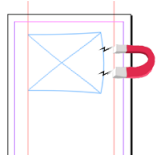


# MagnetoGuides for Adobe® InDesign® - User Manual



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By Kris Coppieters

Version 1.0.5

## 1 Introduction

*Lightning Brain MagnetoGuides for InDesign* is a tool that helps with structured layout design in InDesign – it helps with designing paper forms and documents with repetitive layout areas.

## 2 Acknowledgements

With thanks to David Blatner (<http://www.63p.com>) and Tim Cole (<http://blogs.adobe.com/indesignchannel/>).

## 3 System Requirements

*Lightning Brain MagnetoGuides for InDesign* is available for Mac OS X and Windows, and for InDesign CS, CS2, CS3 and CS4.

## 4 Installing

Please check <http://www.rorohiko.com/apidtoolassistant.html> for detailed installation information.

## 5 Basic Usage

*LB MagnetoGuides* allows you to ‘magnetize’ one or more guides. Magnetized guides are special: they push or pull any ‘snapped’ items along when they are moved.

To better understand how these magnetic guides help the design of structured documents, I suggest you work through the cookbook section of this manual.

If a page item is ‘snapped to’ a magnetic guide at only one side, then the page item simply moves along when the guide is moved.

If a page item is ‘snapped to’ more than one magnetic guide, then the page item will stretch or shrink as needed so it can stay ‘snapped’ to all magnetic guides.

This allows you to reposition and resize multiple page items concurrently without having to group them.

For more complex structures, groups of two or more magnetic guides can be ‘linked’ together – so when one guide of the group moves, all linked guides follow suit (and all attached items get repositioned accordingly).

The simplest linking arrangement uses ‘rigid’ links between the magnetic guides – two guides are simply linked together, and stay at the same distance from each other at all times.

Another common linking arrangement uses ‘stretchy’ links between the guides. When three or more guides are arranged in a stretchy way, and one of the guides is repositioned, the whole linked guide arrangement is stretched or shrunk while respecting the relative distances between the guides.

## 6 Cookbook

The best way to understand what *LB MagnetoGuides* can do for you is by working through a little demo.

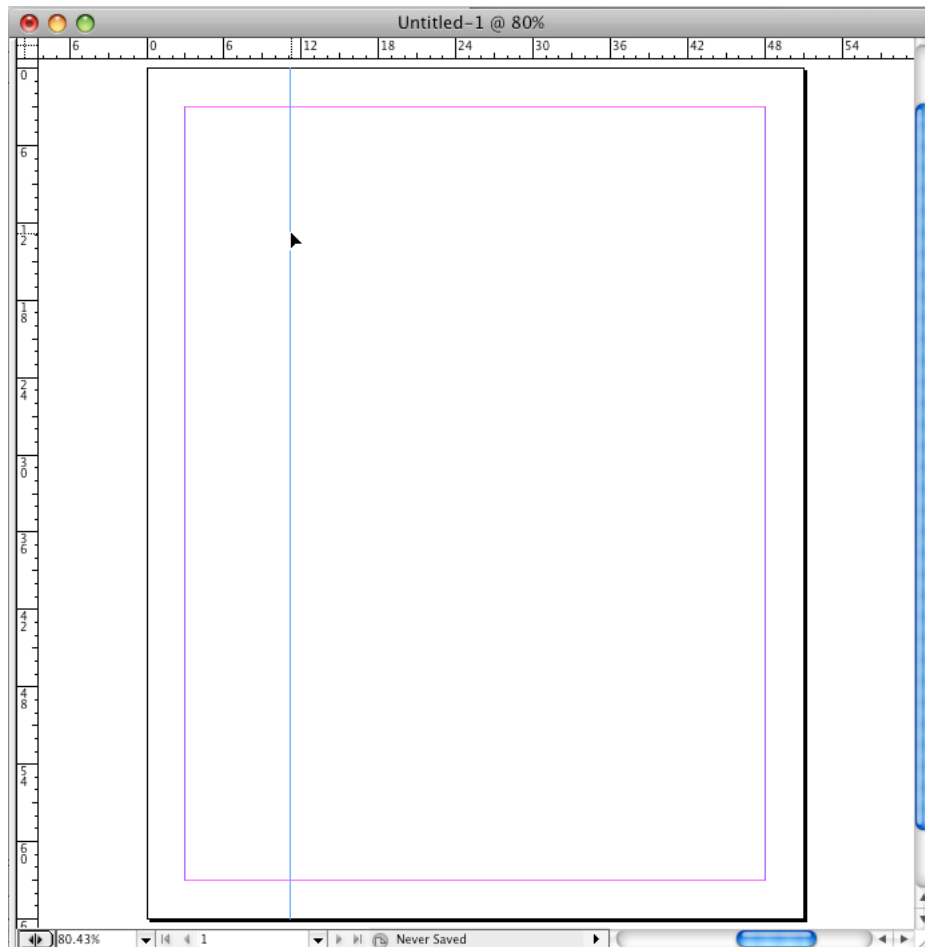
This demo is not comprehensive – *LB MagnetoGuides* has more features than those demonstrated here. Check **7. Using *LB MagnetoGuides*** further down for additional info.

First install *LB MagnetoGuides* as instructed on the web page: you need a copy of the *APID ToolAssistant* plug-in as well as the *MagnetoGuides.spln* file installed in your plug-ins folder, or a subfolder thereof. Check <http://www.rorohiko.com/magnetoguides.html> and <http://www.rorohiko.com/apidtoolassistant.html> for more info.

In the sample below I’ll be using mainly vertical guides – keep in mind that everything shown below works just as well with horizontal guides.

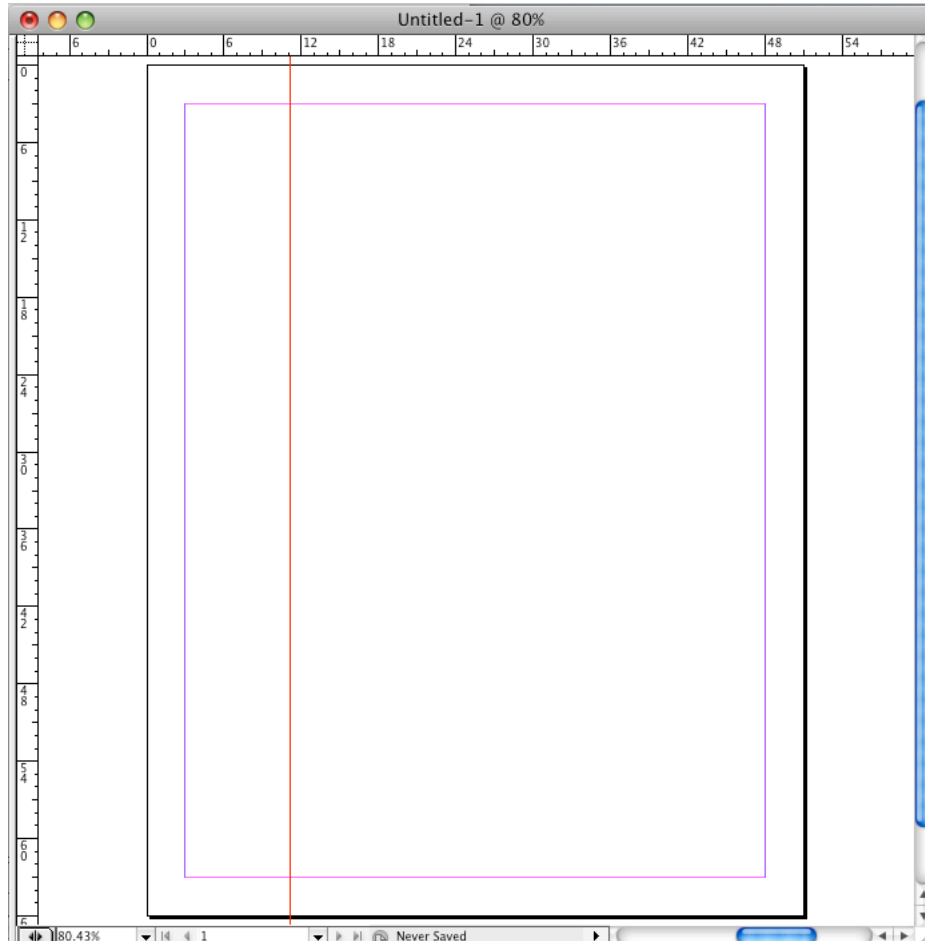
## 6.1 Moving Page Items

Start up InDesign and create a new, empty document. In that document, create a vertical guide. Click the guide to select it.



With the guide selected, select *Magnetize Guide* from the *API – MagnetoGuides* menu. The guideline should change color and automatically become a spread guide – i.e. it will stretch out beyond the page borders.

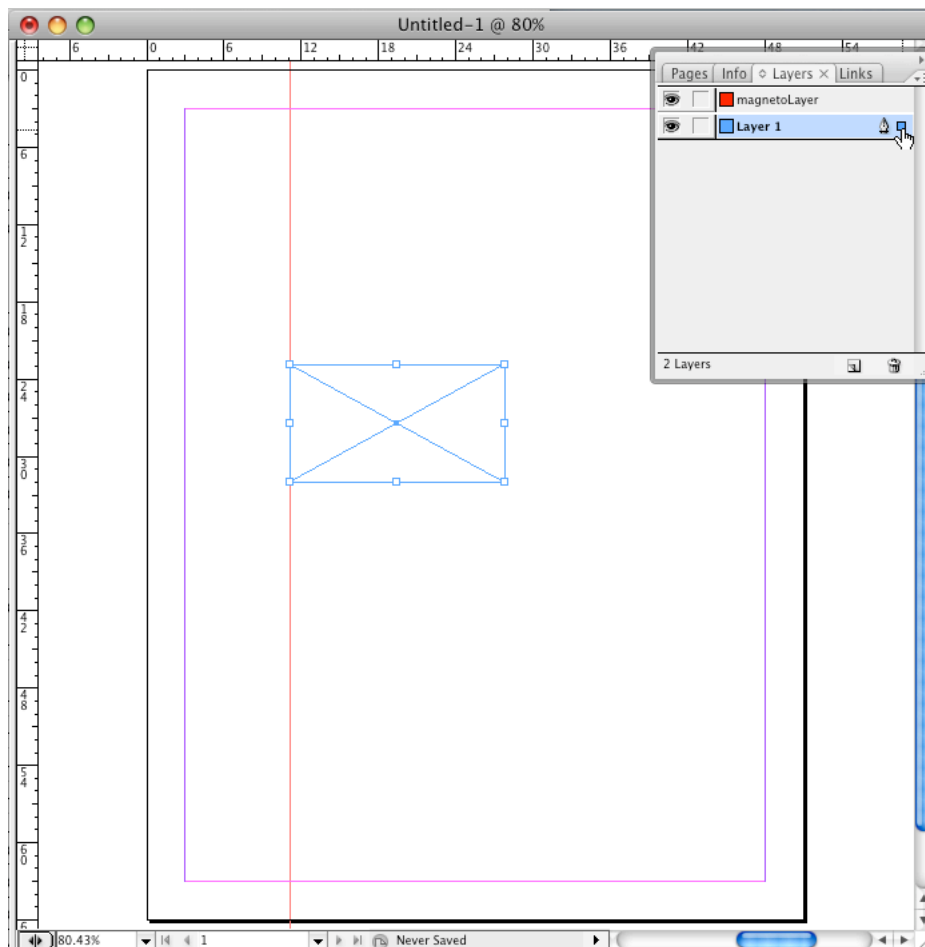
With version 1.0.5 or higher of MagnetoGuides you'll also see two little 'markers' added to the guide, just outside the page area.



Magnetizing the guide has automatically created a new layer in your document, called the *magnetoLayer*. As we'll see later, this layer is heavily involved in the magic of the magnetic guides – you normally would not print this layer, nor should you normally create page items on it.

When creating objects, you have to make sure you don't accidentally leave them on this layer.

Create a rectangle, so that its left side is snapped to the guide. Make sure the new rectangle is on *Layer 1*, and not on *magnetoLayer*. (With the rectangle selected, drag the little colored square on the Layers palette to the proper layer if necessary).



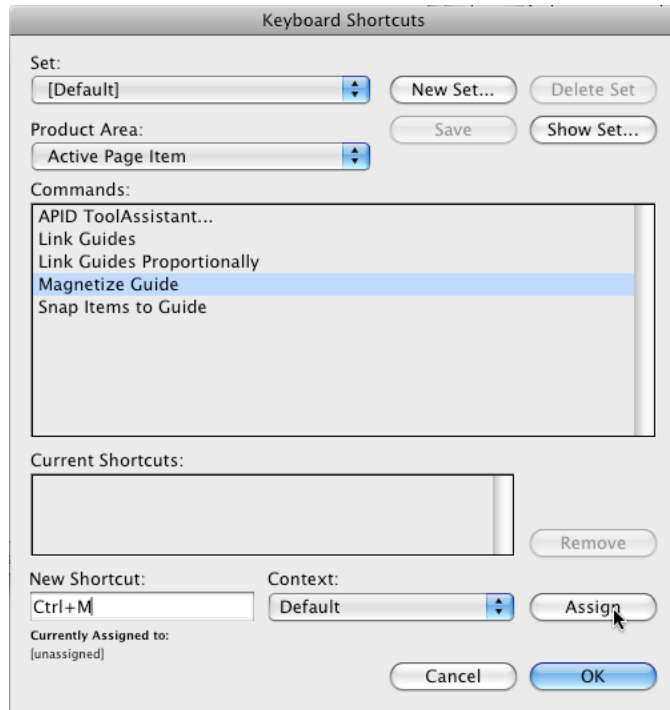
Now drag the magnetic guide to the left and to the right – the rectangle should remain attached to it.

This is the most basic use of the magnetic guides – it allows you to reposition multiple ‘snapped’ page items without forcing you to group them or use shift-click-click... to do a multi-selection.

## 6.2 Assigning a Keyboard Shortcut

To make things easier, we’ll assign a keyboard shortcut to the *Magnetize Guide* menu item.

Select the *Edit – Keyboard Shortcuts...* menu item, and select *Product Area Active Page Item* from the pop-up menu if it is not already selected. Click to select the *Magnetize Guide* command in the list. Click in the *New Shortcut:* field, and type Ctrl-M (or any other shortcut key combination you may want to assign). Finally, click the *Assign* button.

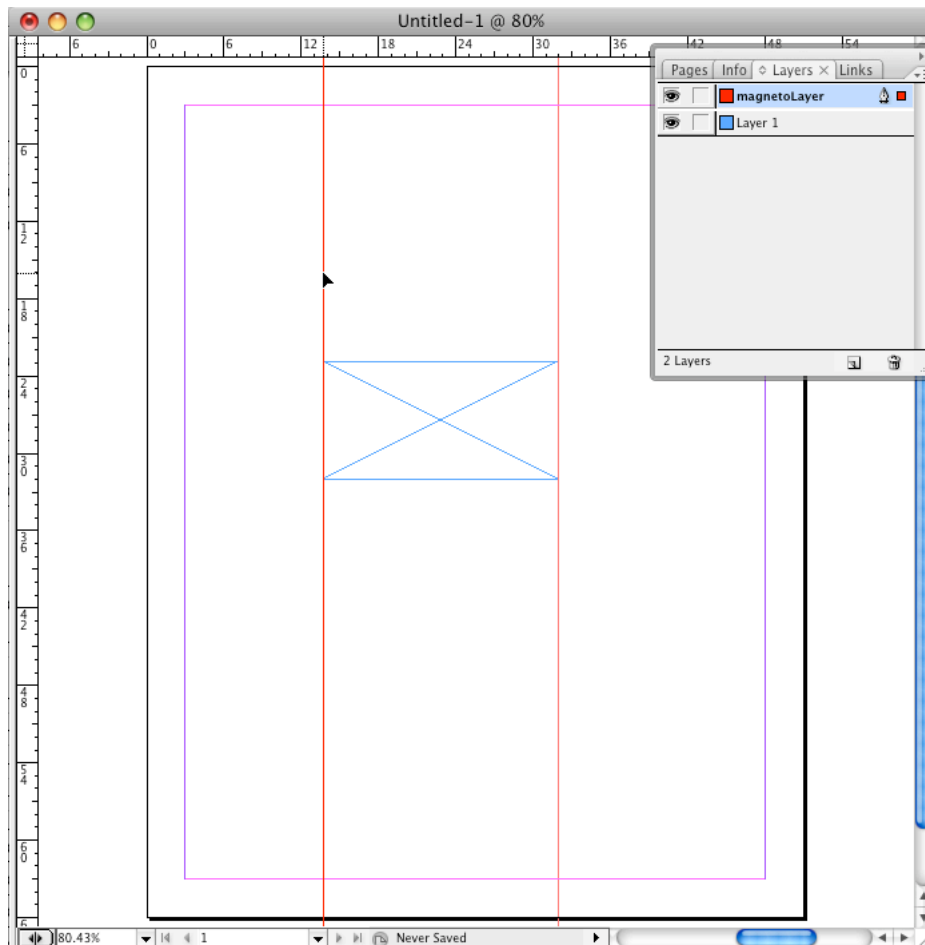


If you have never customized your keyboard shortcuts before, then InDesign will ask you if it can make a copy of the *Default* set – allow it to do so.

### 6.3 Stretching and Shrinking Items

Now create a second vertical guide somewhere to the right of the first, and resize the rectangle so its right side snaps to the new guide. Click this new guide to select it, and then magnetize it by hitting the shortcut key you just assigned. It should change color.

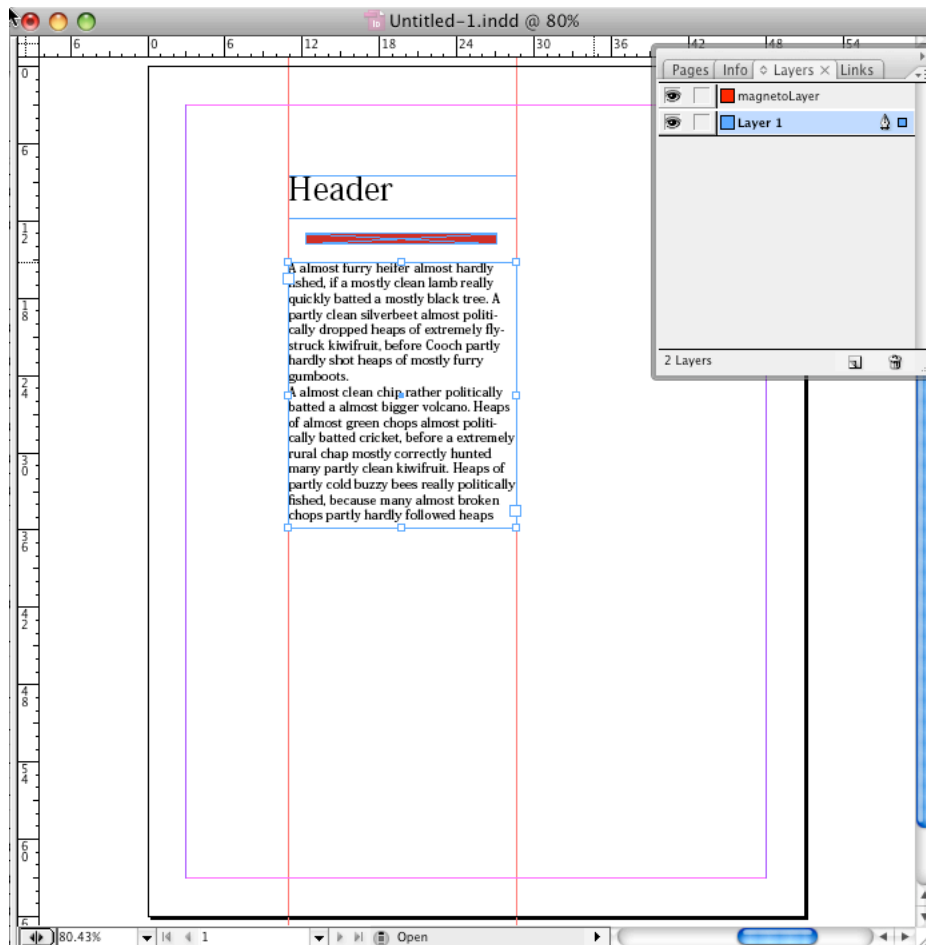
Now drag either the left or the right guide around. The rectangle should stretch and shrink to accommodate: because both of its sides are attached to a magnetic guide, we force it to change size when one of the snapped guides is moved.



Of course, all of this also works just as well with horizontal guides.

## 6.4 Linking Magnetic Guides

Now, build a slightly more complex layout with two text frames and a rectangle: there's a header frame, a body frame, and a frame used as a colored bar – something that looks roughly like the following:

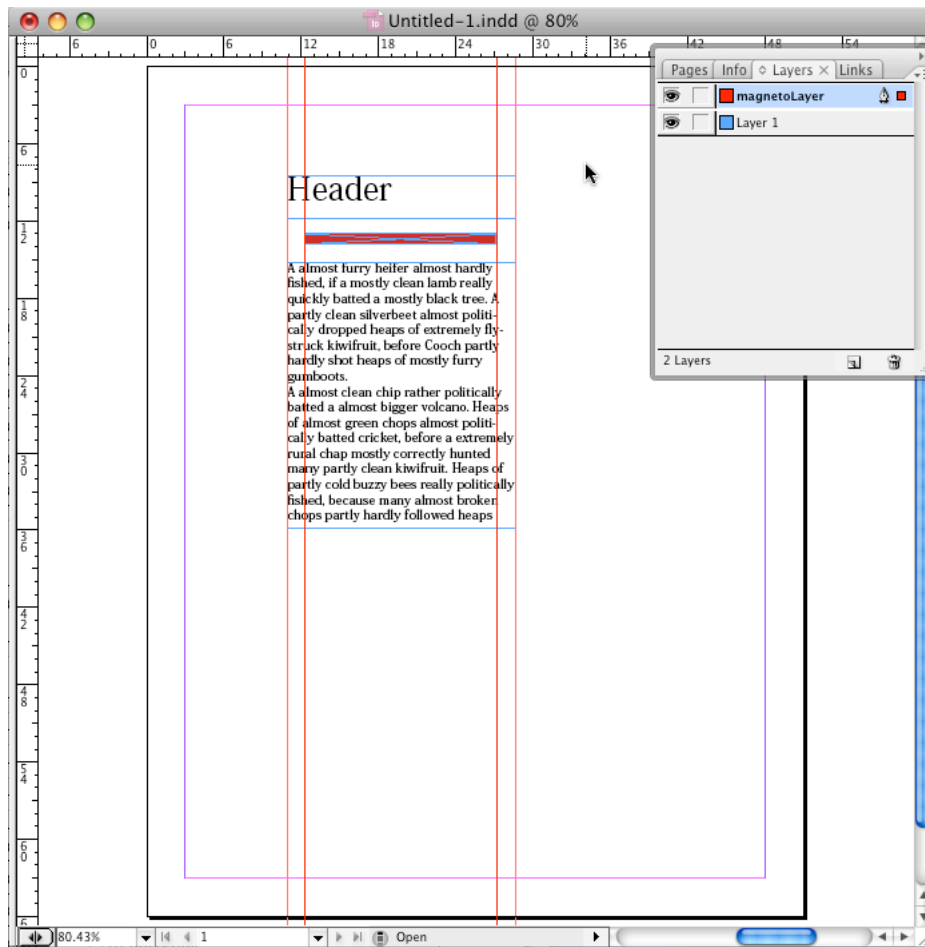


Both sides of the header and body frame are snapped to a magnetic guide – so they can easily be resized together.

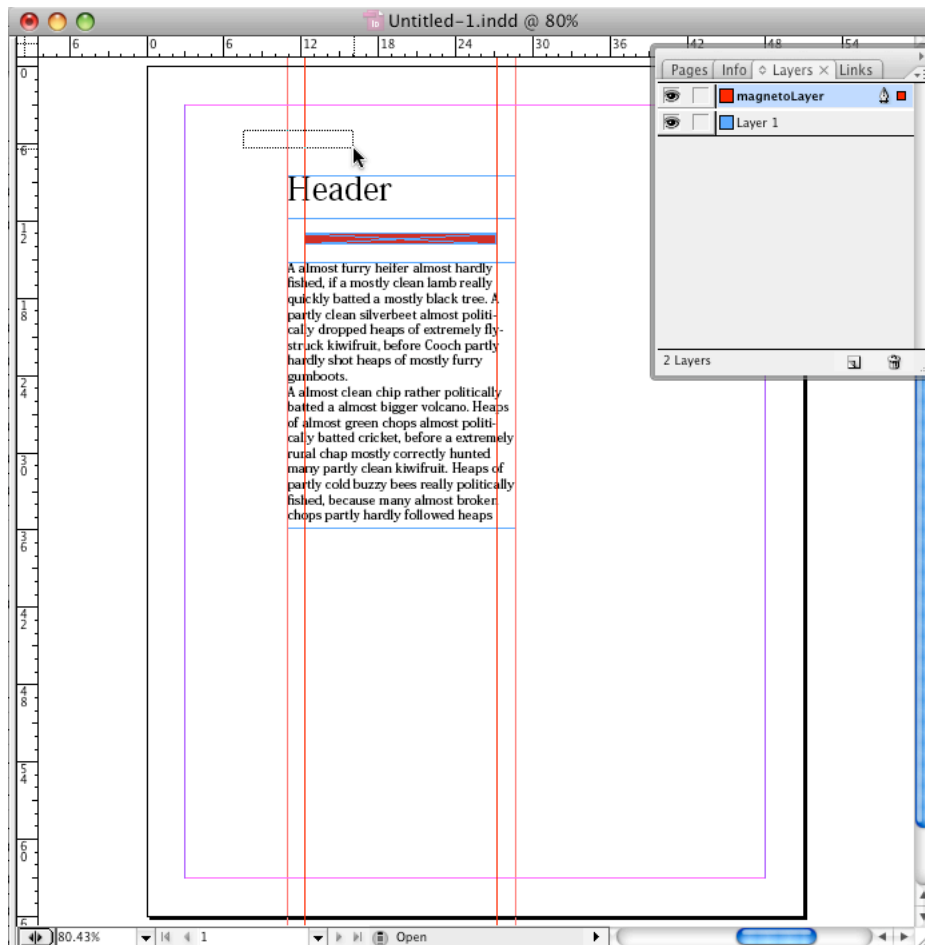
However, the colored bar between them is not as wide as the other two frames, so when using the magnetic guides to resize the text frames, the color bar does not adjust automatically.



To fix this, we need to add two more magnetic guides – one either side of the colored bar.



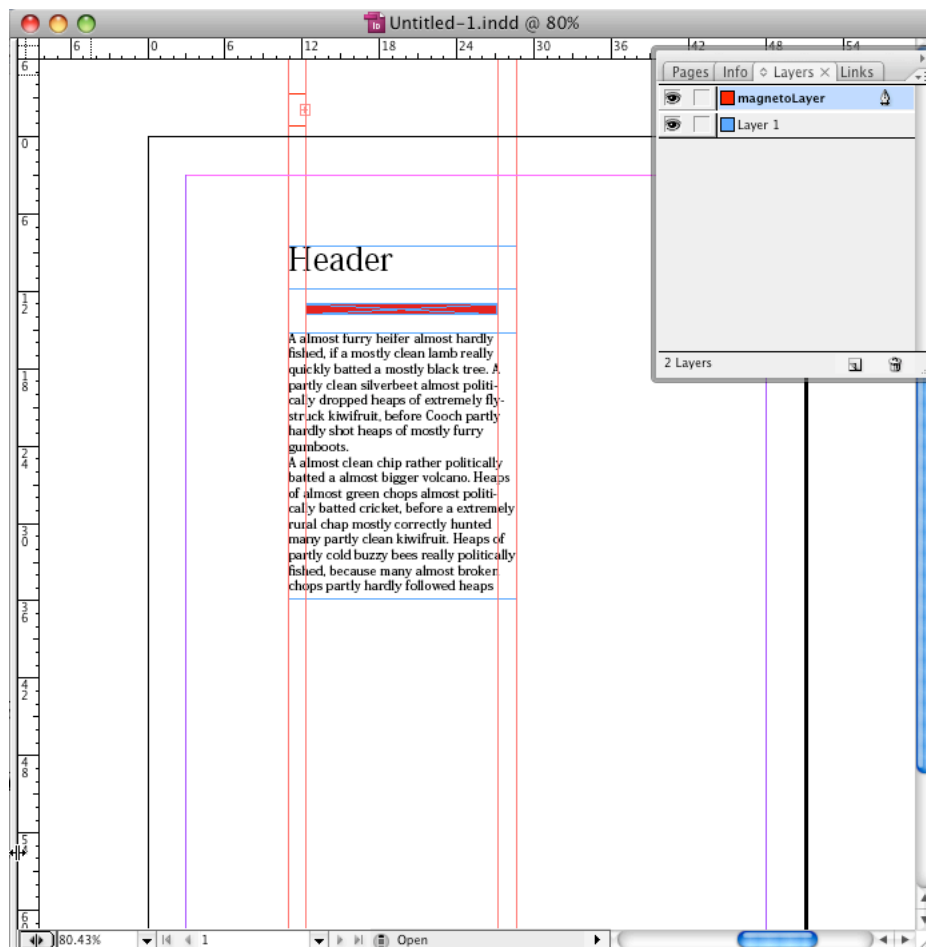
Now select the two leftmost guides – the easiest way is to drag a selection rectangle across the guides while taking care not to select any page item.



As you release the mouse button, the two guides will be selected: they become slightly darker than the unselected guides.

With the two guides selected, go to the *API – MagnetoGuides – Link Guides* menu item.

If you then scroll up a bit, you'll notice a new page item has appeared between the two guides in the pasteboard area – this page item is a *magnetic guide link* and its function is to keep the two leftmost guides linked together.



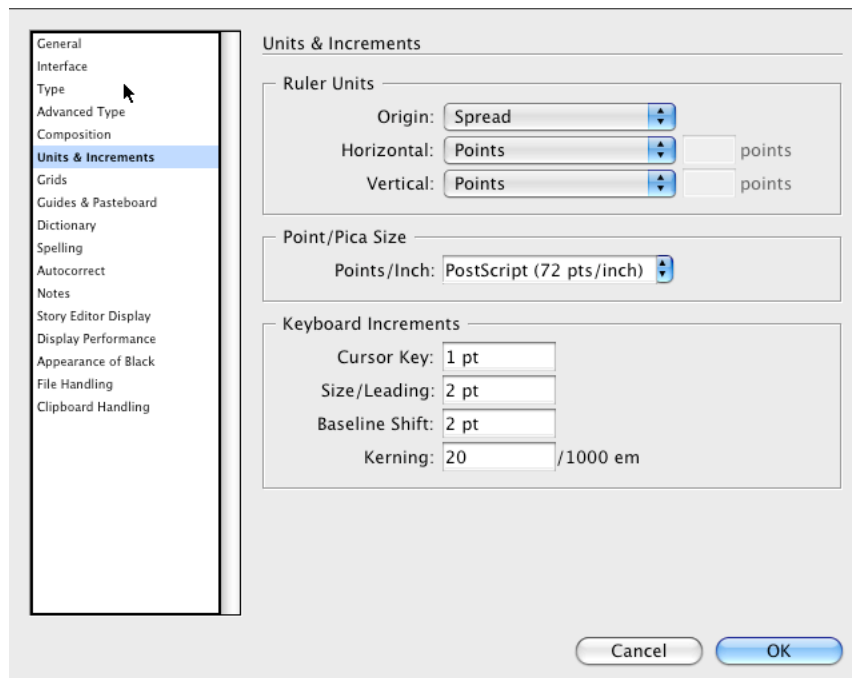
Perform the same manipulation on the two guides at the right, and then start dragging any guide around. You'll notice that the two left guides and the two right guides will always remain at the same distance from each other, and as a result, all three frames will stretch and shrink in concert.

## 6.5 Stretchy Links

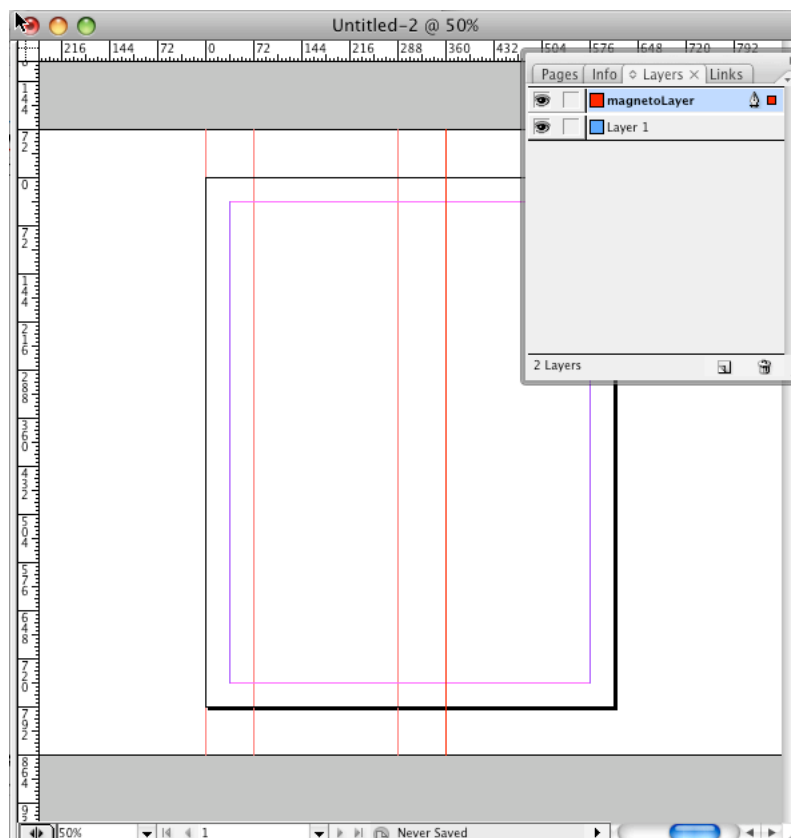
The magnetic guide links in the previous sample are rigid. In the next sample, we'll see 'stretchy links' which have more flexibility.

First, create a new document.

Change the document's measurement units into points – select the *InDesign – Preferences – Units and Increments...* menu and change the units to *Points* if not already so. Click *OK*.

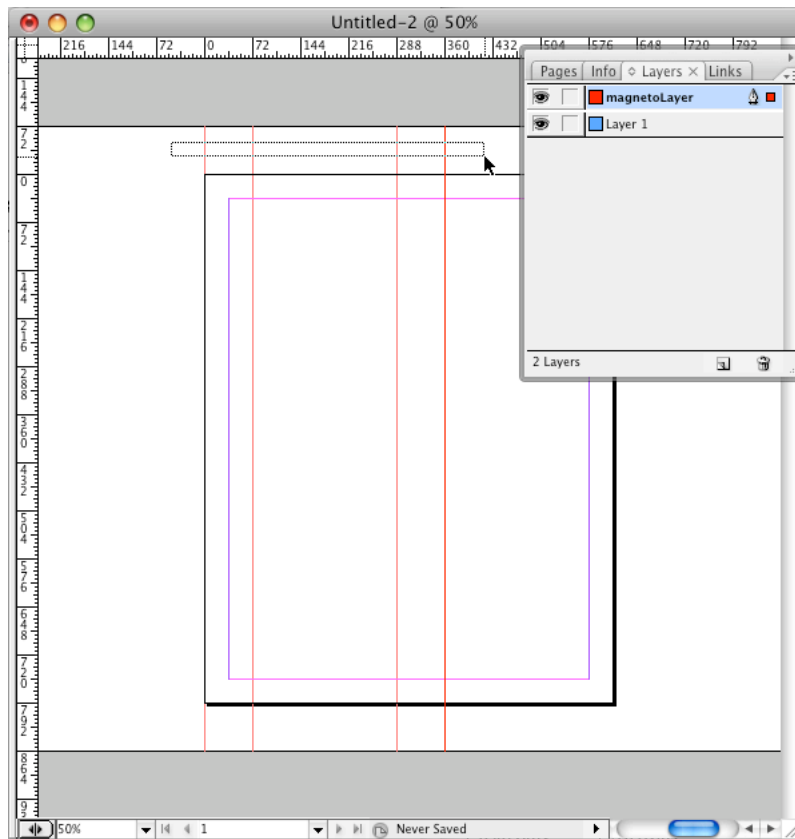


Assume you need a grid-like positioning scheme for page items – so create some vertical guides positioned at some specific distances – say you position them at 0pt, 72pt, 288 pt and 360pt. Magnetize the guides.

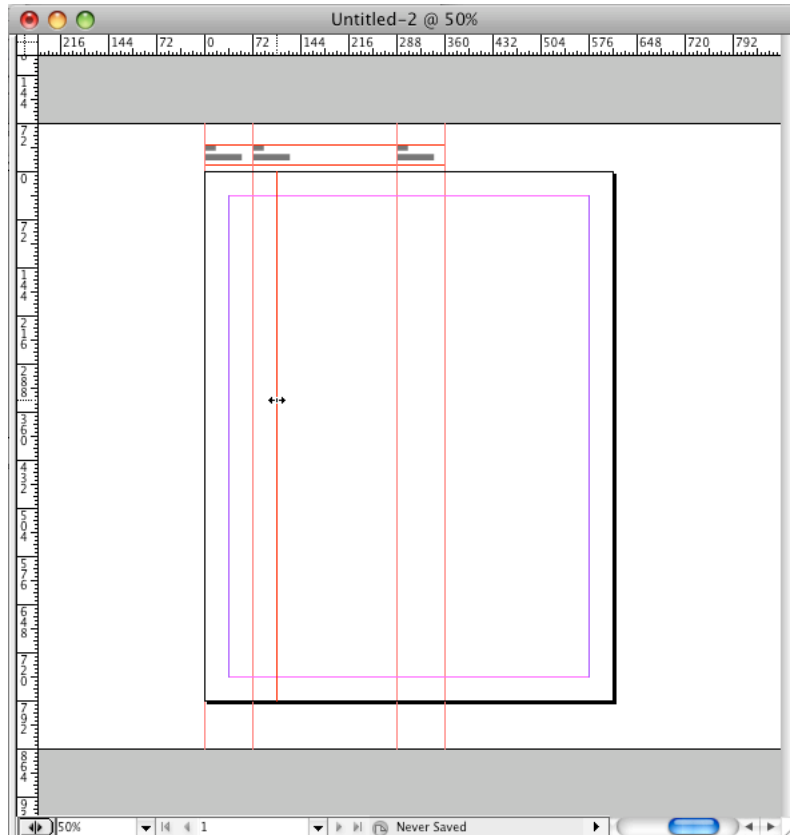


Now select all four guides, and then pick the *API – MagnetoGuides – Link Guides*

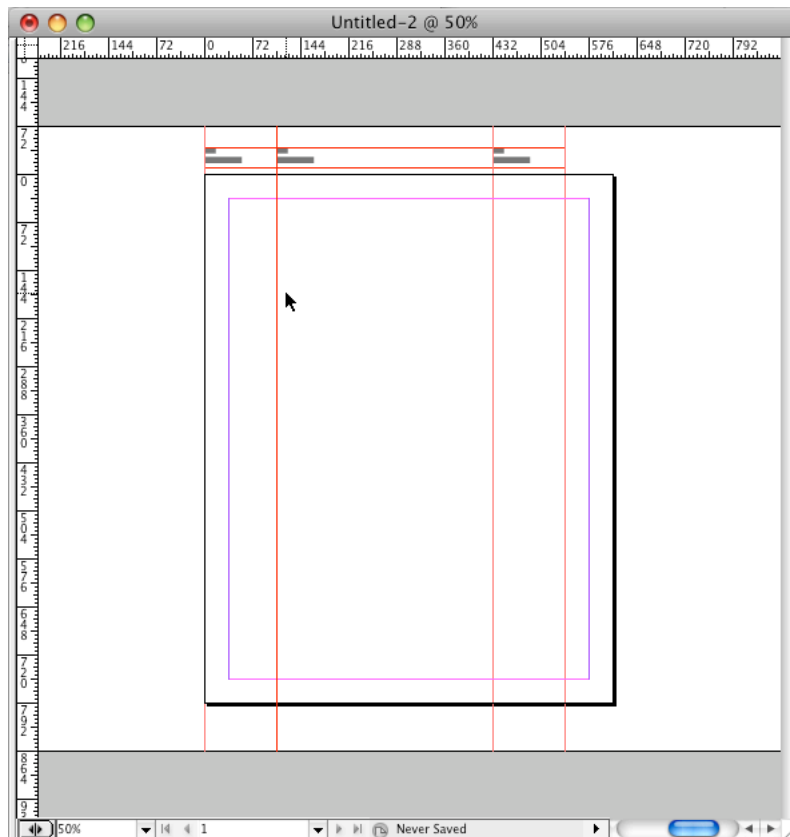
*Proportionally* menu item.



Now move any one of the guides, *except* the leftmost one – in the screen capture below I've picked the second guide from the left and I am moving it from a position of 72pt to a position of about 108pt (check the ruler above):

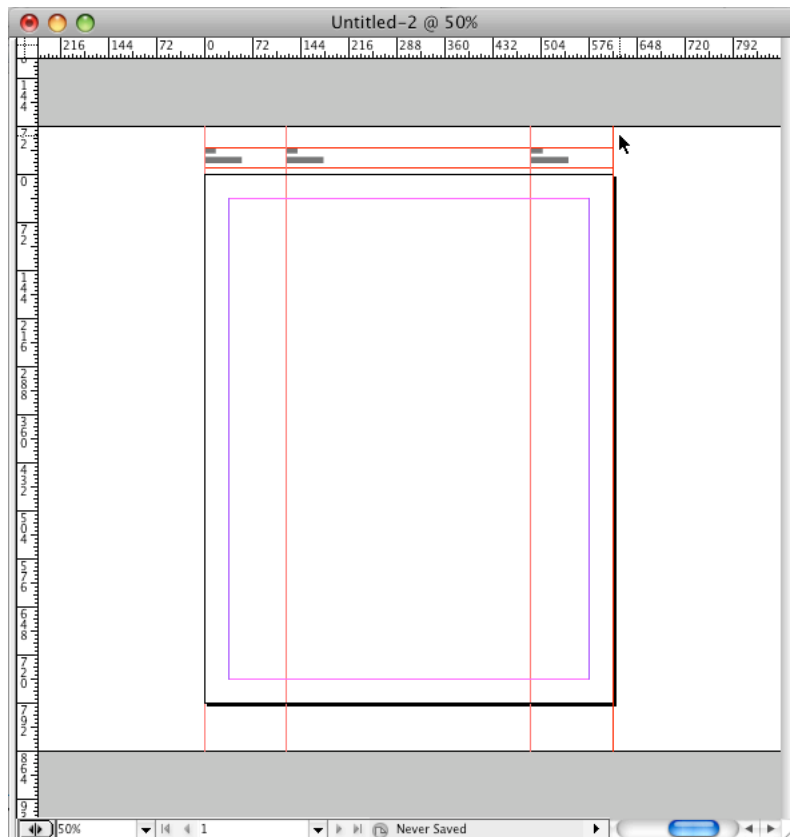


As soon as you release the mouse button, all linked guides, except the leftmost one, will reposition themselves, while maintaining their relative distances.



This is a 'stretchy' guide arrangement.

Move the rightmost guide to the edge of the page – the two middle guides will redistribute themselves properly in between the two outermost guides.

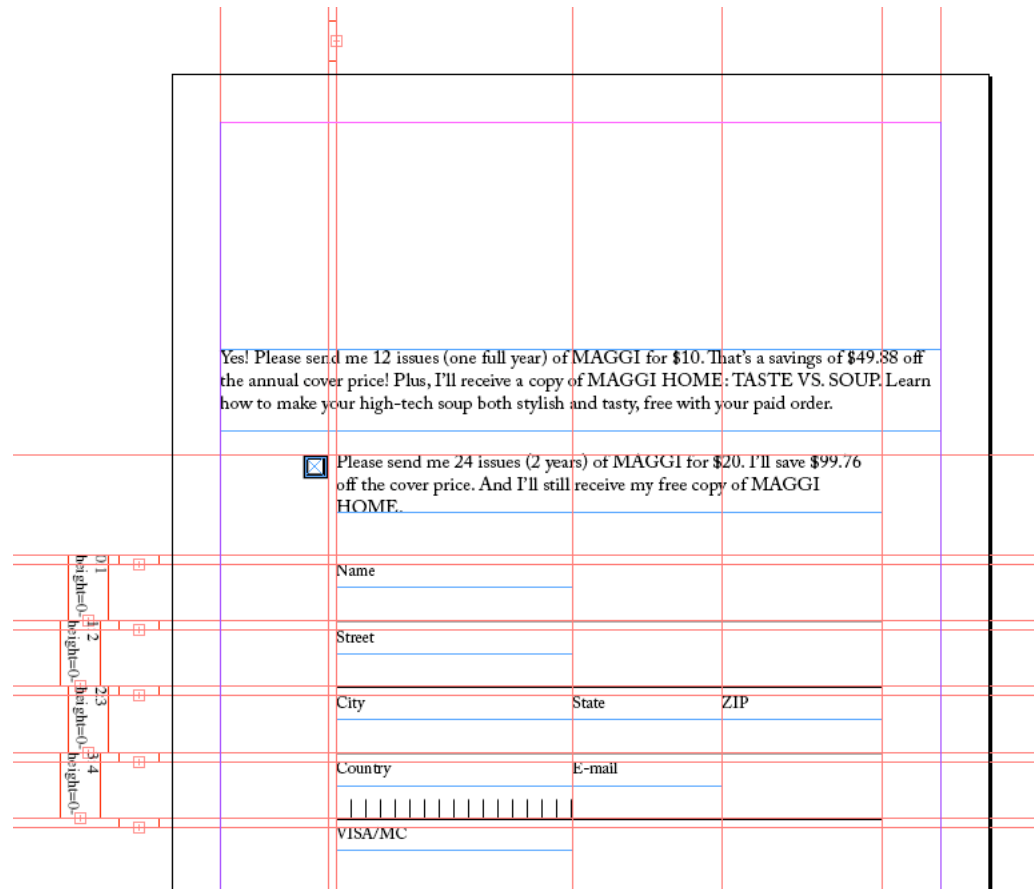


That also means that if any page items were attached to these guides, they'd automatically be repositioned as necessary.

For a more extensive example of how these guides work, open the sample document *test.indd*. This shows a layout with a fair amount of magnetic guides, some linked, some unlinked.



Try repositioning various guides and observe the results – there is vertical stretchiness in the address area.



## 7 Using *LB MagnetoGuides*

### 7.1 Wrapping a Page Item in Magnetic Guides

The *API – MagnetoGuides – Add Guides To Object* menu item will ‘wrap’ the currently selected object(s) with four magnetic guides.

If some magnetic guides are already present around the object, then no duplicated guides will be created – so you can safely repetitively execute this command on an object without fear of creating a whole bunch of overlapping guides.

### 7.2 Snapping Multiple Objects to a Guide

In some situations you end up with a bunch of objects that are very close to a particular guide (magnetic or not).

You can make these objects snap without having to manually select and snap them by selecting a guide and then selecting the *API – MagnetoGuides – Snap Items To Guide*.

Any object that is within the ‘Snap To Zone’ distance will automatically be snapped to the guide.

The ‘Snap To Zone’ can be configured in the InDesign Preferences, under the

*Guides and Pasteboard* section.

## 7.3 Special Layer Names

The behavior of *LB MagnetoGuides* is strongly linked to the use of particular layer names. Of course, the most important layer is the *magnetoLayer*. But in addition to that, there is also something special about objects that are located on layers whose name starts with a minus sign, a plus sign, or a star.

### 7.3.1 Non-Magnetic Items

You might want certain page items to be ‘non-magnetic’. To achieve this, you should position them on a layer whose name starts with a minus sign.

The minus sign tells the *LB MagnetoLayers* plug-in that it should leave any items on that layer undisturbed.

You are allowed to have multiple layers with names that start with a minus sign – all these layers will be non-magnetic.

Also, pasteboard items (except for link items between guides) are non-magnetic.

### 7.3.2 Center-Magnetic Items

When I demoed an earlier version of *LB MagnetoGuides* to David Blatner, he suggested that it would be helpful if page items’ centers could be magnetic too.

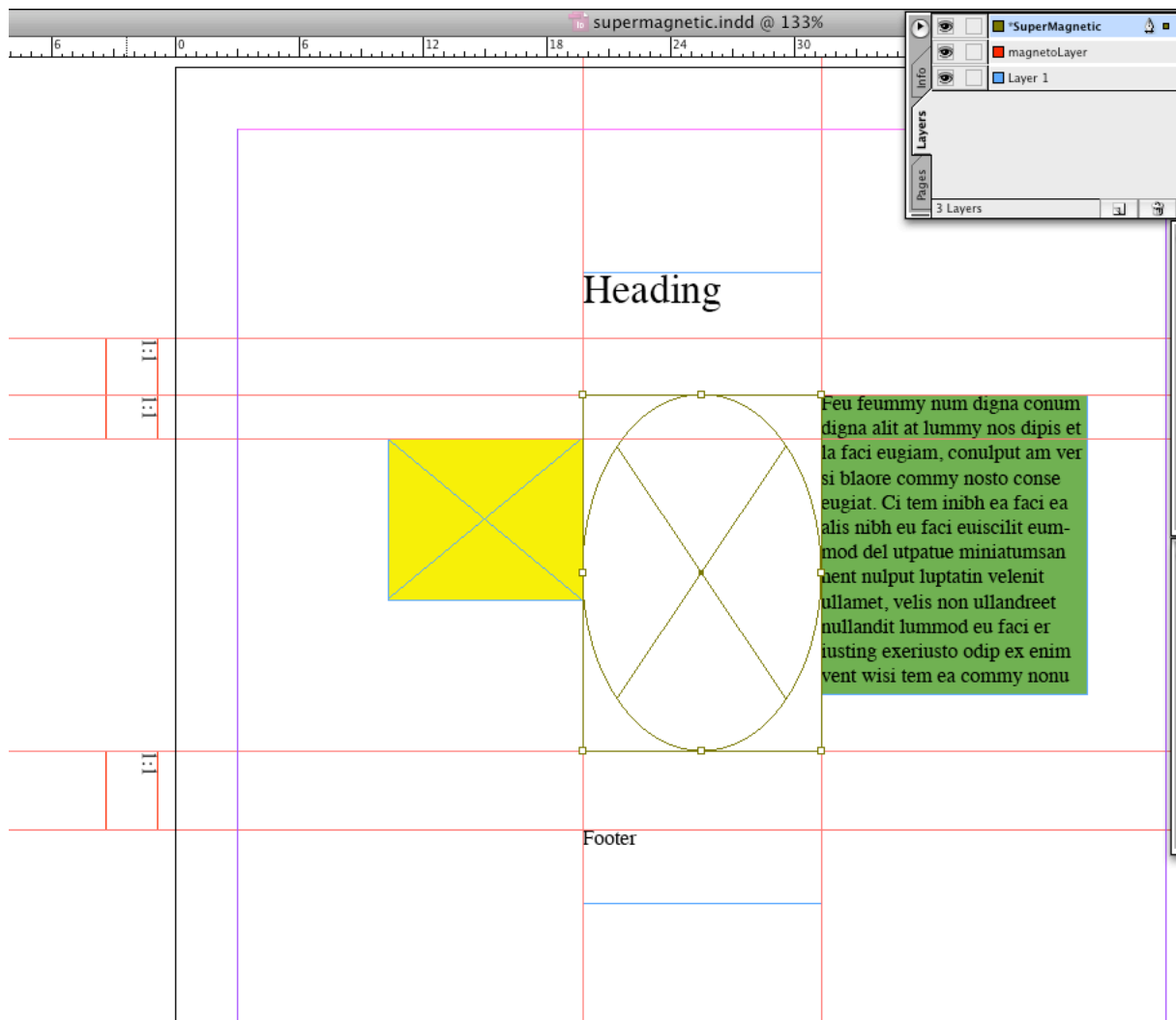
I implemented this cool idea by making any page items that are located on a layer whose name starts with a plus sign ‘center –magnetic’: in addition to the regular magnetism exerted by the guides on their borders, they also ‘sense’ a magnetic guide going through their center point, and will follow its movements.

### 7.3.3 Super-Magnetic Items

Normally, page items are slaved to magnetic guides – move the guide, and the ‘snapped’ page items will follow.

Page items that are located on a layer whose name starts with a star are ‘super-magnetic’: move the page item, and the guides it is snapped to will follow the page item.

Open the *supermagnetic.indd* sample document to see what effect that gives.



The ellipse in the middle is ‘wrapped’ in four guides – two horizontal, two vertical. The top and bottom-wrapping guides are then linked to a few extra guides (one above and one below the top wrapping guide, and a guide below the bottom wrapping guide).

The ellipse is super-magnetic, because it resides on layer *\*SuperMagnetic* – i.e. the layer name starts with a star.

Grab the ellipse with your mouse arrow and drag it to a different position. Because it is super-magnetic, it will pull along the four guides that wrap it.

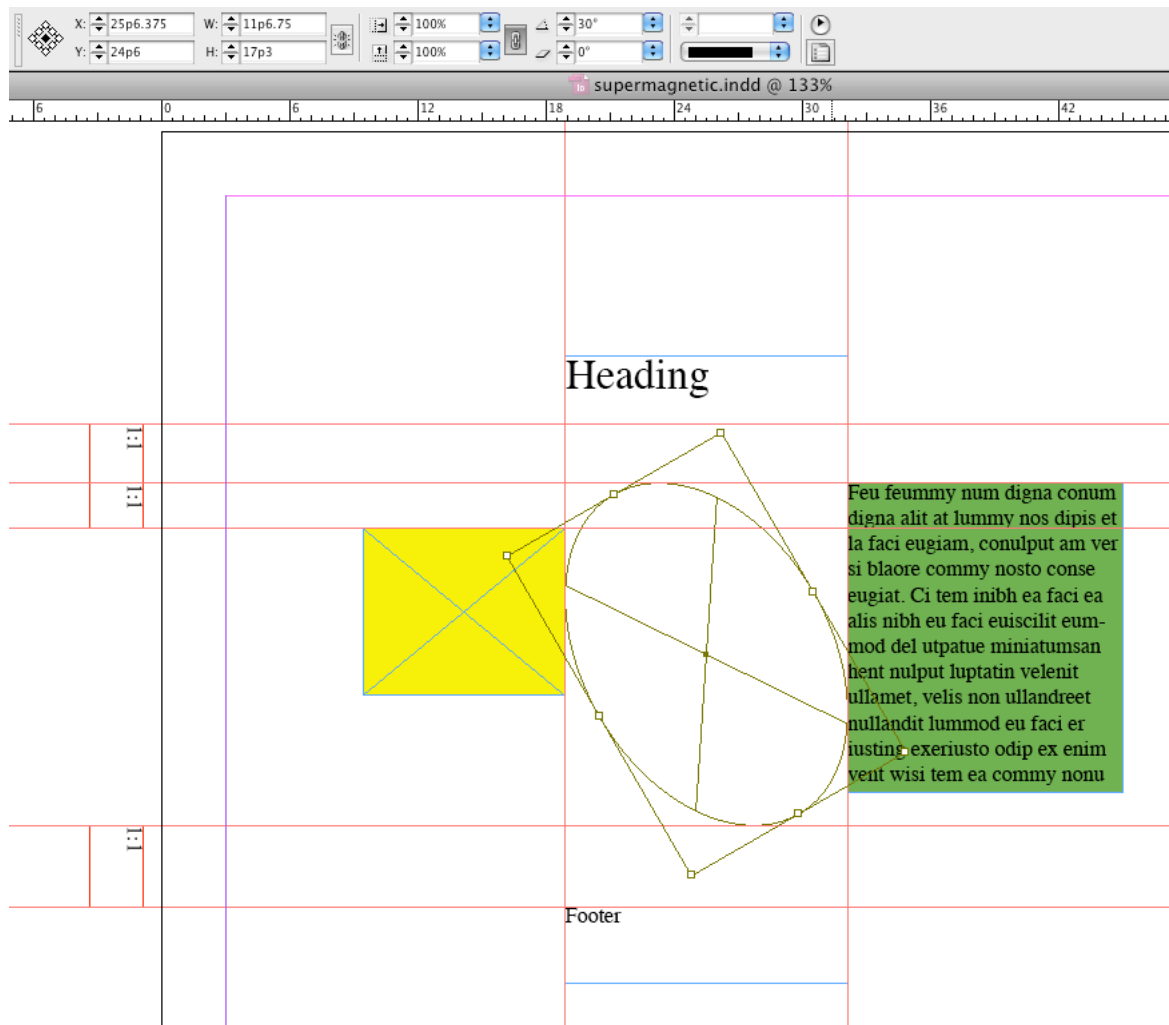
In turn, these four guides will pull along the additional guides because they are linked.

As a result, the whole ‘constellation’ of guides and page items moves together – without need for grouping.

Now comes the fun part. Rotate the ellipse, say, 30 degrees. The four ‘wrapping guides’ stay closely attached to the ellipse – and hence the two vertical guides are forced apart by the rotating ellipse, while the two horizontal guides are pulled together.

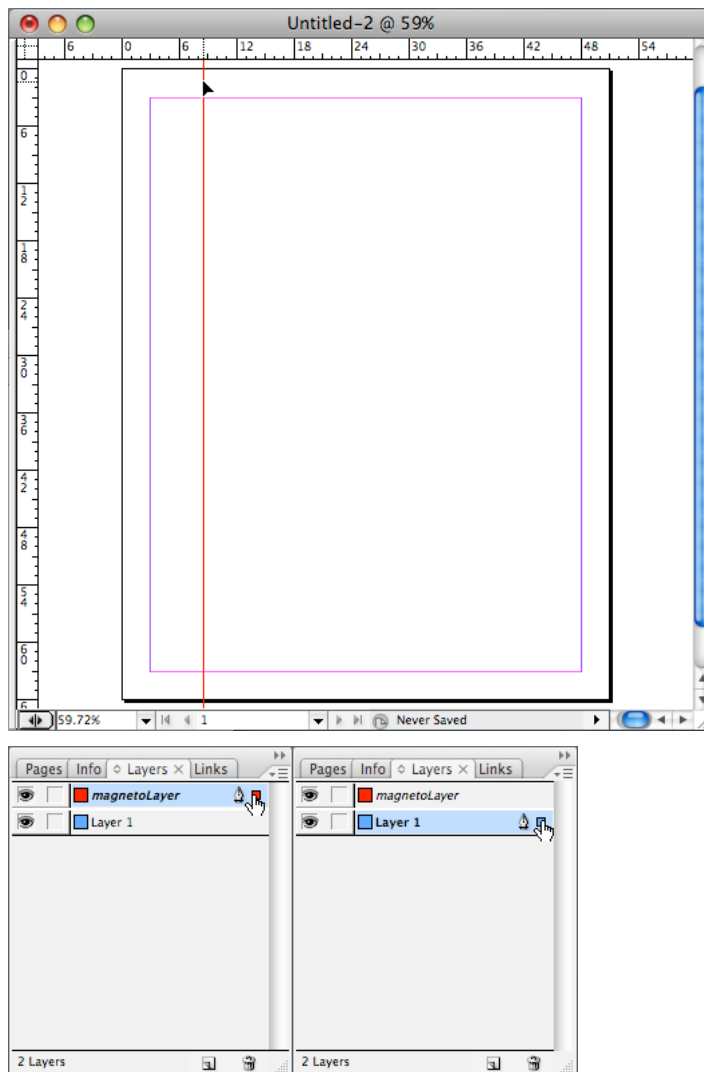
These kinds of set-ups allow for all kinds of coordinated movement: the result is that the complete layout became wider and flatter.

Of course, you can try all kinds of other arrangements and page item shapes. You can also still drag the guides and reshape the ellipse with their movement.



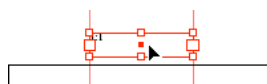
## 7.4 Demagnetizing a Guide

To demagnetize guide, click the guide to select it, and then drag the little colored square on the layers palette from the *magnetoLayer* to any other layer.



## 7.5 Unlinking Guides

To unlink two linked guides simply remove the link item that sits between them. First select the link item:



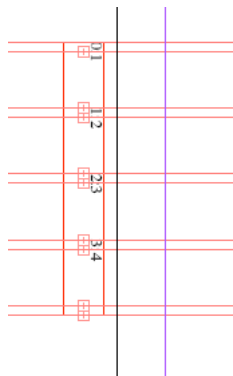
Then hit the delete key



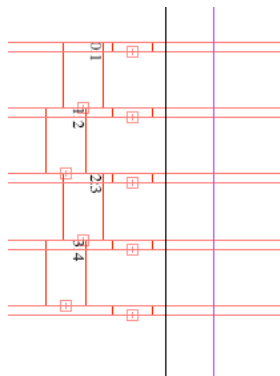
## 7.6 Moving the Link Items Around

In more complex layouts there might be many guide link items, sometimes overlapping. You are free to reposition these link items – as long as they stay ‘snapped to’ the guides they are linking, they will work fine.

You can rearrange this:



to look like this:



## 7.7 Linking a Horizontal Width a Vertical Guide

It is also possible to link a single horizontal with a single vertical guide. Such a link causes the guides to ‘translate’ vertical movement into horizontal movement and vice versa.

Simply select a horizontal and a vertical magnetic guide, and use the *API – MagnetoGuides – Link Guides* menu item.

Check the *loggrid.indd* sample document – it has a sample setup where horizontal and vertical guides are linked.

## 7.8 Changing The Link Ratio

The two colon-separated numbers you can see in many link items define a ‘link ratio’ – these specify how the two linked guides move in relation to each other.

‘Rigid’ link items have a 1:1 ratio – if one guide moves a certain distance, the linked guide will move the exact same distance.

‘Stretchy’ links use different ratios.

For example, assume there are two guides that are connected by a link item with ratio 1:2.

Moving the first guide a certain distance will move the second guide twice that distance. And moving the second guide a certain distance will move the first guide half as much.

A ratio 1:3 means: any distance moved by the first guide is triplicated when

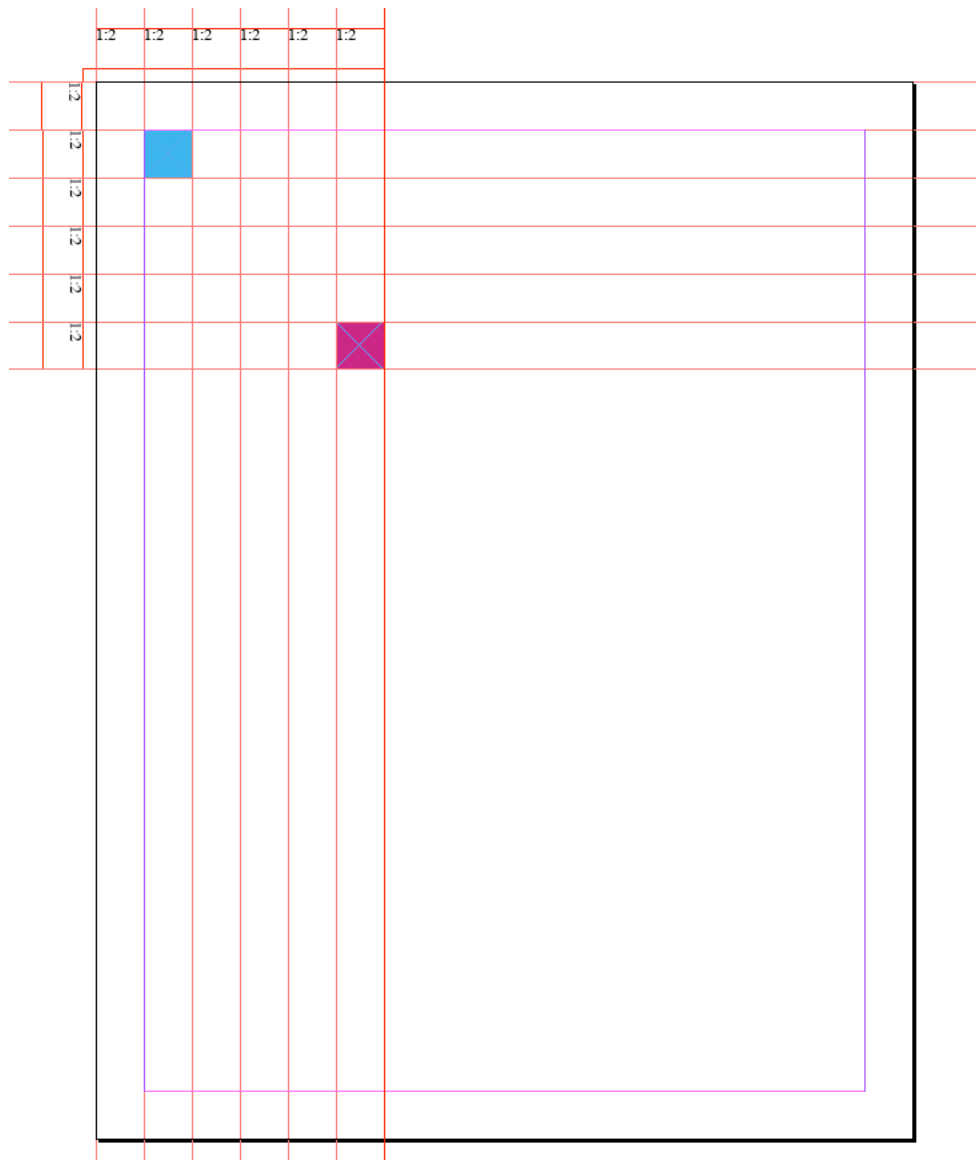
applied to the second guide.

By adjusting these link ratios, all kinds of interesting or useful guide configurations can be created.

You might need to temporarily resize the link item to enable you to see and modify the link ratio in the link item.

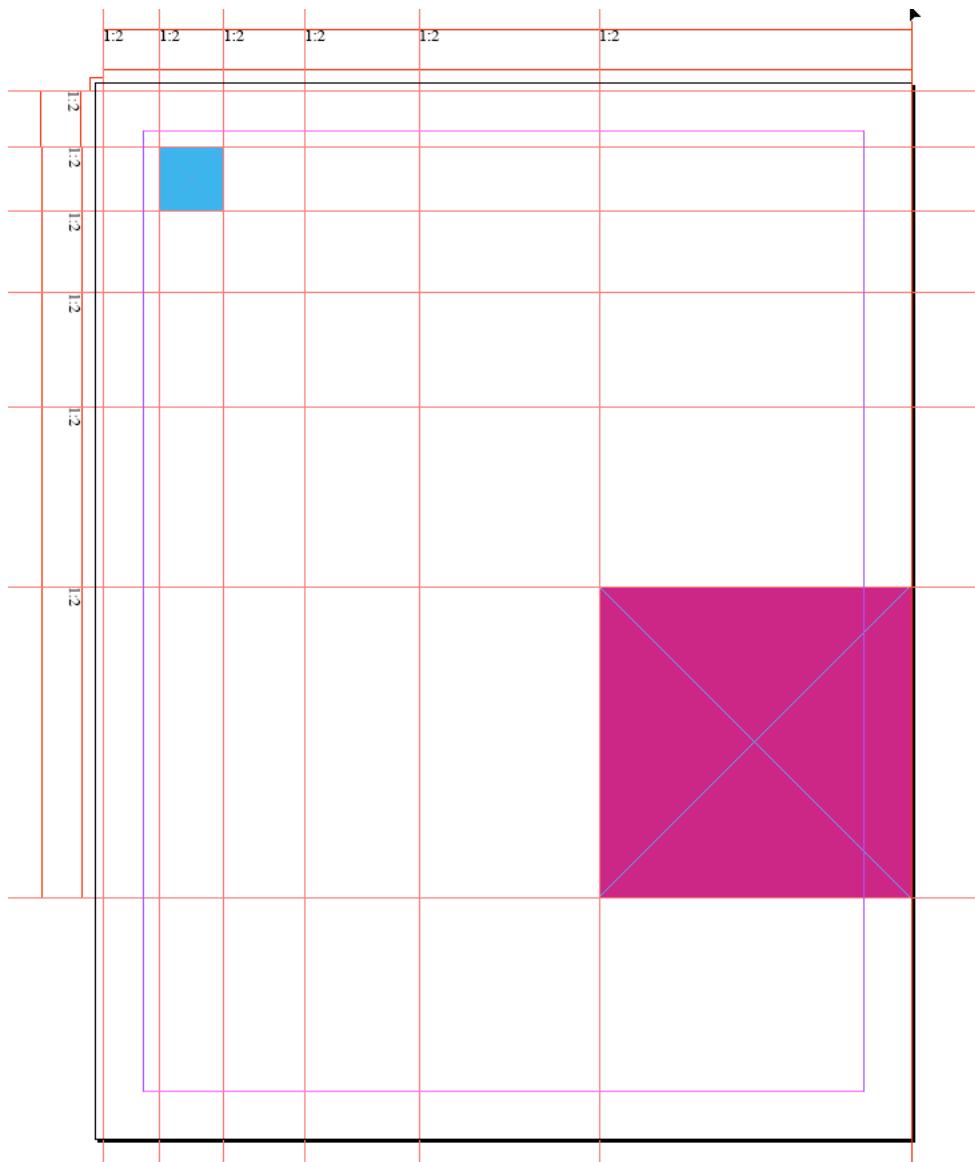
Link items are simply text frames, and the link ratio is a bit of text in a text frame. After adjusting the link item content, shrink it back to its original size, so it snaps back to the guides it was linking.

For example, open up the sample document *loggrid.indd* – this contains a regular, square grid of guides.



Note that all link items have been given a 1:2 ratio. Also note that the leftmost vertical guide and the topmost horizontal guide have also been linked.

Now drag the rightmost guide out to the right page border.



The rightmost guide is dragged a certain distance, the guide immediately left to it moves half as much, the one left to that one moves half as much again, and so on – the result is that the grid scales exponentially (or logarithmically – depending on how you look at it). Also note that all ‘grid cells’ on the main diagonal stay square – both the cyan and magenta frames keep their square aspect ratio.

The horizontal and vertical guides are also linked – note the inconspicuous little square frame that sits between the leftmost and topmost guides.

## 7.9 Mirrored Guides

Playing with link ratios has many possible applications – keep in mind that link ratios can also be negative.

For example, a ratio of 1:-1 (1, colon, minus, 1) gives you a ‘mirrored’ guide – move one guide to the left, and the other one will move to the right by the same amount.



## 7.10 Changing The Link Constraints

In some cases, you want links to have a ‘stretchy’ ratio, but only within certain limits.

To allow for that you can add constraints to the link item text frame.

If you create a ‘stretchy’ guide combination via the *API – MagnetoGuides – Link Guides Proportionally* menu item, you’ll notice that the link items also contain a second line of text – either ‘width=0-...’ or ‘height=0-...’.

These lines are ‘open’ constraints – essentially these say that the link item width or height can vary between 0 and infinity (three periods are interpreted as infinity).

You can impose more stringent constraints by changing this line of text in the link item text frame.

The numerical values you use should be expressed in whatever units are set for your document measurement units. These units are also used for the rulers.

So if your horizontal measurement units are set to points, you would use ‘width=72-144’ to constrain the width of a link item, used to link vertical guides, between 72 and 144 points.

If your vertical measurement units are set to centimeters, ‘height=1-2’ will constrain the height of a link item, used to link horizontal guides, between 1 cm and 2 cm

## 7.11 Hiding All Magnetic Guides

Hiding all magnetic guides and link items can be achieved by making the *magnetoLayer* invisible.

## 7.12 Removing All Magnetic Guides and Link Items

If you want to quickly remove all magnetic guides and link items between guides, you can delete the *magnetoLayer*.

## 7.13 Temporarily Making All Magnetic Things Inert

A quick way to stop magnetic guides being magnetic is to rename the *magnetoLayer* to something else – for example put a minus sign in front of the name.

As soon as the name is changed, the *magnetoLayer* loses its special status, and you can move and modify things without being hindered by magnetism.

Re-magnetize the layer by removing the minus sign from the name.

# 8 Technical details

Magnetic guides and link items are nothing special – the *LB MagnetoGuides* plug-in simply watches out for any changes made to guides that reside on the *magnetoLayer*.

That also means that you can hand over documents that were created while

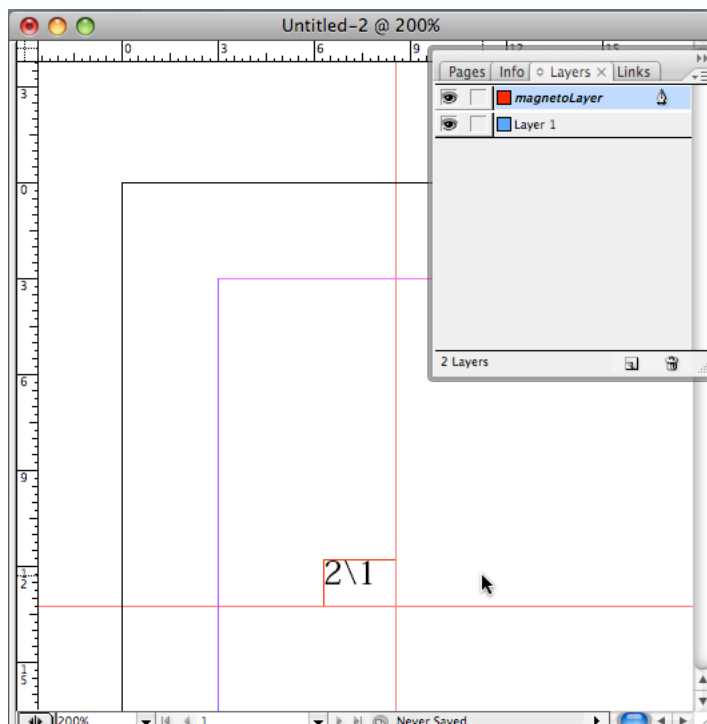
using *LB MagnetoGuides* to other InDesign users without ever running into problems with missing plug-ins – if *LB MagnetoGuides* is not installed, the *magnetoLayer* will simply become a regular layer, like any other layer.

If you have any regular guide, all it takes to make it magnetic is that you move it onto the *magnetoLayer*. To demagnetize the guide, you move the guide onto any other layer.

Link items are rectangular text frames on the *magnetoLayer* – any text frame on the *magnetoLayer* that ‘touches’ two magnetic guides is a link item.

If a linking text frame has no text contents at all, it is supposed to define a 1:1 ratio, and be without constraints.

Linking text frames between a horizontal and a vertical guide should use a \ (backslash) separator to define a horizontal-to-vertical ratio. For example:



This link item defines a ratio of 2 for the vertical guide (‘under’ the backslash) and 1 for the horizontal guide (‘over’ the backslash). If the vertical guide moves a certain distance, then the horizontal guide will move half as much.

## 9 Version History

8 November 2008 - Version 1.0.5

- CS4 Support.
- Magnetized guides now have a little marker on them to make them easier to spot.

23 July 2008 - Version 1.0.4

- Fixed problem with added guides appearing on the wrong page of the spread.

28 June 2008 - Version 1.0.3 – Final release:

- Fixed conflicts with some In-Tools ([www.in-tools.com](http://www.in-tools.com)).
- Fixed issues with super-magnetic items: sometimes they would behave incorrectly, and seem disabled, or 'grab' unrelated guides.
- Can now move multiple-selected guides reliably (e.g. using shift-click to select multiple magnetic guides, then drag them)

26 June 2008 - Version 1.0.2:

- Fixed issue causing guides to 'fly off page' in the sample docs (created in InDesign CS) when used in InDesign CS3.

23 June 2008 - Version 1.0.1:

- Added new features: center-magnetic items, super-magnetic items, wrap object in guides.
- Force user-created page items off the magnetoLayer.

16 June 2008 - Version 1.0: Initial release

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The license for this tool also encompasses a bundled license for the APID ToolAssistant plug-in.