



A quick start guide for the windows imigrant.

How to get Publisher or Print Shop results from Scribus

This guide covers Scribus 1.1.6 on a SuSE Linux 9.0 distribution

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I created this guide using 1.1.4, then updated it for 1.1.5 and 1.1.6. Not all of Scribus' features are used or covered in this guide. This document is intended for Linux wanabees migrating from Windows. It is not complete, and may contain information from on-line manuals at several locations on the web. The location I found most complete was <http://www.atlantictechsolutions.com/scribusdocs/index.html>. Creating this document became my way of learning to use Scribus, and I hope you find it useful. I am, by no means, a Scribus expert, and there may be better ways to do the things I describe, here. If you find them, please let me know, and I'll update this user guide.

The intention here is to help users of Microsoft Publisher or Print Shop achieve similar, or better results with Scribus. Windows imigrants take note: Scribus rivals professional design programs with advanced tools for serious desktop publishing. Depending on your computing expertise, the learning curve may be a little steep, but the results are worth the effort. Scribus has no pre-defined "wizards" or cookie cutter, big brother inspired templates. For instance a greeting card will not show up as 4 pages as in simpler publishing software. You will see the full page as it will be printed. Therefore, you must understand how your finished page will be folded to achieve the same result.

As with any software, remember to save your work often. Scribus 1.1.6 is very stable, but you never know. Hey, I'm cautious, I've been using to Windows XP. Scribus creates a ".emergency" file if possible so you might not lose all of your changes. For example, the emergency file for this document is "Manual.sla.emergency". Are these guys great, or what?

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Creating and editing text frames

One of the first things you'll discover is that Scribus is definitely *not* a good text editor or word processor. If you're going to have large sections of body style text, use a separate word processor to create the text, then copy and paste it into your Scribus text frame. The thinking here is why make a bloated publisher program when there are nice text editors already available on nearly every Linux distribution. When you paste text into Scribus, it needs to be unformatted. Scribus does not handle formatting from outside sources well.

Create a text frame by clicking the text frame button on the tool bar. Then click and drag the mouse pointer to create a text box. You can re-size and move it later. If you have text wrapping around an object, such as the icon in this paragraph, remember to make your frame a little larger than the graphic, and set the frame fill color to none, or your text might get clipped.

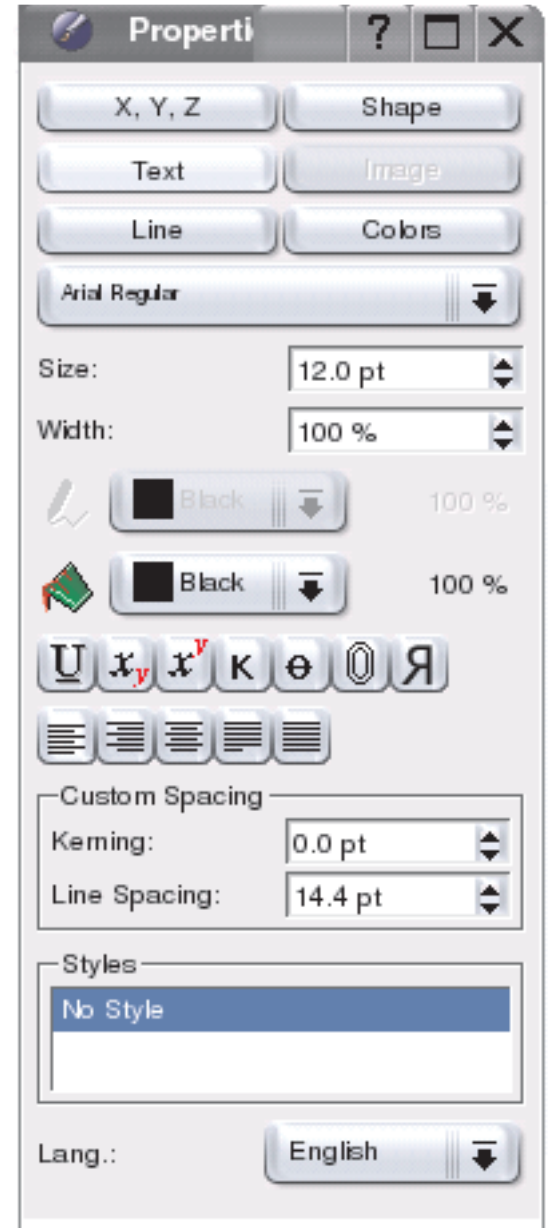
Here you'll discover several quirks not found in windows programs, and a few nice windows features you'll sorely miss. If you click the frame you get a move frame pointer, a second click will still serve up the move frame pointer. Double click the frame to edit the text content. Windows style text selection with the keyboard Shift + arrow keys is available with the 1.1.6 release. Windows style Shift+Insert does nothing, you'll have to select Paste from the Edit or right-click menu.

Once you have your text in place, you can format it. All the standard formatting is in the Properties Dialog, Mouse-select the text you want to work on, right click the selection, and select "Show Properties". In order to get bold or italic, you'll have to change the font. Its a pain at first, but not bad once you get used to it.

Paragraph formatting is also under the Style menu. Forced means justified here. You'll notice the forced format leaves the last line of the paragraph spanning the entire frame. To fix this, open the properties dialog and look at the text alignment buttons. There you'll find an option for "Align Text Block"

Frame formatting is found under the Tools>Properties menu. This brings up the properties dialog. Here, you can manually enter frame placement, sizing, angles, and all sorts of things. There are many options, and useful effects tools in the properties dialog. Options not available for the selected item are diminished.

fig.1 Text properties dialog



The Properties Dialog: One of the most important things to get acquainted with in Scribus. This example shows the text properties of the selected frame.

Something to pay attention to is your margins. If an outlined frame is right on the margin, it may not print that little sliver. The same applies to text. A frame with text right out to the edge that meets the margin might not print the entire letter. The edge of the letters may get shaved off.

The Properties Dialog

Get to know the properties dialog well. It is probably the single most important tool in Scribus! For each of the properties selection buttons, there is a different set of values displayed. Also the display is customized for whatever is selected in the document!

fig.2 XYZ Position properties dialog

The image shows the 'Properti' dialog box in Scribus, annotated with callouts. The dialog has a title bar with a question mark, a close button, and a maximize button. Below the title bar are several selection buttons: 'X, Y, Z', 'Shape', 'Text', 'Image', 'Line', and 'Colors'. The 'X, Y, Z' button is currently selected. Below these buttons is a 'Name' field containing 'Item9 Sat Mar 6 20:00:01 2004'. The 'Geometry' section contains five spinners: 'X-Pos: 0.5139 in', 'Y-Pos: 1.8056 in', 'Width: 4.5537 in', 'Height: 7.6944 in', and 'Rotation: 0.00'. Below the spinners is a 'Basepoint' section with a 2x2 grid of circles, the top-left one containing a dot. To the right of the 'Basepoint' section are 'Level' controls with four arrow buttons and two lock/unlock icons. At the bottom are two checkboxes: 'Text flows around Box' (checked) and 'Use Bounding Box' (unchecked). Annotations include: 'Frame size and placement' pointing to the 'X, Y, Z' button; 'Text properties currently diminished' pointing to the 'Text' button; 'Line size and placement' pointing to the 'Line' button; 'Selected item properties (values, settings, orientation, etc.)' pointing to the 'Geometry' section; 'Rotation tool: The spot with the dot in it will be the central rotation point. In this example, the top left corner of the selected frame will remain stationary' pointing to the dot in the 'Basepoint' grid; 'Horizontal and Vertical frame flip buttons' pointing to the four arrow buttons; 'Frame Lock and Print enable toggle buttons' pointing to the lock and print icons; 'Frame shape, text margins, etc.' pointing to the 'Shape' button; 'Image properties' pointing to the 'Image' button; 'Color selections for fill, lines, gradients, etc.' pointing to the 'Colors' button; and 'Rotation tool degree setting: 180 will flip the image upside down, 90 will turn it on its side, and 270 will turn it on its other side. Of course, any angle will be accepted.' pointing to the 'Rotation' spinner.

Frame size and placement

Text properties currently diminished

Line size and placement

Selected item properties (values, settings, orientation, etc.)

This section will change according to the properties button selected at the top of the dialog box.

Rotation tool: The spot with the dot in it will be the central rotation point. In this example, the top left corner of the selected frame will remain stationary

Horizontal and Vertical frame flip buttons

Frame shape, text margins, etc.

Image properties

Color selections for fill, lines, gradients, etc.

Rotation tool degree setting: 180 will flip the image upside down, 90 will turn it on its side, and 270 will turn it on its other side. Of course, any angle will be accepted.

In this example, you can adjust the hierarchy level, or placement of the selected frame to send it behind, or bring it in front of other frames.

Frame Lock and Print enable toggle buttons

Gradient Fills and special effects

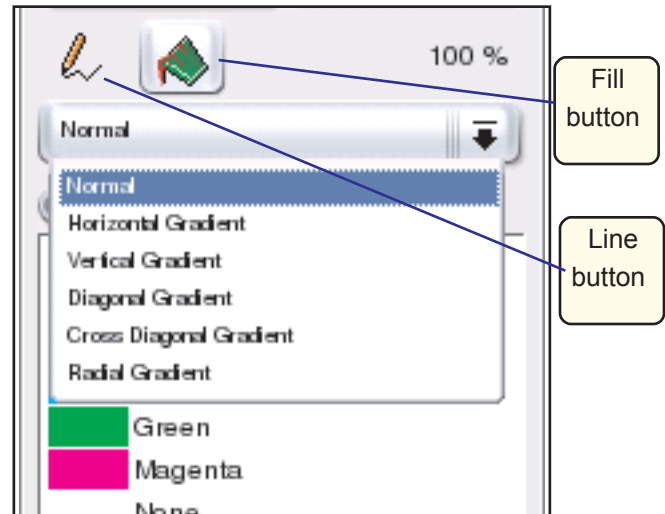
Some special effects are built in and easy. Text color is available on the Style menu, and Outlined off the Style>Style menu will give you a nice, neat black outline of each letter. The really fancy stuff takes a little effort. But, its easy once you know the steps to take, and where to find the right buttons to push. The following are the basic steps for a

- 1 Create a text box, and type something in it. You might want to enlarge the text.
- 2 Click outside the text frame to "deselect" it, then click it again so the "Item" menu is available.
- 3 Under the Item menu, click "convert to outline."
- 4 Right click the text and select "un-group" from the pop-up menu.
- 5 Click and drag the mouse to select all the text as a group.
- 6 Under the Item menu, click "combine polygons."
- 7 Under the Tools menu, select properties to display the properties dialog.
- 8 Click "colors". The fill button should be active.
- 9 Under the paint can is a drop-down list with "normal" in it. Click the drop-down arrow to reveal the selections and select horizontal gradient.
- 10 Select a color for color #1, then click the #2 radio button to select the secondary color. You will see the results in the text immediately.
- 11 Click the line button under it to activate the line controls.
- 12 Click on a color, and watch in horror as your beautifully filled text becomes one big blob!
- 13 Click the line button toward the top of the dialog to set the line properties.
- 14 Click the down arrow adjust button under line width to narrow the outlines.

gradient fill:

You're done with the gradient fill, now add an outline: You now have outlined, gradient filled text. Steps 7 through 14 can be used to adjust the colors and outlines of frames also. The two frames at the top of this page were created with these steps.

fig.3 Colors Properties dialog



The Colors properties dialog. The fill button is active, and the fill type drop-down menu is shown.

fig.4 Line Properties dialog



The Lines properties dialog.
This is self explanatory.

Text on a path... It's better than Word Art!



To create text on a path.

- 1 Create a text box then enter the text.
- 2 Create a bezier curve with the desired shape.
- 3 Select the two items with the mouse.
- 4 Under the Item menu click "attach to path".

Double clicking the resulting item will enable editing the shape of the bezier curve. Right click the item for a pop-up menu that will allow you to edit your text. Other text styles are still available under the Styles menu.

If you haven't worked with Bezier curves before, you need to make one and start fiddling with points and angles.

- 1 Click the bezier curve tool under the toolbar line button.
- 2 Click several places on your page.
- 3 When you've made two or more points, right click to finish the creation process and your line will appear.
- 4 Double click the object, and the curve editing dialog appears.

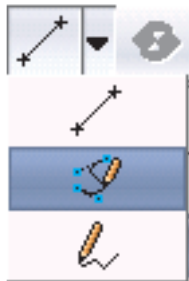
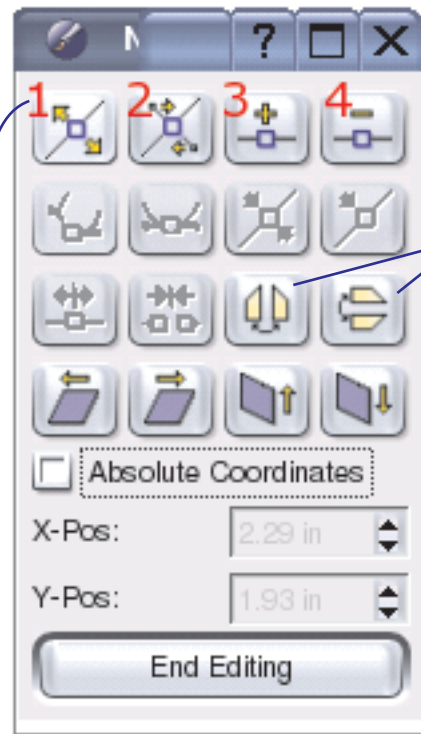


fig.5 Bezier Curve / Shape Properties dialog



Horizontal and Vertical flip buttons

Bezier Curve Dialog Functions

Button #1 Move Nodes: A node is a point on the curve. Wherever you clicked when creating the curve there will be a node. When you move a node, the curve shape changes accordingly.

Button #2 Move Control points: A control point sets the angle of the curve from its attached node. A node at the end of the curve has one control point. A node in the middle of the curve has two control points, one for each direction. Also, the farther away a control point is from the node, the more exaggerated the curve will become between the attached node and the adjacent node.

Buttons 3 and 4 add or delete nodes respectively.

Move your mouse over the remaining buttons to display their respective functions.

Drop caps . . . Shading, and other special effects.

There are no built-in shadow tools in Scribus. This is a double edged sword. On one edge you must create the shadows manually, on the other you have much greater control over the effects. You can control color, placement, thickness of shadow, extra outlines, and more. That extra control is well worth the extra effort needed to create shadows. The effects above were created in about 10 minutes. About 7 of those minutes were spent in learning how. Scribus 1.1.5 provides a tool for a drop cap style, however you must create the style, and you are stuck with the font size. I'm sure this will be fixed, and if you have a version newer than 1.1.5 look for better drop cap tools.

The steps I used to create the title Drop Cap and Shadow effects are:

Drop caps:

- 1 Create a text box for the first letter.
- 2 Set the font size to 100, 120, or some other large value.
- 3 Use the Properties dialog to set text color, text outlines, and outline color.
- 4 Create another text box for the rest of your text.
- 5 Set colors and outlines as desired.
- 6 Align these two text boxes for the best effect. Your drop cap text box may be partly off the page due to the font size. No problem, just make sure the printed part is within the margins.

Your Drop Cap is finished. Now for the Shadow effect. continuing from above:

- 1 Select both text boxes. **Note the X and Y Pos values in the properties dialog.** then click "duplicate" under the item menu.
- 2 With the properties dialog, change the text color to a new color for the shadow. For example, to get grey, use black as the color and change the 100% to 30 or 40%.
- 3 Using the properties dialog, set the X and Y values slightly higher than the main text box values. This will set your shadow to the right, and below the main text. See fig.2 on page 3.
- 4 Now use the level selectors to move the shadow text beneath the main text. In Scribus 1.1.4 this must be set for each individual text box.

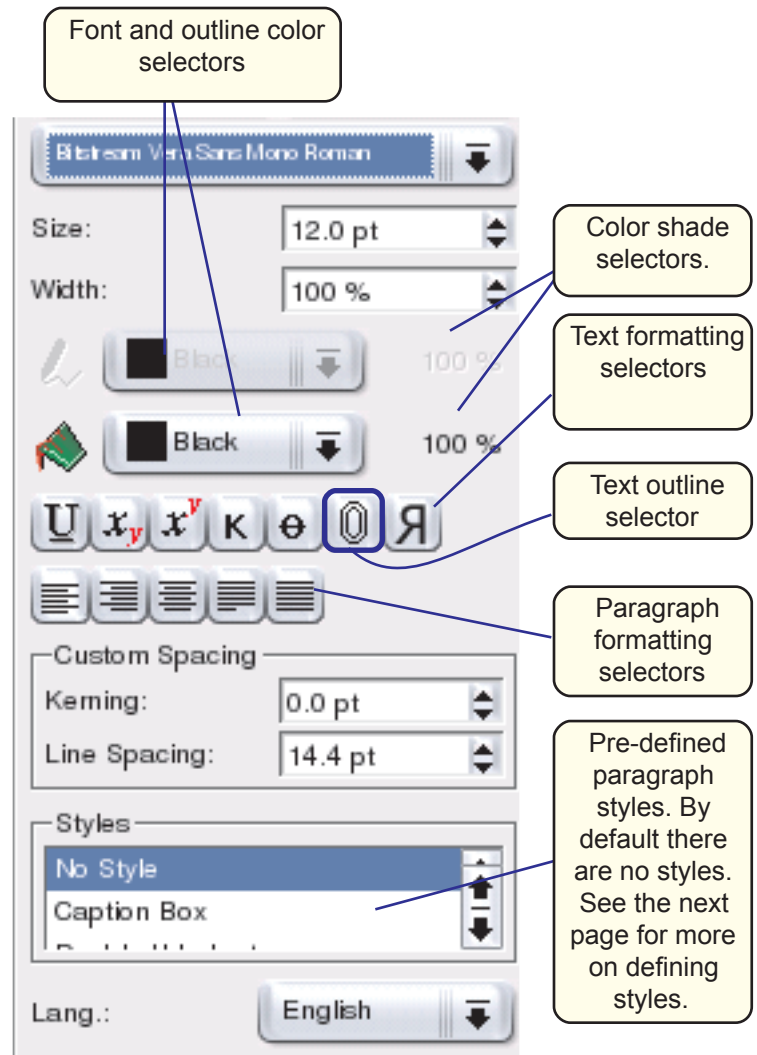


fig.6 Text Properties dialog

FYI: Kerning is spacing between characters

The Color Palette & Styles Pg 7

Now that you have some basic stuff, it's time to work with colors. Scribus comes stocked with the basic 8 colors, but is capable of true color. The picture to the right shows the dialog you get when you click "Colors" under the "Edit" menu. If you click on the colors, you'll notice the "edit" button becomes available for all colors except black, cyan, magenta, and yellow. That's because those 4 colors are the basis for defining all other colors of the spectrum. Click the "New" button and fill in a name for your new color. I chose "Pirkle". Click Ok and the edit color dialog appears.

In the color editor select the color model. Tinker with it as you like, I left it on CMYK. Then start finding the color you're looking for. You have several options on how to proceed. Just as in other color selectors you may be familiar with. Scribus provides a full spectrum palette that you can click and drag around to watch your



fig.7 Colors Editor Selection Dialog

new color change instantly. Or, you can use the sliders to change individual color components. Or, you can enter values directly. Click the Ok button, and your new color is in the list of available colors.

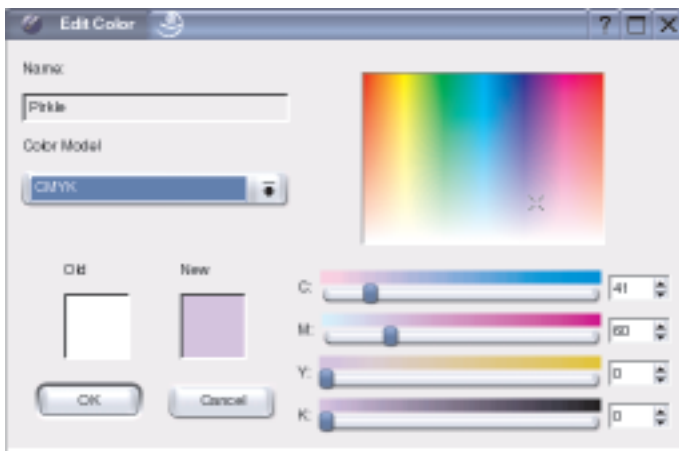


fig.8 Colors Editor

The Edit Color dialog should be very familiar to Windows imigrants. If not, fiddle around with it to see just how easy it is.

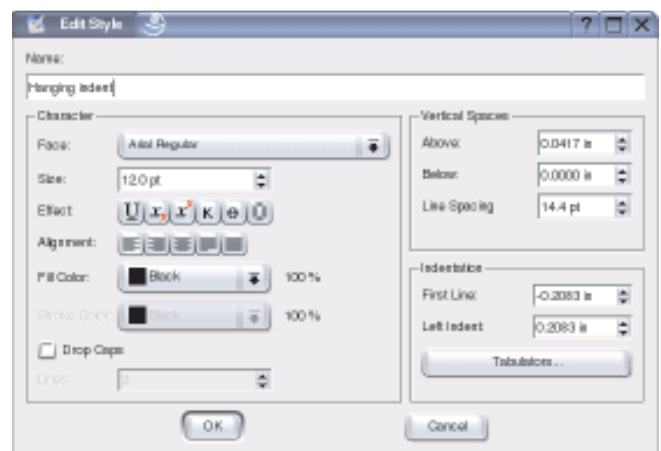


fig.9 Styles Editor

The Edit Style dialog sets custom defined paragraph formats, including fonts. It's pretty self explanatory. See below for a discussion of Styles.

There are no pre-defined paragraph formats in Scribus that I have found. So, if you need bulleted or numbered lists, hanging indents, etc you'll have to create a style.

- 1 Click Styles... under the Edit menu.
- 2 An edit styles dialog appears similar to the colors dialog.
- 3 Click the New button and the Edit Style dialog appears as illustrated above.
- 4 This is pretty straight forward. Style name, face (font), size, alignment, etc.
- 5 Vertical spaces above and below are spaces between paragraphs.
- 6 Use the Indentation section for first line and hanging indents. First line indent is simple, just enter a value in the first line box. For hanging indents, set the First Line as a negative value, and the Left Indent as a positive value that offsets the First Line value.

Now, when you're formatting your text with the Properties dialog, you can select your new style, and the selected style applies to the paragraph selected. If you have no paragraph selected, the style applies to the entire text frame you currently have selected.

Frame Outlines and Fills

No doubt, you've noticed things get fancier as this document progresses. Frame fills, outlines and such make for more dynamic presentations. Here's how to get your text frames looking good.

- 1 Create a text frame.
 - 2 Open the Properties dialog.
 - 3 Click the "Line" button. Here, you can set the line thickness, and pre-defined line endings.
 - 4 Click the "Shape" button. These simple settings get your captions, and text frames looking clean and sharp.
- Use the pre-defined shapes button for quick effects, or click on the "Edit Shape" button to open the Bezier Curve Dialog that allows full shape control.
 - Use the "Round Corners" value to set simple rounded corners. The text box above has this value set at 6 pts.
 - Use the "Distance of Text" values to set the inside margins of the text box. This is useful to maintain space between your text and the frame edge when you have the text box outlined. Most of the outlined text frames in this document have these values at 1 pt. for both top and bottom, 5 pts. for left, and 7 pts. for right margins. As you can see, you also set columns, and tabs here.

You should be familiar with the colors section of the Properties dialog by now. When you have the frame only selected (no text or contents), the color and line buttons control the frame fill and outline.

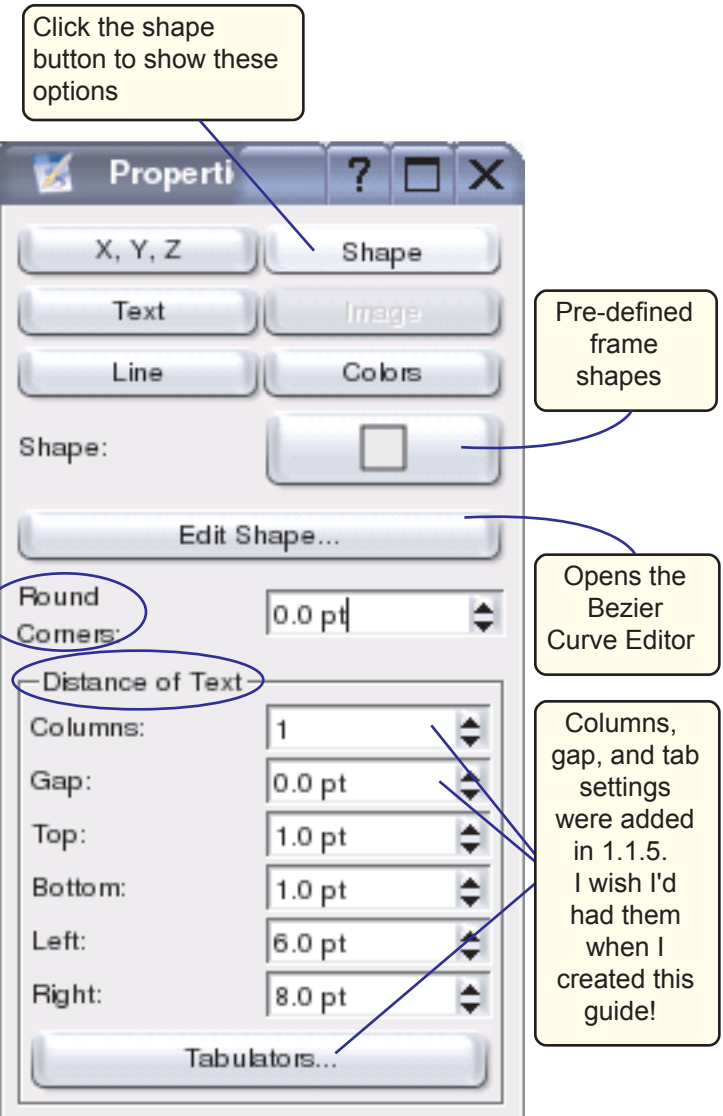


fig.10 Frame Shape Properties Dialog



The Title was made with three frames, all with the "Text flows around box" option unchecked.

- 1 A text frame was created with fill and outlines.
- 2 That frame was duplicated, fill and outlines were cleared, and text was added with Magenta fill and outlines. This frame was placed lightly above and left of the first frame.
- 3 That frame was duplicated, and text color changed to Pinkle with black outlines. This frame was place directly over the first frame.