Demonstration

1.
Place your demo copy of The Kerning Palette in the folder containing QuarkXPress 3.1, launch XPress and open a document.

2.
Choose Show Palette from The Kerning Palette's popup menu (under XPress' Utilities menu).

3.
Place the cursor anywhere in the document and observe the floating Palette.

If you're inside a valid pair (two characters from the same font<style> and the same size), then the palette shows the pair and the amount of kerning for that pair, in the table currently in use for that font<style>. A zero indicates that the pair is not present in the table; or, that the pair is present in the table with a value of zero.

4.
This demo only operates on pairs of Uppercase Characters.

5.
Find a pair for which some non-zero number appears in the Palette (you can navigate as usual, using the arrow keys or manually placing the cursor). That's the kerning now present. It's expressed in 200ths of an em space–the same units used by Quark's Kerning Table Editor, and Quark's manual kerning and tracking functions.

The Kerning Palette follows you as you move from font to font and style to style, opening the relevant tables for editing as you go.

6.
Select an Uppercase Pair combination which you think needs help by placing the cursor between the two members of the pair.

7.
Use the arrow buttons to adjust the value. There are also command keys.

8.
Double-click on the kerning value shown in the floating palette. Now you can type in a value (there's also a command key for producing this dialog).

9.
Click the Apply button on the Palette. Apply tells QuarkXPress to look at new values you've put into the kerning tables, and apply them to text in this document. You will see that the changes you've made to a given pair, is applied to each occurrence of that pair throughout the document.

10.

When you make changes to a pair's kerning value you write directly into XPress Preferences. You can think of the floating palette as a window into XPress Preferences. If there is no table already present for the font you're editing, one is created. If the pair is not already present, it is added.

With that in mind, click on the Export button.

11.

You are presented with a list of fonts. Those you've made changes to have a Q icon next to them. They've been Quarked. All the fonts whose tables are in XPress Preferences have been Quarked, and they all have Q's next to them.

If you were presented with the Nonmatching Preferences alert box on opening the document, and selected Keep Document Settings, then Quarked fonts would be present only in Document Preferences; the XPress Preferences file would remain untouched.

Confused? Consult your QuarkXPress documentation for a fuller explanation. The User Manual for the full commercial version of The Kerning Palette includes an extensive discussion of font handling on the Macintosh and in QuarkXPress, along with a full technical description of the working of the Palette itself.

12.

Notice the Selection buttons below the font list. You can use these buttons to select all the tables in XPress/document Preferences; or all those fonts used in the current document; or all those listed. Use shift-click to select a range of items, cmd-click to make discontiguous selections.

13.

To the right of the Selection buttons are Sort options. They sort the list alphabetically, by font style (all the Plains, followed by the Bolds, etc.),
or according to the icons you see next to the font name on the list.

This font is used in the current document;
its kerning table is in the font suitcase file.

This font's kerning table is in XPress or Document Preferences.

This font is open to your system, but not used in the current document.

14.

Along the right side of the dialog box is a list of Export options. They fall into two categories, Create and Modify. The Create: options create new files while the Modify: options modify, overwrite, change and alter existing open files.

You can Create a font suitcase file with any combination of fonts you select from the list. Those with kerning tables in XPress Preferences will have those kerning tables inserted in the new font suitcase file. You can also Create text files which are expressed with integer values in the em units you specify in Kerning Palette Preferences, or decimal values (in thousandths, of course). A text file with integer units in 200ths of an em is importable into

the XPress Kerning Table Editor.

You can Modify the tables of open font suitcase files or the tables in XPress/ Document Preferences with stunning, unprecedented ease. If the table doesn't exist at a desired location it will be added.

15.
This demonstration software has had its Export functions entirely disabled.

16.
Cancel out of the Export dialog box and select the menu command XPress Preferences… in the Kerning Palette menu (under Utilities).

17.
Here you see a list of all the tables in your XPress Preferences file. There are Sort options, as well as a Select All button. Use this dialog box to delete tables from XPress Preferences, or simply to view the contents of that mysterious place.

18.
Cancel out of the XPress Preferences… dialog box and click on the Prefs button on the floating palette. This takes you to the Kerning Palette Preferences dialog box.

19.
Three settings are available here. Live Update means that you don't have to click Apply to have your new kerning reflected in a document, it happens immediately. However the constant update and redraw can be distracting. List all fonts tells the Export dialog box to list only those fonts you are actually using in a document. The list takes time to build if you normally keep hundreds of fonts open on your system. Em units are the units you want to work in (Quark normally uses 200ths of an em). This doesn't affect Quark's kerning and tracking commands.

20.
For a final, slightly perverse demonstration of The Kerning Palette's ease of use, you should now go to the XPress Kerning Table Editor to delete the tables which you placed in XPress Preferences. Simply select the font name from the list in the Kerning Table Editor, open it, and press the Reset button (it should be enabled). Don't forget to Save.

The Kerning Palette does more than just kern type, although that's its primary focus. It includes functions which, though they grow out of the process of creating and maintaining kerning tables, extend beyond that to areas which are of interest to anyone using QuarkXPress. It fills some of the holes in Quark's very powerful but incomplete implementation, and brings some pieces of the Macintosh out of hiding and closer to hand. It's a superb tool for anyone trying to get the very best they can from the desktop.

Once you begin using The Kerning Palette you'll have a degree of control over your type which was not possible before, with an ease and convenience typographers dream about. The value of your work will be increased, and it will continue to increase every day as you contine to improve the quality of your type through the use of kerning tables. And yes–you'll be producing more beautiful documents than ever, automatically.