

Reader spreads vs. printer spreads

Imagine that you are creating an 8 page, 5-inch × 8-inch booklet. The booklet will be offset printed on 8½-inch × 11-inch paper, folded, trimmed, and saddle-stitched. The correct way to lay out such a document is to create eight 5-inch by 8-inch pages in your page layout software, and design the pages in the order in which they will be read, i.e. page 1, page 2, page 3, etc. Your print provider will then typically use additional software to arrange your pages two-up onto larger plates, in “printer spread” order. This is called “imposition”. They will print page 1 and page 8 side by side on one sheet, page 2 and page 7 side by side on another sheet, etc.

To create a mockup of a booklet or newsletter on a desktop laser printer, you may need to create “printer spreads” from a document that you’ve laid out in

“reader spreads”. Here is how to do this in popular page layout programs.

- QuarkXPress: There are at least three commercial Quark XTensions available for creating printer spreads. These include “Book-O-Matic” (www.poundhill.com), “Bookletizer” (www.visionsedge.com), and “Imposer” (www.alap.com).
- Adobe InDesign: There is a free “Build Booklet” script included on the InDesign application CD-ROM (in the “Goodies” folder) for doing simple impositions. “Inbooklet” (www.alap.com) is a commercial InDesign plugin for creating printer spreads. Or, try the free “TwoUp” script available at share.studio.adobe.com.

- Adobe PageMaker: Try the “Build Booklet” plug-in found in *Utilities > Plug-ins > Build Booklet*.

A few advanced laser printers include booklet-making features in their print drivers that will impose pages as they are printed. Check the documentation that came with your printer to see if your printer has this capability.

Keith Gilbert provides training & support services to help graphic designers and communicators convey print and Web messages effectively. Gilbert Consulting, 651 633-7148 www.gilbertconsulting.com