# dragging and dropping into InDesign

There are a number of ways in which you can use drag and drop to get content in and out of InDesign. Here are my favorites:

If you ever get a lot of content for a layout delivered to you in a folder full of images, logos, text files, etc., there's a fast and easy way to get the files into InDesign that will enable you to avoid placing them one by one.

Any file type that you can import into InDesign using the Place command can also be dragged and dropped into InDesign from the desktop.

In this tip you will learn:

- **how to drag and drop content from the desktop**

- **how to drag and drop from Photoshop's file browser**

- **how to drag and drop from *and* to Illustrator**

- **how to drag and drop from Microsoft Word**
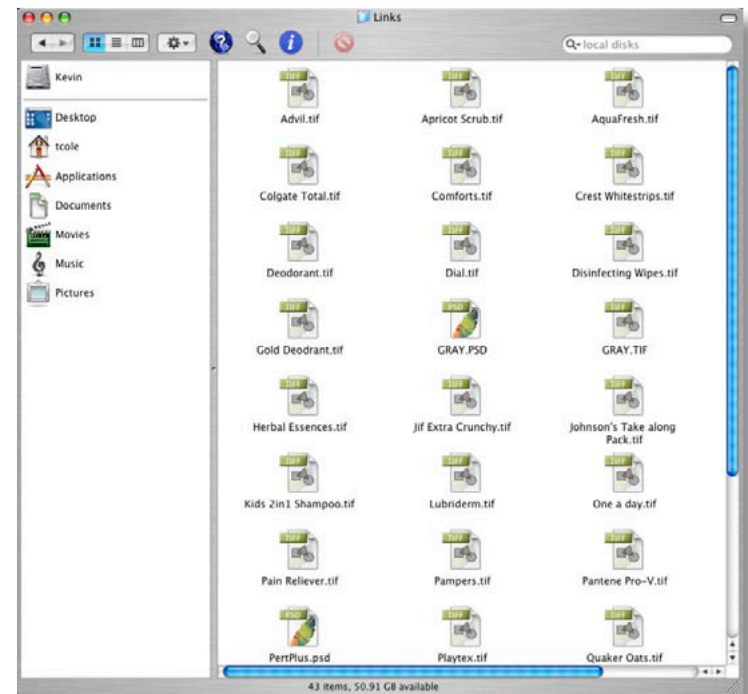
What's great about this feature is that you can drag and drop multiple files into InDesign in a single step. You can drag and drop all the text and/or graphic files in a project folder into your InDesign layout in one step—and that could be a big time saver if you're looking at importing dozens of files.
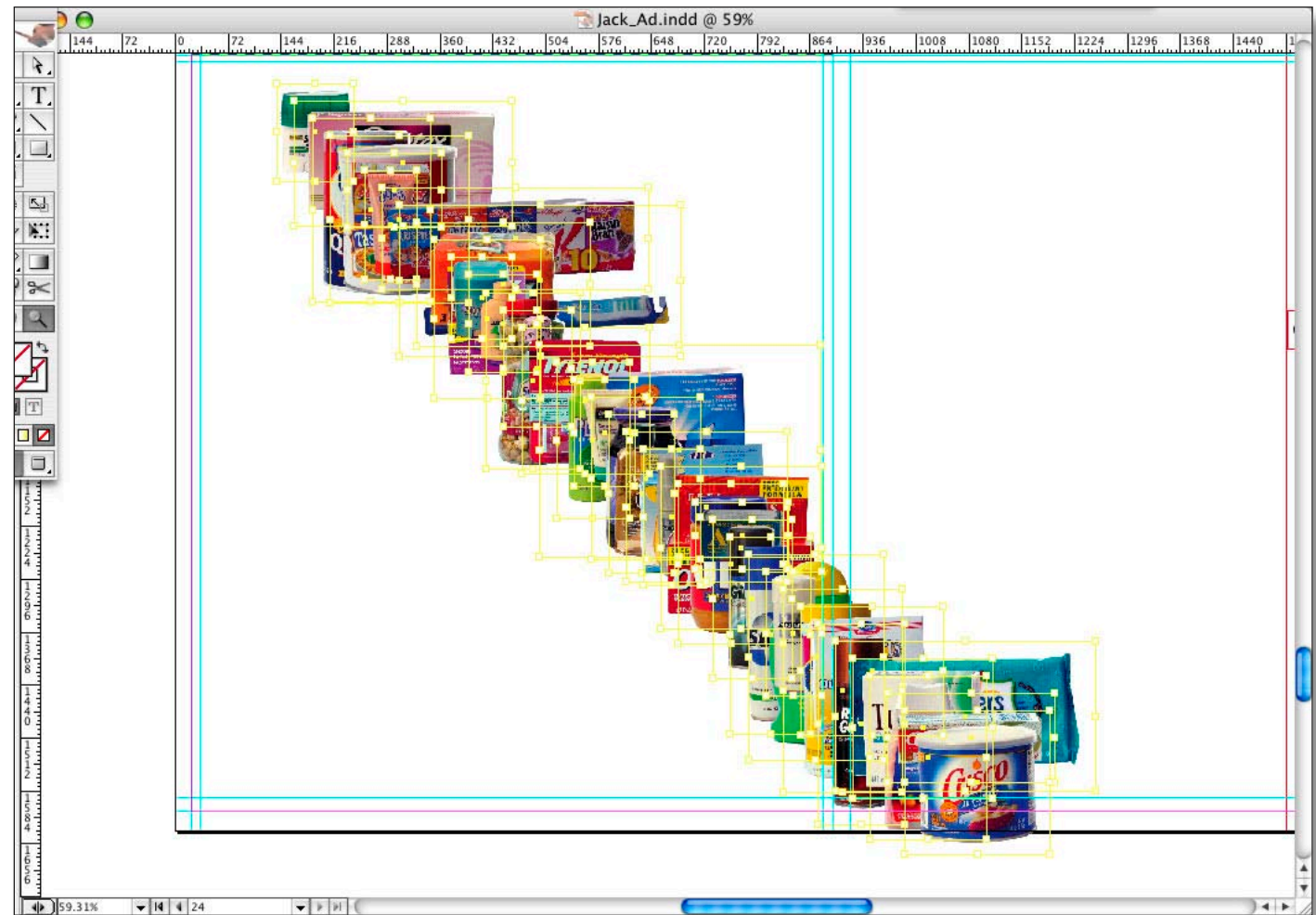
dragging and dropping into InDesign

When you drag and drop from the desktop, you'll see the icons of the files you're placing as your cursor moves into InDesign.

1. Arrange your InDesign windows so that you can see the desktop folder from which you want to drag and drop the files.

2. Select all the files you want to import, and then drag them into an InDesign document window. You'll see ghosted versions of the icons. InDesign will cascade all the imported files when you release the mouse button, and it will use the position of your cursor as the starting point for the distribution of the placed files.
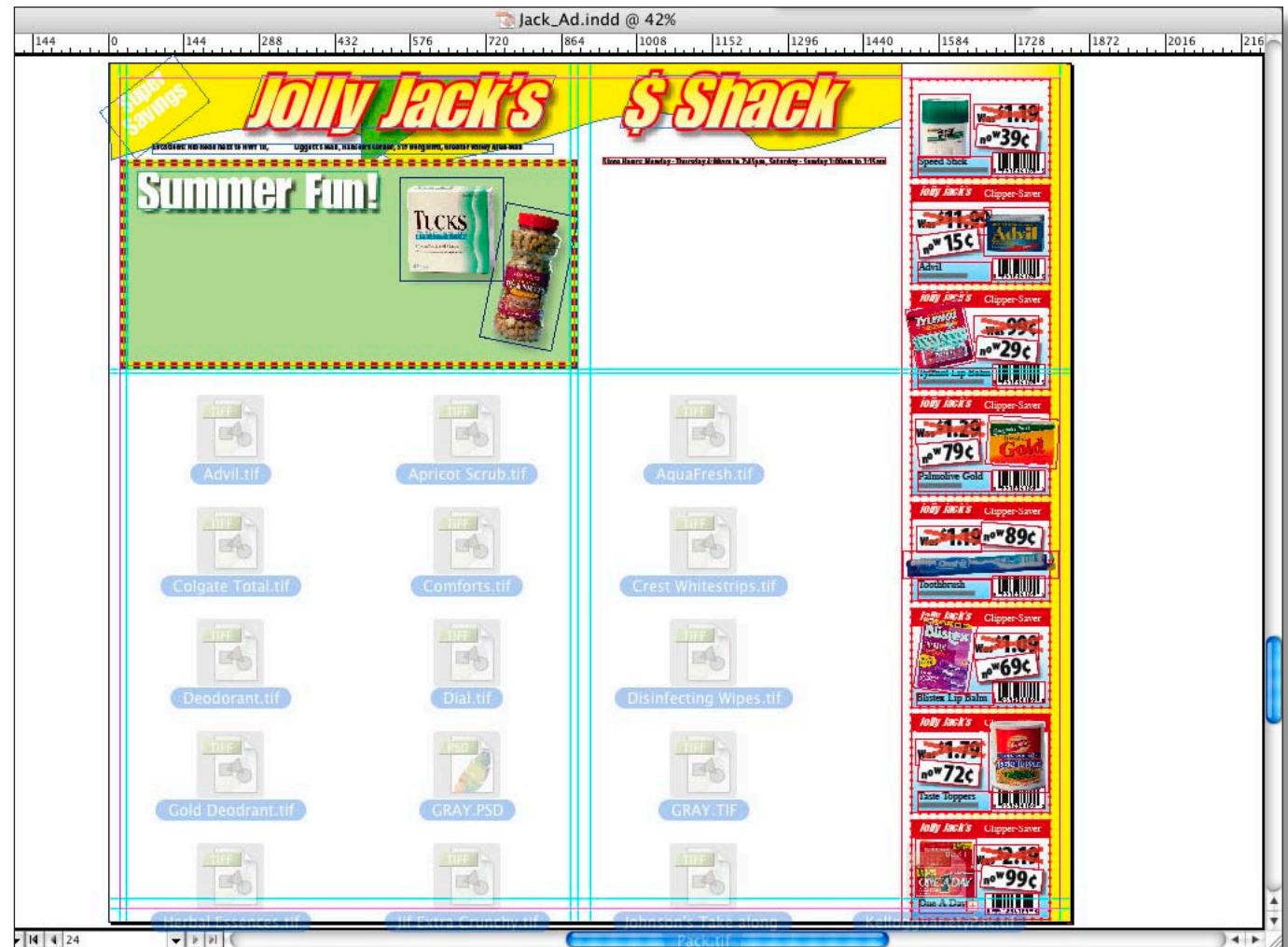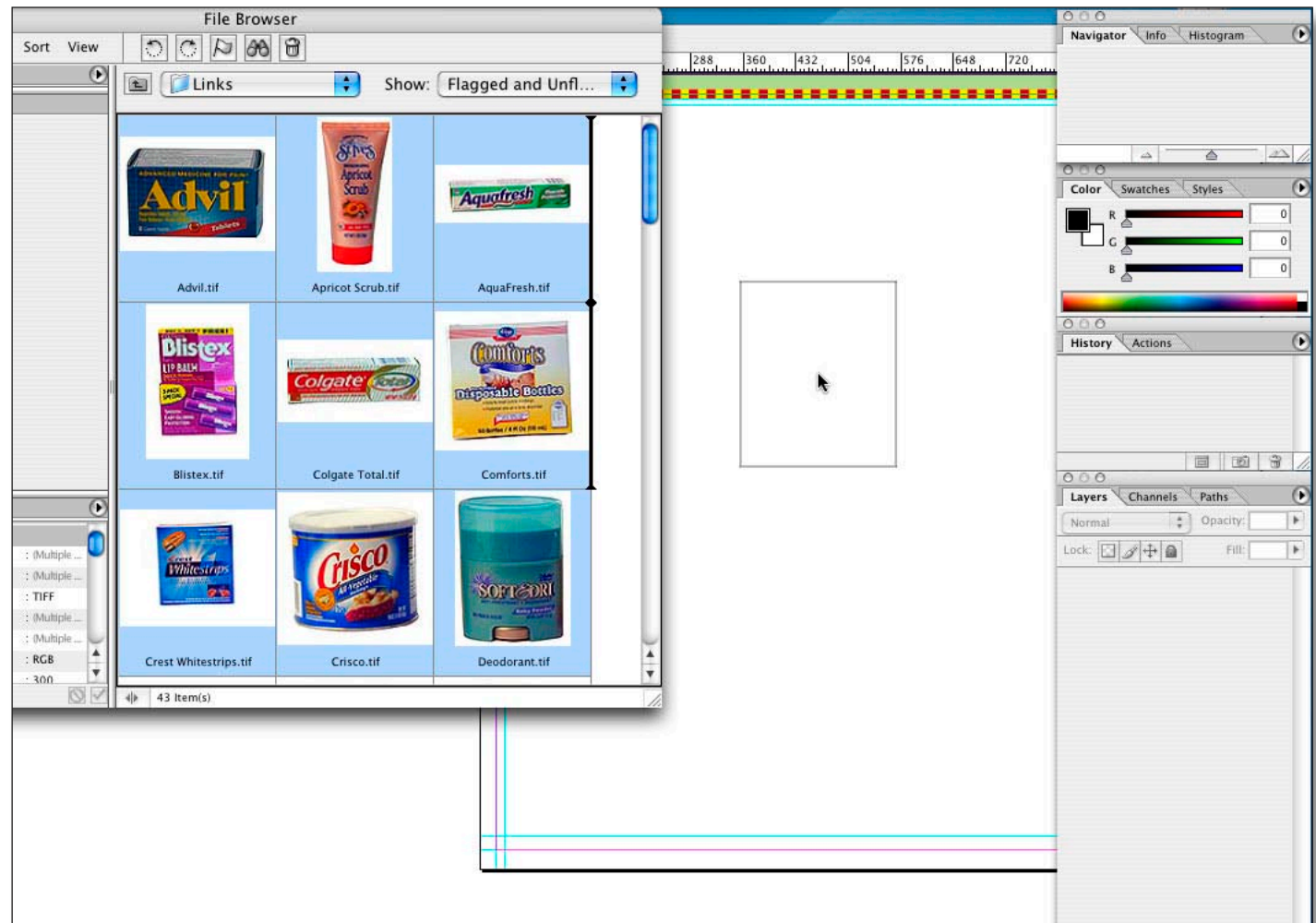
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Here you see the files I dragged into my layout.

dragging and dropping into InDesign

You can do the same sort of batch drag and drop from within Photoshop's file browser.

1. Similar to dragging and dropping from the desktop, select as many items from the Photoshop file browser as you need, and drag and drop them into an InDesign document window.

2. Just as in dragging from the desktoop, the files will be cascaded based on the postion of the cursor at the moment you release the mouse button.

dragging and dropping into InDesign

You can configure your clipboard preferences in InDesign and Illustrator in such a way that you'll be able to drag and drop basic vector shapes between the two applications…and the best part is that the dragged and dropped vectors remain editable.

In InDesign you need to configure your clipboard preferances as shown. When you're dragging and dropping between Illustrator and InDesign, the objects are going through the clipboard. Therefore, your clipboard settings affect how this process will work. You want to tell InDesign not to prefer PDF when pasting (because InDesign can convert Illutrator's AICB format into it's own native format, but not PDF), and to also put PDF on the clipoard when objects are cut or copied there (because PDF is Illustrator's native file format).

You want to configure Illustrator so that it will use only the AICB file format when objects are copied to the clipboard. Also select the 'Preserve Paths' option.

When you set your preferences in this way, both Illustrator and InDesign are going to receive a format they can convert into their own native objects when those objects are pasted.

Once you've set your preferences, you can copy and paste objects from Illustrator into InDesign, as well as from InDesign into Illustrator.

Be aware that this works well for vectors with basic fills. Features in Illustrator that aren't in InDesign won't survive the journey into InDesign without being modified or lost altogether.
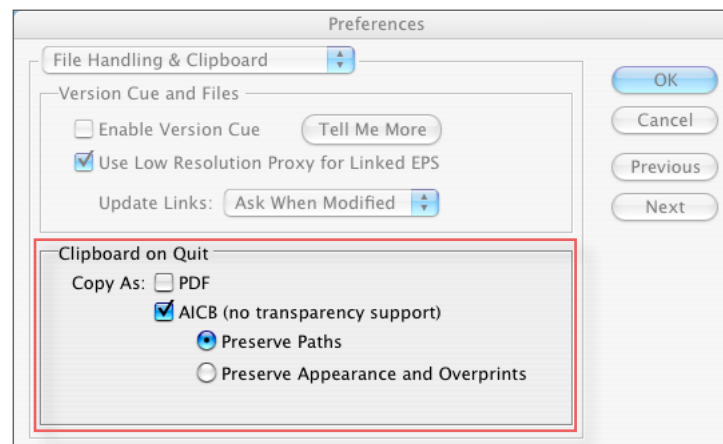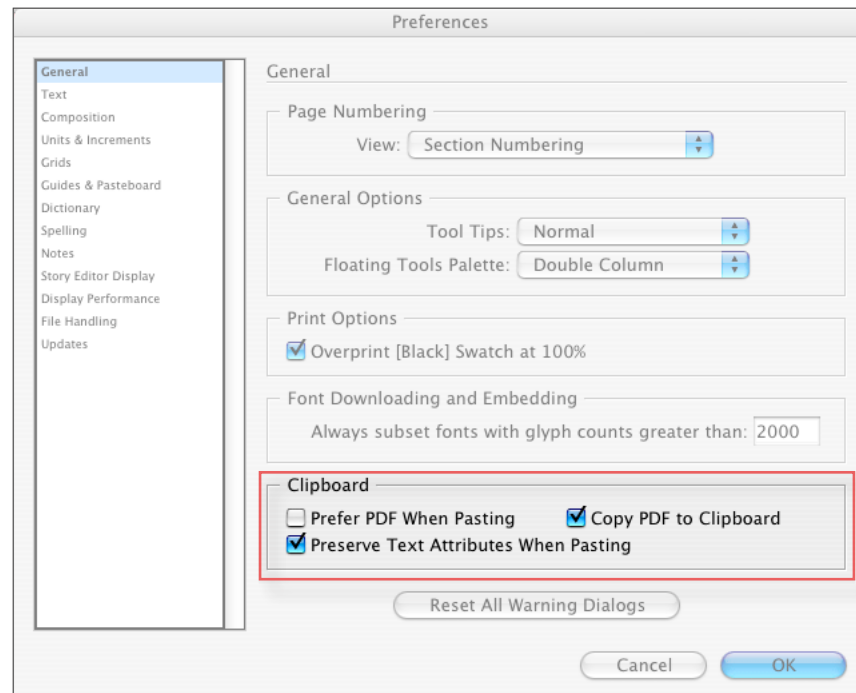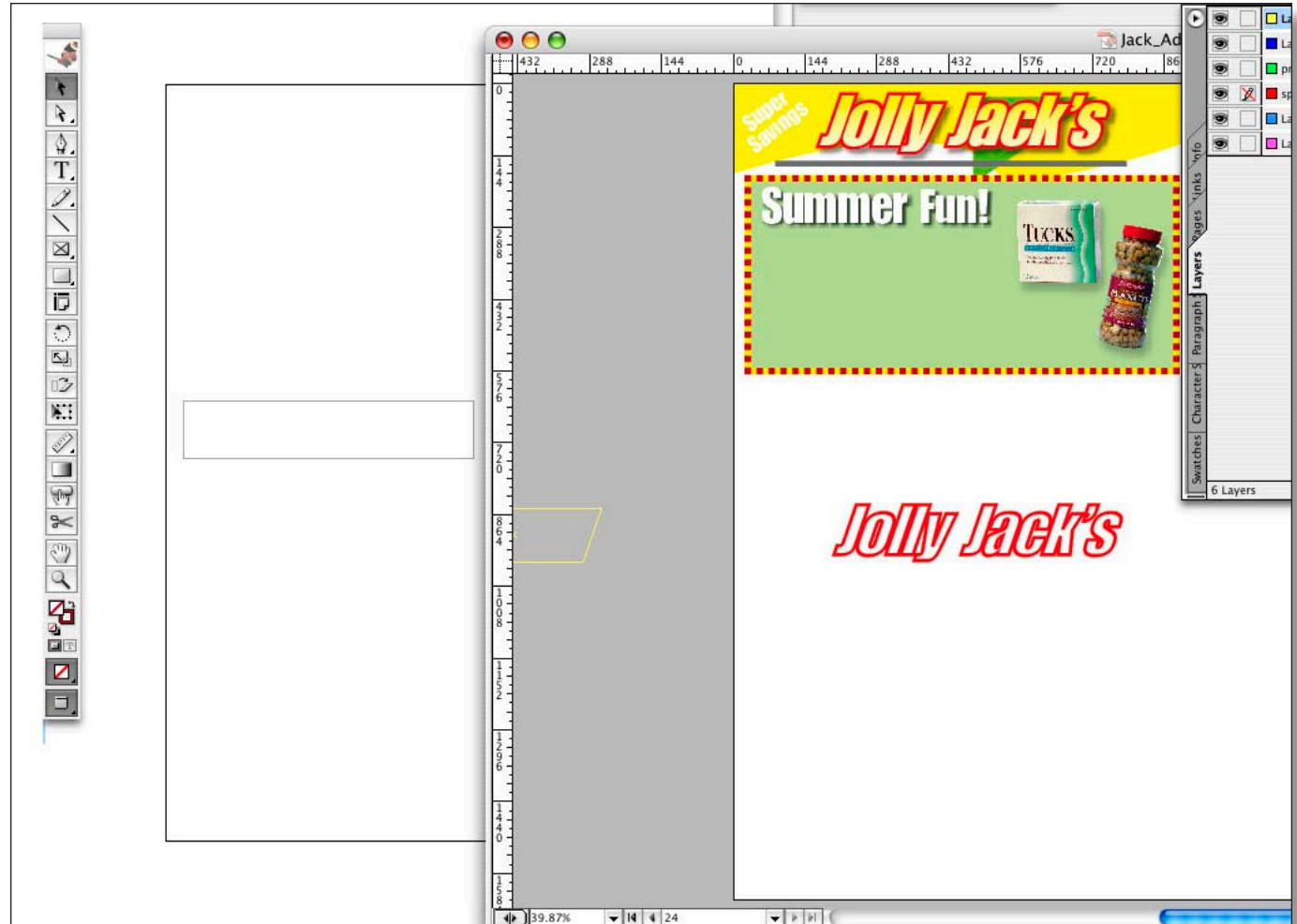
dragging and dropping *from* InDesign

In the example below, I'm taking the store name "Jolly Jack's" into Illustrator to give it a more highly styled appearance.

**1.** I convert the text string to outlines in InDesign, and remove the gradient fill.

   Note: to convert to oulines I use option/alt + Convert to Outlines. This creates a clone of the original text that is a free standing frame, instead of converting the original text into an inline frame.

2. I can then drag and drop the outlines into Illustrator where I can then use Illustrator's features to get the new look I want.

dragging and dropping into InDesign

Once I've created the look I want for the object in Illustrator, I can drag and drop it back into InDesign where it will be converted into a native InDesign vector object and remain editable if further changes or modifications are necessary.
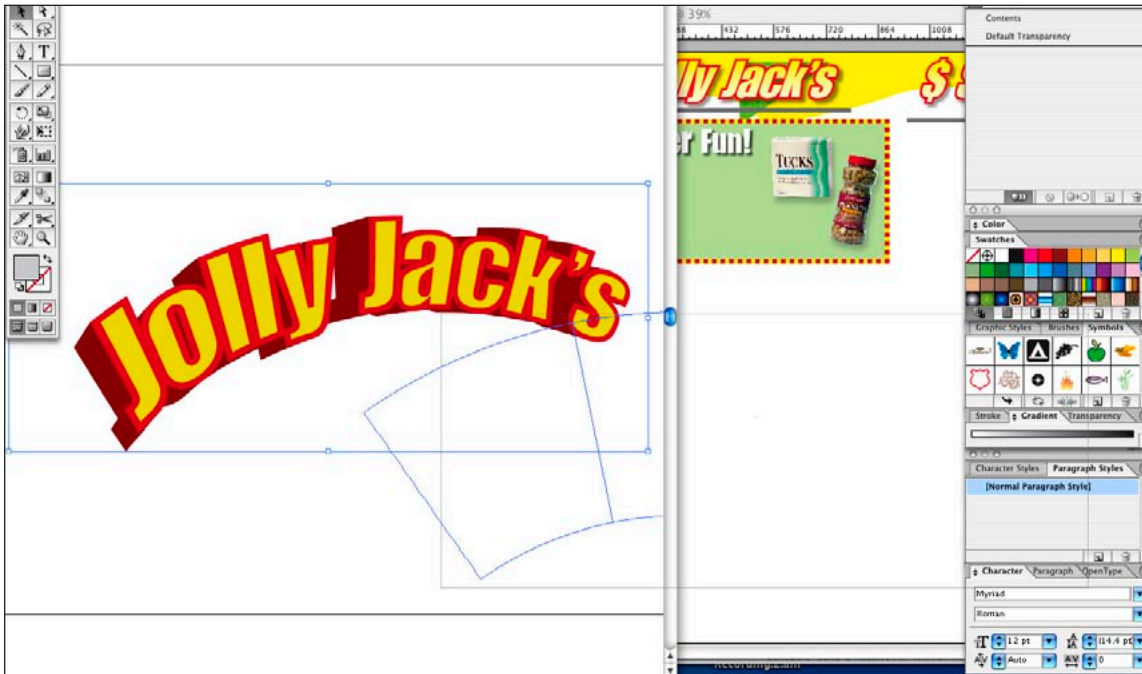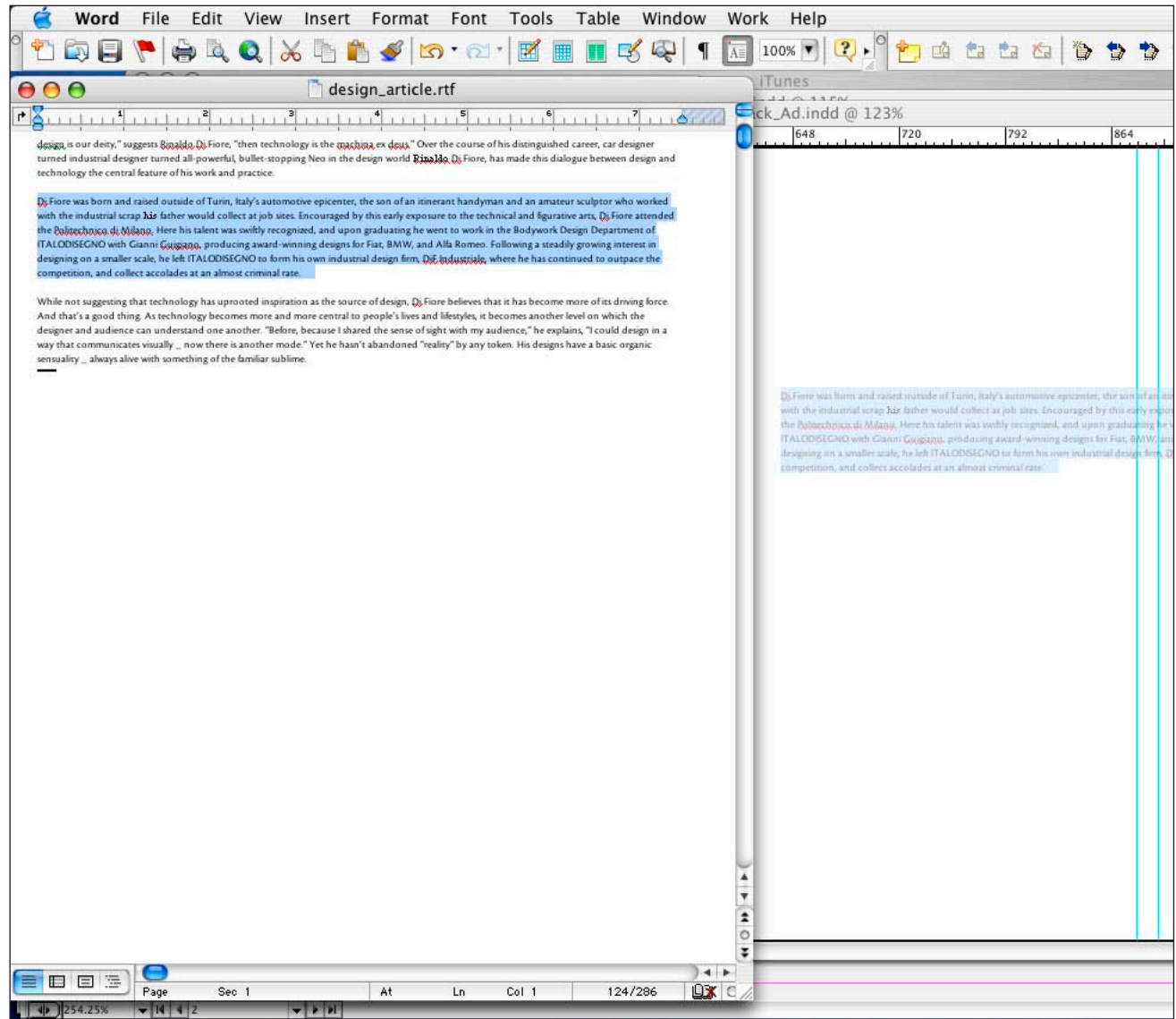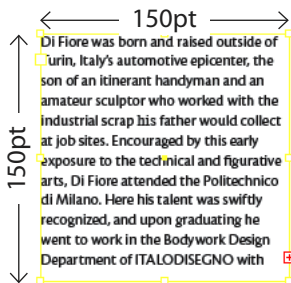

1. Drag and drop the object(s) from Illustrator back into InDesign.

2. Once it's there, I can further modify the objects that came from Illustrator, as in the example below where I've selected some of the paths and given them a new gradient fill…in InDesign.

dragging and dropping into InDesign

Did you know that you can drag and drop from Microsoft Word into InDesign?

1. Open your InDesign General preferences and make sure that the Preserve Text Attributes when Pasting is set to what you desire.

2. Switch to Microsoft Word. Select any range of text in a Microsoft Word document, and drag it into an InDesign document window.

3. Switch to InDesign. You'll see that the the text has been dropped into your layout in a 150pt x 150pt text frame. No, you can't change that, it's just the the arbitrary size for a container that InDesign creates when you drag a new text object into your layout.

150pt

150pt

Di Fiore was born and raised outside of Turin, Italy's automotive epicenter, the son of an itinerant handyman and an amateur sculptor who worked with the industrial scrap his father would collect at job sites. Encouraged by this early exposure to the technical and figurative arts, Di Fiore attended the Politechnico di Milano. Here his talent was swiftly recognized, and upon graduating he went to work in the Bodywork Design Department of ITALODISEGNO with

dragging and dropping into InDesign

And by the way, it works with tables from Word too...
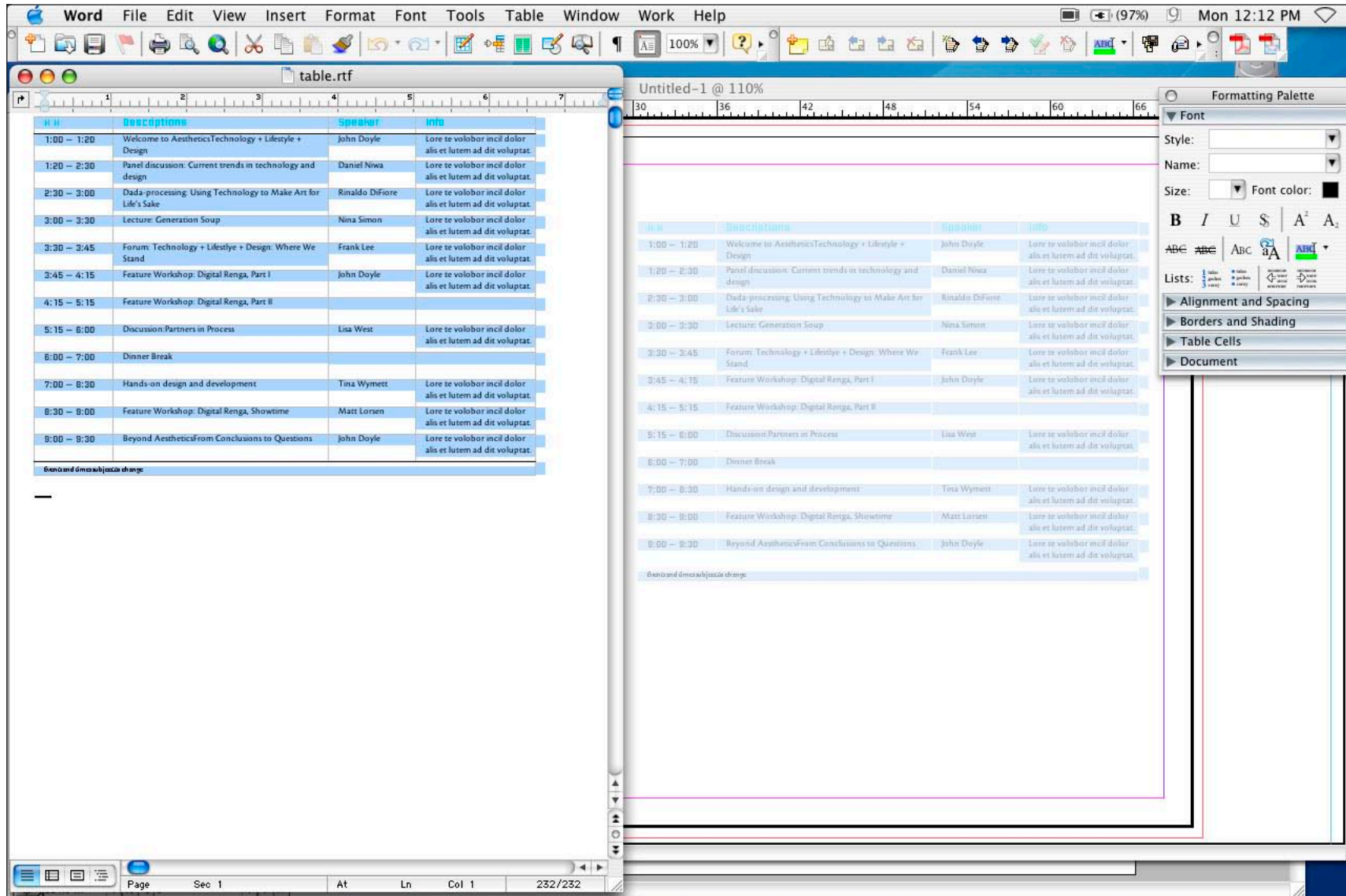
dragging and dropping into InDesign

…but be sure you check your clipboard preferences.

If your clipboard preferences are set to preserve formatting, then the table from Word (including formatting) will arrive intact in InDesign.

If your preferences are not set to preserve that formatting, then you'll get tab delimited text. You'll can see the two different types of results at right.