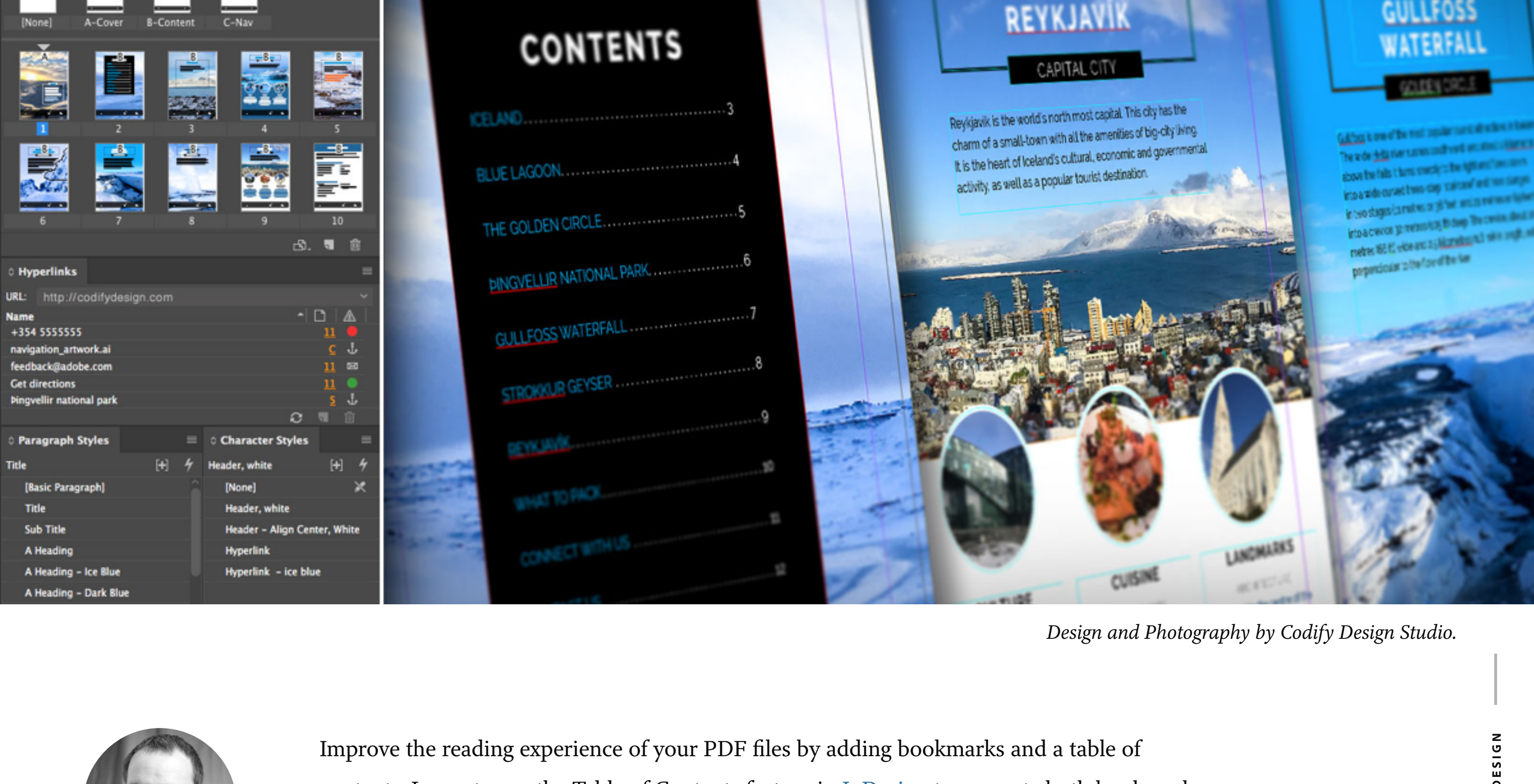
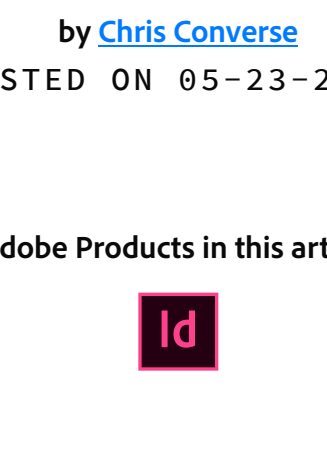


Interactive PDF: Bookmarks and Linked TOCs from InDesign



Design and Photography by Codify Design Studio.



by [Chris Converse](#)

POSTED ON 05-23-2018

Adobe Products in this article

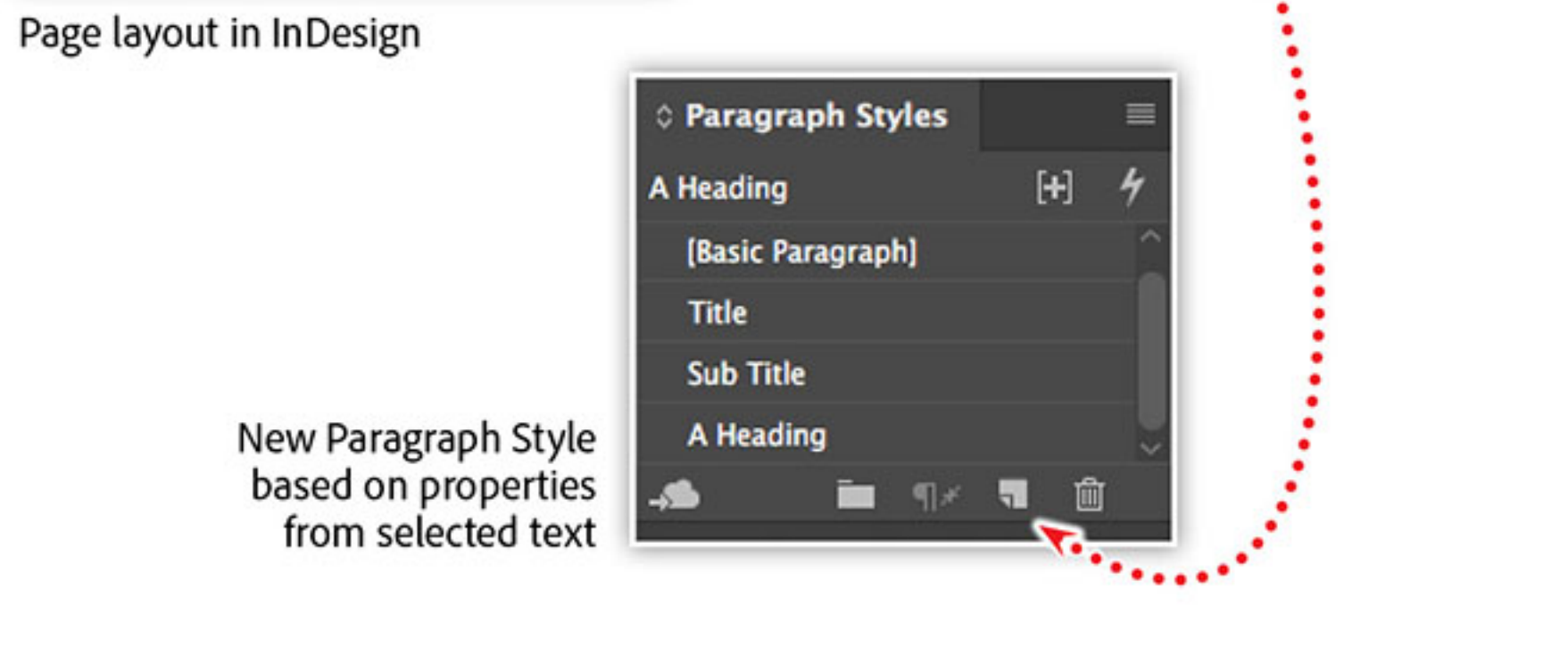


Improve the reading experience of your PDF files by adding bookmarks and a table of contents. Learn to use the Table of Contents feature in [InDesign](#) to generate both bookmarks and hyperlinks that will help your readers quickly find information in your PDF files.

It all starts with Paragraph Styles

While speaking at [Adobe MAX](#) conferences, I've often referred to InDesign as "the most stylin' app in the [Creative Cloud](#)." Styles in InDesign range from paragraph and character styles for text to objects and graphic frames — and can also include tables and table cells, anchored objects, GREP statements, nested styles, hyperlinks — and the list goes on.

Paragraph Styles, however, are key for the Table of Contents (TOC) feature. Typically, styles used for headings work best for a TOC. To create a Paragraph Style, begin by opening the Paragraph Styles panel from the Window > Styles menu. Next, select the characters of your headline within your layout. With the text still selected, click the "create new style" icon in the bottom-right of the Paragraph Style panel. This will create a style based on the properties of the text you had selected.



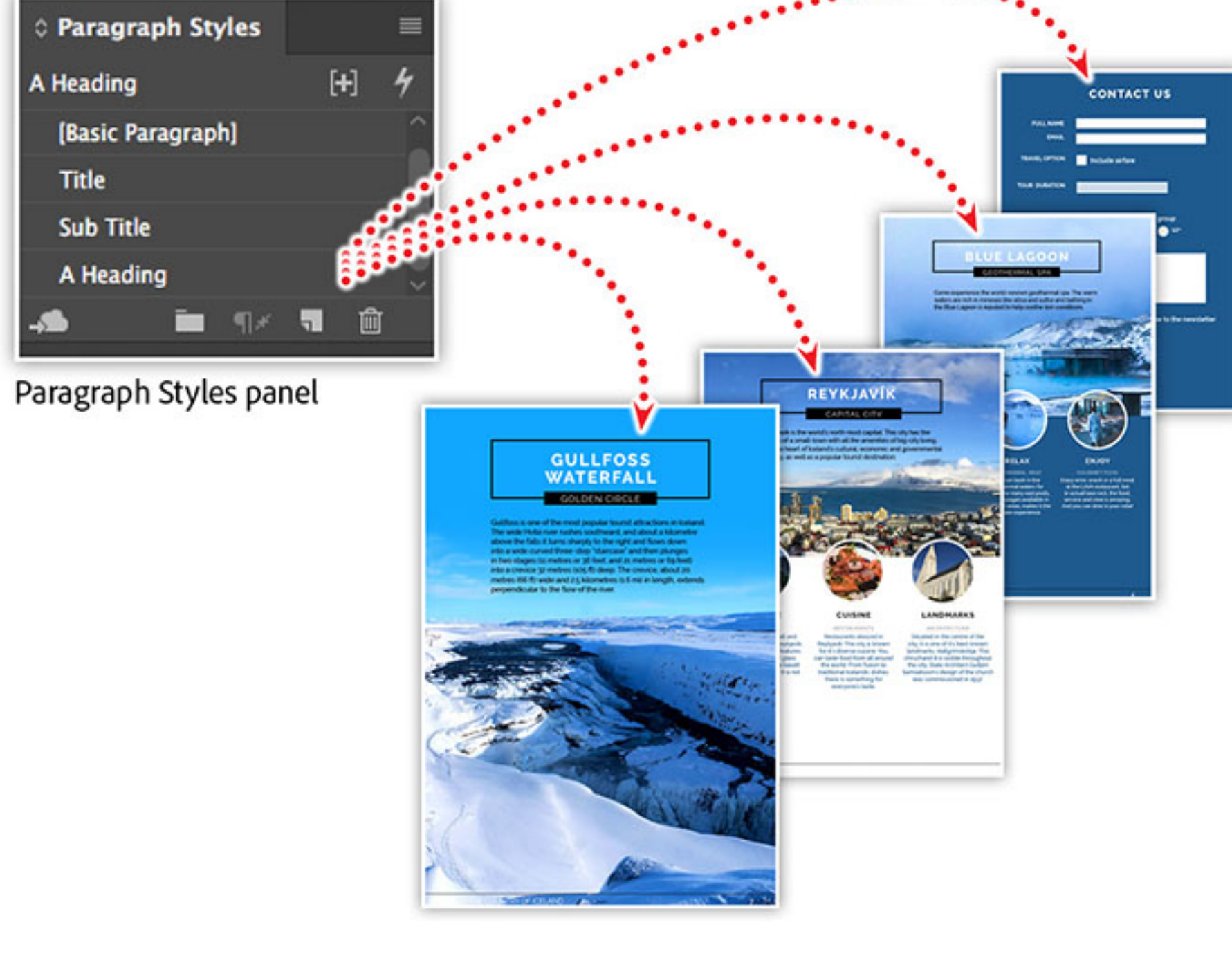
Page layout in InDesign

New Paragraph Style based on properties from selected text

To rename your style, or make style changes, double-click the new paragraph style in the list to open the style options dialog box. Once you finish editing your style, assign the style to your headline by selecting the characters of your headline, then selecting the paragraph style from the list of styles in your Paragraph Styles panel.

Advanced tip

If you hold the Option key (Mac) or the Alt key (Windows) when clicking the create new style icon, the properties dialog box will immediately open from the Paragraph Styles panel, allowing you to edit the new style right away.



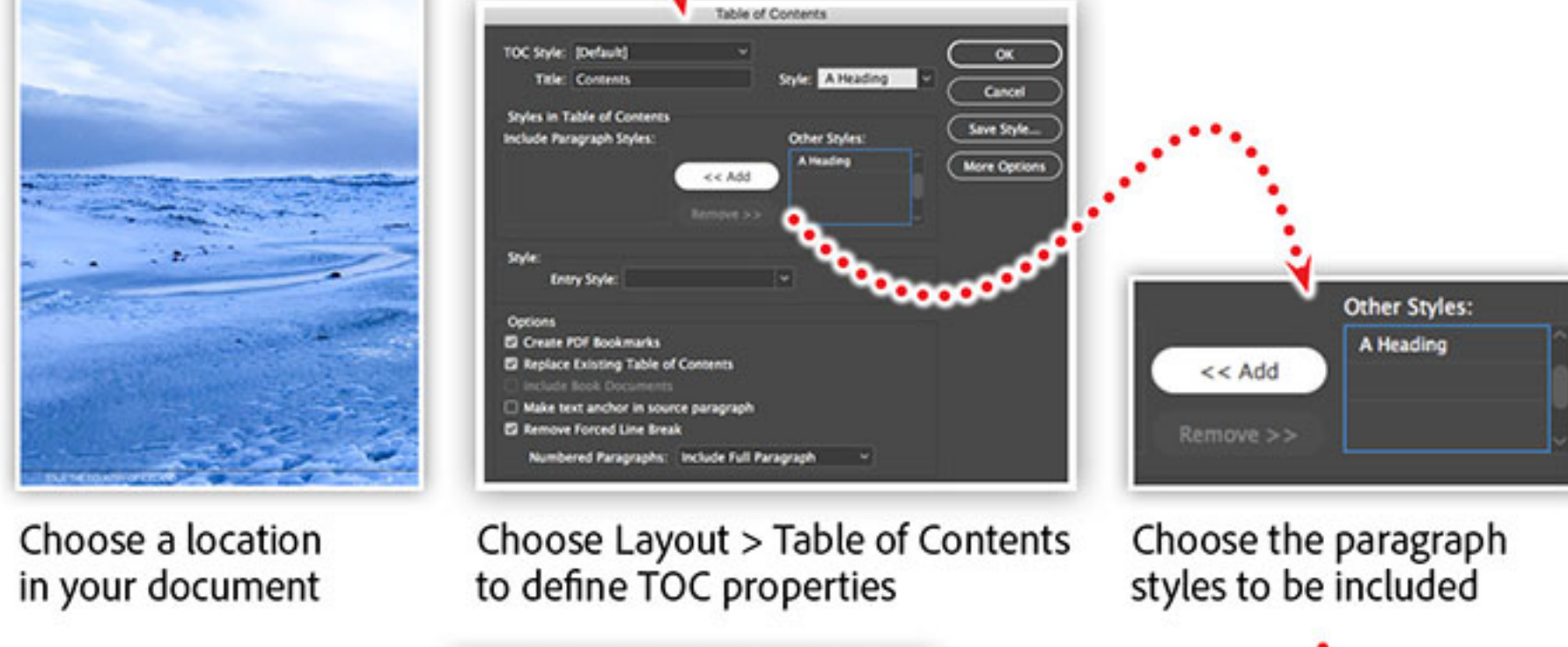
Paragraph Styles panel

Throughout your InDesign document, be sure to apply the Paragraph Style to all of the headings. Not only will this allow you to make design changes faster, but it will also help us add bookmarks and interactivity within a PDF file.

Creating a table of contents

The Table of Contents feature gathers the contents and page numbers of specific paragraph styles in order to provide a list of the contents included in your publication. This content is created automatically and can be updated as your document is edited. While this provides very useful textual information in regard to finding content, this same information can also be used to make your document interactive when exporting to PDF.

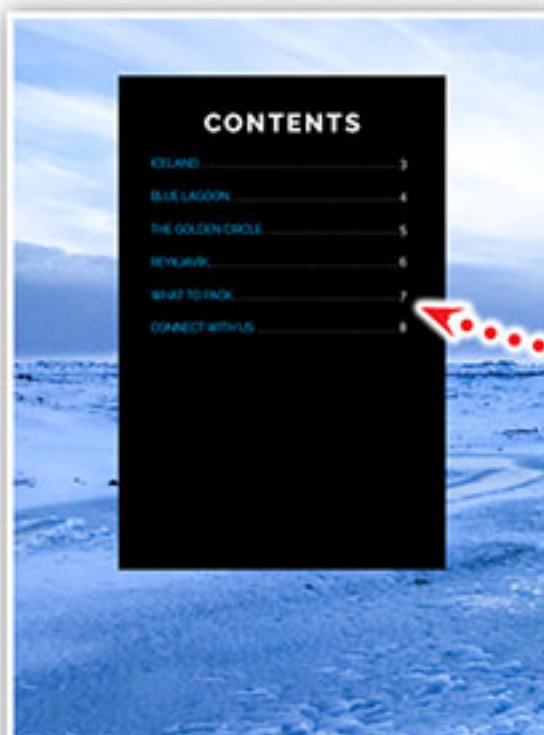
To begin to create a TOC, find a location in your document where you'd like the TOC to appear. Next, select Table of Contents from the Layout menu. We'll be setting a few properties within this dialog box, starting with setting the title to simply "contents." In the Styles in Table of Contents section, we'll choose the paragraph style for our heading and click the add button.



Choose a location in your document

Choose Layout > Table of Contents to define TOC properties

Choose the paragraph styles to be included



Click-and-drag a new text box that contains the TOC content, including the text and page numbers for each included paragraph style

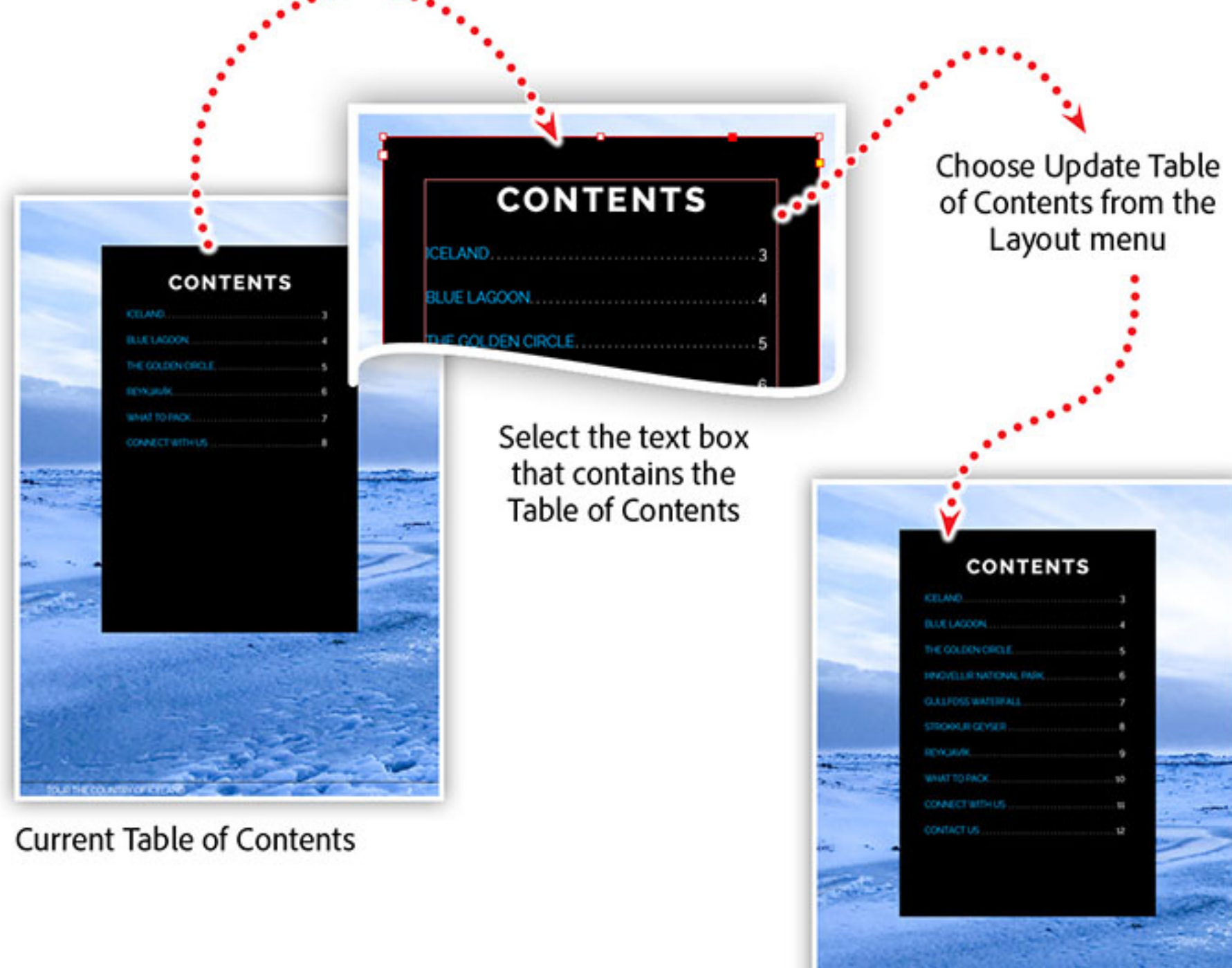
The Options section of the Table of Contents dialog box includes the [Create PDF Bookmarks](#) option. Checking this option will result in a PDF file that includes bookmarks that link directly to the corresponding content within the document. This feature also results in a more structured and searchable PDF file. Bonus!

When finished, click OK to return to your document with a loaded text cursor. Click to add a new story into your document that includes all of the TOC information.

Updating the table of contents

Because the TOC is automatically generated, making changes involves revisiting the Table of Contents dialog box. To do this, select the TOC text frame in your layout, then choose Table of Contents from the Layout menu.

Continue to make edits in this dialog box, including changes to the title, included paragraph styles, and various options, then click OK. The selected text frame will update with your new settings. You can update the Table of Contents as often as you like.



Current Table of Contents

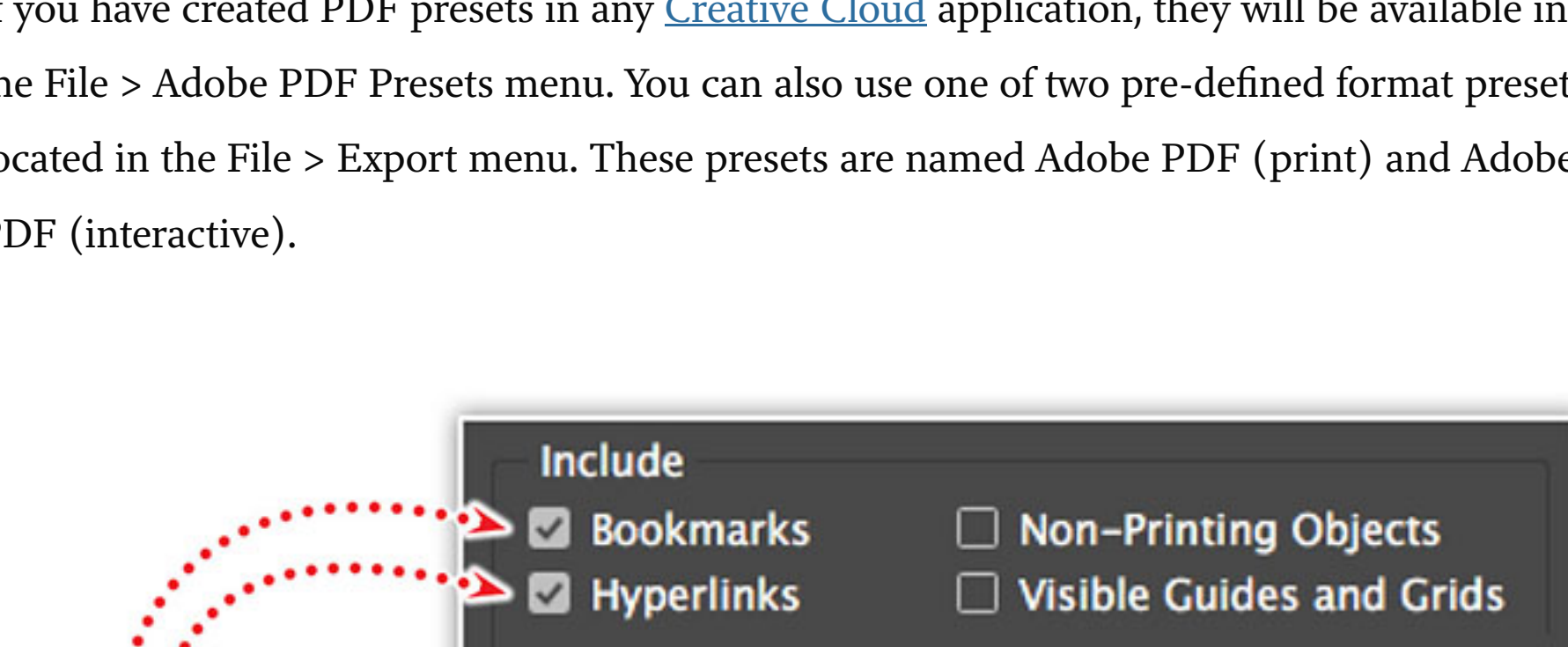
The Table of Contents is updated to reflect the current state of the InDesign document

After you have finished designing your document, you'll want to update the TOC entries and page numbers. Just as we did before, select the TOC text frame, then choose Update Table of Contents from the Layout menu. This will refresh the content of the TOC based on all of the settings we defined earlier.

Exporting an interactive PDF

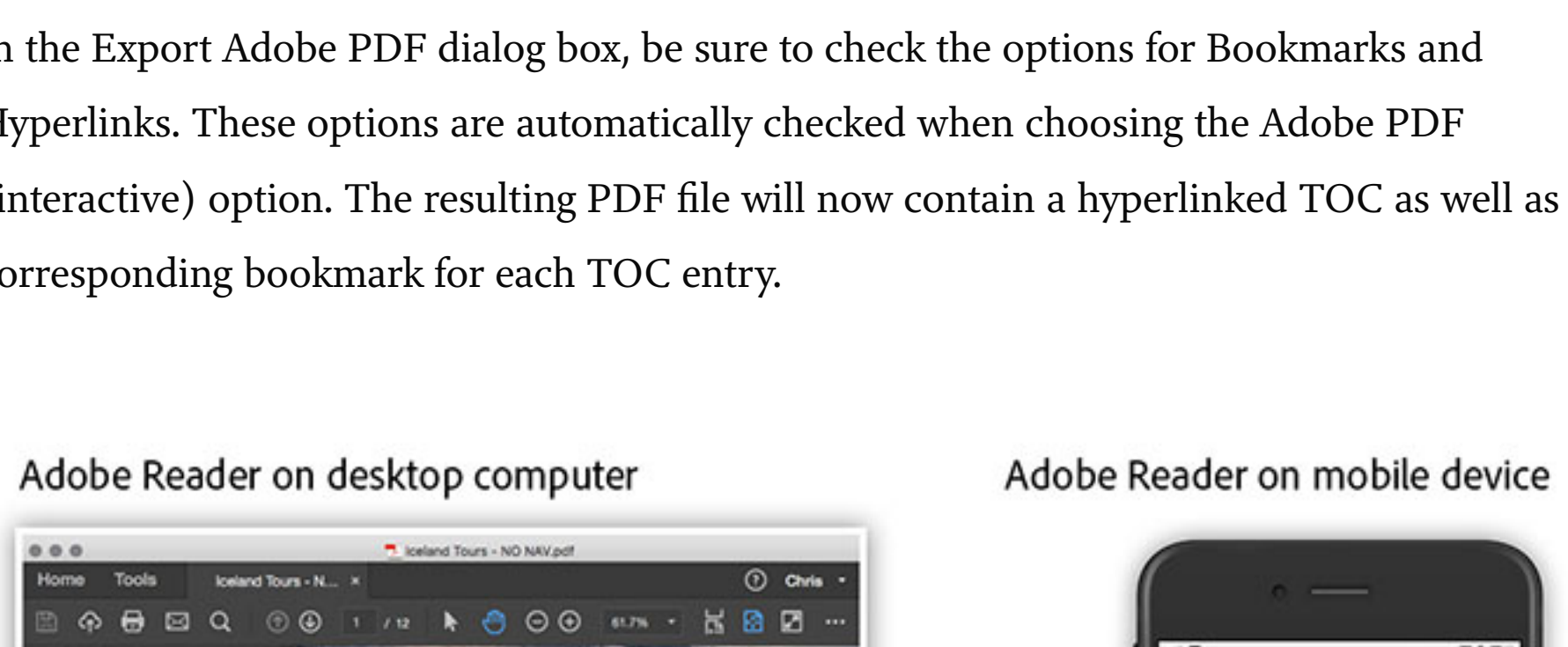
Now that we have added a TOC to our document, we'll need to make sure we check the options for Bookmarks and Hyperlinks in the PDF export dialog box. InDesign provides a few ways to export a PDF file.

If you have created PDF presets in any [Creative Cloud](#) application, they will be available in the File > Adobe PDF Presets menu. You can also use one of two pre-defined format presets located in the File > Export menu. These presets are named Adobe PDF (print) and Adobe PDF (interactive).



In order to preserve the links in your PDF file, be sure to include Bookmarks and Hyperlinks in the Adobe PDF dialog box

In the Export Adobe PDF dialog box, be sure to check the options for Bookmarks and Hyperlinks. These options are automatically checked when choosing the Adobe PDF (interactive) option. The resulting PDF file will now contain a hyperlinked TOC as well as a corresponding bookmark for each TOC entry.



Bookmarks and Hyperlinks generated from the Table of Contents feature of InDesign

Watch these features in action

Join Chris Converse in the [recorded webinar](#) and learn how features such as table of contents, hyperlinks, nested styles, and nested master pages to create a user-friendly interactive PDF for desktop computers and [mobile](#) devices.

In this session you'll learn to:

- Create paragraph and character styles.
- Define and update a table of contents for your document.
- Design documents for better usability.
- Use advanced styles for greater control.
- Add interactive content such as hyperlinks.

[Adobe Creative Cloud e-learning series:](#)

[Creating Interactive PDFs from InDesign](#)

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