new book file by going to File>New>Book, and add the documents to it.



13 Select all the book files in the Book panel and then go to Layout>Table of Contents and work through the dialog; you're basically defining which paragraph styles denote different sections. If you're comfortable with cross-references, you can actually generate navigable contents lists.



14 One of your documents in the book file has a small icon to the left of it – this is the book's Source File. Open it and use File>File Info to add metadata to your document. InDesign uses this on export. You should complete the Document Title, Author, Description, Keywords and Copyright fields.



15 With the Table of Contents placed, it's time to generate the EPUB. Make sure all of the files are selected in the Book panel and, from the Panel menu, choose 'Export Book to EPUB'. Work through the categories, which are fairly straightforward, then test your finished product!