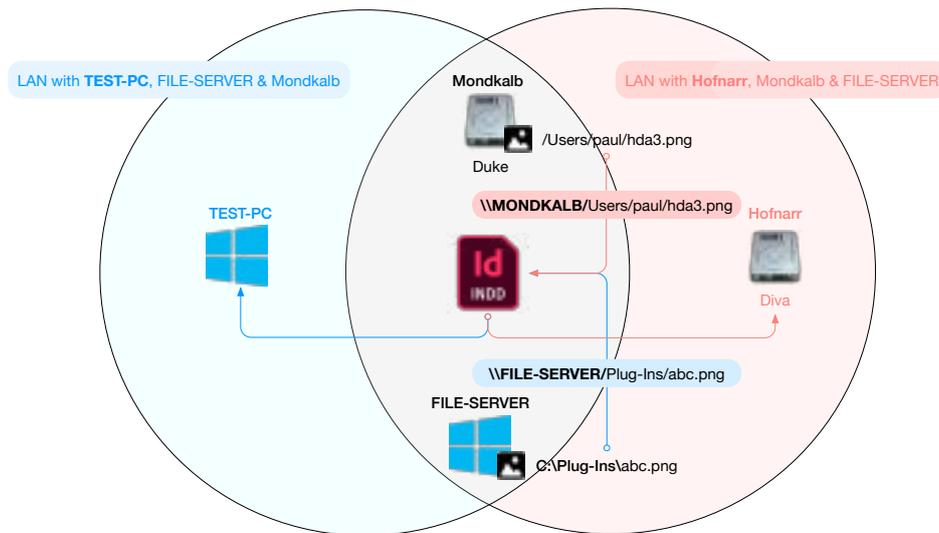


Mixed Mac/Windows Environments Without Changing Image Paths



We probably all know the problem: The image paths in InDesign® documents depend on the operating system under which the images were inserted and there is no way to customize these paths using on-board tools. Countless attempts have tried to solve this problem. But the trick, as we have now discovered, is quite simple:

Use UNC Paths and Mac Synthetic Links

For example, the two images in the above figure could have the following UNC paths:

```
\\MONDKALB/Users/paul/hda3.png
```

```
\\FILE-SERVER/Plug-Ins/abc.png
```

The document shows an easy way for using image paths in InDesign and InDesign Server on Mac OS and Windows without any document changes. **The procedure is a suggestion, not a recommendation.** WERK II expressly excludes any liability for any costs and/or problems that may arise from the suggested solution.

In Short Words

InDesign can identify and load images with UNC paths on both Windows and Mac.

- **Windows** : InDesign® fully supports UNC paths. The only thing you need to take care of is to insert the images from the UNC folder like `\\FILE-SERVER/Plug-Ins/abc.png` instead from local drives like X:, Y:, Z:.
- **Mac** :
 - Define your UNC servers as synthetic links in `/etc/synthetic.conf`, e.g. `FILE-SERVER TAB /Volumes`
 - Mount the volumes used by the servers of the used UNC's after restart
 - Use `print:comet` functionalities to insert images by UNC paths, e.g. `//FILE-SERVER/Plug-Ins/abc.png`
 - Let InDesign® standard functionality read and show images

UNC Paths on Windows

I think we don't need to discuss how to do get and use UNC mounts here :-)

UNC Paths on Mac

InDesign® **could** also load images with UNC paths on the Mac. The problem is that the Mac OS does not support UNC volumes by default. Mounted volumes are always located in the folder `/Volumes`. What we would need are mounts in the root directory `/`, but at least since Mac OS 10.15 (Catalina) it is not allowed to create any objects here. The solution here are the so-called [Synthetic Links](#) which allow you to create virtual drives in the root directory.

Synthetic Links

[Synthetic Links](#) are virtual drives that are created at start time but not automatically mounted. To create Synthetic Links, you have to **edit** the `/etc/synthetic.conf` file and **restart** your Mac after that. Admin rights required for to do that.

In `/etc/synthetic.conf` file you add the destination `/Volumes` for every different **server** part (the first part of the UNC path right behind the `\\`) of the used image UNC paths:

```
firstpart_of_UNC_Path TAB /Volumes
```

If, for example, the image path is `\\FILE-SERVER/Plug-Ins/abc.png` you will need the line

```
FILE-SERVER TAB /Volumes
```

The destination is always `/Volumes`. Both parts are delimited by one mandatory `TAB`.

Mac Mounts

The **volumes** used by the servers defined in `/etc/synthetic.conf` must be mounted before use after each reboot. In each case, the volume is given in the **second** part of the image UNC's.

If, for example, an image UNC path is `\\FILE-SERVER\Plug-Ins\abc.png`, then you have to mount the folder `Plug-Ins` of server `FILE-SERVER`.

Please note that **different shares of the same server each require their own mount**.

If, for example, also the UNC `\\FILE-SERVER\Images\def.png` is used, then you also have to mount the folder `Images` of `FILE-SERVER`.

Please note for **Mac Drives** that the (otherwise never used) name of the hard disk is part of the UNC paths! By default, the drive is called **Macintosh HD** and hardly anyone changes that. **Make sure that all Mac drives you use (including the hard disk of your own computer) have unique names.**

The image shows a typical Mac Hard Disk:

Mondkalb



Duke

The server name in the network is `Mondkalb` (or `MONDKALB`) and the hard disk is called `Duke`. But, if you try to mount it, you may see a list containing the entries `paul`, `Images`, `Desktop`, `Duke`. Do not be confused, these are the so-called shares made in the Mac OS. You use these shares as the folder names (the second part) of the UNC's.

If you have, for example, the image `/Users/paul/hda3.png` on `Mondkalb` and you've mounted `Duke` and `paul` from `Mondkalb`, the following two UNC's are pointing to the same file (and both UNC's are valid):

```
//MONDKALB/Duke/Users/paul/hda3.png
```

```
//MONDKALB/paul/hda3.png
```

Availability

Both Windows and Mac servers can be used by all InDesing® and InDesign Server® versions on Mac and Windows. The UNC paths are also supported by comet_pdf.

The table gives an overview in which actions UNC paths can be used:

	Windows	Mac
Identify / Show File	Yes	Yes, with correct synthetic links
Insert by InDesign® <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drag And Drop• Place• JavaScript• ...	Yes. InDesign will set the correct UNC paths by itself.	No. Unfortunately this does not work . InDesign automatically inserts the images with paths to the /Volumes folder.
priint:comet <ul style="list-style-type: none">• frame::image• Image Placeholder• <w2inline:>• ...	Yes. On Mac since v4.2 R33250 , on Windows for all versions of InDesign®, InDesign®Server and comet_pdf. The two leading \\ may be written as // also on Windows. Example : //FILE-SERVER/Plug-Ins/abc.png	