



## **Pre-Press and Service Bureau Considerations with Scribus PDF**

For service bureaus, printers, magazine publishers and other pre-press providers who are unfamiliar with Scribus, the following notes are meant to anticipate your questions.

Right away, the developer of Scribus, has from day one, made every effort to strictly adhere to the published reference standards in PDF 1.3 and PDF 1.4. Scribus depends on Ghostscript®, a third party PS3 interpreter for postscript support. The most recent versions have received considerable attention to assure high quality postscript generation for print production, including support for overprint and up to 8 spot colors. For those unfamiliar, you can consult <http://www.artifex.com> and [www.ghostscript.com](http://www.ghostscript.com) for detailed specifications and capabilities.

If you are capable of handling PDF/X-3, this is probably the most reliable way of receiving PDF files from Scribus. See the notes below. Given the increasing sophistication and ease of using PDF both for final output and for placement within other print production applications, I have put together specific application notes based on my own testing, as well as discussions with pre-press technicians from leading commercial printers in North America.

We recommend to end users to install the latest GNU Ghostscript 7.05+ or AFPL Ghostscript 8.00. The developer and I found challenges with earlier versions, which necessitated workarounds and limits to the use of PS3 operators. The latest versions have resolved a great many of the previous issues. The Ghostscript PS3 interpreter is used in more than 50 commercial OEM printing and graphic applications.

The default settings for PDF export within Scribus are 1.3, without color management and a user simply needs to select Color > Printer in the PDF Export panel, as well as embed fonts and most settings will be optimized for pre-press.

### **Application Specific Notes for using Scribus created PDF's:**

#### **Adobe Indesign 2.0.2 / Win 2k SP3**

Indesign will import Scribus PDF 1.3 and 1.4 files and appears to handle them flawlessly. Indesign will create a TIFF preview, which can be set to high resolution for high quality on screen viewing. Subsequently, exporting a "press-ready" PDF from Indesign or separately distilling a postscript file results in a PDF which will pre-flight without issues with either Enfocus Pitstop Professional 5 and Markzware Flight Check.

CMYK images are transferred properly, with correct media box and font embedding. Indesign properly translates all the PDF 1.4 features Scribus can include in a 1.4 PDF.

#### Adobe Illustrator 10.0.3 / Win 2k SP3

Scribus PDF 1.3 and 1.4 are imported easily and Illustrator can easily edit them including handling all the alpha channel transparency features in PDF 1.4. All Scribus objects can be selected and edited with Illustrator's editing tools. You can open a Scribus 0.9.8+ PDF in Illustrator 10 and edit all the objects, including text, curves etc, just as if it were created with Illustrator itself. Embedded fonts are recognized and selectable separately or in groups. Saving a "press-ready" PDF from Illustrator or separately distilling a postscript file results in a PDF which will pre-flight for typical press conditions without issues with either Enfocus Pitstop Professional 5 and Markzware Flight Check 4.5. CMYK images are transferred properly, with correct media box and font embedding.

#### Pagemaker 7.0.1 on Win2k SP3

You can "place" a Scribus PDF without errors or warning. The PDF import filter can optionally create a low res-preview. Testing has shown some issues with some PDF 1.4, features including Scribus generated gradients, which we do not yet recommend including in PDF 1.4 files. PS from Pagemaker distills fine including re-embedding the fonts in the placed PDF file.

#### Quark Xpress 5.01 on Win2k

Quark Xpress 5.01 will import a Scribus PDF fine without warning or errors. Two problems are:

The import filter flattens the transparency effects with the top color overprinting the layers below. This I suspect is a weakness in the PDF import function.

It will sometimes, not pick up the embedded fonts in the PDF and fonts which are embedded, still have to be installed on the local machine and "active" via ATM Deluxe 4.1, otherwise Xpress substitutes Courier. Both of the above, I attribute to Xpress PDF import bugs, not flaws in Scribus PDF.

#### Adobe Acrobat 5.0.5 Family

Since the beginning of its development, I have yet to find issues with Scribus PDF files displaying or printing with Acrobat Reader 4 or 5 on Macs, Windows or Linux. The Linux version of Reader 4.05 has sometimes severe issues with color display. Testing with Distiller 3.02, 4.05c and 5.0.5 Win and 5.02 Mac, has rarely failed with Scribus generated postscript files. I have distilled Scribus PS using a number of different joboption files including recommended settings for Creo's Prinergy plug-in, as well as other "press-ready" PDF files at up to 3600 dpi with large CMYK TIFF and imported EPS files from Corel Draw and Adobe Illustrator.

Scribus is also unique in the DTP world in that it supports the creation of a great number of PDF features, which heretofore were only available in the full Acrobat application. This includes full support for javascript, forms with fields, annotations, bookmarks.

## **Preflight Issues**

### **Markzware Flight Check 4.5**

I have used this to pre-flight a number of Scribus PDF's both 1.3 and 1.4. Flight Check picks up all the relevant file information including color space, fonts and file meta info. When images are placed properly in Scribus, image info reads properly. When used with typical CMYK process "ground rules", Scribus PDF's pass easily.

### **PDF Inspektor - PDF/X-3 - Version**

When the PDF/X-3 option is enabled in Scribus, you can be assured they will conform to the spec. Every test of PDF/X-3 I have made via PDFInspektor from [www.callas.de](http://www.callas.de) <http://www.callas.de> shows Scribus will generate all the required intents and and correct meta info for a PDF/X-3 file. Note that the PDF/X-3 spec will allow ICC based colors in the PDF, which is the default configuration for Scribus PDF/X-3 docs.

### **Enfocus Pit Stop Professional**

Testing with V. 5.03 and 5.04, shows a potential bug in Pit Stop. When pre-flighting, a native Scribus PDF, Pit Stop throws a "fatal error" message. We will report this issue to enfocus and hope to learn more soon. This happens in both Acrobat 5.0.5 and Acrobat 6.0 Professional.

### **Acrobat 6.0 Professional**

Acrobat has no problem pre-flighting Scribus PDF 1.3 and 1.4. In addition, it correctly passes PDF/X-3 generated from Scribus. Moreover, you can with limited success edit and revise Scribus PDF's which have javascript enhanced features i.e. links, hyperlinks, presentation effects, bookmarks and annotations. You can use the touch-up tool for text edits as well. One issue is that Acrobat will substitute its own Multi-Master fonts, even if the font is correctly embedded. Disable "Use local fonts" is recommended.

## **Common Linux Fonts**

One area where Linux and its Unix cousins are different from Macs and PC's; the common fonts used in Linux and Unix. Most of the fonts below should have few problems in pre-press, as most are Type 1 fonts or high quality True Type fonts from respected foundries. Linux and Unix font binaries are typically 100% Windows compatible and install easily with ATM or the Control Panel applet.

Postscript and Type 1 - By default, almost every recent Linux desktop installs and uses a set of URW++ donated fonts, which are \*very\* close clones of default base 35 Postscript fonts. They have embedded names like Nimbus and Nimbus Mono, Nimbus Roman 9 and Nimbus Sans. These are equivalent to Courier, Times Roman and Helvetica respectively and are "aliased" to show up with these familiar names. Bookman and Utopia are also commonly installed. These are included with most standard Ghostscript installations. There is also an alternative version of these fonts at <ftp.gnome.ru/> This set has added Cyrillic and CE glyphs. Some distributions use this set in their default installation.

<http://www.artifex.com/downloads/> has a set of 45 True Type fonts, which are the functional equivalent of the 35 standard Postscript fonts, plus additional Garamond faces. This is probably the simplest and quickest way to acquire and install these fonts if the situation requires.

True Type Fonts - Almost every newer Linux distribution installs and uses the Luxi font family from Bigelow and Holmes. This is a versatile family of Unicode fonts have substantial coverage of most of the Western Code pages. These are very well crafted and print to high end postscript printers quite well. Luxi Sans and **Luxi Sans Bold** are quite distinctive, excellent screen fonts when used with the latest Xfree86 displays. We hope to make a package of the fonts available in the near future for use with non-Xfree operating systems.

Generously donated by Bitstream is the Bitstream Vera family of True Type fonts, which surely will become standard in most Linux distributions is freely available from <http://www.gnome.org/fonts/>. This font comes in a tar.gz - a gzipped tar file, which Stuffit and Winzip can extract. My initial testing with with a Fiery RIP and Distiller reveals no problems, as is expected from a top foundry. This document was set with Bitstream Vera Serif Medium, a rarity, in my opinion, a truly readable on-screen serified font.

Lastly, the developers of Scribus, while offering this as a free, open source application, have a fair amount of experience with DTP and work in the in the industry. Scribus comes with detailed documentation for users. Detailed specification notes here: <http://www.atlantictechsolutions.com/scribusdocs/specs.html>

Never before has the Linux and Unix world had a truly native DTP application. Our objective is to make an innovative, user friendly application, capable of creating polished professional results.

If you have specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact:  
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To be added: Mac/OS testing and more Fiery RIP info.. littlecms info

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**Clickable Links (This will launch your default browser)**