# ADOBE INDESIGN CC 2018

## troubleshooting how-to guide

how to reset
preferences as well
as a step-by-step
checklist strategy
of what to do when
your InDesign
app crashes or
your document
becomes corrupted

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# Adobe InDesign CC 2018 Troubleshooting How-to Guide

What do you do when InDesign CC 2018 (and past versions) is crashing? Here is a checklist of ideas.

## Generalities

### 1. Isolate the source problem

Is the problem the InDesign application, or something wrong with your file? InDesign won't start, or file won't open, or file opens and crashes, or crashes on same page?

### 2. Do you have enough RAM?

You need at least 16GB of RAM to run effectively.

### 3. Restart your computer

Quit InDesign, restart your computer, and try to start it again, with no other programs running.

### 4. Run your Mac or Windows Utilities

Before you start any programs, try running housekeeping operating system utilities like DiskWarrior or CCleaner before starting InDesign again.

### 5. Force a screen redraw

Sometimes the screen is not redrawing. Try: *Shift-F5* to force a redraw. What looks like a bug will often vanish. *Cmd+Opt+/* (Mac) or *Ctrl+Alt+/* (Win) will force InDesign to recompose the text and also refreshes the screen.

### 6. Windows 10: Required Fonts

See Font Settings. There is a Check Box to "Hide fonts based on language settings." Also "Restore default font settings" will help in case you delete fonts you needed.

### 7. Round up the usual font suspects

Font Doctor can diagnose and repair fonts, a common reason for crashing.

http://www.extensis.com/font-management/fontdoctor/

### 8. Same problem in a new file?

Do you get the same problem in a new file, or does it only happen in one problem file? This can help you determine if its the InDesign application or a corrupt file.

### 9. Move from network to hard drive

Working on a network server drive can work OK. But, if you are having trouble, try packaging the InDesign file *(File > Package)* to a folder on your local hard drive, and work local. Network problems can cause crashing. InDesign 2017 and newer is better at network drives.

### 10. Keyboard shortcuts not working

Usually caused by a 3rd-party software, possibly a browser plug-in. Try rebooting and loading InDesign. If it works, then load the browser and see if it breaks.

### 11. Missing File Info dialog

Missing the File Info dialog? Locate and delete the *DVADialogPrefs.xml* file and restart InDesign CC 2018.

### 12. Component Information dialog

Hold down the *Cmd* key while you choose *InDesign > About InDesign (Mac),* or the *Ctrl* key while you choose *Help > About InDesign (Win).* The Component Information dialog can tell you potentially useful info about the history of your file.



### 13. User cannot start InDesign

With admin privileges, create a new user and launch InDesign. This will tell you whether or not the user account is corrupted.

### 14. Updating to InDesign CC 2018

While installing, Import previous settings and preferences seems to trigger many operational issues. Turn this off.

Id

# Resetting InDesign

## 15. Reset (aka trashing) preferences

Custom preferences are written to file each time you quit InDesign, but can get corrupted if it crashes.

Simply delete them and restart. InDesign will write a new set of preferences. Press modifier keys immediately as/after you click on the InDesign icon. Press *Cmd+Opt+Ctrl+Shift* (Mac) or *Ctrl+Alt+Shift* (Win). Click Yes to this message:



If you want to to protect a backup copy, do this:

① Start InDesign CC 2018 (or your older version)
② Open Scripts panel (Window > Utilities > Scripts)
③ Right-click on the User folder, and choose Reveal in Finder (Mac) or Reveal in Explorer (Win)
④ This is a folder named *Scripts Panel* in the Mac Finder or Win Explorer. Go one level above this folder to the preferences file named *InDesign Defaults*. If you make a backup copy of this file, you can restore it (copy it back) if the original file becomes corrupt.

To reset manually, delete *InDesign Defaults* and *InDesign SavedData* files, and restart InDesign.

Here is the folder location for the *InDesign Defaults*:

Mac OS: Home > Library > Preferences > Adobe InDesign > Version 13 > en_US > InDesign Defaults

Windows 10: Users > UserName > AppData > Roaming > Adobe > InDesign > Version 13 > en_US > InDesign Defaults

Here is the folder location for the *InDesign SavedData*:

Mac OS: Home > Library > Caches > Adobe InDesign > Version 13 > en_US >

Windows 10: Users > AppData > Local > Adobe > InDesign > Version 13 > en_US > Caches >

I usually visit this Caches folder to delete the *InDesign SavedData* file (when I manually reset preferences by finding and deleting *InDesign Defaults* and *InDesign SavedData*), but you might need to go into the InDesign Recovery sub-folder and delete *all* the files inside if you are caught in a restart/crash loop.

Some say the keyboard method works better than the manual file delete method. In worst cases, some users delete all files under these two folder locations.

# InDesign is crashing

## 16. Turn off Type Contextual Controls

Preferences > Advanced Type > Type Contextual Controls. This is a new feature that shows you alternate glyphs. In CC 2017, this feature proved to be buggy. Try turning them off.

## 17. Turn off GPU Performance

If you are using InDesign CC 2015.4 (or later) on a GPU-equipped Mac with Retina display, disable the GPU Performance feature in *Preferences > GPU Performance* or *View > Preview on CPU* and see if your problem stops.

## 18. Close docked and floating panels

Sometimes files crash with certain panels open, but when the panels are closed, the file doesn't crash. A quick way to temporarily hide all panels on the screen is to press the *Tab* key (when you don't have text selected), or *Shift-Tab* to hide all panels except the Tools panel.

## 19. Remove third-party plug-ins, if any

The most common problem is font activation plug-ins, since they rely on the OS, InDesign, and the plug-in all to work well together. Try shutting down font management software. Look in the Plug-ins folder in the InDesign folder in Applications (Mac) or Program Files (Windows) to remove plug-ins from InDesign.

## 20. Crash on Print or Export to PDF

First, try the export to IDML trick. Next, try the Divide and Conquer technique. If you isolate a page, move half the objects to the pasteboard and test again.

If it is a graphic, open the graphic file and re-save to a new filename and different format. Place it back onto the page. If it is a textframe, copy the text out to a text editor to remove all formatting. Try to replace back in.

## 21. Reinstall InDesign CC 2018

You might try to uninstall and then reinstall InDesign using the Creative Cloud app. Some run the Adobe cleaner utility before reinstalling:

https://helpx.adobe.com/creative-cloud/kb/cc-cleaner-tool-installation-problems.html

## 22. InDesign Auto Recovery crashing

InDesign temporarily saves, or caches, information about the documents you are working on, so that they can be recovered if InDesign crashes. When you restart, InDesign attempts to recover and reopen the problem file, causing it to crash again, and the process repeats. The solution to this is to delete the cache files. The files are located here:

Mac OS: Home > Library > Caches > Adobe InDesign > Version 13 > en_US > InDesign Recovery > RecoveryData (or even the whole folder)

Windows 10: Users > Username > AppData > Local > Adobe > InDesign > Version 13 > en_US > Caches > InDesign Recovery > RecoveryData (or whole folder)

## 23. Win 10: Recent Files

Right-click on the InDesign icon in the taskbar. Under "Recent" there were files that InDesign kept looking for. Right-click on the file and "Remove from this list." Shut down InDesign with Task Manager and then restart normally might remove issues.

# Hidden files

## 24. Mac OS: show Library folder

The user Library folder is hidden in Mac OS (10.7 and later). Use one of the following methods to make the user Library folder visible.

Method 1: In the Finder, choose Go > Go to Folder. In the Go To Folder dialog box, type ~/Library. Click Go.

Method 2: Hold down the Option key when using the Go menu. The user Library folder is listed below the home directory. Note: After you open the Library folder, drag the Library icon from the top of window to the Dock, sidebar, or toolbar, making it readily accessible.

Method 3: Launch Terminal, type the following: chflags nohidden ~/Library and press Return. Enter the system admin password, and press Return. Close Terminal. The Library folder is now permanently visible in the Finder.

## 25. Win 10: AppData folder is hidden

In Windows, open File Explorer and go to Tools > Folder Options > View Tab, and then scroll down and check the radio button to show hidden files and folders.

# Salvage the document

## 26. Export to IDML

IDML (File > Export > InDesign Markup IDML) is a way to write an InDesign document to XML code. Export to IDML, then close the original file, and open the IDML to a new file sometimes cleans the file of corruption.

## 27. Divide and conquer

Delete half the pages, and see if the problem goes away. If so, now you know which half of the file is the problem. Return to the original file, and remove half of the section you previously removed. Keep deleting segments of the file to narrow the problem to a single page or pages. Rebuild those pages to heal the problem.

## 28. Push damaged pages into a new file

Use the Move Pages command in the Pages panel menu to push pages from a damaged document into a new document with the same page setup.

## 29. Delete a text frame

A single corrupt story can be the source of the problem. Try exporting all the text, then deleting one or more of the text frames and see if the problem clears. If so, replace the exported text into new text frames.

## 30. Delete a graphics frame

Actually, any frame object can be the source of crashing. Try deleting a frame object to resolve crashing.

## 31. Delete styles and swatches

Try deleting (first the unused) paragraph, character, object, table, and cell styles, and color swatches, and see if the problem clears.

## 32. Export text to recover assets

Sometimes you need to get the text out of the file so that you can rebuild the project. Try exporting the text *(File > Export > Text Only)*, or try ExportAllStories.jsx script.

## 33. Convert a PDF to a new InDesign file

Try exporting to PDF, and using PDF2ID to convert back to InDesign.

https://www.recosoft.com/products/pdf2id/

Id

## 34. Acrobat DC's Export To command

Acrobat's File > Export To command can extract to a Word .docx or PowerPoint .pptx so that you can rebuild.

## 35. DTP File Recovery Service

Markzware offers a File Recovery Service. You pay the larger fee only if they are able to recover your file.
http://markzware.com/products/file-recovery-service/

# Preventive advice

## 36. Save-As frequently

InDesign files are databases of all the objects that you've ever placed on your page, even those that you've deleted. Occasionally do a File > Save As and just save over the original file. This will compact and clean up the file, keeping the database small, and less prone to corruption.

## 37. Keep a chain of version backups

Practice saving iteratively-named backups. If the document corrupts, you can go back to a workable version without much loss. If you save your files in Dropbox, its auto-versioning feature makes backups. A free plug-in called Radish also saves versions for you.

## 38. Don't build in a single document

Some say it is better to break the large project into smaller files, and use the Book feature (File > New > Book) to help manage the individual document files.

## 39. Don't fill pasteboard with objects

Don't store objects on the pasteboard, the area beyond the page. It makes the file larger, and printing slows down. Instead, use Libraries (*File > New > Library*) and/ or CC Libraries (*Window > CC Libraries*) to store extras. Or make XML Snippets (*File > Export > InDesign Snippet*) for storing objects that you might re-use later.

## 40. Mac OS: reset font caches

A frequent cause of app crashing. Use FontNuke utility to remove and reset Mac OS font caches:
https://www.jamapi.com/products/fontnuke/

## 41. Mac OS: avoid system dfonts

Mac OS: Avoid using system .dfonts in documents. Remove old PostScript Type 1 fonts. Use only OpenType versions of fonts. Don't have multiple versions installed.

## 42. Use linked graphics

Don't copy and paste artwork from Illustrator and other programs into InDesign. This makes the file more prone to corruption. Instead, always use File > Place to place .ai and .psd graphics. If InDesign always crashes on a particular page, it might be that placed graphic that is corrupt; therefore replacing the placed (not pasted) graphic can be an easier operation.

# Get assistance

## 43. Adobe help documentation

Damaged documents:
https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/kb/troubleshoot-damaged-indesign-documents.html

Recover InDesign documents:
https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/kb/indesign-document-recovery.html

## 44. Adobe InDesign user forums

Research your questions on these two public forums:
https://forums.adobe.com/community/indesign
https://indesignsecrets.com/forums

## 45. Outside help

No guarantees, but Adobe might be able to help: email or link your file to corrupt_indesign_docs@adobe.com.

## 46. Known issues

Do your own research by searching for "known issues"
https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/kb/known-issues-october-2017-release.html
https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/kb/indesign-and-mac-os-high-sierra.html
https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/kb/crash-fixes-october-2017-release.html

## 47. Get a service contract

JetSet Communications is a great resource for services related to InDesign and long-document productions:
http://trainingonsite.com/help-services.html ▪

# Ask about our support services



ADOBE PHOTOSHOP CC 2018
a complete tour of preferences

also showing tool preferences and how to setup
color management for workflow color accuracy

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