



Xara PAGE & LAYOUT DESIGNER 9

A Quick Look
By Gary W. Priester

In 1996, when I first starting using Xara there was just one version, CorelXara. Since then, the product we lovingly know as Xara has expanded into a family of related graphics products including: Xara Web Designer, and Xara Web Designer Premium, Xara Photo & Graphic Designer, and the top of the line, Xara Designer Pro. Please join me in welcoming the newest member of the family, Xara Page & Layout Designer 9!

I know many of you were expecting this to be my First Look at Xara Designer Pro X9, and that will be coming soon. Honest! However, in a way, this is a sneak preview of Designer Pro X9 as well since all of the fantastic new text handling and layout design capabilities in Xara Layout & Page Designer 9 will also be included in Designer Pro X9 (plus the new web design features found in Web Designer 9 Premium, and all the cool new photo tools found in Photo & Graphic Designer 9).

Xara Page & Layout Designer 9 A Quick Look!

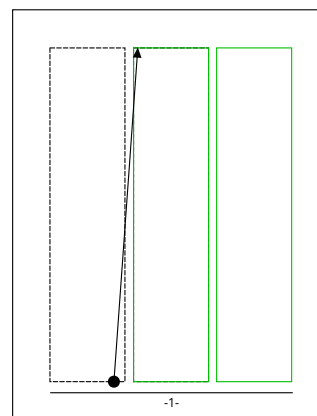
Xara Photo & Layout Designer (or P&LD as I will refer to it), has been designed to fit a specific niche, page and layout design (what we used to call “desktop publishing”). It has most of the drawing tools and features found in Photo & Graphic Designer, some photo editing, crop and enhance, and web publication capabilities. But the focus is on printing and printed output. If you are a Xara Designer Pro X or Photo & Graphic Designer user, you might be wondering what new features there could be in P&LD that are not already available. Ha! Are you in for a very pleasant surprise!

P&LD is ideal for people who create logos, business cards, brochures, newsletters, advertisements, flyers, business documents, posters, even magazines, in short, anything designed to be printed commercially or on the desktop. If you are not a designer, but need to create any or all of these items, not to worry. P&LD includes an extensive library of professionally designed templates that fit your every need, and that you can modify as needed.

All New Text Features

New P&LD9 has some really, really exciting text handling features. It’s hard to know where to start, but I have to start someplace. OK.

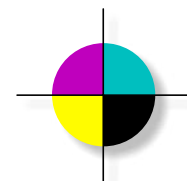
Multiple Columns. When you create a new



page, (*File > New...*) the page automatically opens with a large single text area and a footer with a page number. You can paste text into the text area or create text as you would in a word processor. Right click in

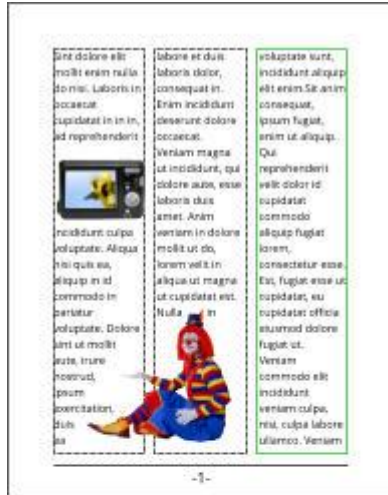
the text area and select *Columns* (or click the *Columns* icon on the InfoBar). Select the number of columns you want, and press *Convert*. The text area adjusts and an arrow links the bottom of the first column to the top of the second column.

Text That Flows Like River. When the first column fills up the text automatically flows into the next column. (Text areas can be linked non-sequentially if you wish.) For example you

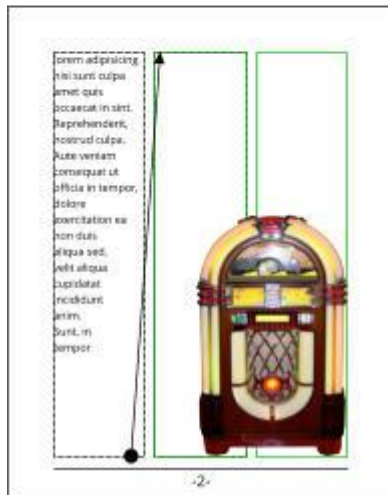


might want to have a thin column on each page for quotes and graphics and two larger columns for the text. You can skip the thin columns and flow your text only into the larger columns.

Automatic New Page When your text has filled the column or columns on the page, P&LD



automatically creates a new page, with the same format and the page number increases by 1. If your current page has three columns, then the new page will also have three columns in exactly the same configuration. But each page does not have to be exactly like the one before it. If you want the new page to be a single column, or a different number of columns, just edit the number of columns. You can



also turn the automatic new page on and off. Right click on the text, select *Advanced Text Properties*, and add or remove the check mark for *Automatically Create New Pages*. East as pie!

You can work on side by side pages (a double-page spread) and have your text flow from the left page to the right page. And then create a new double page spread when you have filled both the left and right pages. This is great for newsletters, brochures and catalogs.

Adjustable Columns You can have different sized columns. This is easy to do because you can adjust the width of any or all columns separately and the text re-flows. This makes it easy to create your own master pages.

Automatic Page Numbers Right click in a text area, and select *Insert* and a menu appears with the option to add a page number in Arabic (0, 1,

2, 3, etc.) or Roman (I, II, III, or i, ii, iii, etc.) numerals. You can add a footer to this as well and have it repeat on all pages. For example, the footer and the page number at the bottom of the pages in this review.

Column and Page Breaks Right click on a text area and from the *Insert* option you can add a *Column Break* or a *Page Break*. What these do is break off the text at the point you insert the break and go to the next column or next page. Not unlike a discretionary hyphen (which is also supported in P&LD).

Microsoft Word .docx Support This is a good time to mention the new support for Microsoft Word .doc and .docx file formats. You can import and export in these file formats. I wrote this review in Microsoft Word 2013 and saved the text as a .docx file. Then I imported and flowed the text into Page & Layout Designer with my styles intact. Once I had all the text imported, it was easy to change the columns, and update the styles.

Publish Your Document to the Web P&LD's tools and functions are designed primarily for printed documents. That said, I have decided to publish this Quick Look as a web document. P&LD treats each page in the document as if it is a single web page, complete with page numbers, headers and footers, but in reality, it's all one long web page.

Before Xara Page & Layout Designer 9, the only way to share a high quality printable document on the web was PDF. Now you can publish your documents on the web exactly as you would on paper. And you can use all the tools and features of P&LD to make your document stand out over the crowd! And because the web document is paginated, smart phone and mobile device owners can quickly swipe through the document one page at a time.

Google Fonts (Over 600!) P&LD provides access to over 600 Google Fonts which can also be embedded in web, PDF and P&LD documents. But in case you fret about having too many fonts installed, you only install the fonts you want to use. This is easy with the Google Fonts

addition to the Fonts menu. You can audition Google fonts by style, family and more. When you publish a web or PDF document, the fonts are automatically embedded so your visitors see the correct font or fonts, even if they do not have the actual fonts installed. And Google fonts can be used for any of your print work as well. I have used several Google fonts here.

Support for Multiple Font Styles In the past, due to a Windows limitation, Xara could only support four styles, for a given font. Usually something like Arial Regular, Arial Bold, Arial Italic and Arial Bold Italic. But now P&LD supports as many styles as come with the font. *Raleway*, a Google font for example, comes in nine weights from Thin to Heavy.



Text Styles P&LD supports *Styles*. Styles are a powerful way of controlling your text. You can assign a style for Headlines in three weights and Normal text. You can modify styles, as well as create your own styles and styles can apply to both *Paragraph*, which effects the entire paragraph of text and *Character*, so you might have a Paragraph style for your text and a Character style for bold faced lead in text.

Other Text Features

In addition to the new features I have covered, Xara Page & Layout Designer 9 supports a wide range of text formatting including, Underlined text, ~~Strikethrough text~~, _{sub} and ^{Superscript}, Line Spacing, Bullet and Numbered Lists, Indents and Outdents, Spell Checking as you type in English (US & UK), Dutch, French, German (Germany, Austria, and Swiss), Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Slovak and Turkish. Spacing Before and After Paragraphs, Tracking and Kerning, Baseline Shift, and Character Width.

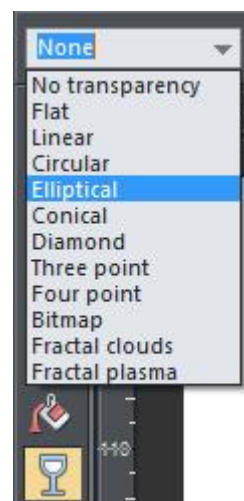
Repel Text and Embed Graphics You can embed (paste) small graphics ★ into your text that travel ● along with the text. You can create professional looking wrapped text effects using the *Repelling* and *Anchoring* text functions. Graphics can be anchored to repelled text so

that even if the text area is edited, or the text area resized, the repelling objects maintain their position relative to the text such as these *Photo Object* binoculars.



World Class Drawing and Editing Tools

You not only get all the new and existing text handling capabilities I just covered, you get Xara's world class drawing and editing tools which have been the mainstay for Xara



products from day one. There are 11 types of fills including seven kinds of gradient fills. One of the industry's most powerful Transparency tools, with 11 types of transparency, again with seven kinds of gradient transparency, and 9 types of transparency.

Three intuitive line drawing and shape creation tools, a Shadow Tool, and powerful tools for adding or creating Bevels, Blends, Contours, Envelopes. Even an awesome 3D Tool. With the Photo Tool



you can Enhance (Brightness, Contrast, Saturation, Blur/Sharpen, adjust Color Temperature and Hue) and Crop your photos. And you can Optimize any

and all photos in your document to cut down on memory usage.

Re-editable Effects Many of P&LD's effects and functions are reversible. If you add a bevel to an object or text object, for example, you can go back and edit or even remove the bevel at any time. All fills including Bitmap fills and transparencies can be edited at any time. Photo edits are "non-destructable" and are retained in the photo and can be removed or modified tomorrow or next year. As can any other re-editable effects.

Xara's Unique Intuitive Interface One of the features that has been much imitated but never duplicated is Xara's intuitive on screen editing. For example, you add a gradient fill or transparency directly onto an object not by using a menu, but by clicking the Transparency Tool on a photograph for example, and dragging in any direction to make the photo fade into the background or another photo. Drag the Blend Tool from one object to another object to create a blend.

The Designs Gallery — Tons of Useful Stuff

In the Designs Gallery you'll find professionally designed clip art, stock photography, photo albums and calendars, plus customizable templates for just about anything you can imagine including: logos and letterheads, brochures, flyers, invitations, citations, CD labels. There is so much great stuff in the Designs Gallery I could write a separate review just of the contents.

And Let's Not Forget P&LD offers a wide range of import and export filters including PDF and PDF/X, and a host of other graphic file formats. There's Pantone Color support for commercial printing, and one of my favorites, Magic Snap, the easy way to precisely align objects.

Help Is Just A Click Away You could grow old trying to locate help for many software products. But with Xara Page & Layout Designer help is usually a click away. Select a tool, press *F1*, and a context sensitive menu appears with details relating to the selected tool. In most menus, click *Help* for a context sensitive menu detailing the associated options. If you learn better by watching than reading, there is a link in the Help menu called *Movies* which takes you to a web page with videos covering most of the basics. And if you need help, want to share your creations, or just hang out, check out TalkGraphics.com where the members are friendly, and helpful

What Product is Right for You? Decisions, decisions. If you are a serious website designer, then the product for you is Xara Web Designer 9 or Web Designer 9 Premium. If you want a

really first rate set of photo editing and graphics creations, and illustration tools, then Xara Photo and Graphic Designer 9 is for you. If you are a small business owner or a graphic designer who needs mostly printed output, you can't do better than Xara Page & Layout Designer 9.

If you want to go first class and have the very best graphics, text handling, web design, photo editing product, then Xara Designer Pro X9 (coming soon) is the top of the line.

For more information about Xara Page & Layout Designer 9, visit the Xara Page & Layout Designer 9 web page, www.xara.com/page-layout-designer/.



Gary W. Priester created and hosted the Xara Xone from 1995 – 2012. A native of Los Angeles, California, he now resides in Placitas, New Mexico where he is semi-retired. Priester is the author of 5 books of 3D stereograms and creates custom 3D stereograms for advertising and sales promotion. Visit his website gwpriester.com or write him a note gary@gwpriester.com.



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