

Migration without aggravation: Proximity London makes the move to QuarkXPress 6.5 and Mac OS X

Changing the way its team members work takes careful planning for any company that focuses on production. Deadlines are tight, and no one has room for downtime, whether it's for training, troubleshooting, or learning new software. For Proximity London, a direct marketing services company, smart planning paid off, and the company's migration to QuarkXPress® 6.5 and Mac OS® X went more smoothly than company representatives had dared dream.

Easy migration for award-winning global company

Proximity London (www.proximitylondon.com) is part of Proximity Worldwide, an award-winning, global direct marketing services company with a diverse clientele that includes Eurostar, BBC TV Licensing, Royal Mail, Sainsbury's, Shell International, and Volkswagen. Proximity London has 250 employees and produces direct and digital marketing campaigns for its clients.

A loyal QuarkXPress user for more than a decade, the company was making the move to Mac OS X. Executive management decided that they would update QuarkXPress at the same time.

"We were moving straight from QuarkXPress 4 to QuarkXPress 6.5," said Michael Curtis, Mac support manager at Proximity London. "We wanted to make the move as quickly as we could."

Solid experience meets solid features

According to Curtis, the most important aspect of the move was to ensure that the changes were seamless. The company's users needed to be able to continue to produce — without headaches and without printing or file issues.

"Our users are all very experienced QuarkXPress users," said Curtis. "They know it and know it well. They know how to fix something and get the job done."

"One of our major concerns was that we wanted to be absolutely sure that we wouldn't have any printing problems and that we could revert to QuarkXPress 4 if we ran into any printing issues," said Curtis.

To everyone's relief, no printing issues occurred, and the company recognized the combined stability of QuarkXPress 6.5 and Mac OS X. Users were up and running immediately, with no downtime and no time or money spent on training.

Because of their requirement to revert to QuarkXPress 4, Proximity London initially did not use some of the new features in QuarkXPress 6.5. One of those features is layout space, a feature for designing a project around multiple media publishing possibilities. Users can create multiple layouts of different sizes in the same project, designate different media types (such as print or Web) for each layout in the project, and convert print-based designs to Web-based designs or Web-based designs to print-based designs.

"One of the concerns with not using multiple layout sizes was that we didn't want to lose more than one job in one go if anything happened to the file," said Curtis. "That hasn't been an issue at all."

Once again, the stability of QuarkXPress 6.5 on Mac OS X impressed company representatives, and Proximity London is now taking full advantage of the layout space feature.

"Now we are using multiple layout sizes all the time — mainly for press ads because they are all different sizes for different publications," said Curtis.

Another feature of QuarkXPress 6.5 that Proximity London uses extensively is full-resolution preview. With full-resolution preview, users can display pictures on screen using the picture file's full resolution. This feature is also handy for scaling or magnifying a picture with minimal pixelation or for creating more accurate QuarkXPress clipping paths.

"Full-resolution preview is a nice feature," said Curtis. "It gives users a really good feel for what something is going to look like, and you can turn it on and off so you don't lose any performance."

Support rapport

The staff at Proximity London applauded Quark's technical support during the migration.

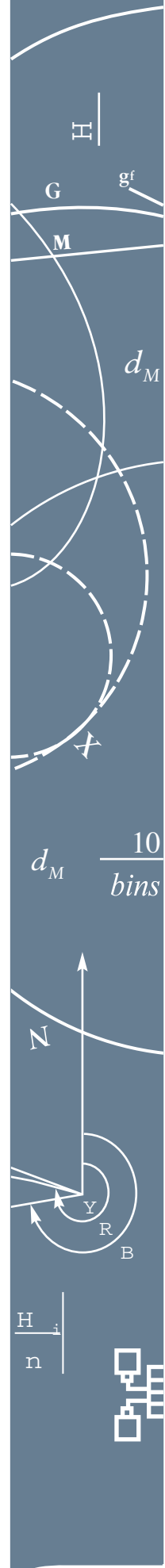
"Quark was a big help with our move to Mac OS X and QuarkXPress 6.5," said Curtis. "We even had a visit from a second-line support engineer who stayed with us for a day working with our studio staff."

Because QuarkXPress users at Proximity London are highly competent and experienced users with top-of-the-line troubleshooting techniques, having an engineer on site was one of the keys to the smoothness of the migration.

"Whenever we have had a problem in the past, we have already gone through all the basics when we call tech support and don't have time to go through them again," said Curtis. "When we ring up, we are at the end of the line and need help — and need help now."

The Proximity London team developed a strong rapport with the engineer.

"He watched our guys work, so he knows how we work and that we know what we are doing," Curtis said. "He got a feel for our level of expertise. We can call him directly if we have any problems and work through the problem with him. We know that he will not waste our time."





Stable software, stable company

Curtis said that he and the other staff members at Proximity London are confident in the stability of QuarkXPress on Mac OS X. Company representatives are pleased with the extended capabilities of QuarkXPress 6.5, and users are producing better than ever.

“The number of IT support calls we receive from our users has been reduced by 80% since we moved from QuarkXPress 4 to QuarkXPress 6.5,” said Curtis.

According to Curtis, Quark has been a reliable partner and has shown tremendous support. He is pleased to have stayed with Quark and said he hopes the new approach Quark has of supporting and listening to its customers will continue.

“Quark is a changed company,” said Curtis. “We seriously looked at moving to another product while also moving to OS X, but Quark proved that they were listening to their customers. We are even a QuarkXPress beta tester.”

“Quark is a company that we can trust. We know that QuarkXPress is a product that is going somewhere and that it will continue to improve.”

The results are in

“Moving to QuarkXPress 6.5 didn’t really feel like a migration,” said Curtis. “With a migration, you expect some aggravation. To us, it was just another upgrade; it was smooth. That’s what we loved about it all along. It’s just simple.”

Because working in QuarkXPress 6.5 was no different at its core from working in QuarkXPress 4.0, Curtis said users were able to open the software and start work right away.

“Working in QuarkXPress 6.5 wasn’t different at all, and we could work the way we always had — which was really the biggest thing for us,” said Curtis. “Our users had looked at and tested another product, but with QuarkXPress 6.5, our users didn’t have to learn anything new. Just having the same tool we have known for years running in OS X was a complete relief. We didn’t need any retraining.”

“With QuarkXPress 6.5, our users can work the way they always have, do what they need to do, and it’s done,” said Curtis. “They just want it to work and get the job out the door. And they can do that with QuarkXPress 6.5.”

“We are very happy with QuarkXPress 6.5,” said Curtis. “And we are very happy with Quark.”

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