

BEST PRACTICES FOR DIGITAL PUBLISHING

The App Studio team share their digital publishing do's and don'ts to help you design the best publications for your audience.

Design for the web

Designing for web means taking into account web standards. App Studio files are HTML5-based therefore keep in mind that print typography techniques such as kerning, tracking and hyphenation are unsupported. Although there is a workaround for this - convert text to an image (QuarkXPress) or to put it on the background layer (InDesign) - this text will then not be searchable or selectable. It is better to reserve the workaround for objects that specifically need these unsupported styles.

Readability

Since the primary purpose of any digital publication is to be read, the content should be clear, consistent and most importantly readable. There are numerous established methods to achieve this: making sure your colour contrast is strong, line height is correct and font size is large enough to read - even on smart phones. We recommend that you do not venture below 14pt in font size when designing your e-publication.

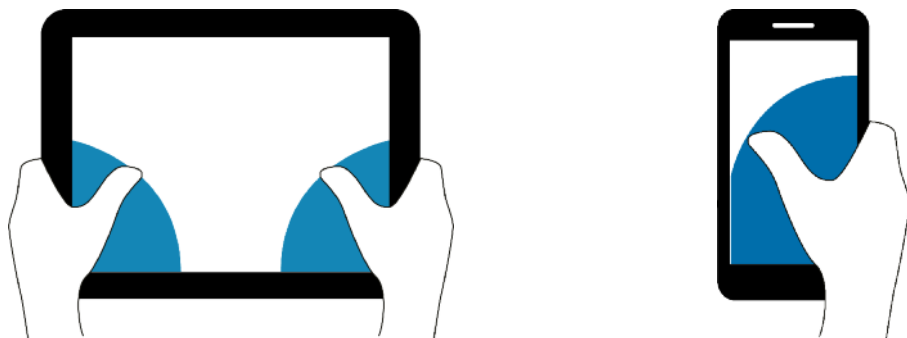
Design for fingers and thumbs

Remember to think about how the user will interact with your content on device. Looking at tap zones and how far the user has to stretch their hand from its usual holding position is crucial. It's also important to take into account how close buttons are in relation to each other.

We recommend having a 44x44px touch space on buttons so that there is clear difference between separate touch areas.

Navigation indicators

It is important for a user to know where they are within your publication. Having unclear navigation can be alienating and can encourage a user to quit the app.



The App Studio scrubber view makes it easy for the user to see where they are horizontally within an issue and using a visual indicator is a good way to guide the user how far down vertically they are. The award-winning app CIMA FM employs the use of subtle navigation throughout articles that span vertically more than a few pages.

Optimise graphics

Although App Studio does not have recommended image sizes we suggest avoiding using raw/full size images and that instead you optimise your images for web using a graphics programme. This means that your images will be small in file size while maintaining quality.



An exception to this rule is when dealing with zoomable images, however we still strongly recommend that you try to keep file sizes down and optimised but with a higher image size.

Searchable Content

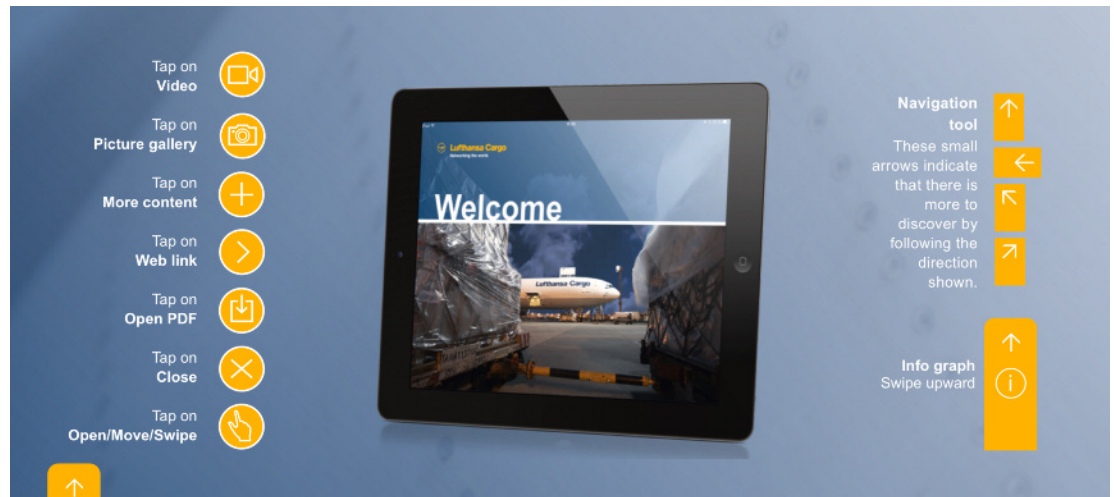
One of App Studio’s USP’s is that you can let your users search for keywords within downloaded issues. To enable and ensure your content is searchable, make sure your content is not on the background layer when creating your content in InDesign.

Use of icons

It is important that your users understand the visual language of your publication. Make sure users are aware what an icon does (they are unlikely to tap on something they don’t understand). The best way to avoid confusion is to use universal icons and symbols in common use.

Tutorials and Guides

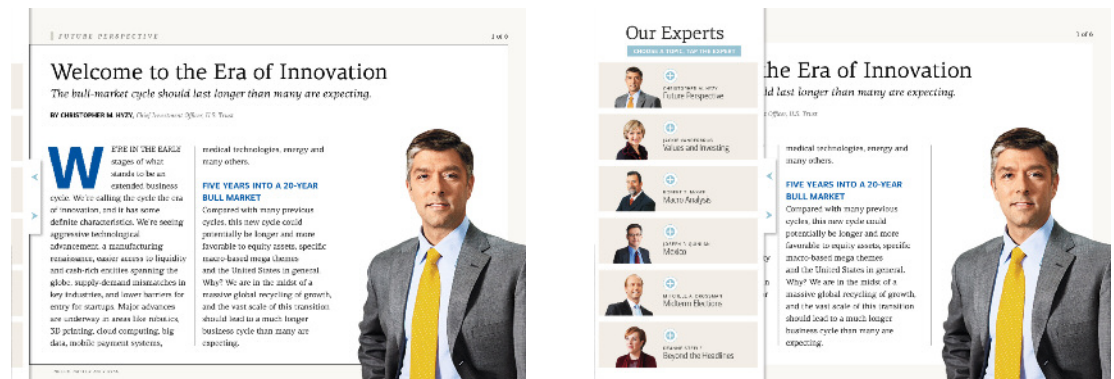
Including a tutorial page within the first few pages of the issue is another way you can help users to understand your publication. The Lufthansa Cargo Company App is an example of this being done well using App Studio.



Non-linear page navigation

A great advantage of digital publications is the ability to have non-linear navigation through the app. The user can link between pages in the issue and fly directly to content they want to view. You will need to take care to label links accordingly: the user should know where they are in the issue, where they are about to get taken to and how to get back.

A good example of a non-linear navigation is the Capital Acumen app by Bank of America. The navigation can be used to get to other articles in that section and can also be hidden at any time. This is a great way of using the real estate on the page for a dual purpose.



Interactivity

It can be tricky to get the balance of interactivity right. Too much may seem gimmicky while too little and you may be missing out on features that would be helpful to users. Hiding information inside popups or carousels can help when designing for maximum use of page real estate, while subtle videos and animations can help make your publication pop!

Experiment with App Studio features to create something special that caters to your users' requirements.

ABOUT APP STUDIO

App Studio is the next generation digital publishing solution that uses HTML5 to push the bounds of user experience without the high cost and effort associated with custom app development. By combining the market-leading HTML5 technology from the recent acquisition of PressRun with Quark's existing digital publishing technology, App Studio is the only digital publishing solution that allows users to create branded content apps using QuarkXPress, InDesign, HTML5, and XML. Through a managed cloud environment, designers, authors, and extended teams are able to collaborate to create rich, interactive content that can be delivered across multiple platforms and devices.

Get started for free at www.AppStudio.net

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