Adobe Studio on Adobe InDesign CS2

Learn the ins and outs of text wraps

The eye is sensitive to the form and placement of type. Adobe® InDesign® CS2 offers advanced typographic control and precision, allowing you to use the written word as an aesthetically appealing art form.
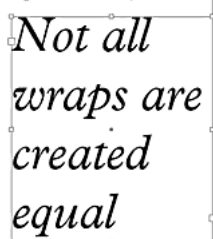
A good text wrap closely follows the contour of the object being wrapped. Adobe InDesign CS2 expertly detects an object's shape and guides text around it. But in typography, what's mathematically correct doesn't always look correct; so there's no perfect one-click wrap.

Text wraps look better when the margin abutting the object is justified. To make the right-hand margin justified in text with a ragged-right margin, go to Preferences/Composition and choose the justification option that suits the shape of your wrap.

InDesign's Text Wrap palette (Window > Text Wrap) specifies the distance between an object or frame and the text that wraps it. But setting these values is just the beginning.

Wrapping text around a rectangle is straightforward because the shape is simple. Your main concern is balancing the white spaces on all sides of the wrapped object.

The value for the distance between the top of a rectangular object and the text that runs above specifies the distance between the object and the baseline of that line of text. (The baseline is the invisible line upon which characters appear to sit.) Leading—the space between lines of type—is measured from the baseline of one line to the baseline of the line preceding it. A top text wrap boundary of 0 means that the wrapped object could snuggle right up to the baseline of the text above it, leaving descending parts of letters such as g and y overlapping the object. Always have some positive value for this distance—try the leading of your text.

For text below the wrapped object, the boundary you specify defines the minimum amount of extra leading that can appear between the bottom of the object and the baseline of the first line of text below it. If the text's leading is 12 points, and you specify a value of 0, that baseline can come no closer than 12 points from the object.

Selecting equal values for all the boundaries of this frame doesn't create even spacing on all sides.

Dragging the lower wrap boundary upwards allowed another line of type below the wrapped frame, but the frame still had to be nudged a bit lower to center it vertically.

Clearly, having equal values for the boundaries above and below an object doesn't guarantee that these spaces will appear equal. Ultimately, the spaces you see around the wrapped object depend on where it sits relative to the baselines of the text around it. The values you set in the palette are minimums, not absolutes, so adjustments are normally needed to get the boundaries to appear equal. You have several options:

- Adjust the values in the Text Wrap palette (you can type negative values, using the hyphen as a minus sign).

- Adjust the wrap boundary using the Direct Selection tool.

- Resize the object.

- Reposition the object vertically (nudge it with the arrow keys).

Once your wrap boundaries are equalized, they'll stay that way, unless you alter the text leading.

Wrapping curved shapes is trickier. Take, for example, a simple semicircle. Where the outline curve of the object is most vertical, the space between it and the text is most predictable. But as that curve becomes more horizontal, the space between the text and the wrapped object grows, because the width of the text wrap boundary is fattened by "slices" of the white space between the lines of text. This makes a circular wrap appear oval, pinched at the waistline. With undulating curves the effect is more subtle, but it's still there.

To compensate, select the object and use the Direct Selection tool to manipulate the wrap boundary just like any other path. You can add points using the Pen tool. To judge the results, print a proof—even the best screen display is a coarse approximation of a printed page.

In a semicircular wrap (fig. A), the gap between text and shape grows as the curve becomes more horizontal.
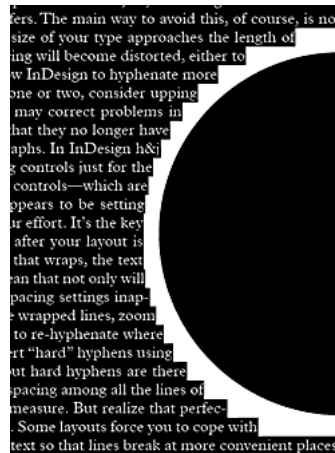

Figure A

Selecting the text (fig. B) shows that the text shape is defined by where the lines' bounding boxes touch the wrap boundary.
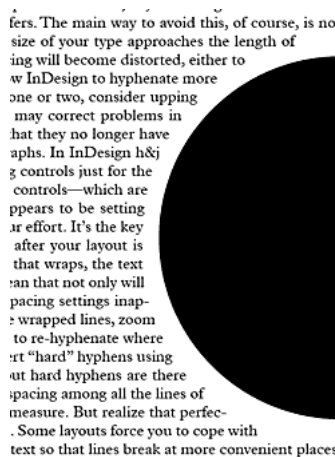

Figure B

Using the Direct Selection tool to modify the boundary at the "poles" of the semicircle (fig. C) makes spacing more consistent.

fers. The main way to avoid this, of course, is not
ize of your type approaches the length of the line
l become distorted, either to lose or
esign to hyphenate more freely.
wo, consider upping the ceil-
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InDesign h&j settings
just for the lines that
which are a character
ting either too loose
key to a professional
t is finalized. If the
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ens are there forever, unless
ll the lines of the wrapped text,
ze that perfection is not always pos-
you to cope with very short lines, so don't hesitate
nvenient places. Some day, page layout programs

Figure C

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