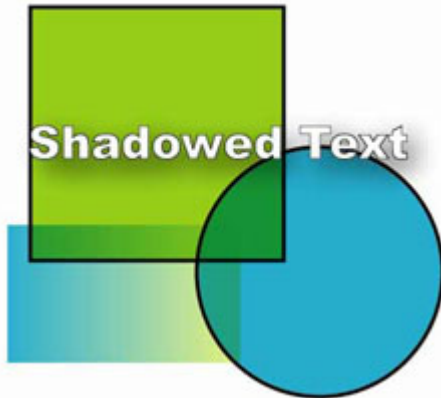


## Tech Support Transparency

Adobe Illustrator™ version 9, 10 & CS and Adobe In-Design 2.0 & CS include transparency features that may cause serious printing issues. These features work well under "controled" circumstances, however, if used inappropriately, they can add huge amounts of processing time to the job and may even cause pages to be unprintable. The information below is designed to help you understand these features and how they may effect your jobs schedule and costs.

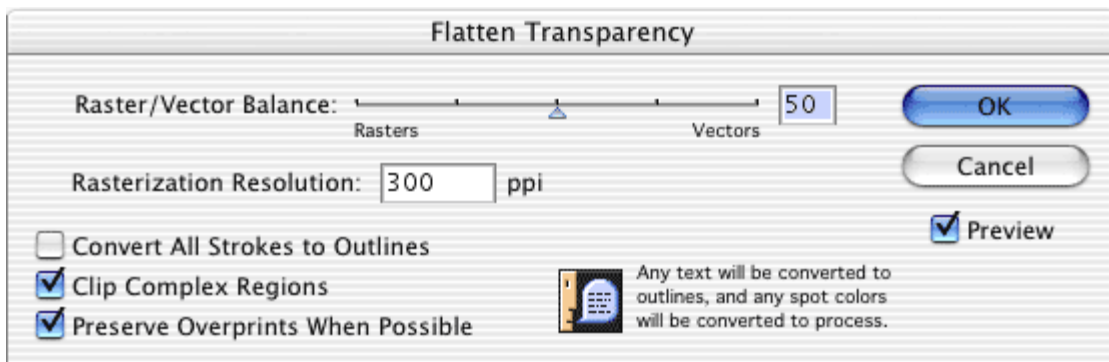


The key to understanding how the transparency features affect files in Illustrator and InDesign is knowing how files are flattened.

This is a simple drawing in Illustrator 10. Download the file to play with by clicking [here](#).

The text has a **drop shadow** created within the program. The blue circle is set to **Multiply** and is laying over the green square. The blend rectangle is also set to **multiply** and lays over the circle and square.

Looks pretty simple. But, it needs to be flattened BEFORE being saved to an .eps file so that it will print properly.



### How to manually flatten art in Illustrator 10

Select all, then choose **Flatten Transparency** under the **Object** Menu in Adobe Illustrator 10.

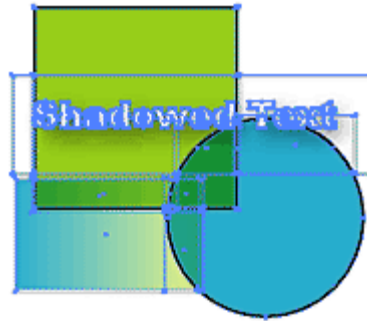
The Flatten Transparency menu exists in Illustrator 9 & 10.

Using the settings seen above, the flattened art looks like this →

In order to achieve the desired effect, the art is...

- Split into several pieces
- Several objects are converted from vectored art to bitmap images
- Bitmap images are imbedded and placed in masks
- Complexity changes:
  - from 3 paths to 523
  - from 12 points to 2758
  - from 0 imbedded bitmaps to 18
  - from 0 masks to 23

If one of these objects were a photograph, it would be split into multiple photographs and masked.



### The links palette →

shows the 18 bitmap images that are imbedded into the Illustrator file.

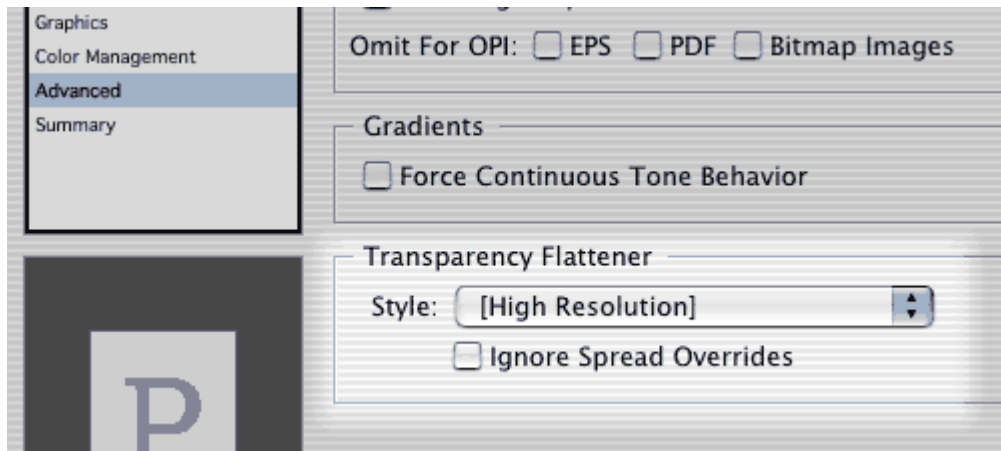
Imagine how complex this could become with a full 8.5x11 page with paragraphs of text and multiple high resolution photographs



## Tech Support *Transparency*

InDesign does not have the Flatten Transparency menu. Instead, it relies on the **Transparency Flattener** found in the **Advanced** section of the **Print Menu**. There are 3 settings to choose from here, **Low Resolution**, **Medium Resolution** and **High Resolution**.

High resolution is used for imagesetters and it is the setting used to print to our devices. The flattening procedure happens when you print, in the background. it cannot be previewed.



Although the menus are different in Illustrator than InDesign, the actions occurring in the background are very similar. To print, both must flatten the artwork.

InDesign automates the process somewhat by performing the flattening during the print process. Illustrator does it when being saved as a .eps - IF it is saved as a version 8 or less .eps file.

If saved as an Adobe Illustrator 9 or 10 file, you get a tiny little warning that looks something like this...



It shows up at the very bottom of the SAVE menu when saving as an .eps and is easily missed. If you see this warning, you should flatten the artwork manually and save under a different name like "Logo\_flat.eps"

If you do not do this, the art may not print properly and the results may be unpredictable.

## Conclusion

These features do work when handled properly and are not too complex. Photos that must be split into many pieces sometimes show up with a visible trap line where they are "stitched" back together by the programs.

## Recommendations

- If many objects are using drop shadows or other transparent features, build it in PhotoShop and create a flattened .tif or .eps to place.
- Keep it simple.
- Do not have transparent objects over the top of text if possible, it creates many, many masks.
- Although it is possible to place native, layered PhotoShop and Illustrator files in InDesign, we recommend flattened .eps or .tif files for fool-proof reliability.
- To learn more, read the **Flattening Guide.pdf** document found on the Adobe Illustrator 10 CD or the **ID2\_Printing\_Guide.pdf** located on the In-Design 2.0 CD.