



## INTRODUCTION TO SCRIBUS

by Natasha Deasy

# Making Sense!

Entering the Field of Sensory Studies.



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### Coordination:

**Institute for Anthropology and Cultural Research, Faculty 9, University of Bremen:**

PD Dr. Cordula Weißköppel, Prof. Dorle Dracklé

**Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Eastern Finland:**

Prof. Dr. Jaana Vuori, Prof. Dr. Helmi Järviluoma

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PD Dr. Cordula Weißköppel, Dr. Javier Gago Holzscheiter

### Sub-Units of the Module

Smell Trek: PD Dr. Cordula Weißköppel, UB

Sound Trek: Dr. Javier Gago Holzscheiter, UB

Visual Trek: Dr. Martin Gruber, UB

Cited as: <https://blogs.uni-bremen.de/makingsense/files/Deasy-Introduction-to-Scribus.pdf>



Scribus is a free layout programme, non-commercial and open-source. The user interface may look a bit "oldschool", but it is a powerful tool for laying out your photo essays and placing images and text flexibly in your project. This document includes instructions on basic functions and links to matching video tutorials from the YouTube channel "TJ Free".

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## Before you begin

### Download

Here is the link for downloading Scribus on **Windows** and **macOS**:

<https://sourceforge.net/projects/scribus/files/scribus-devel/1.5.6.1/>

„**Download Latest Version**“

### Important information for Mac Users:

<https://support.apple.com/de-de/guide/mac-help/mh40616/mac>

Within **Linux distributions** as well as other open source operating systems, Scribus is included in the specific repositories and package management systems (Software-Centre, Synapticetc..)

#### TIPP

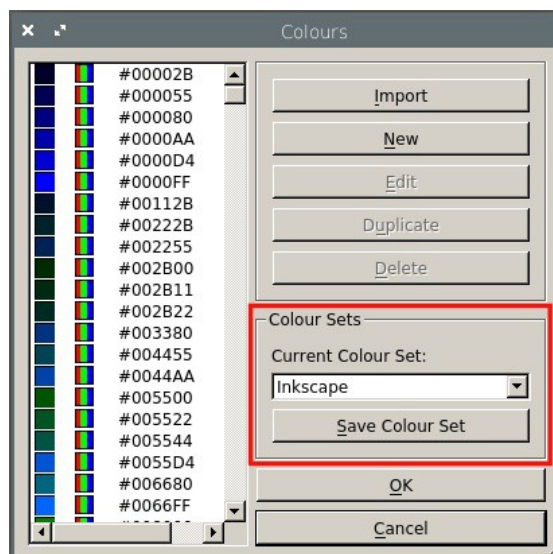
Later, an extra image editing programme can come in handy. In combination with Scribus, **GIMP** is highly recommended.

### Create a folder

Create a separate folder for the photo essay and copy your pictures into it. It is best to add copies and have the original version of the images as a backup somewhere else. The folder ensures that Scribus always has access to the images in the same place.

### Setting the colour palette

Scribus starts with a default colour palette. You can add more colours or a whole set. To do so, no other Scribus document should be open. When you start Scribus now, click **Cancel** button in the **New Document** window. From **Edit/Colours...** you can now access the **Colour Sets** section and select a palette of your choice from the drop down menu.



## Before you begin - part 2

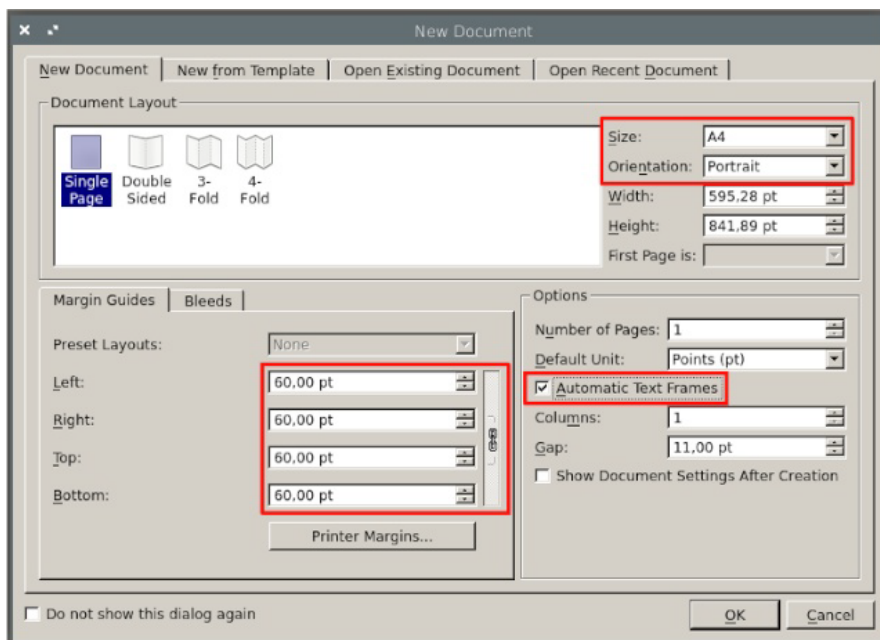
### Create a Document

When you open Scribus, a **New Document** window pops up. Here you can set the format, properties and number of pages for your document. When you are finished or just want to use the default A4 format, click **OK**.

If you want to change the format later or add more pages, you will find the options **Insert...** and **Manage page properties...** in the top bar of the document under **Page**.

#### TIP

If it is clear that you want to work with text on every page of your document, check the box **Automatic Text Frames** under **Options**. You should also set the margins in the bottom left-hand corner - e.g. to 60 pt - as the size of the text frames will adapt to the margins.



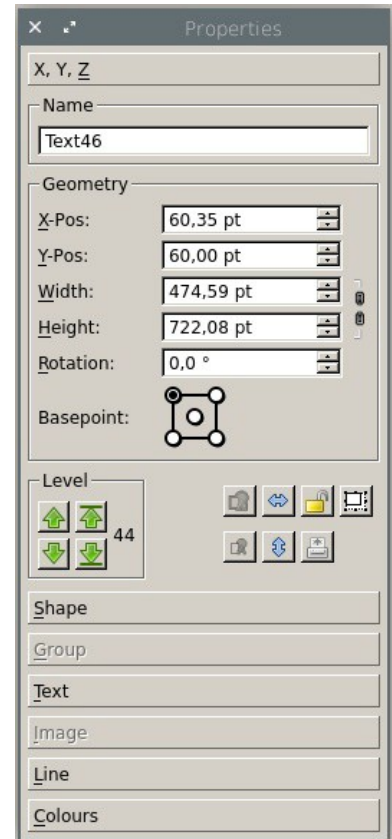
Link zu Scribus Lesson 1 - Getting Started and User Interface:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMIT9C6xcDw>

# Windows to keep open permanently

Unlike programmes such as Word, there is no toolbar at the top or side of Scribus to edit text, images and other things directly. Instead, there are windows that should always be open on the side. Two windows are particularly important:

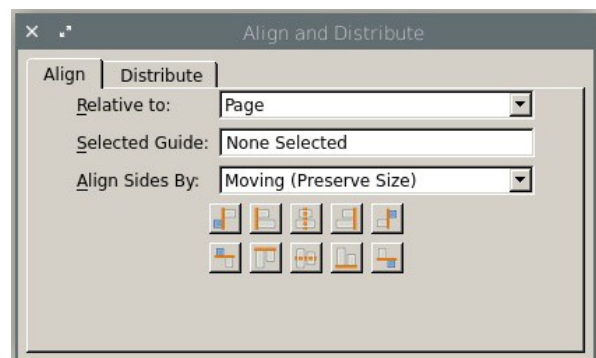
1.

The **Properties** window, as the name suggests, allows you to edit the properties of objects. For example, in the **Text** section you can change the font, size and other text properties. Open Properties by clicking on **Windows/Properties** in the top bar or by pressing the shortcut key **F2**.



2.

The second important window is called **Align and Distribute**. Open it via **Window/Align and Distribute**. More on this on p. 11 and 12.



3.

A helpful window which does not always have to be open is the **Style Manager**. Open it via **Edit/Styles...** or **F3**. More about this on p. 8.

## Helpful Shortcuts

**i** to create an image frame

**t** for a text frame

**F2** opens Properties

**F3** opens the Style Manager

**Ctrl** held while scaling an object will keep up its proportions

**Shift** helps to select several objects simultaneously

**Ctrl+g** will group selected objects

**Ctrl+Shift+g** will de-group them again

## Working with images

### Import an image

Click on **Insert Image Frame** in the top menu bar or press **i**. Roughly drag the frame to the correct position and size. Now right-click on the frame and select **Get Image....** In the **Open** window, look for your previously created folder for the photo essay and choose a picture.

If the frame only shows a section of the image, first right-click, then click **Adjust Image To Frame** to reduce the size. If you wish, you can now right-click and select **Adjust Frame to Image**.

#### TIP

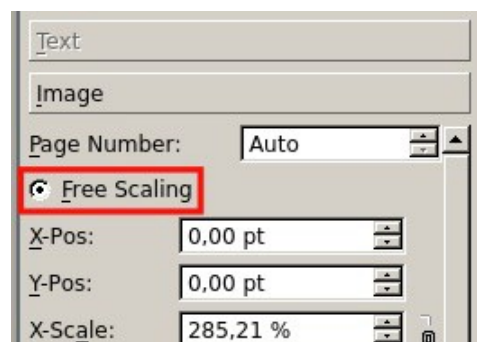
If you are importing several images at once any way, keep **Shift** pressed in order to execute these last steps with all of them simultaneously.

### Scale

If you want to change the size, click on the picture, hold down the **control key** and drag it to the desired size at one corner. If this does not work, right-click and select **Adjust Image To Frame**.

### Crop

To crop the picture, right-click on it and choose **Properties/Image** and select **Free Scaling**. If you want to scale your image proportionally again afterwards, de-select this option.



*Scribus Lesson 2 - Image Frames and Properties*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nB4dTL1lwI4>

## ATTENTION

Layout programmes such as Scribus or Indesign are not image editing programmes. They work with links to the image file, not with the actual image. So if you scale images in Scribus, the size will change visually. But what was 5 MB before is still 5 MB afterwards. This can be problematic if you are emailing or uploading your photo essays.



If this is the case, you need **GIMP** (/Photoshop/other image editing programme). If you then right-click on the image in Scribus and select **Edit Image...**, it will open in GIMP \*tadaa\* and you will be able to *actually* scale the image. You do this by first activating the **Scale** button in the GIMP toolbar and then scaling the image down. You can take the exact dimensions of the image size in Scribus or scale the image down approximately – the main thing is that the proportions are maintained and that the image does not end up too small. From the top bar, now select **Image/Size to Content** and **File/Export as.../Export**. Now switch back to Scribus and, right-click on your picture and select **Update Image**.



# Working with text

Working with text in Scribus means to use text frames. Either you have already created text frames automatically to start with, filling the whole page. Or you can work with individual, smaller text frames.

## Create text

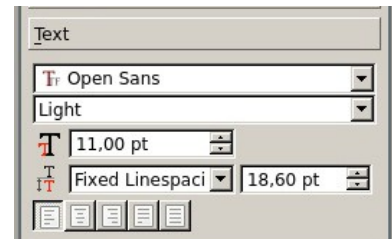
Click on **Insert/Text Frame** in the top bar and drag it to the preferred size. Now there are two ways to add text:

### 1. Import text:

If you have already written a text in a word processing programme, right-click on the text frame, choose **Get Text...** and select the file. If you have already formatted the text, the formatting will be adopted and can be edited in the Style Manager (p.7).

### 2. Writing text in Scribus

Double click to access the contents of the text frame. Now you can write and change the style in the **Properties** window under **Text**. Alternatively, you can open the text editing window called **Story Editor** by clicking **Edit/Edit Text...** in the top bar (this option is more cumbersome, though).



## Linking text frames

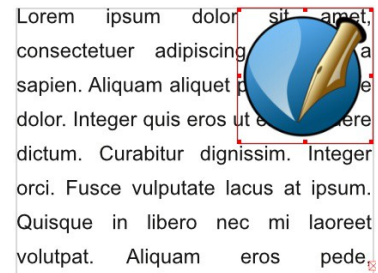
A small cross at the bottom right of the text frame indicates that there currently is more text than fits in the frame. If you want to distribute the text over several text frames, you can, for example, link them with one another. To do this, click on the first text frame. In the toolbar at the top, select the symbol Link Text Frames and click on the second text frame.



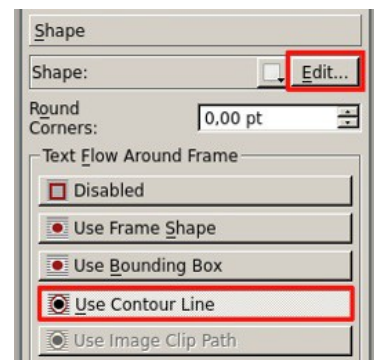
## Working with text – part 2

### Let Text flow around an image

If you want the text to flow around an image, first make sure that the image is placed on top of the text (right-click **Level/ Raise to Top**).



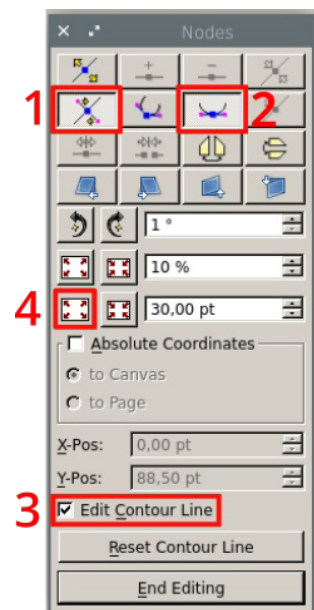
With the image selected, open the Properties and go to the section called Shape. First click on **Use Contour Line** and then on **Edit....**



Now another window opens in which you activate

1. **Move Control Points**,
2. **Move Control Points Symmetrically**,
3. and **Edit Contour Line** at the bottom.
4. Now, click **Enlarge the size of the Path by the shown value**

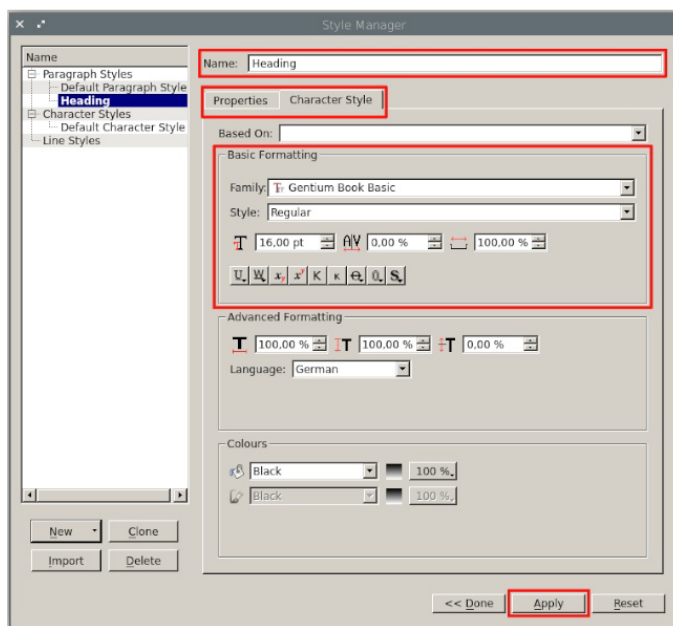
Finally, choose **Finish Editing**.



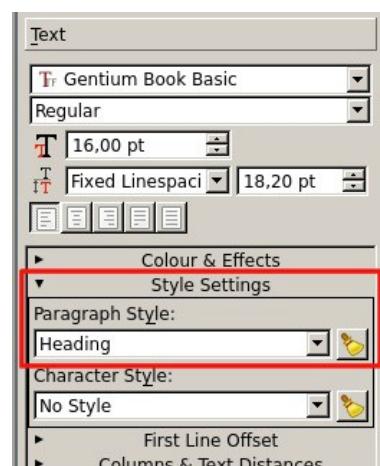
## Defining Paragraph Styles

If you want to create a consistent look in Scribus with coherent headings etc., you can access the **Style Manager** via **Edit/Styles...** or the shortcut **F3**. Click on **New** and then **Paragraph Styles**. (If you want to change something later or if the text has already been imported with a preset format, click **>>Edit**).

Then create the style of a heading, subheading or the standard text style. In the **Properties** tab, you can change the line spacing, text alignment, etc. Under **Character Styles** you can edit the font and font size. When you have finished, click **Apply**.



Switch back to the actual document and select the relevant part of the text, e.g. a heading. Now assign the appropriate style via the properties window. You will find this option under **Properties/Text/Style Setting**.



Scribus Lesson 8 - Using Styles

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkyX7rgeawg&list=PLqazFFzUPc6U1RcNRBMeCK6Hg3g\\_S6aN&index=](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkyX7rgeawg&list=PLqazFFzUPc6U1RcNRBMeCK6Hg3g_S6aN&index=)

# Edit Objects

## Rotate objects

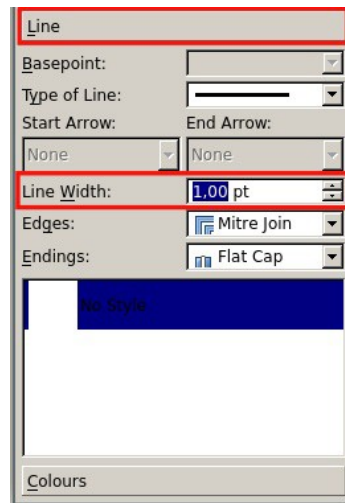
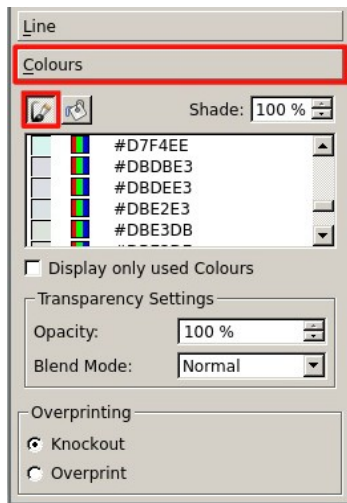
Click on the **Rotate Object** symbol in the toolbar at the top, then select an object and rotate it. If you hold down the control key while doing this, the object will rotate in 45° steps.



## Frame objects

If you want to draw a frame around an image or text, first go to **Properties/Colours**. Choose the button **Edit Line Colour Properties** and select a colour.

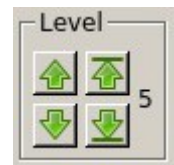
Then switch to the **Line** tab and set the width of the frame under **Line Width**.



## Change object layer

You can determine which object is above or below another one by right-click it and selecting **Level**). Here there are arrows pointing up and down with which you can set, for example, whether the object should be placed a little higher or completely in the foreground.

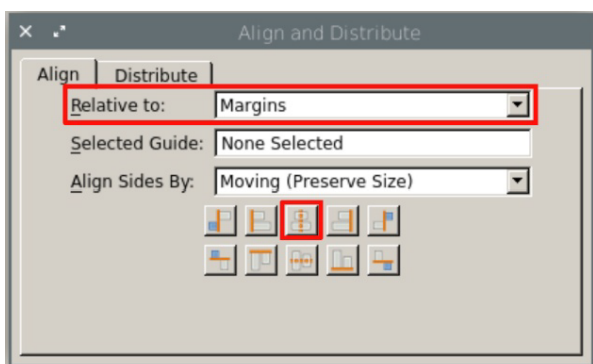
The arrows are also available in **Properties** under the tab **X, Y, Z**.



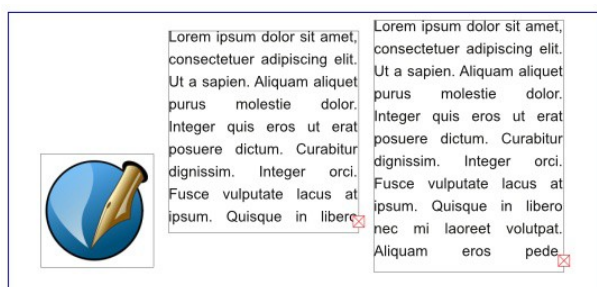
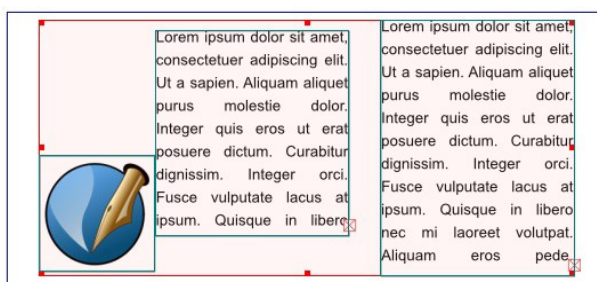
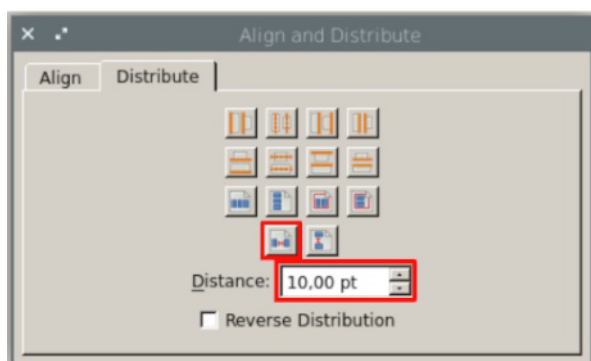
## Align and Distribute

Layouting means to arrange objects in a coherent way. This is why the following function is essential when working with Scribus. To do so, on the top bar, go to **Windows/Align and Distribute**.

In the **Align** section, under **Relative to:**, set the reference point to which the objects should be aligned. Here, as an example, a single object is placed in the middle of the upper page margin. To do this, click on the object, select **Relative to: Margins** and **Center on vertical axis**.

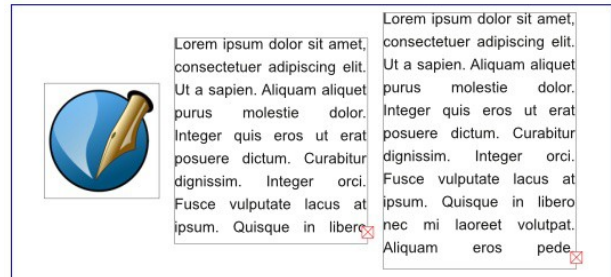
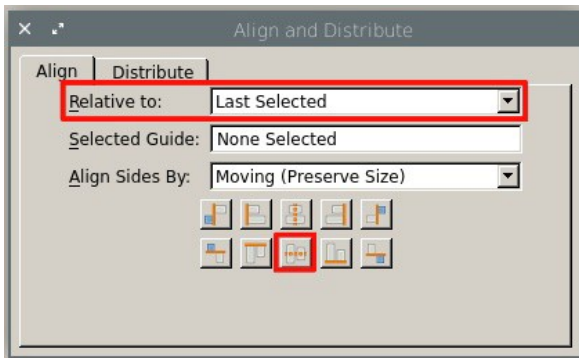


In the **Distribute** section you can create an even distance between several objects. For instance, enter a value at **Distance:** (e.g. 10 pt) and then select **Make horizontal gaps equal to the value specified**.

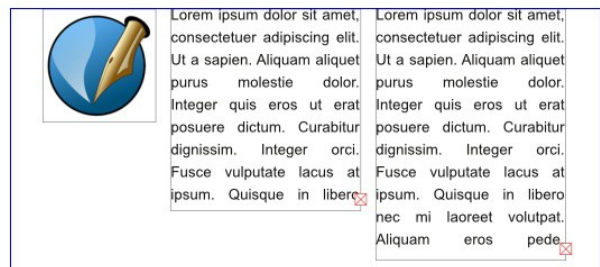
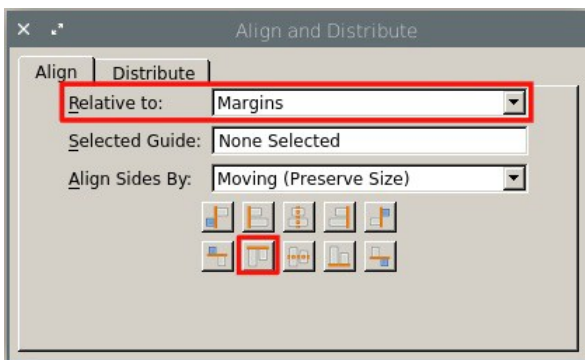


## Align and Distribute – part 2

To align the objects, guess what, switch back to **Align**. There are different options, e.g. to bring the objects to a horizontal center line from where they are at the moment. To do this, choose **Relative To: Last Selected** and then **Center on Horizontal Axis**.



Or you can align the top edge of the objects to the top of the page, via **Relative To: Margins** and **Align Top Pages**.



There are many more ways to align and distribute objects than displayed here, so experiment with these functions!

*Scribus Lesson 14 - Align and Distribute:*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqtlUB-esdU>

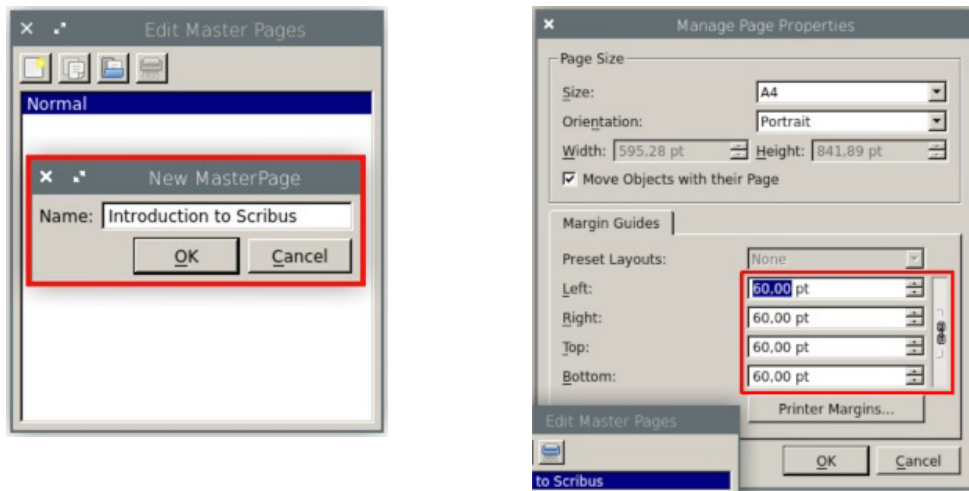
## Set up a master page

If you are creating a multi-page document and want to include certain recurring elements (page numbers, background image, background colour - you name it), master pages are the best solution. This is the name for templates in Scribus.

### Create a master page

Switch to the Edit Master Pages mode by clicking on **Edit/Master Pages...** on the top bar. Here you select the button **Add a new master page** and name it. This window has to be open in order to keep up the Edit Master Page mode.

Then set up the document as desired. For example, you can set page margins under **Page/Manage Page Properties**.



### Page numbers

In the Edit Master Pages mode, place a small text frame where you want page numbers to appear, e.g. at the bottom centre (for centring an object, see p. 13). Set the frame to **writing mode** with a double-click (cursor flashes) and go to the top bar. and select Insert/Characters/Page Numbers. If # now appears in the text box, you have your page numbers and can move on to other things. If something other than a hashtag appears, try the key combination Ctrl+#.



## Set up a master page – part 2

### Background for the whole document

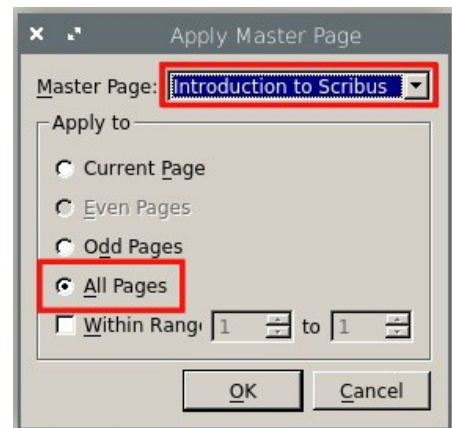
If you want to insert a background colour, draw a rectangle over the entire master page (in the toolbar, click on the grey square called **Insert Shape** and then **Standard Shape** to select the square). Right-click on the rectangle and open **Properties**. Select the desired background colour from the **Colours** tab below.

If your background is supposed to be a picture, use an image frame instead to add a photo.

Finally, move the coloured rectangle or the photo to the background (see "Edit Objects", p.12).

### Applying the Master Page to the Document

Once the page is set up, close the **Edit Master Pages** window. Now go to your actual document and click on **Page/Apply Master Page**. Select the name of your master page from the drop-down menu and choose whether the template should be applied to all pages of your document or only to certain ones.



*Scribus Lesson 7 - Master Pages*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEiIlyuVndY&list=PLqazFFzUAPc6U1RcNRBMeCK6Hg3g\\_S6aN&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEiIlyuVndY&list=PLqazFFzUAPc6U1RcNRBMeCK6Hg3g_S6aN&index=7)