9

Working with Objects

9.1 Modify 112
9.2 Modify Text Frame. 113
9.3 Modify Picture Frame 116
9.4 Modify Line 117
9.5 Modify Object 119
9.6 Border 120
9.7 Text Flow around a Frame or Picture 122
9.8 Duplicate Object 125
9.9 Shape of Object 126
9.10 Front/Back. 127
9.11 Group/Ungroup 127
9.12 Make Local/Make Master 128
9.13 Snap to Grid 128

This chapter describes all the options on the Object menu concerned with manipulating objects.

9.1 Modify

Menu➪Object➪Modify nnnn F7

The **Object➪Modify** option *(fig. 9.1)* allows you to alter the properties of selected objects.

The properties that can be altered depend upon the type of objects selected, so 4 different dialogue boxes may appear:

Modify text frame,
Modify picture frame,
Modify line,
Modify object.

The latter is displayed if the selection or group contains mixed types of objects.

In a selection, the settings shown in the dialogue box refer to the first object selected. If you alter **X**, **Y**, **Width**, **Height**, **Angle** or **Skew** the first object is altered as specified, and all other objects are altered proportionally.

Only those properties that you change are updated in the document when you click on **OK**.

The **Modify** option can also be used to set the exact position of ruler guidelines *(see 8.4)*.

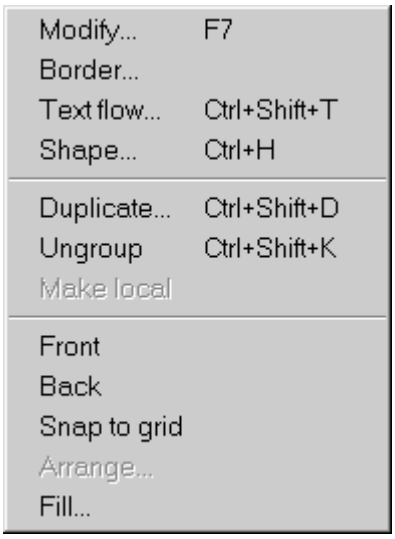

*Fig. 9.1 - The **Object** menu.*

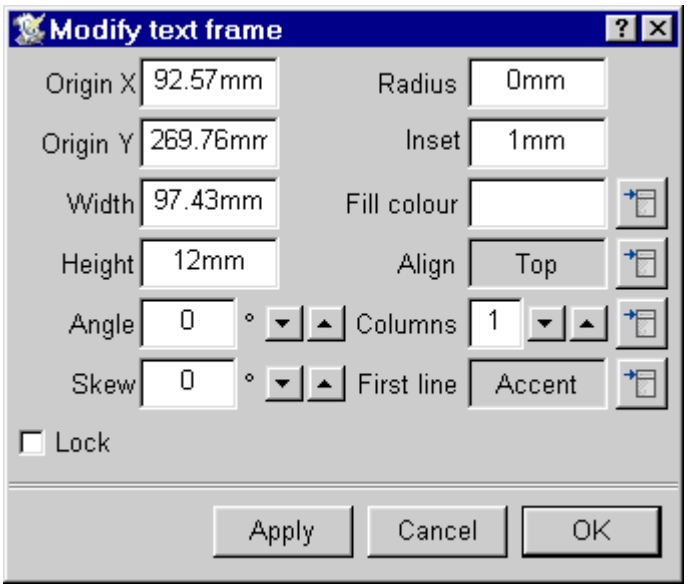

*Fig. 9.2 - The **Modify text frame** dialogue box allows you to alter the properties of text frames.*

9.2 Modify Text Frame

Menu➪Object➪Modify… F7

The **Modify text frame** dialogue box is displayed if a text frame is selected or if the selection contains only text frames *(fig. 9.2)*.

Origin X/Origin Y

These values are the coordinates of the top left corner of the selected frame. They may be modified to change the position of the object. Coordinates are measured from the top left corner of the page.

Width/Height

These values are the width and height of the selected frame. They may be modified to change the size of the frame.

Angle

This is the angle of rotation of the selected frame. The angle is in degrees, and is applied clockwise *(figs. 9.3 & 9.4)*. You may type in a new value followed by Return or use the up and down icons to increase or decrease the angle by one degree.

Skew

This is the angle of skew for the selected frame. You can enter a new value or click on the up and down icons to change the skew angle one degree at a time. A positive value skews the frame to the right *(fig. 9.5)* and a negative value, to the left *(fig. 9.6)*. The angle is specified in degrees and must be within the range -80° to 80°.

If a multi-column frame is skewed, the columns are also skewed.

Radius

This value is the corner radius of rectangular frames *(fig. 9.7)*. The radius must be a positive value smaller than half the length of the shortest side. This value is ignored if the frame is not rectangular in shape.

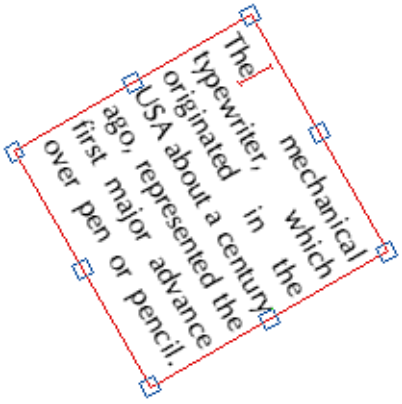

Fig. 9.3 - Frame rotated 60°.

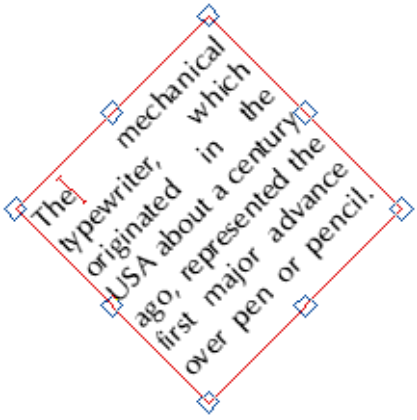

Fig. 9.4 - Frame rotated -45°.

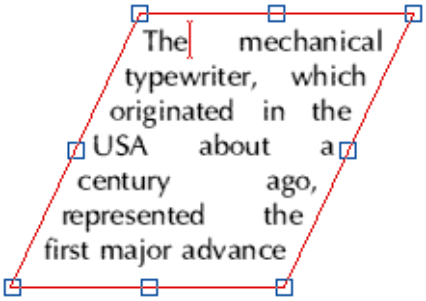

Fig. 9.5 - Frame skewed 25°.

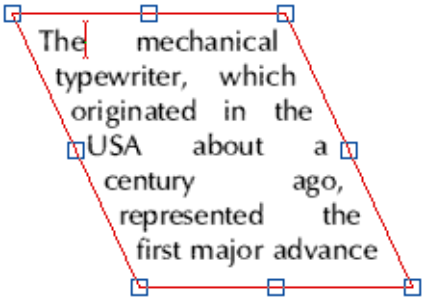

Fig. 9.6 - Frame skewed -25°.

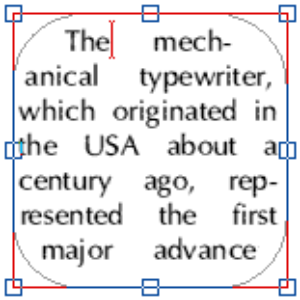

Fig. 9.7 - Frame with round corners.

Inset

Inset is the gap between the edge of the frame and the text flowing inside the frame. It prevents the text from touching the sides and improves the appearance of frames that have a frame border *(fig. 9.8 & 9.9)*. The default inset is 1mm and is set in

Menu➪Misc➪Choices➪Text➪

The inset normally follows the shape of the frame, but it can be made any shape by editing the Inset curve as described in the previous chapter. This is useful if you want to have a different inset on different sides of the frame. If the inset curve is edited, the value for **Inset** is blanked out. Resetting this value will reset the inset so that it follows the shape of the frame.

Fill colour

This is the current background colour of the selected frame. To change the background colour click on the icon to the right of the colour to display the standard ***Ovation Pro*** colour picker. Frames can be made transparent by choosing **Transparent** from the scrolling window. Transparent frames are ideal for overlaying text onto graphics e.g. adding a caption to a picture.

More advanced possibilities are available using the Fill applet.

Align

This option specifies how text is aligned vertically in the frame. The submenu provides four options:

Top is the default setting and causes text to be aligned with the top of the frame *(fig. 9.10)*.

Bottom causes text to be aligned with the bottom of the frame *(fig. 9.11)*.

Centre causes text to be vertically centred in the frame *(fig. 9.12)*.

Justify inserts additional white space between the lines of text so that it fills the frame vertically *(fig. 9.13)*.

Please note that **Bottom**, **Centre** and **Justify** do not work if the frame is overlapped by another object that causes the text to reflow or if the frame is not rectangular. In this case the text reverts to **Top** alignment.

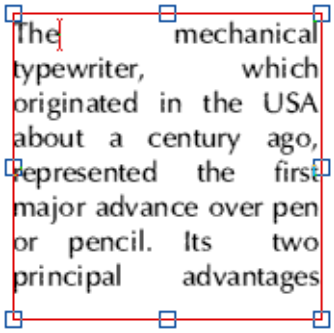

*Fig. 9.8 - Frame with 0mm **Inset**.*

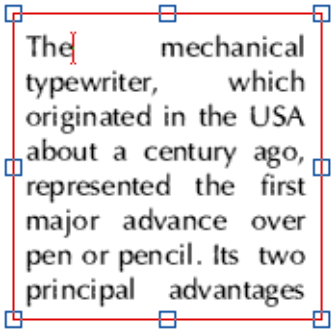

*Fig. 9.9 - Frame with 2mm **Inset**.*

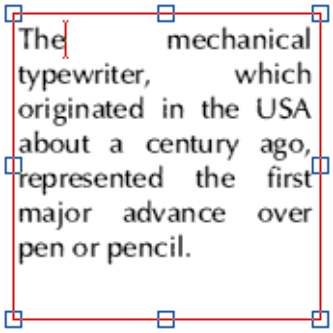

*Fig. 9.10 - Text aligned **Top**.*

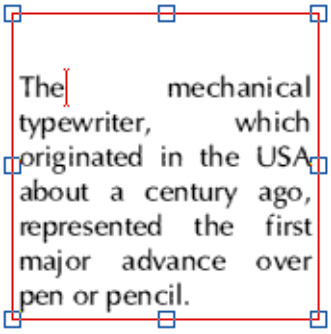

*Fig. 9.11 - Text aligned **Bottom**.*

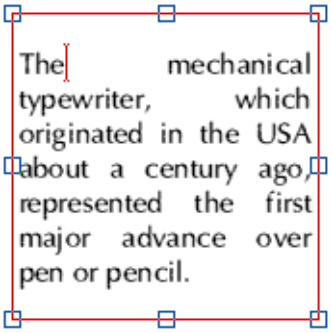

*Fig. 9.12 - Text aligned **Centre**.*

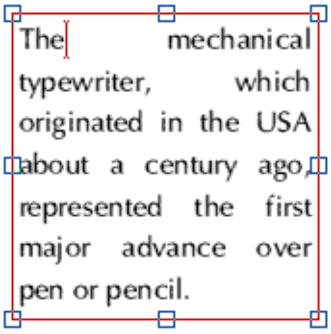

Fig. 9.13 - Text fully justified.

Columns

This option specifies the number of columns in the text frame. The default gutter (the space between the columns) is 5mm, but this and other advanced settings can be modified from the **Column specification** dialogue box *(fig. 9.14)* which is opened by clicking on the icon to the right of the **Columns** option.

Gutter width allows you to specify the gap between the columns.

Column width allows you to specify the width of the columns.

If **Display column guides** is selected, a vertical line is drawn centrally in each gutter *(fig. 9.15)*.

Guide width allows you to specify the thickness of the column guides *(fig. 9.16)*. You may choose a standard width from the menu or enter your own value at the bottom of the menu. The default width is **Thin** which is the thinnest line possible on the output device.

Guide colour allows you to specify the colour for the column guide using the standard ***Ovation Pro*** colour picker.

First Line

When text is flowed into a frame, a decision is taken how far down the first line of text is placed.

The sub menu provides four options:

Accent - the maximum size of the fonts in the line using all the available characters is calculated. This includes high bit or accented characters.

Ascender - this is similar but only the characters with codes less than 127 are used. This includes all the 'normal' ASCII characters used in English.

Fit - the exact height of the line is calculated and used.

Grid - the baseline is snapped to the text baseline grid *(see 5.4)*.

Older versions of ***Ovation Pro*** used the Accent setting by default.

Notice that the first two (and last) options give a distance which is independent of the precise characters used in the line - the base line of a row of mmmmm's is positioned in the same place as a row of MMMMMM's. For the fit option the mmmm's would be placed higher.

Lock

This option locks the frame so that it cannot be accidentally moved or resized by dragging. If a frame is locked it has no handles, and the pointer changes to the lock symbol if you try to move the frame.

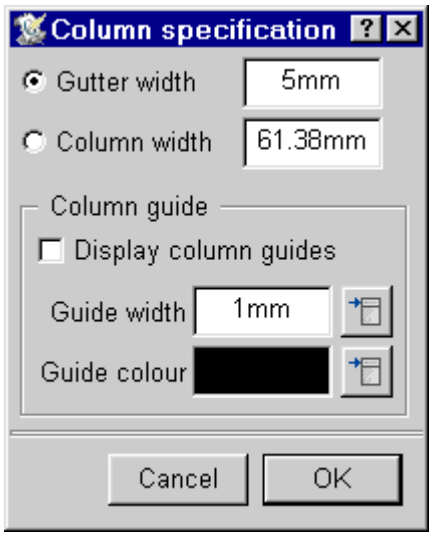

Fig. 9.14 - Dialogue box for setting column specification.

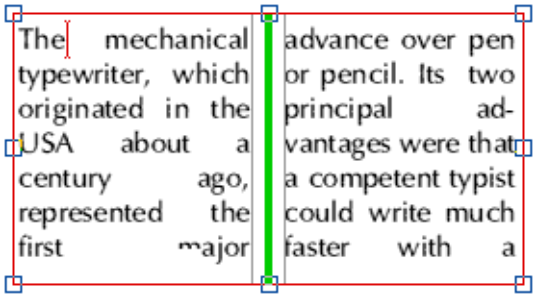

Fig. 9.15 - Frame with two columns and a green coloured column guide.

*Fig. 9.16 - Column **Guide Width** menu.*

9.3 Modify Picture Frame

Menu➪Object➪Modify… **F7**

The **Modify picture frame** dialogue box is displayed if a picture frame is selected or if the selection or group contains only picture frames *(fig. 9.17)*.

Operation is identical to that described for text frames above except that the options **Align** and **Columns** are not applicable to picture frames and do not appear in the dialogue box and **Inset** operates slightly differently for picture frames than for text frames.

Inset

In a picture frame the inset is a border inside the frame, of the width specified and the colour of the frame fill colour. If a picture is made to fit a frame *(see 10.4)*, it will be scaled to fit inside the inset *(fig. 9.18 & 9.19)*. The default picture frame inset is 0mm, but this may be changed on the **Picture Choices** dialogue box *(see 15.7)*.

Menu➪Misc➪Choices➪Picture➪

The inset normally follows the shape of the frame, but it can be made any shape by editing the Inset curve as described in the previous section. This is useful if you want to have a different inset on different sides of the frame. If the inset curve is edited, the value for **Inset** is blanked out. Resetting this value will reset the inset so that it follows the shape of the frame.

Additional information

The Arrange applet provides a number of ways of aligning and spacing out frames. See the Help file of the applet.

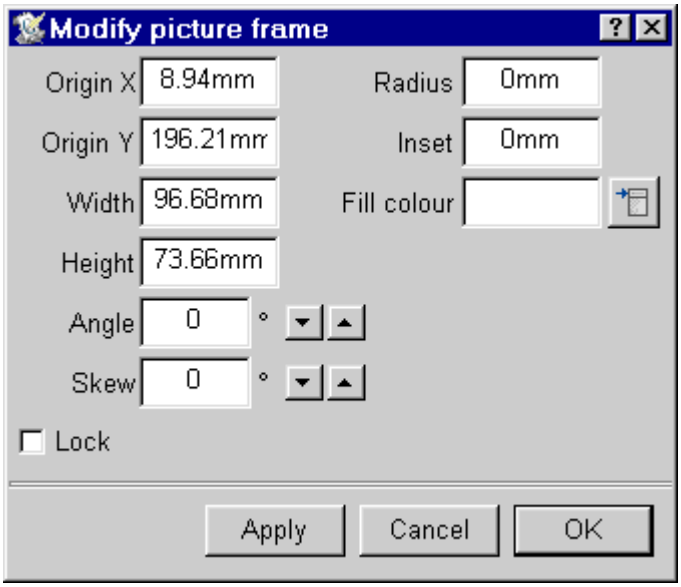

*Fig. 9.17 - The **Modify picture frame** dialogue box provides options for altering the properties of picture frames.*

*Fig. 9.18 - Picture frame with 0mm **Inset**.*

*Fig. 9.19 - Picture frame with 1mm **Inset**.*

9.4 Modify line

Menu⇨Object⇨Modify… F7

The **Modify line** dialogue box is displayed if a line is selected or if the selection or group contains only lines.

Operation is similar to that described for text frames above except that the options **Radius**, **Inset**, **Align** and **Columns** are not applicable and **Width** and **Height** have a different interpretation for lines. There are also a number of new options concerned with line style *(fig. 9.20)*.

Width/Height

These values refer to the width and height of the bounding box that contains the line.

Line width

This option allows you to set the line width to any of the predefined values from the menu or enter your own value at the bottom of the menu *(fig. 9.21)*. The default width **Thin** is the thinnest line possible on the output device. You can change the default line width on the **Choices** dialogue box *(see 15.9)*.

The width of a single selected line can be increased or decreased in steps of 0.5mm using Ctrl > or Ctrl <.

Line colour

Allows you to set the line colour using the standard ***Ovation Pro*** colour picker.

Pattern

This option displays a menu of dashed and dotted line patterns that can be applied to lines *(fig. 9.22)*.

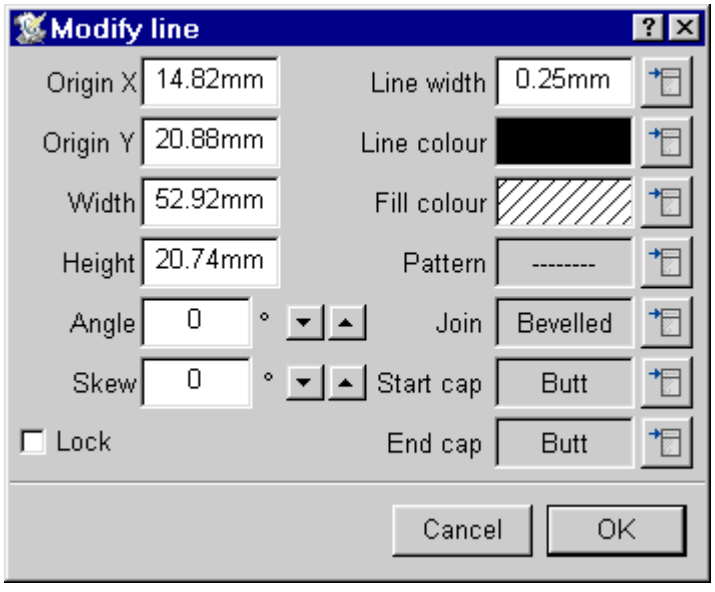

*Fig. 9.20 - The **Modify line** dialogue box.*

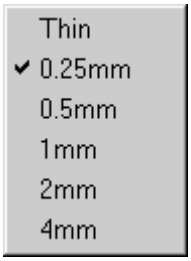

*Fig. 9.21 - The **Line width** menu.*

*Fig. 9.22 - The **Pattern** menu.*

Join

Join specifies how lines are joined together and is only significant on thick lines. There are three types of joins *(figs. 9.23 & 9.24)*:

Mitred brings the outer edges of lines together to a point.

Round rounds off the point where the lines join.

The default option **Bevelled**, cuts off the corner where the lines join.

Start cap/End cap

These options specify what the end of lines look like. Caps only apply to open paths and are only significant on thick lines. The window provides four options *(figs. 9.25 & 9.26)*:

Butt, squares off the line at the end point. This is the default option.

Round adds a solid semicircular to the end of the line.

Square adds a square to the end of the line. The square has half the width of the line.

Triangle adds a triangle to the end of the line, allowing you to create lines with arrowheads. This option has its own submenu *(fig. 9.27)* allowing you to set the width and height of the triangle. Choose one of the predefined values or enter your own value at the bottom of the menu. The **Width** and **Height** values should be specified as multiples of the width of the main line.

You can change the default **Width** and **Height** values on the **Choices** dialogue box *(see 15.9)*. Please note that you cannot generate arrowheads of a reasonable size on a line of width **Thin**; you must typically have a line width of at least 0.25mm.

*Fig. 9.23 - The **Pattern** menu.*

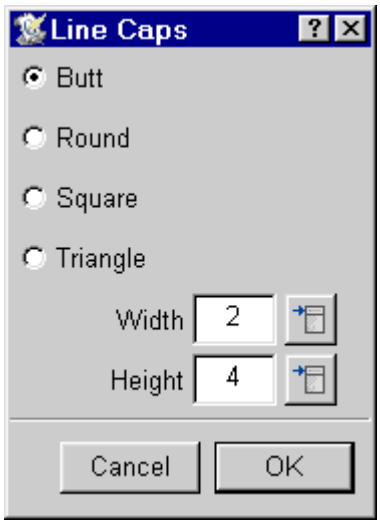

*Fig. 9.25 - **Line caps** menu.*

*Fig. 9.24 - **Mitred**, **Round** and **Bevelled** joins.*

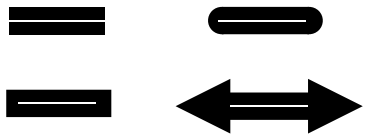

*Fig. 9.26 - **Butt**, **Round**, **Square** & **Triangle** caps.*

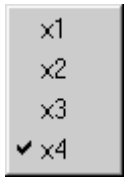

*Fig. 9.27 - The **Triangle Height/Width** menu.*

9.5 Modify Object

Menu➪Object➪Modify… F7

This dialogue box is displayed if there is a group selected or if the selection contains mixed types of objects i.e. text frames, picture frames and lines *(fig. 9.28)*.

The options provided are those that are common to all types of objects in the selection or group. Operation of these options is identical to that described for text frames earlier.

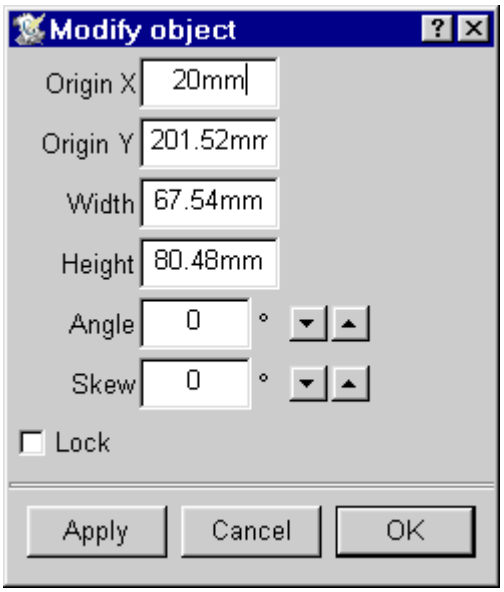

*Fig. 9.28 - The **Modify object** dialogue box.*

9.6 Border

Menu➪Object➪Border…

Normally the edges of frames are just guidelines, and are not printed, but you can add a border around the outside of a frame using the **Border** dialogue box *(fig. 9.29)*.

The scrolling window in the top left corner of the border dialogue box, shows all the border styles that are available. Use the vertical scroll bar to scroll through the complete list, and click on the border you wish to use. The chosen border is then highlighted. It is possible to add additional simple border styles *(see Appendix F)*.

Acorn Draw file borders can be used as well as line borders. One example is supplied which allows crop marks to be easily added to any frame. In ***Ovation Pro*** the border width is used to scale the designs, so you may find some only look correct at a certain border width.

Note that borders are not stored in ***Ovation Pro*** documents, so if you use a new border you must provide it to anyone who you want to be able to use the document.

Draw file borders can only be applied to rectangular frames. If the border colour is transparent, then the colours in the original Draw file will be used (nb these are RGB colours), otherwise the brightness of the colour in the Draw file will be used as a tint of the border colour. So for example black in the Draw file border will produce 100% of the current border colour (including the tint set for it). White in the Draw file will produce white in the border.

The option **Border** determines whether the border is applied to the frame. The action of choosing a border style, automatically selects this option. If you want to remove a border from a frame, deselect this option.

The **Colour** option allows you to choose a colour for the border using the standard ***Ovation Pro*** colour picker.

Width allows you to set the border width to any of the predefined values from the menu or enter your own value at the bottom of the menu. The default width **Thin** is the thinnest line possible on the output device.

Click on **OK** to apply the border to the selected frame or selection of frames. You can add borders to rectangular, elliptical or even irregular frames *(figs. 9.30 & 9.31)*.

Design size is only available for Draw borders and when selected sets the frame width to that of the original border in the Draw file.

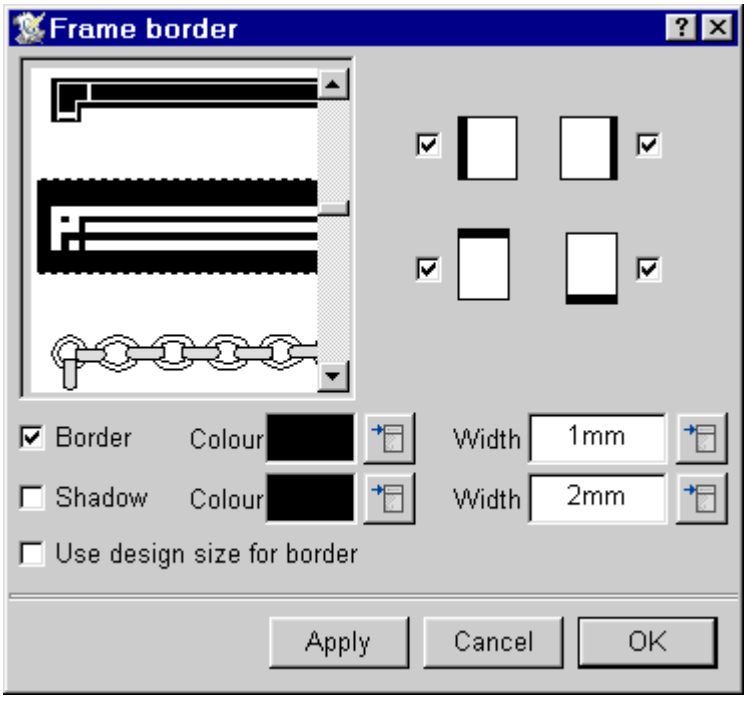

*Fig. 9.29 - The **Border** dialogue box.*

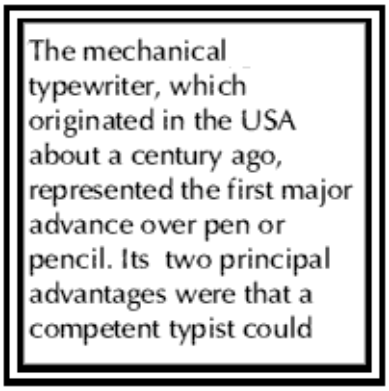

Fig. 9.30 - Border around rectangular frame.

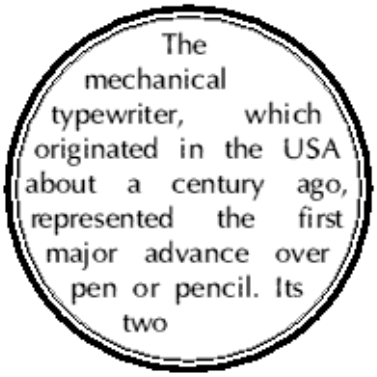

Fig. 9.31 - Border around circular frame.

Adding Borders to Specified Sides

You may use the four options in the top right corner of the dialogue box to determine which sides of the frame the border is to be applied *(fig. 9.32)*. By default all four options are selected, causing the border to be applied to all four sides.

Please note that these options only have an effect on rectangular frames. Borders on elliptical and irregular frames are always applied to the entire frame outline.

Drop Shadow

You can add a drop shadow to rectangular frames by choosing the **Shadow** option *(fig. 9.33)*. The best drop shadow effect is obtained by applying a border and a shadow *(fig. 9.34)*. In this case the border is always applied to all four sides of the frame.

You may choose the shadow colour and width using the options provided.

When **Shadow** is selected, the four options in the top right corner of the dialogue box allow you to choose the corner of the frame to which the shadow is applied.

You cannot apply a drop shadow to an elliptical or irregular frame.

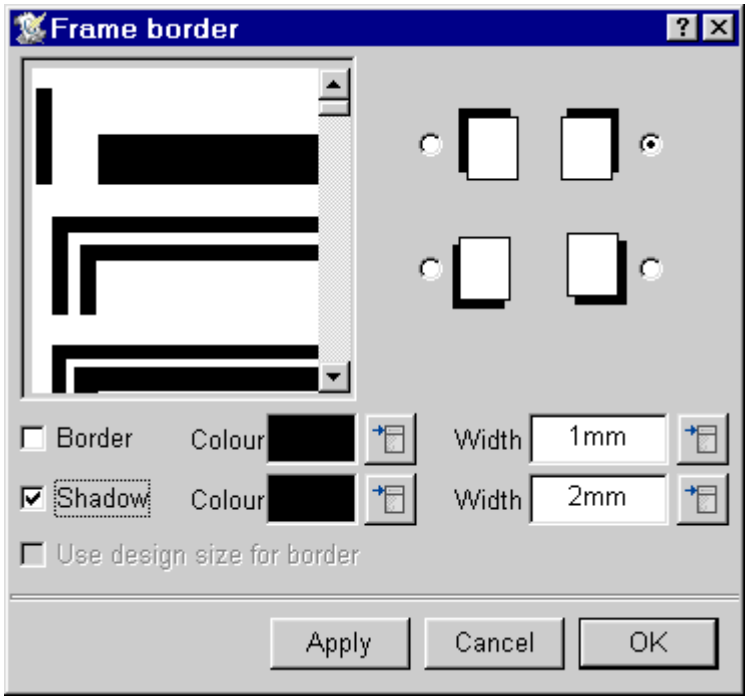

*Fig. 9.33 - The **Border** dialogue box with **Shadow** selected.*

Fig. 9.32 - Border on top and bottom only.

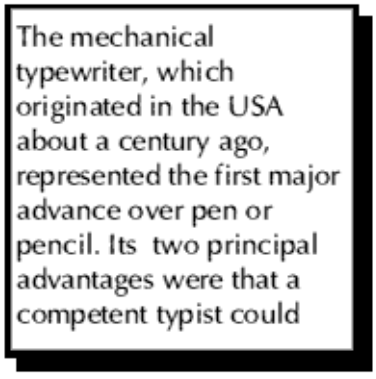

Fig. 9.34 - Border and drop shadow.

9.7 Text Flow

Menu➪Object➪Text flow… Ctrl+Shift+T

If a frame is positioned over another frame containing text, the text may be repelled and flow around the frame. **Text flow** controls how the text flows around the frame *(fig. 9.35)*.

It only applies to frames, and not lines which are always transparent and do not repel text.

Runaround

These options control whether text flows around the obstructing frame or behind it.

None causes the text to flow behind the frame completely ignoring it *(fig. 9.36)*.

Frame causes the text to flow around the frame shape leaving a gap around the frame of whose size is specified by **Standoff** *(fig. 9.37)*.

Picture causes the text to flow around the shape of the picture in the frame leaving a gap around the frame specified by **Standoff** *(fig. 9.38)*. It is only available if the frame contains a picture.

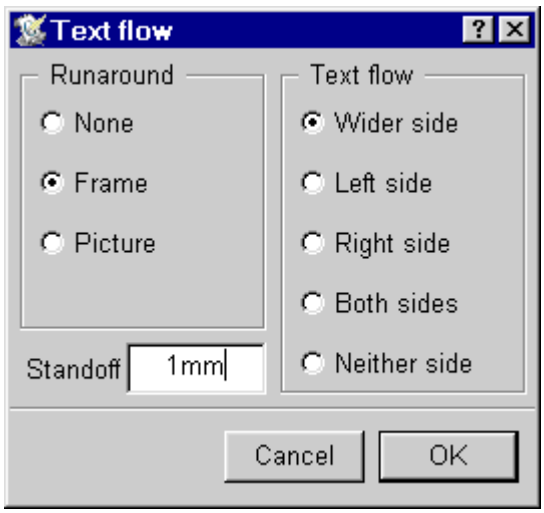

*Fig. 9.35 - **Text flow** controls how text is repelled.*

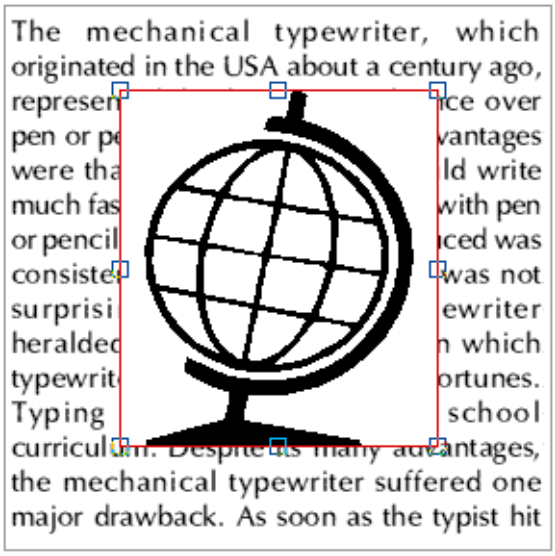

*Fig. 9.36 - Runaround set to **None**.*

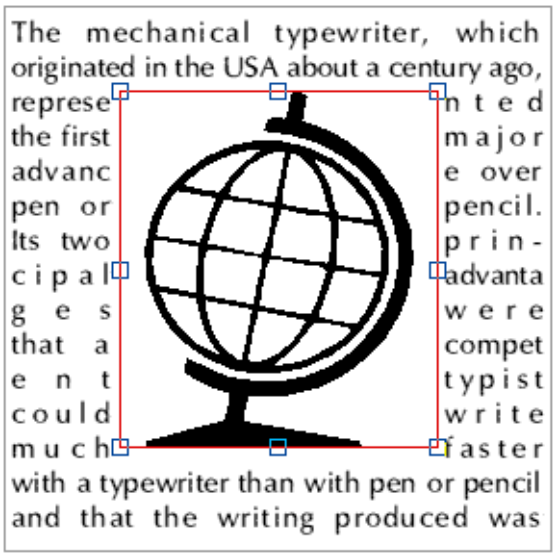

*Fig. 9.37 - Runaround set to **Frame**.*

Picture Runaround

Choosing **Picture** runaround causes ***Ovation Pro*** to trace the edge of the picture in the frame and then generate a Standoff curve of the same shape. The Standoff curve follows the shape of the picture but stands off by the distance specified by the value of **Standoff** (1mm by default).

You can set picture runaround for Draw files or bit-image files such as sprites which may have a mask or a solid background. In the latter case, ***Ovation Pro*** detects the background colour and ignores it when tracing the sprite outline. Furthermore, it sets the Inset curve to the exact shape of the picture thus masking out the background colour.

Setting **Picture** runaround automatically sets the frame to a transparent background so that it does not obscure the text that flows behind it.

Please note that there is a delay when setting picture runaround while the picture is traced. The length of the delay depends upon the size and complexity of the picture. You can press Esc at any time to cancel picture runaround.

You can control how accurately ***Ovation Pro*** traces the picture using the **Runaround error** on the **Choices** dialogue box *(see 15.8)*.

Menu➪Misc➪Choices➪Picture➪

Editing the Standoff Curve

The standoff normally follows the shape of the frame or picture, but it can be made any shape by editing the Standoff curve in path edit mode *(fig. 9.39)*. This is useful if you want to have a different standoff on different sides of the frame or if the text doesn't flow around the picture exactly as you require.

If the standoff curve is edited, the value for **Standoff** is blanked out. Resetting this value will reset the text flow so that it follows the shape of the frame or picture again.

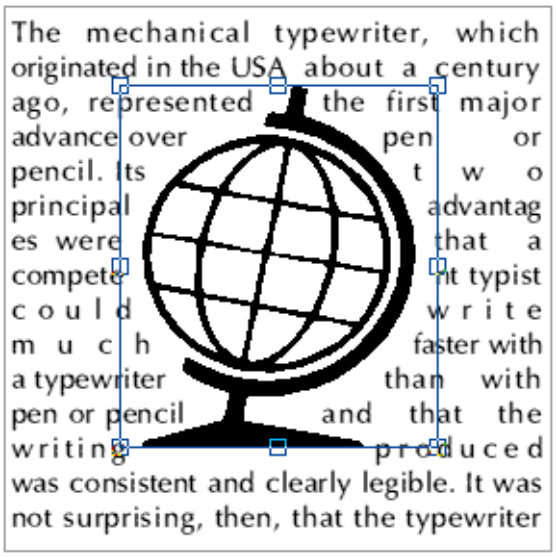

*Fig. 9.38 - Runaround set to **Picture**.*

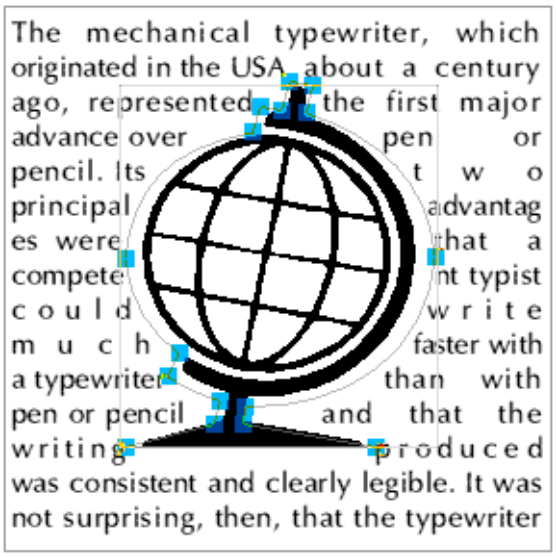

Fig. 9.39 - Editing picture runaround.

Text flow

These options control how text flows around frames and pictures. The text can flow around the **Wider**, **Left**, **Right**, **Both** or **Neither** sides.

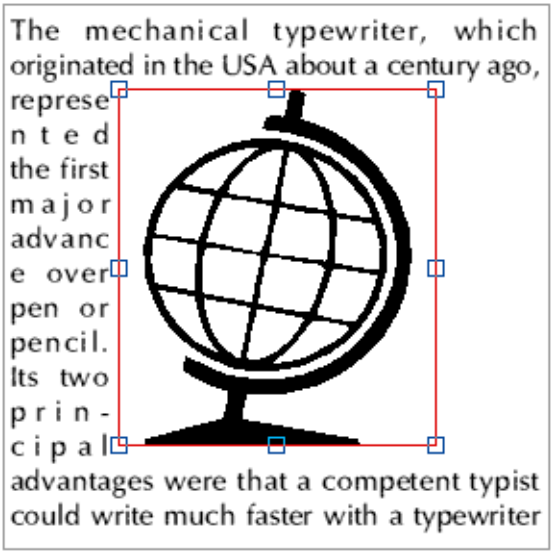

*Fig. 9.40 - Text flow to **Left** side.*

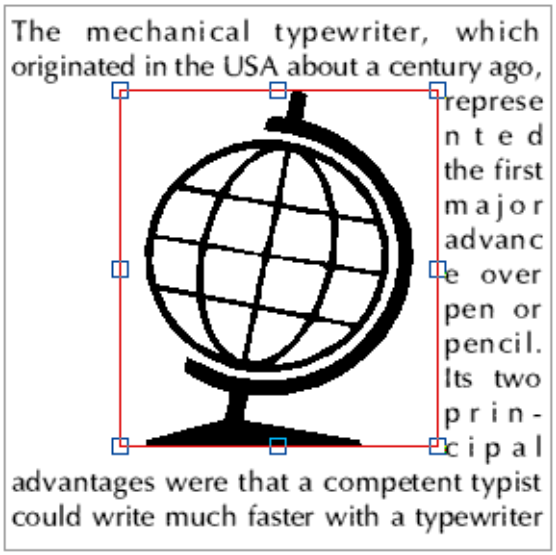

*Fig. 9.41 - Text flow to **Right** side.*

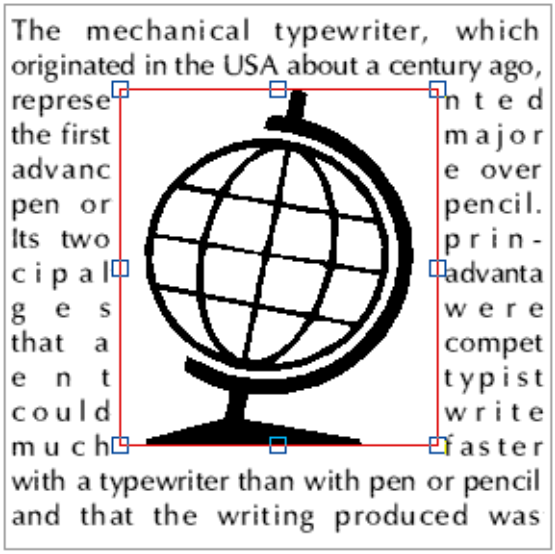

*Fig. 9.42 - Text flow to **Both** sides.*

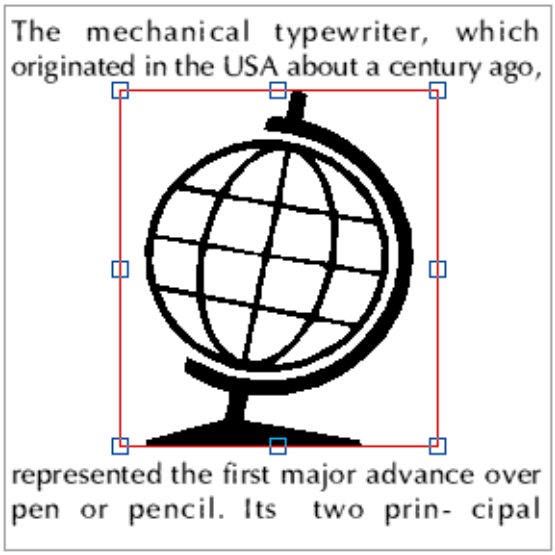

*Fig. 9.43 - Text flow to **Neither** side.*

9.8 Duplicate

Menu➪Object➪Duplicate…

Duplicate allows an object or selection to be copied a number of times at specified horizontal and vertical offsets *(fig. 9.44)*. It is particularly useful for creating tables and grids from lines or frames.

Number of times specifies the number of duplications to be made.

Vertical offset is the vertical shift made before each duplication *(fig. 9.45)*. This value should be positive for a downward shift, negative for an upward shift or zero for no vertical shift.

Horizontal offset is the horizontal shift made before each duplication *(fig. 9.46)*. This value should be positive for a rightwards shift, negative for an leftwards shift or zero for no horizontal shift.

Making One Duplication Ctrl+Shift+D

You can make one duplication of an object or selection by pressing Ctrl Shift D. The offsets used are the same as those set on the **Duplicate** dialogue box.

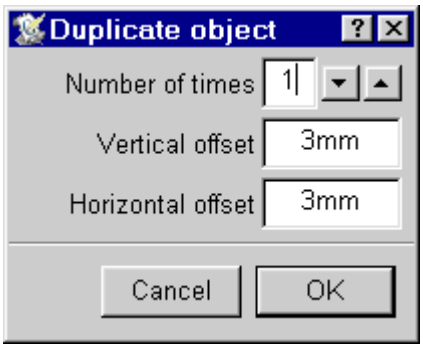

*Fig. 9.44 - The **Duplicate** dialogue box.*

*Fig. 9.45 - The single line has been duplicated to form a series of 10 lines, 4mm apart using: **No of times** = 9, **Vertical offset** = 3mm, **Horizontal offset** = 0mm.*

Fig. 9.46 - The single 10mm x 10mm frame has been duplicated to form a series of 8 frames, 5mm apart using:
***No of times** = 7, **Vertical offset** = 0mm, **Horizontal offset** = 15mm.*

9.9 Shape

Menu➪Object➪Shape… Ctrl+H

Shape opens a dialogue box which indicates the shape of the selected object, and allows you to change it *(fig. 9.47)*.

Rectangle changes an ellipse or polygon into a rectangle. The rectangle will be the same size and shape as the bounding box of the original object.

Ellipse changes a rectangle or polygon into a ellipse. The ellipse will have the same size bounding box as the bounding box of the original object.

Polygon changes a rectangle or ellipse into a polygon. The polygon will have the same size bounding box and shape as the original shape, but will be constructed from straight and curved line segments thus allowing a rectangular or elliptical shape to be edited in path edit mode.

Regular polygon changes any object into a regular polygon with the number of sides specified *(fig. 9.48)*. The polygon will have the same size bounding box and shape as the bounding box of the original object. If you wish to draw perfect regular shapes such as triangles, hexagons, octagons etc., your original object must be perfectly square.

Star changes any object into a star with the number of points specified.

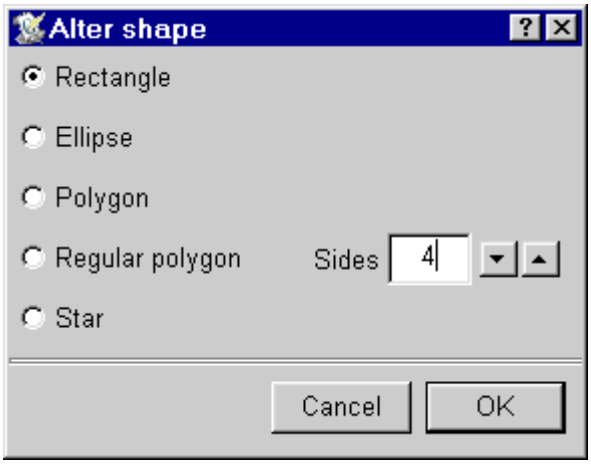

*Fig. 9.47 - The **Shape** dialogue box.*

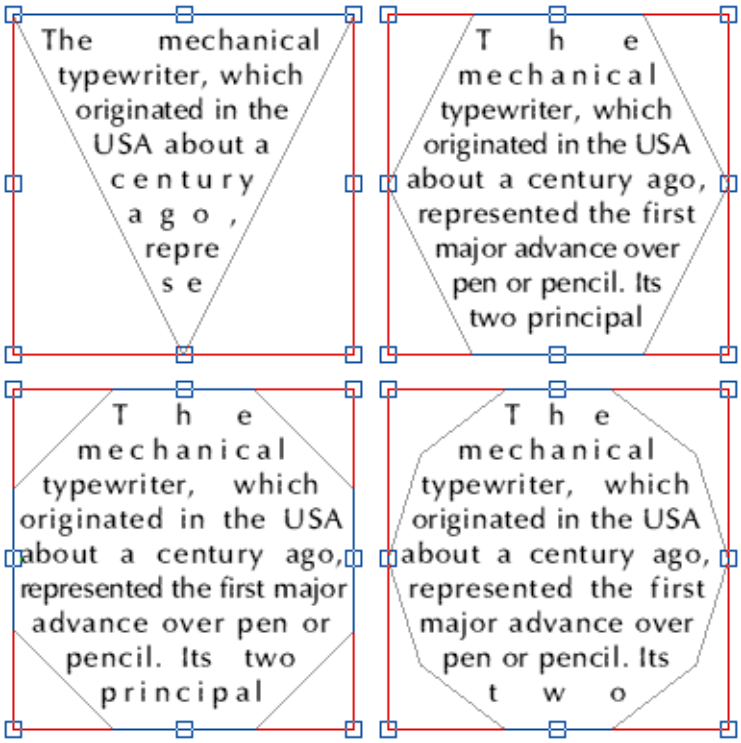

Fig. 9.48 - Regular polygons.

9.10 Front/Back

Menu➪Object➪Front **Ctrl+Shift+U**
Menu➪Object➪Back **Ctrl+Shift+H**

There are two ways to send objects to the back or bring them to the front.

Using menu options

If a number of objects occupy the same area of the page, the object created last is said to be at the top of the stack and obscures other objects lower down the stack. The **Front** option brings the selected object to the top of the stack. It is only available when there is a single object selected which is not already at the front.

The **Back** option pushes the selected object to the bottom of the stack, hiding it behind any other objects that occupy the same area of the page. It is only available when there is a single object selected which is not already at the back.

Using keyboard short-cuts.

When using the keyboard short-cuts the object is moved one layer at a time. In this way you can change the following order of a stack of frames.

Beware that you can send an object behind the main text frame, making it invisible. To retrieve such an object either put the main frame at the back or drag an area holding down the shift and control keys. The object outline will be visible if it has been totally enclosed within the dragged area, and the selection can then be moved forward.

9.11 Group/Ungroup

Menu➪Object➪Group **Ctrl+Shift+K**

Group turns a number of selected objects into a single group. A group has a single bounding box enclosing all the objects in the group, and can be moved, rotated, duplicated, grouped etc. just as though it were a single object *(fig. 9.49)*. If the group is resized by dragging, all the objects in the group are resized by the same relative amount. If the group contains frames, you may click in a frame to edit its contents. **Group** is only available when there is more than one object selected.

Ungroup breaks down a group into the objects that make it up. It is only available when there is a single group selected. It has the same key short-cut as **Group.**

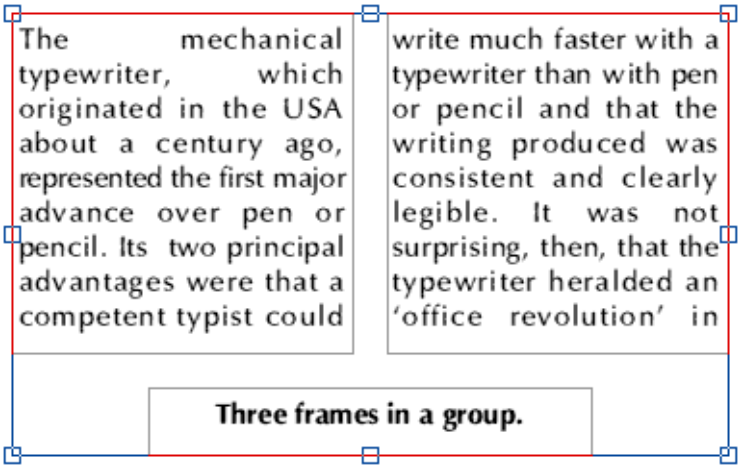

*Fig. 9.49 - The **Group** option allows a number of objects to be grouped together and manipulated as a single object.*

9.12 Make Local/Make Master

Menu➪Object➪Make Local

Make local converts a Master object generated by the Master Pages, into a normal object that can be edited in the usual way. **Make local** is only available when the selected object or objects are Master objects.

Make master converts a Master object that has been made local, back into a Master object. **Make master** is only available when the selected object or objects are Master objects that have been made local.

> Any changes that were made to a local object are lost when it is made back into a Master object.

Refer to Chapter 11 for more details about Master objects.

9.13 Snap to Grid

Menu➪Object➪Snap to Grid

This option causes the top left corner of the selected objects to snap to the nearest grid point. It only applies if either the grid or grid lock is enabled *(see 7.4)*.