Customising PagePlus

This tutorial is specific to PagePlus, but some tips also apply to WebPlus, DrawPlus, and PhotoPlus. PagePlus allows users to customise the toolbars, menus, workspace tabs, and keyboard shortcuts. If you use any Serif programs regularly, its well worth the effort to configure the interface to suit your personal preferences.

Toolbars

See the topic: "Customising Toolbars, Menus, and Tabs" in the help file.

Large Icons

PagePlus X7 or later has options for small, large, or auto icons. Import 22 x 22 pixel icons into the Button Editor, or use Paste Button Image from the context menu while customising toolbars. In earlier versions the Windows registry can be edited to change the value of the "LargeIcons" key from zero to one, e.g. for PagePlus X6 there are several keys like this one:–

[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Serif\PagePlus\16.0\ToolBars\PagePlus\Options]
"LargeIcons"=dword:00000001

[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Serif\PagePlus\16.0\ToolBars\BookPlus\Options]
"LargeIcons"=dword:00000001

[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Serif\PagePlus\16.0\ToolBars\PrintPreview\Options]
"LargeIcons"=dword:00000001

[HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Serif\PagePlus\16.0\ToolBars\WritePlus\Options]
"LargeIcons"=dword:00000001

WebPlus and other Serif Applications are similar.

Creating New Toolbars

I recommend adding a new toolbar for each side of the window where you want to dock toolbars. Changes are lost if you reset the workspace, so save the workspace and copy the *.wtb file from the %AppData% workspace folder to keep as a backup. Open the Options dialogue from the Tools menu, select "Toolbars" and add a new toolbar. I added one named "Standard Plus." Display all the toolbars, select the customize tab on the
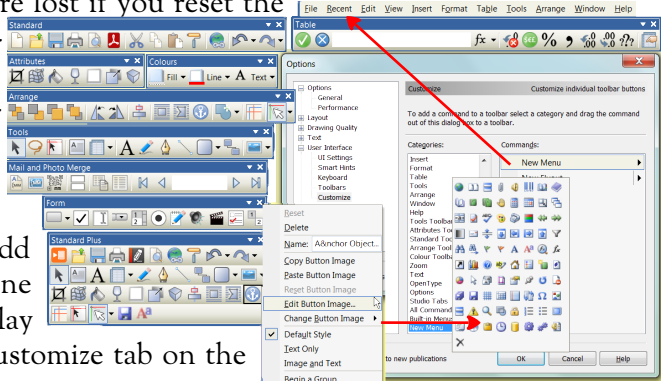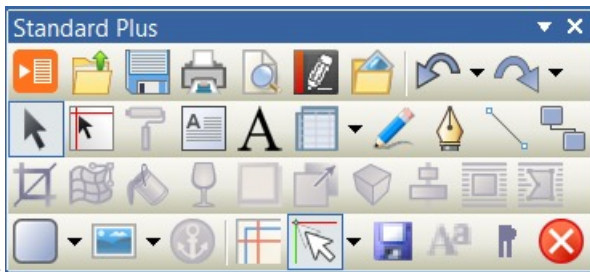
options dialogue, and drag the toolbars by their handles. The new toolbars will be empty. Hold down the control key, and drag icons from the default toolbars, dropping a copy onto the new toolbars.

To make changes on the fly, drag buttons while holding down the Alt key.

To Change a button, right-click on a button and select "Change Button image" from the popup context menu to open the icon palette.

Adding A New Flyout

At the bottom of the customize tab of the options dialogue is the New Menu category, which contains two commands: New Menu and New Flyout. A new flyout can be dragged to any toolbar from the dialogue, or an existing flyout can be copied by dragging a flyout from any built-in toolbar by holding down the control key.

Detaching Flyouts

An advantage of the built-in flyouts is that they can be detached as floating toolbar palettes. If you open a flyout, you will see that it has a drag handle. Drag it away from the toolbar to detach it as a floating toolbar. The original flyout will not be changed. A floating toolbar from a copied flyout bears the name of the original flyout from which it was copied. This name cannot be changed. Floating toolbars can also be docked, and are automatically added to the list of named toolbars in the Options dialogue.
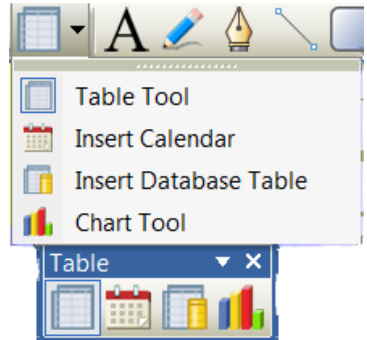
Publications Toolbar

This non-customisable toolbar with tabs for each open publication can be shown can be docked on any side of the window or left floating. I have added items to the Window menu to "Show Tabs Automatically" or "Always Hide Tabs."
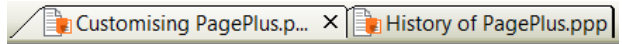
Editing Command Buttons

With the customize dialogue open, right-click on a flyout, button, or menu to edit its properties. Change the name, the button, or choose the button style: default, text, image and text.

If any command, such as the Acquire command, has no button a new button can be chosen from the list of custom buttons, pasted from the windows clipboard, or imported from a file on disk (On older versions, one needs to select All Files *.* to include PNG images). If the image doesn't have transparency, add it using the Button Editor's tools.
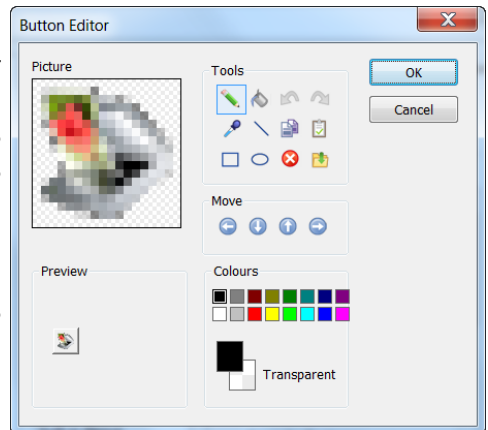
Menus

The menu bar is similar to other toolbars, except that it cannot be disabled. It can be undocked and moved to any side of the window, moved below other toolbars, or left floating. Buttons can be positioned on the menu bar, and new menus can be added. Menu items can also have icons. For example, create a new menu and drag the recent files item from the file menu to this new menu. Rename the "New Menu" to "&Recent" so that the access key will be Alter R, but avoid using the same access key twice or menus will not pull down at once. Buttons and fields (e.g. Zoom) can also be added to the menu bar.

In Tools, Options, UI Settings, increase the number of recently used files from the default from 4 to 10 (max =16). PPX7 or later has a button to clear the list.

Rearrange other menus to allow quick access to frequently used items, remove items that you never use to save space and make other items quicker to find. Cascading menus should be avoided if possible as it reduces accessibility. The View menu on the right has been heavily modified to remove all submenus.

The Zoom submenu has been removed. Using shortcuts for zooming is much quicker.

The Toolbars submenu has been removed – it is available by right-clicking on any toolbar.

The Tabs submenu has been removed as one can right-click on the borders of the Tabs to show the Tabs menu. Workspaces can be changed from the context toolbar when no objects are selected.

Layers are best managed from the layers tab, so the layers items have been removed.

The Grids and Guides submenu has been removed, and the useful items moved to the view menu as they were in PagePlus X5.

The Special Characters submenu has been removed. "Show Spaces" has been moved to the view menu. Variables and index marks break the layout in page layout mode, so should be shown only in WritePlus, where they may be useful.
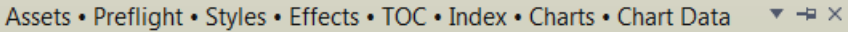
The items on the Select submenu of the Edit menu have been moved to the menu so the submenu is no longer needed. Using a submenu for just two items is pointless.

Access keys often need to be reassigned after modifying menus. As with the main menu, avoid using the same access key more than once as it prevents instant access to menu items. Menu items can be renamed if necessary. Use an Ampersand before the letter that you wish to use for the access key.
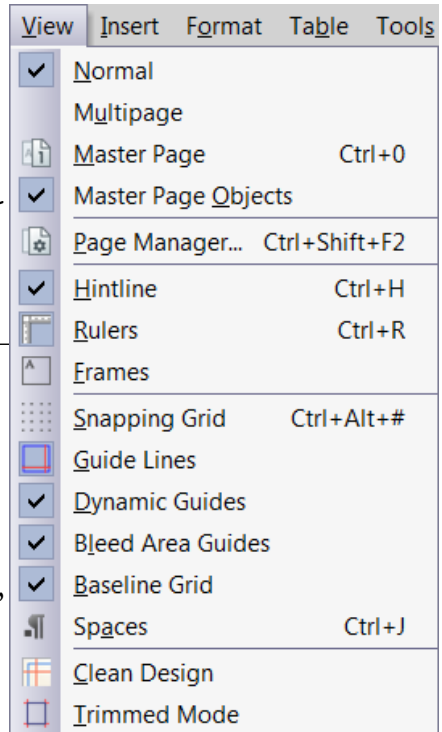
Workspace Tabs

This topic is dealt with under "Customizing tabs" in the main help topic of Customizing toolbars, menus, and tabs.

Assets • Preflight • Styles • Effects • TOC • Index • Charts • Chart Data   ▼ ⊟ ✕

It is much quicker to access a control that touches the edge of the screen because the edges of the screen effectively have infinite width. With the default workspace there are tabs on the left and right of the workspace. That on the right is quick to access, but the Assets tab on the left is inside the toolbar, and any tab docked at the bottom will be above the Hintline.

Move the Assets Tab from the left, and position it floating at the top, where it can be set to Auto Hide, utilising the free space on the Windows title bar. In this position, tabs can be wider. Drag the Styles, Effects, TOC, Index, Preflight, Chart, and Chart Data tabs to share the floating panel with the Assets tab.

Browse to add some graphics to the assets tab, and pin them if you want them to be available for other documents, but be aware that pinning a lot of large images will affect the program's performance.

Save custom workspaces for reloading later. Experiment with different layouts for different projects. Workspaces are saved in the %AppData% workspace folder, for PagePlus X9 that is:
%AppData%\Serif\PagePlus\19.0\Workspace Profiles\

Don't forget to save your workspace profile after making changes, and backup any other customisation data in the %AppData% folder to a safe place.

Keyboard Shortcuts

This doesn't have its own topic in the Help file — it is included under the topic "Using shortcuts." See my separate tutorial on Customising Keyboard Shortcuts.

- Control key shortcuts are easy to use, so assign them to the most used functions.
- Alter key shortcuts are reserved for menu access keys so use them with caution — you might lose easy access to one of the main menus.
- If your scroll lock key has a light, assign it to snapping on/off
- Assign shortcuts for the rulers and hintline, which are not always needed.
- Assign shortcuts to frequently used styles in the text editing context.
- Backup your keyboard profile in the %AppData% Accelerators folder.

Text Styles

None of the default styles are likely to be exactly what you want, and you may never use them all. Before starting work, delete any that you don't want, and modify the others to suit your needs. Open the Text Styles tab in the panel on the right and click the drop down arrow by a style to delete it, modify it, or create a new style based on it. Styles can also be updated from the current selection. Add a toolbar button or shortcut to make this easier.
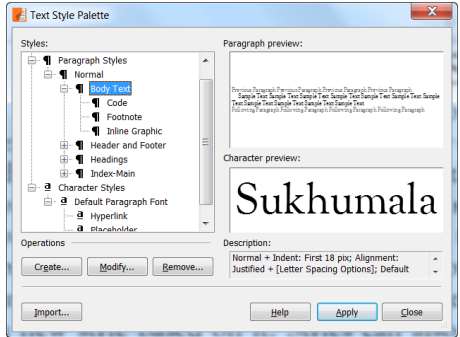
Styles based on the current style will be modified if the current style is modified. Style hierarchy makes it easy to modify the styles throughout a publication, without modifying each one.

You may wish to modify any of these settings for each paragraph style:

1. Font, font size, text colour, or type style.
2. Kerning and optical justification values. Enabling kerning and optical justification for body text will improve copy-fit, *i.e.* about 5% fewer pages will be used in long books.
3. If the style uses an OpenType font, select features to enable/disable. Standard, Contextual, and Required Ligatures are enabled by default. OldStyle Figures (0123456789), ordinals (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th), and Discretionary Ligatures are optional.
4. Justification. Full justification is the most common setting for body text; headings may be centred or left justified. Force Justified fits the last line.
5. Indents. If there is no spacing between body text paragraphs, it is usual to use a first line indent to emphasise the beginning of each paragraph. Quotations may be indented from both margins, and lists may use a hanging indent.
6. Line-spacing can be defined in several ways. The default of single line-spacing uses a value determined by the font designer. This depends on the typeface — changing from Times New Roman to Palatino Linotype will make a big difference to the number of lines that fit a page at the same point size. To keep the number of lines constant, the best choice is percentage of pointsize. If exact line-spacing is used, and the font size is changed, the line-spacing will not change. In the above dialogue, 11 point text is set at 120% of the point size, and the line-spacing is 13.200 points.
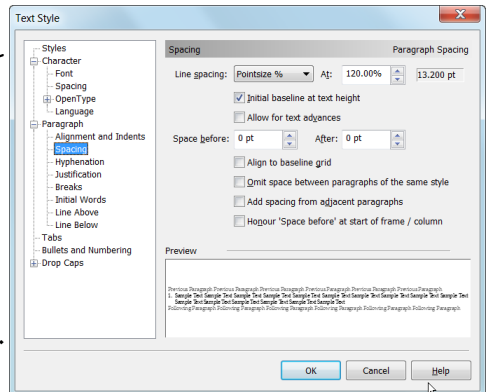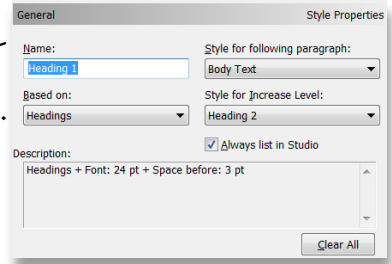
7. Initial baseline at text height. If this checkbox is disabled, the distance to the first line of text from the top of the frame is equal to the paragraph's line-spacing.
8. Allow for text advances (disabled is the most common requirement). If it is left enabled, any superscripts (e.g. footnote references) will alter the line-spacing.
9. Spacing before/after the current paragraph. The default for body text is 10 point spacing after each paragraph. Set it to zero, and use a first line indent instead, or set it to something more reasonable such as half of the line-spacing, which would be 6.6 points for 11 point text spaced at 120% of the point size.
10. Align to baseline grid will fit the baselines of the current text style to a grid defined in options, or in the current text frame's properties.
11. Omit space between paragraphs of the same style. This setting, new in PagePlus X9, is useful for block quotes and lists. This numbered list style has 6 points of spacing before and after the paragraph, but the spacing between is omitted.
12. Add spacing from adjacent paragraphs. This setting, also new in PagePlus X9, adds after and before spacing of adjacent paragraphs instead of using the highest value.
13. Honour space before at start of frame / column. Without this setting, also new in PagePlus X9, no spacing is added before the first paragraph in a text frame or column.
14. Hyphenation settings. To use hyphens less frequently, increase the minimum word size and/or increase the max/min number of letters before/after a hyphen.
15. Justification limits. These settings control the spacing between words when attempting to justify text. By adjusting the letter spacing too, justified text will look better. I find that a range of 97% to 103% for letter spacing works well.
16. Breaks. Widow/Orphan protection is best left on to prevent ugly single lines at the end or beginning of a text frame or column. Headings may need to use "keep with next" or "page break before," while verses may require "keep together."
17. Initial Words: **Bold,** ALL CAPS, *Italics*, Underline, SMALL CAPS, another font or Other formatting can be used for a few words instead of using a subheading.
18. Line above and below. Use for callouts. Indent from column, indents, or text.
19. Tab settings. ....This is a right aligned tab with a dot leader.
20. Bullets and numbering.
    20.1 For structured documents like reports, use:
    20.2 multi-level numbered lists or
    - bullets.

DROP CAPITALS. For decorative effect at the beginning of a new section, a Drop Capital can be used. Subsequent lines of text will wrap automatically around the Drop Capital. A different font or style attribute can also be used. For this paragraph I have Sukhumala Hand Tooled Regular for the Drop Capital and OpenType Small Capitals for the first two initial words.

Nested Styles

The "Heading 1" style used above is based on the "Headings" paragraph style. On pressing the Enter key the next paragraph is the "Body Text" style. Any changes made to the Heading 1 style will have no effect on the paragraphs that use the "Body Text" style, but they will affect paragraphs that use the "Heading 2" style. If the font is changed, the font used for Heading 2 will change to match. However, if the font size for Heading 1 is changed the size of the "Heading 2" style doesn't change because "Heading 2" has its own size of 16 point.

Any changes to the typeface, point size, line-spacing, justification, indentation, *etc.,* of the "Body Text" style will be inherited by its nested styles. However, any change to the text colour will not be inherited. The dark green text will be bold, and the blue text will have 6pt spacing before/after, whatever changes are made to the weight and paragraph spacing for "Body Text." However, if the colour of "Heading 1" is changed to Blue, "Heading 2" will also change to Blue because the text colour was not part of the "Heading 1" parent style on which "Heading 2" depends.

General   Style Properties

Name:
Heading 1

Based on:
Headings

Description:
Headings + Font: 24 pt + Space before: 3 pt

Style for following paragraph:
Body Text

Style for Increase Level:
Heading 2

☑ Always list in Studio

Clear All

Heading 2

Heading 2 is also followed by "Body Text" on pressing the Enter key. It is left aligned instead of being centred, and has 12 points of spacing before it, but none after it. "Body Text" has 2 points of spacing before and after, that's why there is a gap after Heading 2 before this paragraph.

On the General tab of the Modify Text Style dialogue, one can find a description of the style attributes that differ from its parent style, on which it is based. In the above screen shot, you can see that Heading 2 is based on Heading 1, but it is 16 instead of 18 point, and has zero spacing after it.

"Body Text" is automatically followed by another paragraph of "Body Text" style on pressing the Enter key.

"Red." This is Body Text, plus the red colour attribute. All paragraphs that use this style will be just like Body Text, but red. Pressing the Enter key in a paragraph of red text will automatically select the "Green" paragraph style for the next paragraph.

"Green." This is Body Text, plus the green colour attribute, and the italic attribute. Pressing the Enter key in a paragraph of green text will automatically select the "Blue" paragraph style for the next paragraph.

"Blue." This is Body Text, plus the blue colour attribute, and an indent on both sides. Pressing the Enter key in a paragraph of blue text will automatically select the "Body Text" paragraph style for the next paragraph.

"Body Text" automatically follows the "Blue" paragraph style.

Object Styles

THE STYLES TAB in the studio on the right contains a wide range of predefined object styles that can be applied to quick shapes, text, or other objects. They are grouped into categories. Add more using the styles manager.
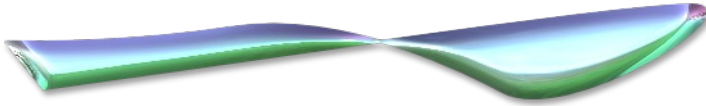
Anyone with even a little artistic skill can quickly create an unlimited range of designs by playing with quick shapes and objects styles. I got lucky and managed to create the spoon above with a simple pen drawn line.

To add, remove, and reorder style categories: click the Style tab's menu button and choose Object Styles Manager... from the flyout menu.

To locate an object style, right-click the object, and from Format, Object Style, select "Locate in Tab." This won't expand a category if it is collapsed, or display the Styles Tab if it is on Autohide.

Deleting a style doesn't affect the appearance of existing objects using that style, but they are no longer linked to any style. To unlink an object from its style definition: Right-click the object and choose Format, Object Style, Unlink.

Right-click on a style's icon in the studio tab to edit its attributes. Editing any of the attributes used in the style will unlink the object from its style.

Like Text Styles, Object Styles are saved with the current publication. To save any object styles for use in new publications, select Save Default Settings from the Tools menu, and enable the "Object styles" checkbox.
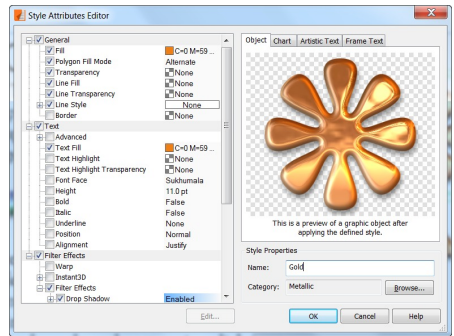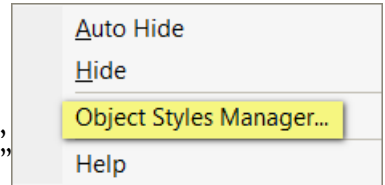
Synchronising Styles With WebPlus

If you need to copy text from PagePlus to WebPlus it is a huge time-saver if the styles are synchronised. Styles for use on the Web should use either web-safe fonts or embeddable fonts, while those used for printing or PDF production can use any fonts you like, but if the styles use the same name, when pasting PagePlus text into WebPlus the existing style will be used. This means that only minimal reformatting of the text needs to be done to make it suitable for the web.