GREG ECKLER'S
VICIOUS CIRCUS
A MENAGERIE OF DESIGN MARVELS and TYPOGRAPHIC ACROBATICS

TOPIC: SAVING A PDF...NO. SERIOUSLY.

PORTABLE DOCUMENT FORMAT

A file format better known as PDF, it is used to represent documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems. Basically a PDF is supposed to be a document that looks the same on any platform.

However for many designers (especially starting out) some very odd things can happen. Many of us need to get our stuff printed by print service bureaus sometimes in-house/on campus, or by the likes of Staples, Kinkos, Office Max, etc. The #1 issue with this is that depending on our settings the fonts may not embed.
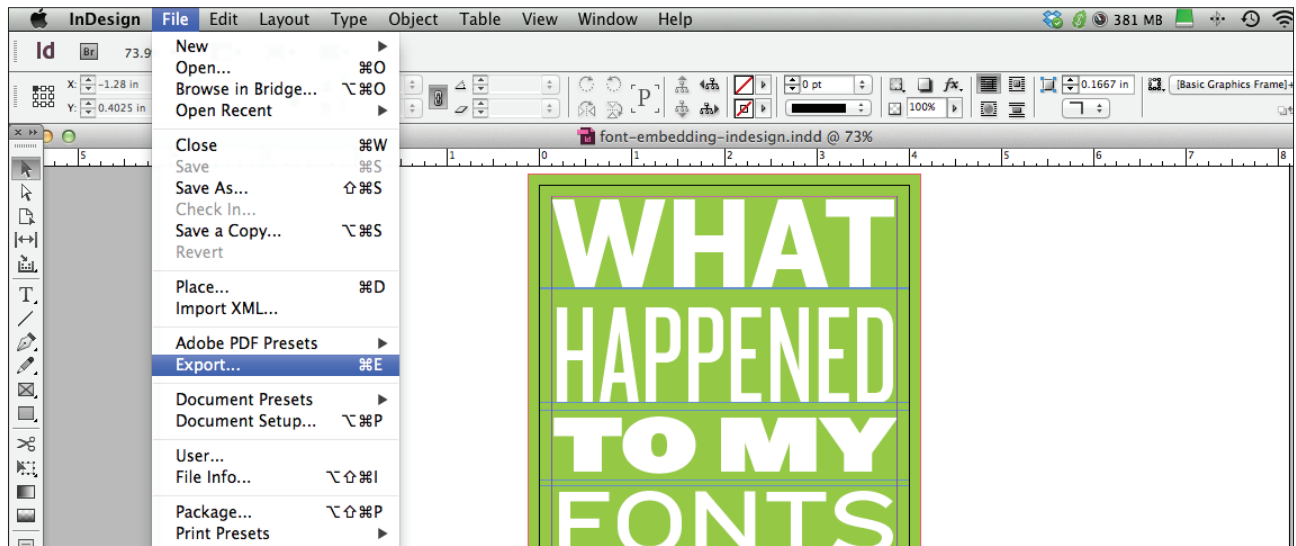
WHAT HAPPENED TO MY FONTS WHEN I MADE MY PDF?

I designed this!

WHAT HAPPEN TO MY FONTS WHEN I MADE Y PD

I got this, WTF?

STEP 1: EXPORT

Adobe programs like Illustrator and Photoshop let you "Save As" and choose PDF but in InDesign we need to Export. Go to File > Export or (⌘E) and then choose Adobe PDF (Print).
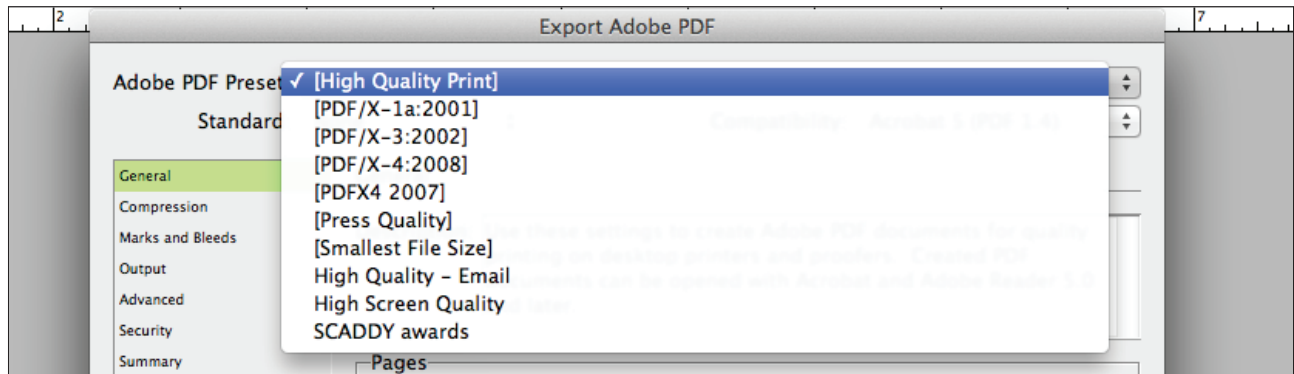
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STEP 2: PRESETS PRESCHMETS
After choosing Adobe PDF (Print) the Export Adobe PDF dialog box pops up. Now there are a number of Adobe PDF Presets built in *(you can also make your own presets as well)*. Now several of the built in presets like [High Quality Print] and [Press Quality] sound great but often fail to embed our fonts *(aka the #1 problem.)*
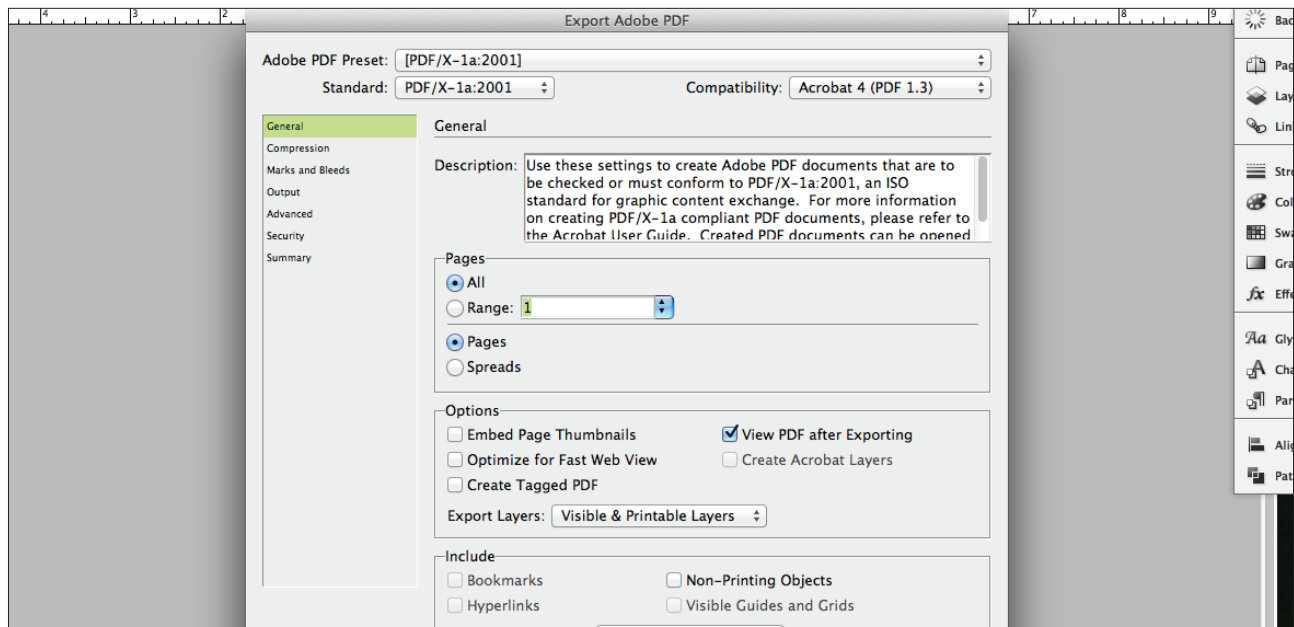

STEP 3: CHOOSE WISELY
"...for while the true Preset will bring you life, the false Preset will take it from you." The wise route is in the presets whose names for most of us don't seem to make any sense the PDF/X.

The purpose of PDF/X is to facilitate graphics exchange, and it therefore has a series of printing related requirements which do not apply to standard PDF files. For example:
- PDF/X-1a: all fonts are embedded and all images are converted to CMYK or spot colors.
- PDF/X-3: accepts CMYK, spot colors, calibrated RGB and CIELAB colors.
- PDF/X-4: Color-managed, CMYK, gray, RGB or spot color data are supported, as are PDF transparency and optional content.

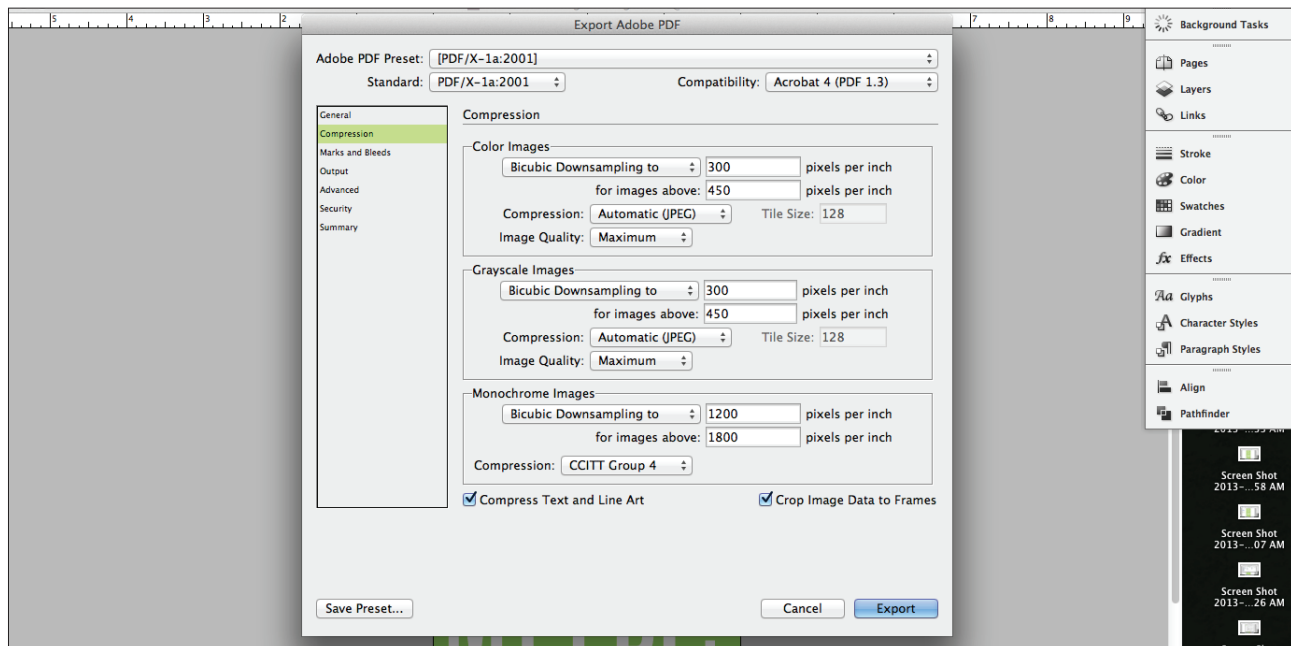Since we want to create a basic print PDF the PDX/X-1a works best for our needs.

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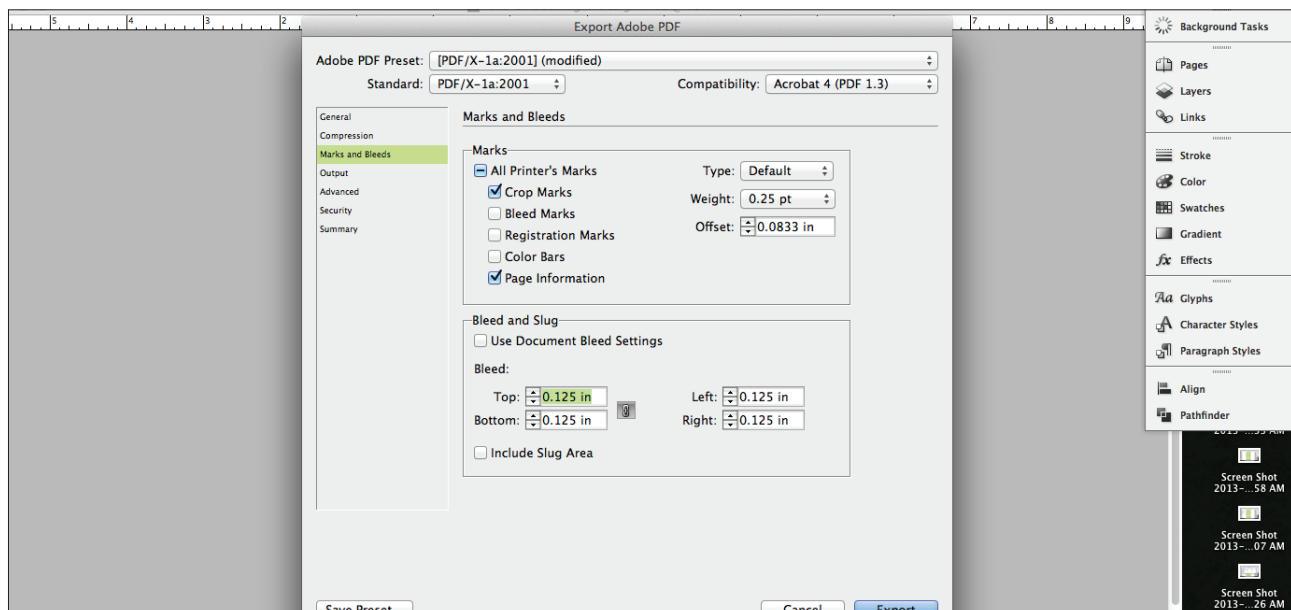## TOPIC: SAVING A PDF...NO. SERIOUSLY.

STEP 4: COMPRESSION

Now a quick run down of the side options in the Export Adobe PDF dialog box. First we can check Compression but no worries here since this is set by the PDF/X-1a preset and is good to go.

STEP 5: MARKS AND BLEEDS

Now this area is pretty important if you're making a print document that needs to be trimmed down *(i.e. has bleeding objects/backgrounds, is not a usual size like 8.5" x 11" or 11" x 17")*. We don't usually need all of them though so the few regularly in use are Crop Marks *(to trim the work down)*, Registration Marks *(if we are printing two-sided)*, Page Information *(just keeps things clear as to what file this print is from and when the PDF was created)*. Lastly we need bleed which by industry standards is 0.125" on all sides.
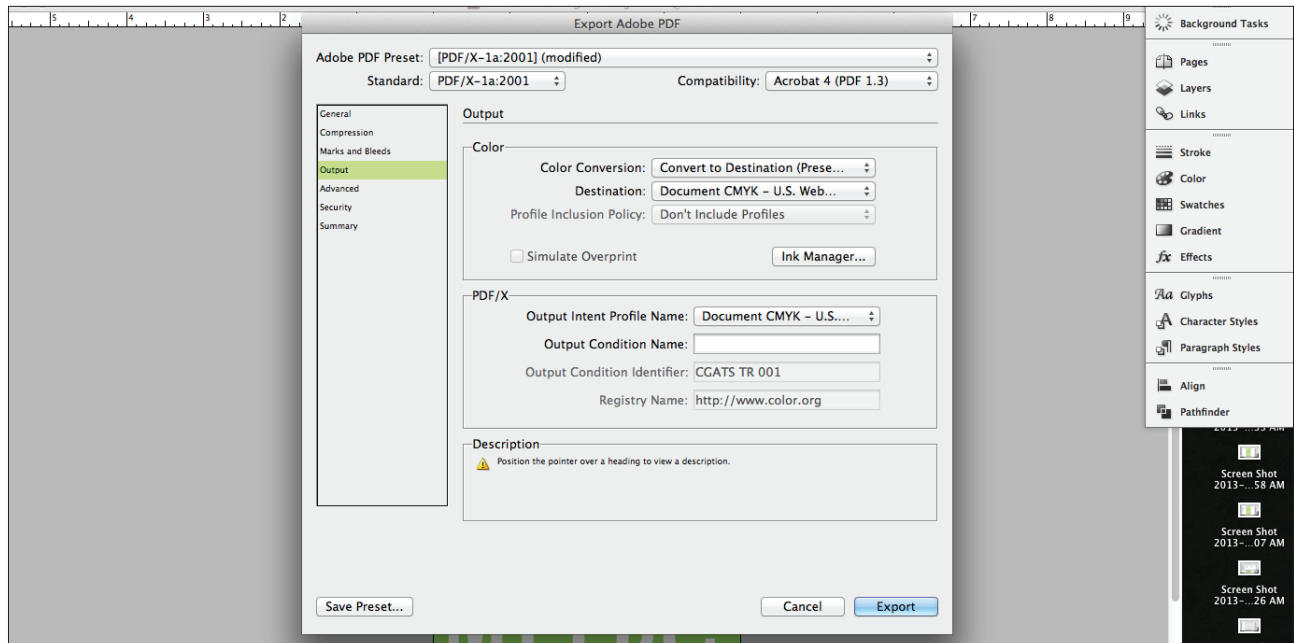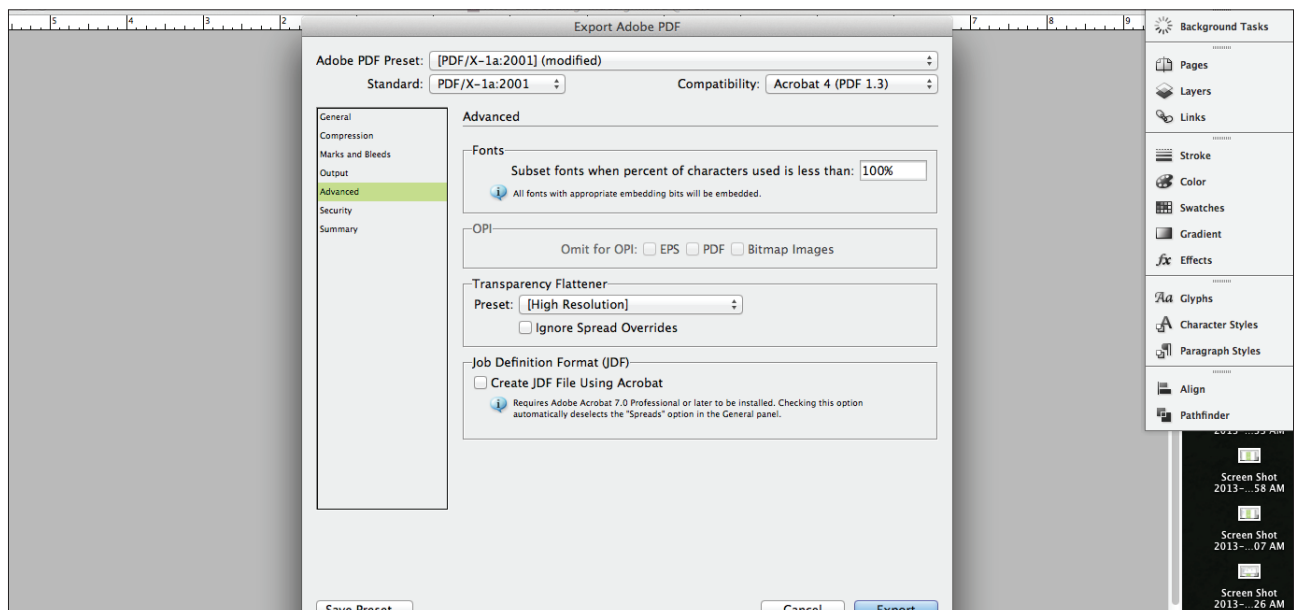
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Step 6: Output
Also something set by the PDF/X-1a preset *(it's nice to have something that does most the work for you isn't it?)*

Step 7: Advanced
In this area the only thing we adjust is the Transparency Flattener. Set the Transparency Flattener to [High Resolution], this is a good safety catch and helps if you have ever run into a problem where there may be thin lined boxes around your text boxes especially if they were on top of a color box or image. It also helps with this occurrence with any drop shadows you may be using in your design. Overall it is just a good practice to get into and helps to smooth a lot of little things out.
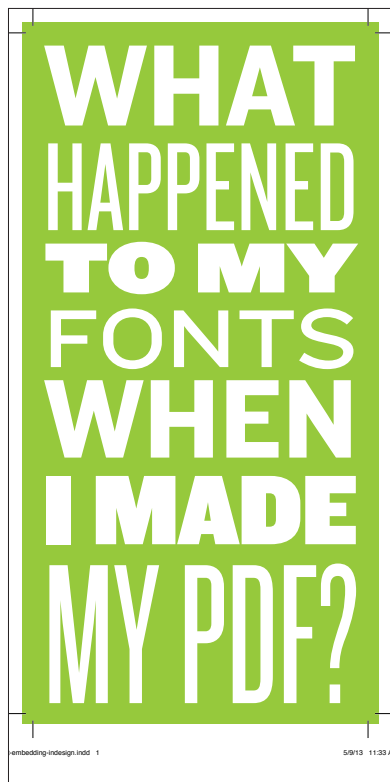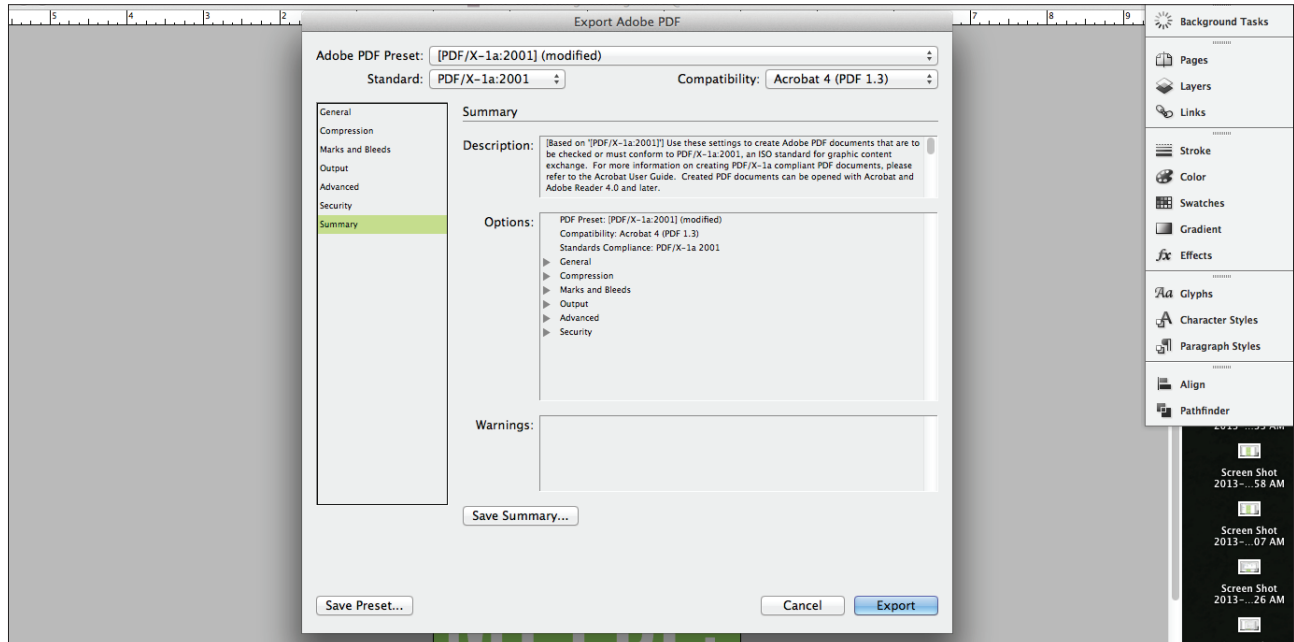
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STEP 8: SUMMARY AND GO

This area just sums up all the settings we made if we want to double-check anything that we have done, but overall we are ready for launch so just hit Export. Note that if you are using CS6 there is now a Background Tasks palette *(we can find it in under Window > Utilities)* that lets you see the status of your export while it is running in the background. You can't close the InDesign file until the export is complete.

FINALE

Now we have our PDF ready for print. The fonts have been embedded and we also have crop marks, bleed and page information for our file.

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Illustrator (Just in case)

All the settings used here are available in the Save Adobe PDF dialog box that opens in Illustrator. Getting to it is a bit different than in InDesign. For Illustrator you go to File > Save As, and then choose Adobe PDF (pdf) from the drop down menu. The rest of the journey is the same as InDesign.