Quark Publishing System®

How it Works

QPS® provides tools that let teams of writers, designers, editors, and other contributors to creative and editorial workflows integrate their tasks and publish content across mixed media. This paper describes how QPS works in practice.

An ideal publishing workflow looks like a linear progression from start to finish. But in truth, the process often requires changes, and QPS accommodates these changes.

QPS Server and QPS Client Applications

The full QPS software suite includes a QPS Server that tracks all assets, along with a collection of client applications for writers, designers, artists, editors, and managers to work on those assets. QPS users transfer assets to one another using client applications, and the QPS Server dynamically maintains a record of this activity for all QPS users to see.

Administering a QPS Workflow

The QPS administrator defines the workflow configuration. The structure of the content might include project types (for example, advertisements and brochures), which can be further subdivided according to the clients for whom the group creates ads and brochures. The QPS administrator creates the list of workgroup users, or, to make this task even easier, creates the user list through QPS support for LDAP, directly integrating with the company's directory services. Then the administrator assigns each user to a specific role that governs the privileges available to that user. The QPS administrator also controls where assets are stored (either in a file system, or in a single repository, shared with a content management system), the progression of steps in the workflow, default specifications for new assets, and the attributes (descriptive metadata fields such as name and due date) that are attached to every asset in a QPS workflow. All QPS users can track assets based on these attributes.

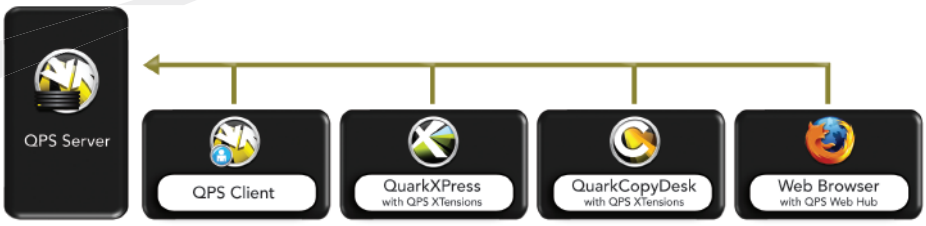

Figure 1: The designer receives the illustration assignment, and the writer checks out the article in QuarkCopyDesk.

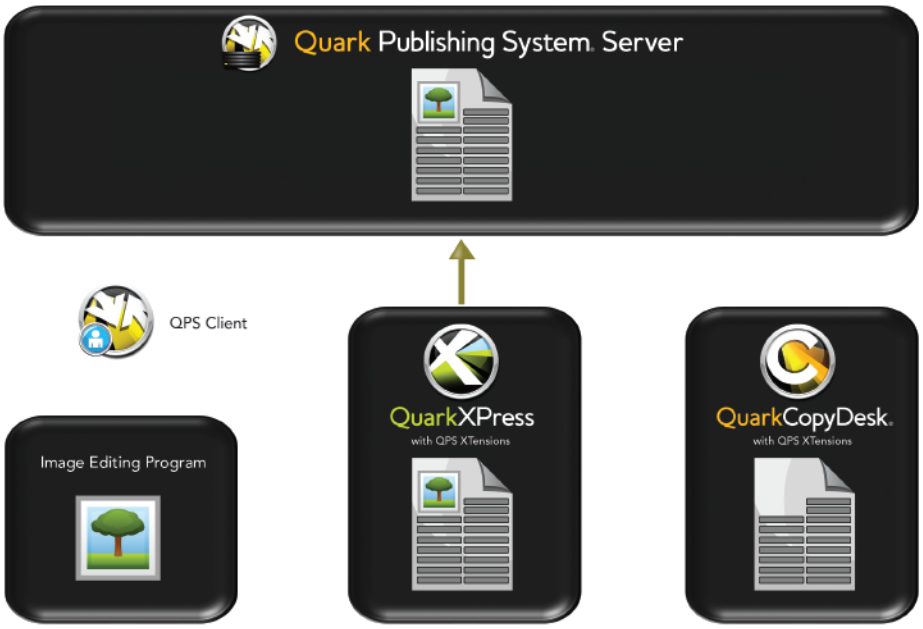

Figure 2: The designer creates an illustration according to the layout artist's specifications, the writer writes an article of the appropriate length, and adds the illustration.

Quark

Assigning and Managing Assets from QuarkXPress

A QPS workgroup for a brochure might include a QuarkXPress® user responsible for page layout, a QuarkCopyDesk® user who writes the brochure copy, a graphic artist who uses an image-editing application, and a remote editorial manager who uses QPS Web Hub to work on text through a Web browser. QPS even accommodates members of your workgroup who use Adobe® InDesign® with InCopy®, along with those who use Quark® applications — in the same workflow. (See figure 1)

Let's consider a sample workflow. Note that this is only a sample; different organisations set up their QPS workflows in different ways. In this workflow, the QuarkXPress user often works as the hub through which all other work flows.

The layout artist uses QuarkXPress to create the page layout by creating text boxes for copy and picture boxes for graphics. Once the layout artist has created the page, he or she checks it in to the QPS Server. The layout is now backed up on the server, and every time the layout artist checks it out and back in, another revision is created. (See figure 2)

Using QPS, the layout artist assigns articles, including text and picture boxes, to QuarkCopyDesk users, and assigns picture boxes to artists working in drawing applications. The writers and artists receive notification of these assignments, which can also include instructions and other useful information in the attributes for the asset. Here, a designer has been assigned to create an illustration, and a writer has been assigned to write the brochure text and to add a relevant illustration. (See figure 3)

It is important to note that an article created from a layout comes with geometry, which is a description of the article's size and shape within the layout. Geometry allows the writer to know exactly how much space he or she has to fill.

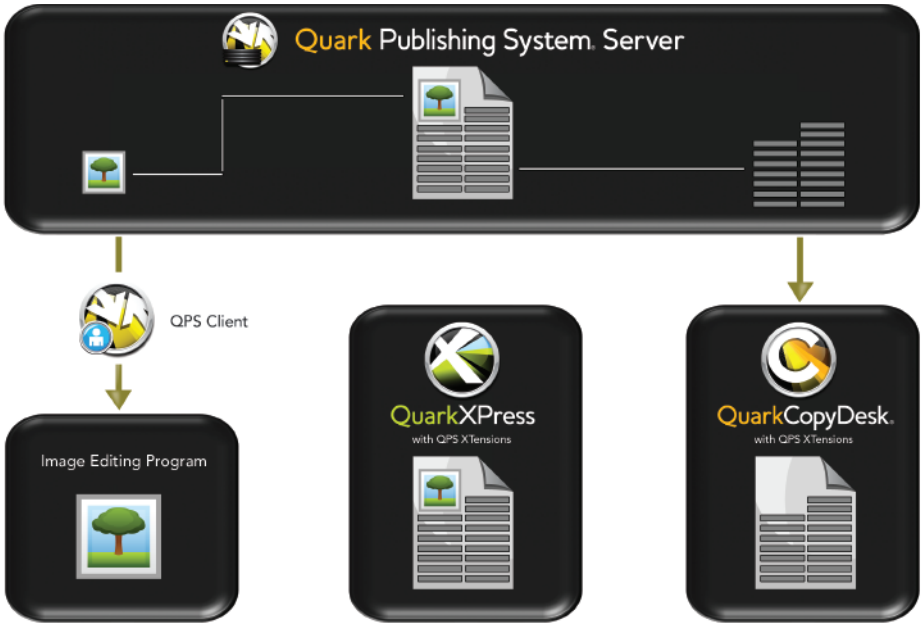

Figure 3: Once checked in, illustrations, pictures and articles can be viewed in the layout with which they are associated.

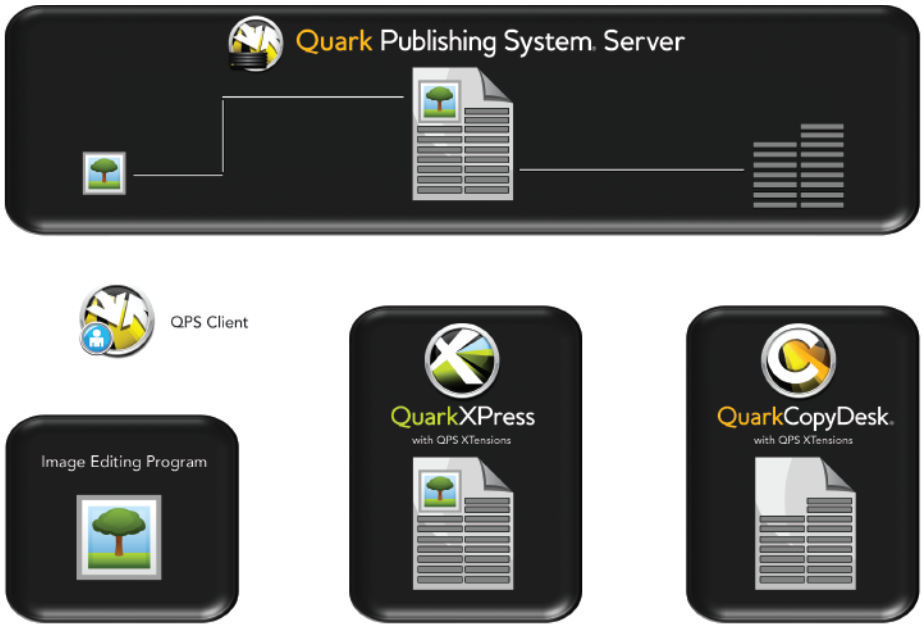

Figure 4: The layout artist updates the layout in QPS. This automatically updates the geometry in the article. QPS notifies the writer of the change.

Working on Assignments

Having received their assignments, writers and artists can now do their part to complete the layout. The designer creates an illustration, and the writer writes the text, selects the picture in QPS, and places it in the picture box. (See figure 4)

Next, the designer and writer check their work in to the QPS Server. Now, like the layout, the illustration and article are backed up in a central location, and revisions of the assets will be saved. And when the layout artist refreshes the layout, the layout updates to show the work of the designer and the writer. (See figure 5)

So far we've been looking at a linear workflow. However, workflows are not always linear. For example, what happens if the layout artist decides that the illustration should be larger and the text should be shorter? If a layout artist changes the size of a text box in an assigned article, QPS can automatically update the page geometry in the writer's copy of QuarkCopyDesk to reflect the new size of the box. The writer can then add or remove text to fit the updated page design. (See figure 6)

The writer updates the text to fit the available space, checks in the article, and all is well. (See figure 7)

Now, let's assume the copy editor assigned to fact-checking is in another location, and does not have access to the network where QPS Server is running. The copy editor can simply launch a Web browser, log in through QPS Web Hub, check out the story, and do the copy-editing. And because QPS Web Hub is aware of article geometry, the copy editor knows exactly how much space is available. (See figure 8)

Looking at a Content-driven Workflow

As mentioned above, this layout-driven workflow is only one option. An organisation might instead choose to use a content-driven workflow, where the designer and writer do their work first, and the layout artist then designs the layout to fit the content. In such a workflow, the designer creates an illustration and checks it in with QPS Connect Client, and the writer creates an article from scratch in QuarkCopyDesk and then checks it in with the QPS® XTensions® software.

When this is done, the layout artist creates a layout and attaches the illustration to the layout by dragging the file icons from the Search Results palette to a picture box. The layout artist can use the same method to attach the text of the article to a text box.

In addition, QuarkXPress users can attach the same article in separate QuarkXPress projects. The first attachment is called the "primary attachment," and all other attachments are "secondary attachments." If the article content changes, all instances are updated.

Updating All Users in the Workflow

While working on an assignment, a QPS user can update the entire workgroup with the current state of that assignment by using the Save Revision command. This command updates the QPS Server with the most current version of the assignment. For example, if a QuarkCopyDesk user finishes four of five sections in a brochure assignment and then chooses Save Revision, the editor can open a read-only copy of the text and preview it before the assignment is complete.

Routing and Tracking

Many QPS workflows include a sequence of hand-offs from one team member to another. In QPS, this is called routing. For example, when a QuarkCopyDesk user completes an assignment, he or she might route the asset to an editor who reads first drafts. Using QPS Web Hub or QuarkCopyDesk, this first-draft editor might finish the job and route the asset to a copy editor, who in turn might route it to a managing editor. As the asset moves from workgroup member to workgroup member, other team members can track the asset's movement using the QPS search interface.

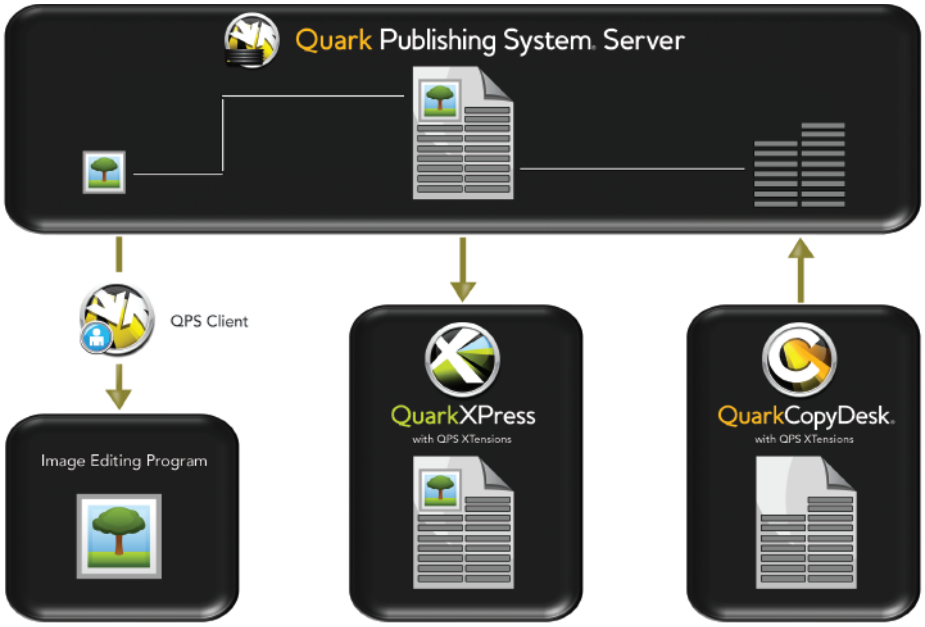

Figure 5: The writer updates the text to match the updated geometry and checks in the article. The layout updates to show the updated text.

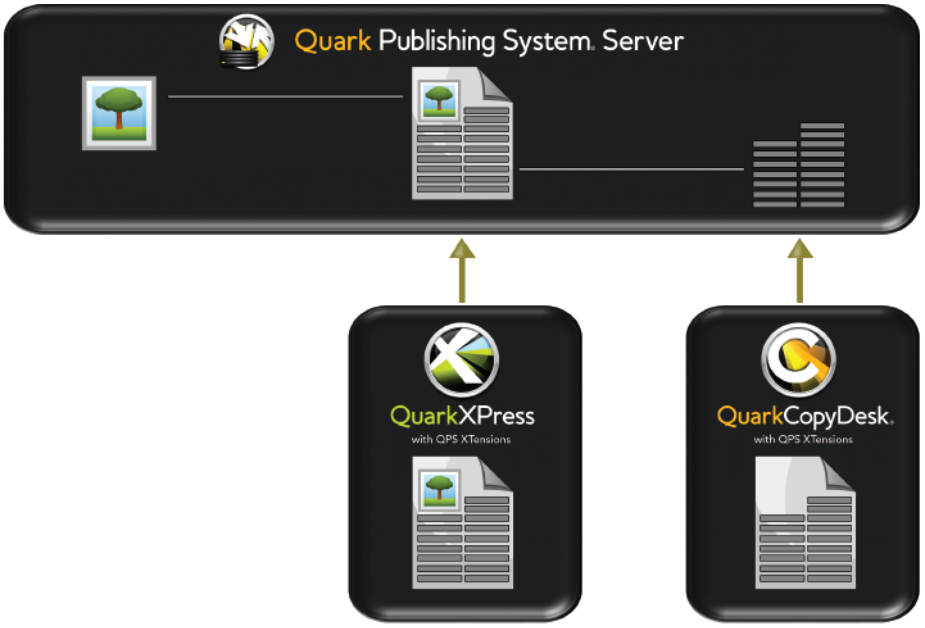

Figure 6: The remote editor copyedits the article using QPS Web Hub.

The QPS copytasting feature lets users view the first 255 characters in a QuarkCopyDesk article in the Search Results palette. Users can also view a list of all revisions of an asset, open a read-only copy of any revision, open a read-only copy of any current asset, and get (retrieve) a fully editable copy of any asset tracked by QPS.

Automated Output and Export in Multiple Formats

Organisations often report that the final step in the publishing process — output — requires too much time and money to accommodate last-minute changes. QPS users can streamline much of the output process by using the Quark® Job Jackets® controls within QuarkXPress and QPS Server to eliminate problems before the output stage.

For final output, QPS provides three ways to automate tasks.

Within QuarkXPress and QuarkCopyDesk, users can create output styles that specify every aspect of output. With an output style, a single action can trigger output for one or more assets.

Working with the QPS Script Manager application for QPS Server, administrators can write scripts that automate output based on conditions within the QPS workflow. For example, when a user changes the status of a QuarkXPress project to "Ready for Output," an automated script can output or export the project in any of the supported formats (PostScript®, PDF, PDF/X-1a, PDF/X-3, SWF, PPML, XML, or native QuarkXPress or QuarkCopyDesk format).

If an organisation requires more automation, the open architecture of QPS allows third-party developers to fine-tune the output process with XTensions software.

Archive and Restore

When a project like the brochure described above is complete, all the assets can be gathered for archiving within QPS. If the organisation needs to revise the brochure or create a similar project in the future, they can use the QPS Restore function to access the content.

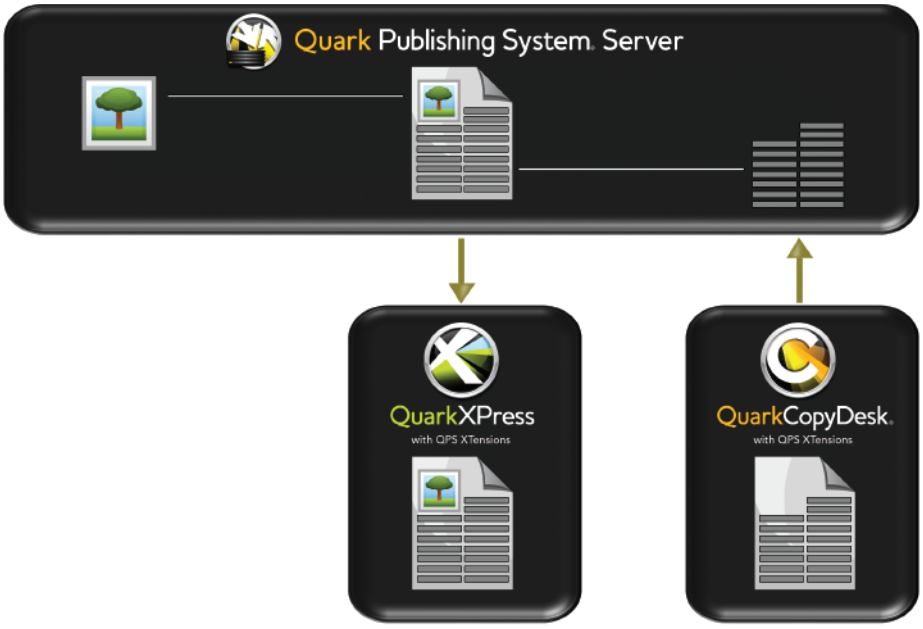

Figure 7: The writer updates the text to match the updated geometry and checks in the article. The layout updates to show the updated text.

Figure 8: The remote editor copy edits the article using QPS Web Editor.

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