

Flourishing Creativity

London art and design agency adopts Adobe print and online technologies to move with the digital future of the music industry



The music industry has long been a place where creatives get to showcase talent and innovation in print art and design. ZIP Design, London-based music industry graphic design specialists, are now following the music business on to the web. From print campaigns for Beth Orton to work for Paul Smith and MTV, ZIP's projects have moved out into areas such as branding, websites, e-flyers, and motion graphics.

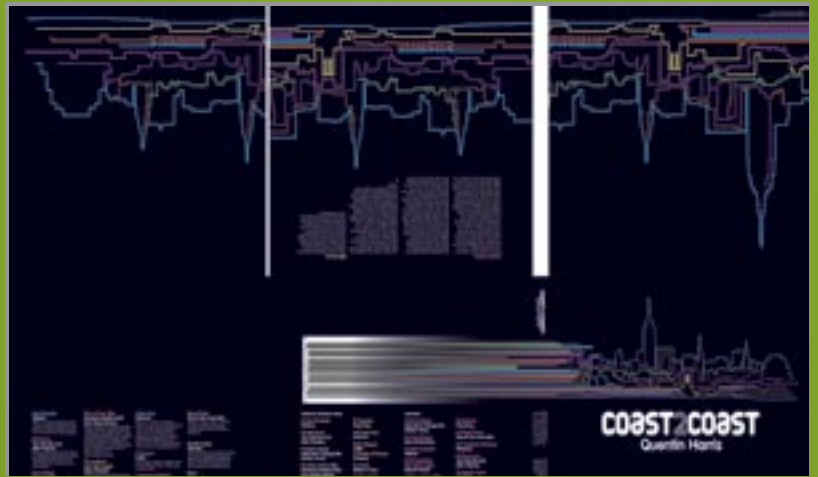
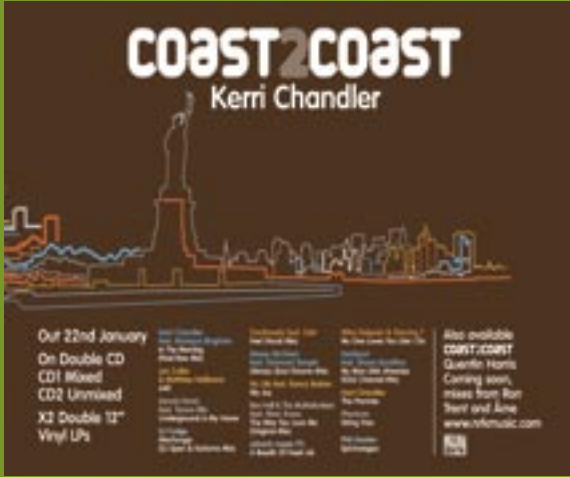
To do this, ZIP has migrated to Adobe® solutions to provide continuity, workflow ease, cost and time savings, and a level of flexibility that other software cannot match. Key to this has been the move from QuarkXPress to Adobe® InDesign®. In addition, using Adobe® Flash® and Adobe® Dreamweaver® software for on-line projects has allowed them to create new media work that will help them compete in the future online world of music.

01.

Project: Hush Hush Vol. 1
Designer: Chrissie Abbott @ Zip
Illustration: Bryan Louie
Client: Swank Recordings

02.

Project: Coarst2Coast Series
Design & Illustration; Neil Bowen @ Zip
Client: NRK Music



“Every single product within Creative Suite allows creativity to flourish”

David Bowden, creative director, ZIP Design

Moving beyond the limits of QuarkXPress

Using QuarkXPress increasingly became an issue with the ZIP creative team. David Bowden, creative director and Neil Bowen, assistant creative director, say that Quark’s lack of improvement showed up how advanced Adobe InDesign had become. “Quark’s added new features,” says Bowden, “but it never improves.”

ZIP is now firmly with Adobe InDesign, says Bowen. “We have found a number of issues with QuarkXPress,” he says. “For example it doesn’t use an Adobe technology to create PDFs, whereas you can just export to PDF from Adobe InDesign and you know you will create a stable PDF.”

Using QuarkXPress also meant extra time spent amending printed proofs to make sure that the printers produced exactly what the team had created. “A lot of the time you have to either print QuarkXPress files or make a PDF in order to see how the logos and bitmaps will look,” says Bowen. “You really don’t know what you’ll get until you can see a final preview. This isn’t necessary with InDesign, you can trust what’s on screen.”

With any music release today there are a selection of magazine advertisements to send to a reprographics house. “Using QuarkXPress to send work was a protracted and relatively expensive workflow.” First the team would ISDN materials to the repro house, they would then output Cromalin and films, and then courier them to the relevant magazine. “It was just crazy and typically you would be doing two or three adverts at the same time,” says Bowen. Now, he says, “the ability to create a press-quality Adobe PDF and FTP or email it direct to the magazine eliminates the stress and the cost involved with films and Cromalins.”



04.
Project: Nate James 'Funkdefining' Promo
Design & Illustration: James White @ ZipClient: MoreThan4

05.
Project: Mozez 'So Still' Campaign
Designer: Daniel Koch @ Zip
Illustration: Jo Radcliffe
Client: Apace Music

06.
Project: Strange Series
Design & Illustration: Neil Bowen @ Zip



More creative, more productive and more flexible

So, ZIP's design leaders are taking ZIP forward using Adobe Creative Suite, Adobe Flash and Adobe Dreamweaver because it means they can be more creative, more productive and more flexible while achieving both return on investment and workflow improvements. A recent print commission spells this out, says Bowden. ZIP has worked on several editions of a 1980s music compilation series before, but with the latest issue, '80s Pop', he found he could produce work using Adobe solutions that would previously have been impossible. "The way InDesign speaks with Illustrator is freeing me to do exciting things with print. The inserts on '80s Pop', I'd never have been able to do in Quark. The way I've set them up with a slight reflection on some of the type, for example, taking things directly from Illustrator and placing them in as part of the artwork, I would just never have been able to do."

An unexpected benefit from using Adobe Creative Suite has been Adobe® Bridge for viewing image assets on ZIP's machines and royalty-free images using Adobe® Stock Photos. "For browsing your files, Adobe Bridge is brilliant," says Bowden. "I leave it open and instead of going through my hard drive I'll go straight to Bridge. It just makes the designer's life easier."

"I just don't think you can do what I wanted to do with any other product. With Flash, anything you can think of, you can do."

David Bowden, creative director, ZIP Design

"We want to go in the new media, online direction," says Bowden. "We love the music industry, and we want to be doing new exciting and different things within it. Perhaps a client wants to market an album in a different way – we want to be there for them."

Adopting Adobe software across the board will allow ZIP Design to stay competitive in an increasingly cross-media world as Bowden concludes, "The most important feature within Creative Suite is that every single product allows creativity to flourish, the software doesn't limit your imagination - you can create anything you want to do."

03.

Project: Defected Single Disco and House Bags
Designer: Neil Bowen @ Zip
Illustration: Steve Wilson
Client: Defected Music



“If you output to PDF, then it needs to be representative of what’s going to come out in the end,” says Bowden. But Adobe’s superior preview capability cuts time and effort long before output. “In the design process if you’re spending hours in Quark moving bitmaps around and proofing each time, that’s not great. Adobe InDesign’s accurate previewing eliminates all that.”

With five design staff using Adobe® Creative Suite®, workflow benefits are as important as creative flexibility. “Just being able to place native files or EPSs from Adobe Illustrator into Adobe InDesign makes a massive difference”, says Bowen.

Adopting the industry standard

The creative team at ZIP feel that for creating vector graphics or website graphics Adobe Dreamweaver and Adobe® Illustrator® have the edge on the competition, and Adobe Flash stands alone as the only technology that can create the web work they increasingly want to produce.

The software’s previewing capabilities are also second to none say the ZIP team. They save time, money and effort.

As for new media work, Adobe Flash and Adobe Illustrator are the industry standards, says Bowden. “Since I was at university, some time ago now, the only programs that have really made the grade are Adobe, it’s as simple as that.” Using Adobe Flash for recent projects has reminded Bowden why he likes it. Bowden gave himself a refresher in Adobe Flash with a website he made for one of ZIP’s illustrators. Though it is a simple site, he says, “I just don’t think you can do what I wanted to do with any other product. I know there’ve been advances in scripting and that HTML is more versatile now, but with Flash, anything you can think of, you can do.”

Company

ZIP Design
www.zipdesign.co.uk

Challenges

- Move away from costly traditional print methods
- Save time and effort on document creation
- Move beyond QuarkXPress’s limitations

Solution

Move to Adobe® Creative Suite® to remove workflow and creative limitations

Results

- Return on investment benefits by removing hard copy stages of production
- Workflow benefits from superior previewing
- Capability to face the future of online music
- Increased creative flexibility through cross-product integration

Systems At A Glance

Adobe® Creative Suite® featuring use of:

- Adobe® Illustrator®
- Adobe® InDesign®
- Adobe® Acrobat®
- Adobe® Photoshop®
- Adobe® Stock Photos
- Adobe® Bridge
- Adobe® Dreamweaver®
- Adobe® Flash®

Platform: Apple Macs with Intel processors running MacOS