

Tips for Designing PrintUI Templates for HTML

Information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Because PrintUI is constantly updated, some of the information may become obsolete, so if there is a feature you would like to use which is listed as unsupported, or a feature you think is missing, please contact us at support@printui.com for the most current status and to log a feature request.

Introduction

PrintUI offers two methods for outputting HTML. The two approaches are very different and are designed to support different workflows.

The first method is called “Email HTML.” It is called this because the HTML is straightforward enough to use as the body of an email, but it can actually be used for any purpose. For example, if you have a need to output structured responsive HTML, the Email HTML output might be a good option for you. To use this feature, you must design a companion HTML template which is used as the basis for the output HTML. All formatting and structure is defined by the HTML template rather than the InDesign document. The InDesign document is used only for content, including any changes made via the PrintUI web editor. The content is extracted and inserted into a corresponding spot within the HTML using mapping defined by the template designer. Please download the Newsletter_email template from <https://printui.com/developer> to use as an example.

The second method is called “Microsite HTML” because it can be used to generate web pages suitable for a small web site. But it can also be used for things such as HTML banner ads or any other purpose where the HTML pages should have a one-to-one correspondence to the InDesign template pages. Microsite HTML requires little or no special setup or technical know-how to output valid, well formed HTML. The HTML output resembles the original InDesign document very closely, and in some cases exactly. However, we do not strive for 100% duplication of the InDesign document because in some cases that would compromise the HTML structure. For example, text styling should be the same or close to the InDesign document, but there might be some text reflow. Microsite HTML output relies on advanced HTML features that many email clients do not necessarily support, so it would not generally be usable for email output.

Note that HTML output is an extra-cost feature and is not enabled by default. Please contact sales@printui.com if you would like to add this capability to your PrintUI account. Once HTML output is enabled for your account, you may need to log out of the main PrintUI panel within InDesign and then log back in.

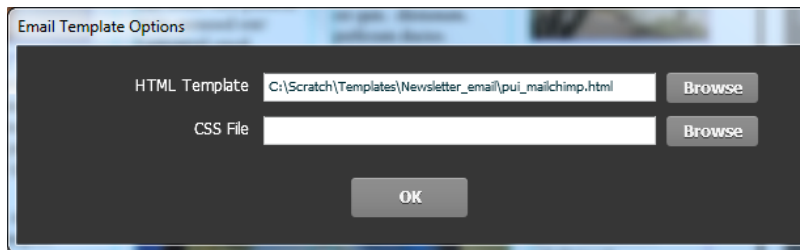
Controlling Previews

If desired, you can allow your end users to preview the HTML output while they are in the web editor. When the user clicks the Preview button, a dropdown menu will be shown with the HTML choices. This is controlled by two Flashvar options when the PrintUI SWF gets loaded onto a web page: `previewEmail` and `previewMicrosite`. Please see the Web Application Run-Time Options documentation for details.

Email HTML

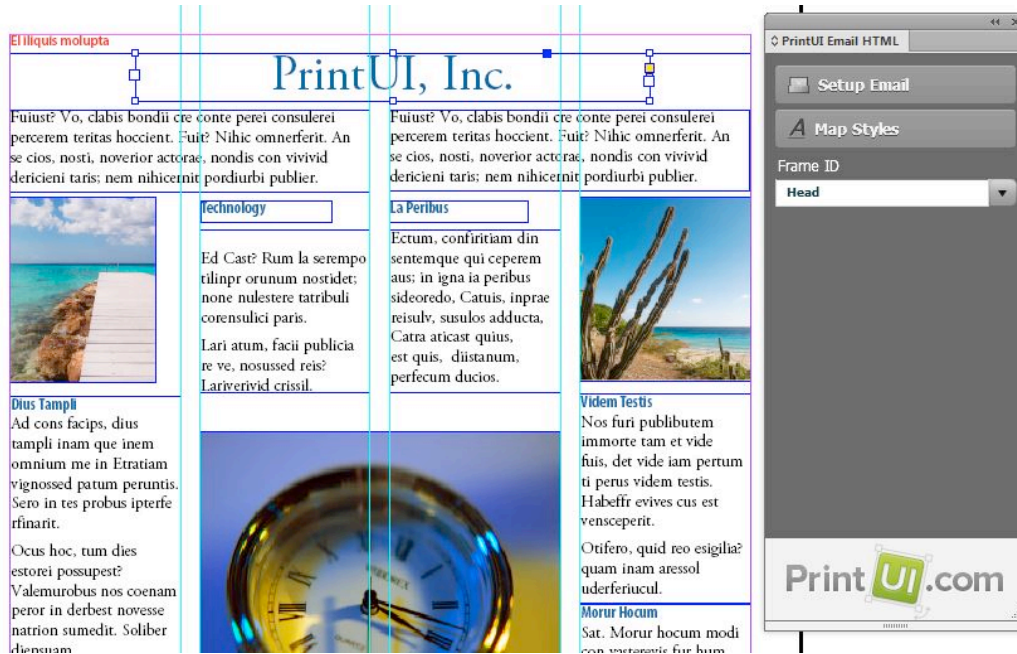
Email HTML allows for a lot of control over how the HTML is output, but the setup procedure is extremely important and requires a strong knowledge of HTML design. (For simpler setup with less control see below.) There are multiple steps required when setting up the template:

1. You must create an HTML file which displays the content the way you would like it to appear in the final output. You should add any static content to the HTML document, and create place-holder content for any content which will be replaced by InDesign content. Note that Email HTML output can look very different than the original InDesign template since all we are doing is copying content from the InDesign template into your HTML file.
2. You must have CSS defined to style your content including text and images. The CSS can be embedded in the header of your HTML file, or it can be a separate CSS file.
3. Specify the location of the HTML file and CSS file (if any) using the PrintUI Email HTML extension. Enable that extension by clicking on Window/Extensions/PrintUI Email HTML from within InDesign. Then click on the Setup Email button. When the HTML file is selected, it is validated to make sure it can be processed by PrintUI.

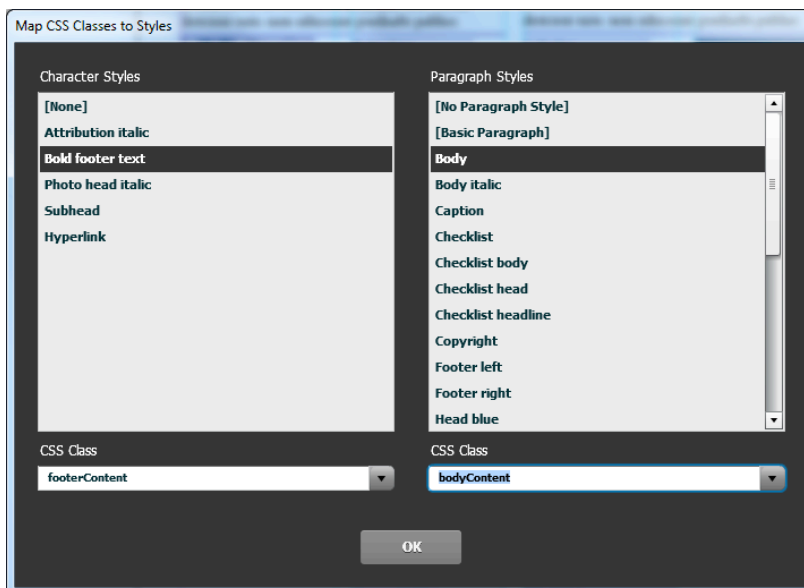


4. If your HTML content comes from a source which uses a proprietary templating language, the non-valid tagging (such as "mc:" for Mailchimp) must be removed. All HTML must be valid. HTML validity can be checked using an HTML validator such as this one: <http://validator.w3.org/> We do not currently have a method of directly exporting templated HTML for a service such as Mailchimp, so any non-valid markup would need to be added after the HTML has been generated. We hope to add support for automated templating in the future.

- The last required step is to specify frame IDs for InDesign objects that will be used to map the InDesign content to the HTML content. All content in the HTML which will be replaced by InDesign content *must* be assigned an HTML ID. The IDs must be unique and will be used to map the InDesign content to the HTML content being replaced. We recommend that you set the InDesign frame IDs *after* you have specified the HTML IDs and the HTML file has been selected via the Email Template Options panel. The reason for this is because the mapping panel reads all IDs in the HTML file and allows selecting IDs via a dropdown. With the PrintUI Email HTML panel open, clicking on an InDesign frame will cause the Frame ID dropdown to appear in the panel.



- You can also optionally map character and paragraph styles to CSS classes. If styles are not mapped, the class names will be InDesign's paragraph style names.



- Email HTML is generated by using PrintUI's *requestemailhtml* API.

Embedding the Design in Email

Instead of mapping all InDesign objects to HTML ones, it is possible to have PrintUI flatten the design as an image and embed the image in the HTML. For this to work, the email HTML template must have an `img` tag prepared. The `img` tag must have an id of "printui_background" like so: ``

Links for flattened content

If the flattened image of the design should have a link, that can be achieved by wrapping the `img` tag in an anchor tag like so: `<a>`. If the anchor tag exists, PrintUI will search the document for a hyperlink in the flattened content, and use that as the destination for the link. The URL can be created in the original InDesign document and/or edited in the web editor.

Headers and Footers

PrintUI allows header and footer content to be inserted into the HTML output by specifying HTML in our APIs when generating the output. For the headers and footers to be inserted correctly, tags must be added to the HTML template to indicate where the content should be added. We use custom tags for this purpose: `<header />` and `<footer />` respectively.

Microsite HTML

As mentioned, Microsite output is designed to resemble the InDesign document as closely as possible, but there are some things which should be considered. Note that Microsite HTML is generated using PrintUI's *requestsitehtml* API.

HTML Layer

When a template is initialized in the PrintUI panel within InDesign, an optional layer can be created which is called "HTML." Any objects on this special layer will be present in the HTML when it is generated, but not for any other forms of output such as PDF or JPEG. The HTML layer also does not show in the web editor. For example, it could be used for navigation elements such as buttons or links that are unique to HTML. If you instead have navigation elements that should also display in the editor, you should use one of the other printing or non-printing layers.

Fonts

We have two options regarding fonts when outputting microsite HTML. Use of web fonts requires a special web font license. If your fonts are licensed, you can specify font embedding when outputting the HTML with the *embedfonts* parameter for the *requestsitehtml* API. This allows for the closest possible rendering no matter what font is used. If you do not have a web font license, you should consider using a standard font (such as Arial) that your end users would have installed on their computers.

Note that text frames with transparencies will always be rasterized and be output as images, so the rendering should be pixel perfect and font licensing is not an issue for that text.

Output files

HTML is output as a separate file per page in the InDesign document, and cross-links between the files are preserved from cross-page linking in InDesign. Additionally, spreads are always output as a whole rather than separate output for each page within a spread.

Images referenced by the HTML are also included as individual files. By default, they are output at a higher than required resolution so that they will look better on high-resolution monitors, but the resolution can be controlled via the

imagequality parameter for the *requestsitehtml* API.

Buttons

InDesign buttons that have states will be output with all states as sprite images. Basic navigation specified in the button attributes will be preserved as links. These include: go to first page, go to last page, go to next page, go to previous page, go to a specific page, and go to URL. No other actions are supported at this time. Additionally, the zoom settings on the “go to” actions are not honored; the page zoom will be the browser default. The last thing to be aware of is that for documents with more than one page per spread, the different “go to” options have slightly different behaviors. When specifying a specific “go to” page, it is the **page** and not the **spread** which will be targeted. So if “go to page 3” is specified, the link might be to the second HTML file if that spread contains both pages 2 and 3. Next, previous, first and last, will always go to the corresponding spread and **not** the page.

Links

Normal links will be preserved as expected on all levels. This goes for text, text frames, images and even groups. Links can be URLs, email addresses, or cross-page links. Anchored links (to specific text) are not yet supported.

Video and Audio

There is no support for video and audio as of yet. If this limitation is an issue for you we want to hear about it, so send us an email at support@printui.com.

Animations and Multi-state Objects

Animations and Multistate objects are not yet supported. If you need support for this, we’d very much like to hear how you’d like to use these features, so send us an email at support@printui.com.

Forms

InDesign has support for many forms features which can be used for export to PDF. However, they are not currently supported for Microsite HTML, although we expect to add this capability later. But we need your advice as to the best way to support this, and our course of action will very much be dictated by client needs for this feature. If you have a use-case for HTML forms in exported HTML, **please** let us know.

Other HTML Elements

There are some other HTML elements that can be controlled via parameters passed to the *requestsitehtml* API. Please see the API documentation for exact details.

Parameter	Usage
title	The HTML page title.
author	The HTML author.
copyright	The HTML copyright notice.
robots	The HTML robots string.
description	The HTML meta description.
keyword	The HTML header keywords.
viewport	The viewport to use when displaying the HTML.

shownonprintlayer	Which non-printing layers to include in the HTML, if any.
creategenerator	Add <meta name="generator" content="PrintUI"> to header.