

Desktop Publishing That Works. Without Gimmicks.

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Intro



Why do you want to get involved in Desktop Publishing (DTP)? Perhaps you're already involved, but have a feeling that you could do better and don't know where to begin. Oh, please start here. I won't be cruel, but I will offer some ideas of What Not to Do When Creating Flyers, Newsletters, etc.

Do you need to be a graphic artist in order to make great flyers and similar documents? No. The most important factor is **motivation**. People creating DTP spend a great deal of time studying good design, and then arranging the necessary elements in a way that best transmits the message. I'll provide references throughout this presentation for your use later. For now, we're lightly touching the tip of the iceberg.



Why do you create flyers, brochures, ads or for that matter, reports, letters, and forms?

- ❖ To create a call to action (Do it Now, Call Now, Buy Now, Don't Delay, etc.)
- ❖ To give information
- ❖ To get information
- ❖ To build relationships

Good design can be found in DTP, TV, ads, newspapers, websites, newsletters, signs, billboards, and magazines. In fact, they all influence each other, and this changes constantly.

The Arizona Republic is an example of a print publication with a layout is much more interesting than the traditional newspaper layout. Recaps. Boxes. Quick Tips. Variation within the five to six columns on a page that makes it more exciting and makes the eye move on more quickly. It's laid out so information is broken up effectively. There's nothing random about it.

And this is true of every aspect of design and the media. If it's good, it wasn't a surprise. It's aimed at the reader/consumer. Not on the likes and dislikes of the person creating the document.



TIP: Please **don't** use colored and/or expanded fonts to emphasize a point or make a list. Please.

I'm emphasizing a point.

I'm emphasizing a point.

I'm emphasizing a point.

I'm emphasizing a point. Pointless, really.

Get it? Black on white is fine if well written.

Give your readers a break. Using all those sizes and colors is not creative, in fact it's the opposite. Color can be distracting and you want your words and ideas to flow. Give them good, tight writing with all the right information, and respect them enough to give them simple, clean fonts that contrast with the background and that convey the message. Like this:

- Point (make it brief, scannable)
- Point (keep same font size as body text)
- Point (start each bullet point with a capital letter)
- Point (be consistent within the list re end punctuation)

There! Did that hurt? Of course not. People are busy. They want to read and then move on. Generally, they aren't enchanted with various sizes and colors of fonts in the process. Plus many people are color blind.

Design Elements

The elements in DTP can be graphics, text, fonts (including wingdings), tables, and items like fill-in forms. But how do we place them on paper so they look great? You'll find many good examples in newspapers, billboards, magazines, direct mail, the Web, and TV. Use examples and templates, but don't let them dictate *too* much. Let them guide you.

Designer [John Magnik](#) recommends using three eyes to develop a sense of design:

- **Visual-eyes:** Examine closely all types of printed material. Physically see/look at what everyone else is doing or has done. (What catches or escapes your attention, and why?)
- **Critic-eyes:** Separate the good from the bad. (What provokes the ad? What motivates you? Those things that don't catch your eye - why?)
- **Analy-eyes:** Select the element(s) that makes it a good design.

In order to produce good design, you need vision, imagination, and judgment. Sometimes you can brainstorm with others, but most often you'll need to do this alone. Try making everything - every piece of correspondence, every report, every table - a piece with balance and harmony. Think of your audience.

Avoid chunky paragraphs. Do what's necessary to make your document appealing and easily understood. What components will you use? Proportion. Restraint. Balance. Rhythm. Tone. Consider your audience.

Graphics

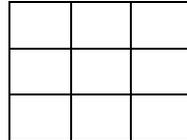


You can use many items as graphics, including clip art, photos, drawings, and text. Especially in DTP, every cluster of text is in a sense a graphic. The trick is to find a way to create balance so you can get your message across and make your document look superb. And if not superb, at least balanced and something people want to read. You may be a beginner, but if you're committed, you can do it. **Motivation.**

Rule of Thirds

You may have noticed that most photos and artwork look better if they're not rigidly done. Half sky and half landscape = boring. Centering at all times = boring. Subjects that aren't centered often are more interesting. Why? Usually because the photographer or artist used the [Rule of Thirds](#).

The rule says that people and objects make a more interesting composition if they appear at the intersections of the lines dividing the blocks. Simply, try not to center your subject, but shift it off center by a third, vertically and/or horizontally. It makes for a more eye-appealing, interesting composition.



Take a look at the table above. Nine blocks. It's the four intersections that, when used as recommended, give the subject more power. This isn't always the case, but it's smart to keep these four intersections in mind - just as guidelines

People often break rules, and this is true in DTP and typography. Rules and guidelines aren't necessarily sacred. While there'll be times you won't use this type of setup for your documents. It's simply a good idea to keep them in mind.

"Z" Pattern

[Use the conventional Z pattern of reading](#) (western cultures) for the strategic placement of important information. Start in the upper left corner, work across to the right, and then back to the left again, going top to bottom, then finish at the lower right. Study ads. You'll notice many of them informally use the Z pattern. It can work for you, too. It all depends on what you're trying to achieve.

Text

Margins

Did you know you can create non-printable lines to help you keep things in balance? Everything in



Microsoft Publisher is movable. You create boxes for graphics and text and tables. It's what you do with these elements that makes the difference. For now, we're talking balance. Use those non-printable lines, and drag the rulers down or to the right to ensure that columns and other blocks of text end up with a measure of equality.

White Space

White space is what *appears* to be empty space. But it's empty deliberately. It has power when used properly. *Have you ever seen a confrontation between two people in which the person being verbally attacked refuses to respond?*

Who takes over the control? Instead of an argument, there is silence.

Silence can be very powerful. So can white space. It's there for a reason. Use it well, and see it as a BFF, not an enemy.

White Space on Paper

One common mistake is that of placing text inside a box too close to the borders. Most Desktop publishing software makes a provision for you to position your text away from the borders. Use it. You won't regret it.

White Space on the Web

Try condensing words into meaningful phrases and headings. Use bullets, numbering, indentation, etc. to give both variety and emphasis.

Exception: if you are presenting information primarily to be printed out by the user, ignore the rules for white space. At this point, delivering information to be printed may take priority over design. Paper is a precious commodity throughout the world. Unashamedly use the entire screen for your important information. [For a visual explanation of the benefits of white space in a box containing text, go to this site.](#)

Bold, Italic, and Underline

Underlining on Paper



For many years, authors underlined text as a way to instruct typesetters to italicize words. Desktop publishing made underlining popular as a way to provide emphasis. It's often used that way today, but is no longer acceptable in many typographical circles. Primary reason: underlining interferes with descenders, those things on letters that drop below the line: p, q, j, etc. Underlining sometimes sabotages the reader's ability to read with ease. One good way to provide emphasis: use bold. Carefully.

Underlining on the Web

See previous section. Also, today most hyperlinks on Web sites are underlined, and many people have come to expect this as the norm. So why not avoid underlining text you want emphasized and go for the bold. Or italics. Or both.

Bolding on Paper

Bolding can be overdone, but when used cautiously, it is worthwhile.

Bolding on the Web

Experts say that people scan text on the Web more than when reading text printed on paper. Therefore, thoughtful use of bolding in text is good. Where too much bolding might look inappropriate in a business letter, it might be fine on the Web. Again, use your judgment. Make it easy for the reader to catch your important points.

Italicizing on Paper

Italicizing works beautifully on paper with ink-jet and laser printer resolutions at 300 dpi or higher.

Italicizing on the Web

Avoid too much italicizing. With the low resolution available on the Web, most italicizing can be difficult to read. However, as resolutions change, this rule changes.

Fonts

When you're creating copy, be aware that fonts send different messages merely by their style. Think about it. Many understated but expensive ads use light fonts that avoid shouting.

There's a lot of psychology involved in which fonts you choose for your particular messages, especially in the area of flyers, ads, etc. Study the fonts used on various TV programs and movies. You'll see a range of styles, and most will, in some way, reflect the overall message of the program or series.

*Use decorative fonts sparingly in DTP and on the Web. They are just that: decorative. They were not designed to be used for body text (general reading), but I've seen entire sites, newsletters, and documents done this way. Somebody fell in love with a font, and thought everyone else would enjoy it. **Keep the reader IN MIND AND REMEMBER THAT TYPOGRAPHY IS A SCIENCE. Tread CAUTIOUSLY.***

Fonts on Paper

Most of us use serif fonts (like Times Roman & Times New Roman) for text. This type of font is designed so the reader's eye moves smoothly from letter to letter. The little squiggles ([serifs](#)) are part of that process. Traditionally, [sans serif fonts](#) (no squiggles—like Arial and Helvetica) are often used for headings, accounting, data entry, etc. They also complement serif fonts. Today's home and office (inkjet & laser) printers usually operate at a minimum of 300dpi (dots per inch). At 300dpi and higher, both types of fonts are readable.

Fonts on the Web

Many screen resolutions are set at 72-100dpi. Web typography experts often suggest that at this low resolution, Web designers offer the best readability by using sans serif fonts such as Arial, Helvetica, and Verdana. This will undoubtedly change in years to come, but slowly. Most users will not replace their current monitors simply because better resolution is available. Designers may be the biggest exception.

The text on a computer user's screen is usually controlled by the fonts the user has on his/her system. Some users, for various reasons, control the specific font and size their browser uses.

Size is another, more difficult issue. You may learn that you can't please all the people all the time! Read more about both of these issues and [see examples in the Yale Web Style Guide](#). Try to use no more than three fonts in a DTP publication. Two may be better. It avoids clutter, adds consistency, and reduces confusion.

Headings

Headlines/Headers on Paper

If you're creating a presentation that needs some vitality, try using a different heading font. If your body text is in Times New Roman, use a sans serif font like Arial or Helvetica for the heading.

Some experts suggest you avoid too many headings in all upper case, referring to the principle that too many caps seem to shout. Unless the phrases are brief, they may be more difficult to read than a combination of upper and lower case. Again, use your best judgment.

Do use a number of sub-headings if they'll help the reader move more quickly through the document. Gerry McGovern has a [fantastic tutorial for writing effective headings](#) for the Web. And if you learn how to write good headings for the Web, you'll have learned how to write good headings for any document.

Body Copy

Know your audience and use font faces and sizes accordingly. Create every document with grace.

Lists

When is it better to use bullets than numbers?



Use numbered lists when you're working with instructions to be done in sequence, and the numbers suggest a hierarchy. The same applies when someone may refer to specific items by number. Numbered and unnumbered lists are more commonly used in scholarly publications. If numbers aren't essential, use bullets, especially in business documents.

When do I capitalize the first letter in a bulleted item?

In most cases, experts recommend that you start each bulleted item with a capital letter. We're so programmed to capitalize only proper nouns and the first word of a complete sentence that it almost seems wrong to capitalize single words and phrases. Do it anyway.

When do I use periods and when do I leave bulleted items without end punctuation?

RULE: Use periods after independent clauses, dependent clauses, or long phrases that are displayed on separate lines in a list. **Example:**

In this project, the equipment shall consist of:

- Three horizontal centrifugal pumps with design temperature of 100 degrees F.
- Three electric motors, in accordance with Appendices II and IIA.
- Three steel base frames.

RULE: Use periods after short phrases that are essential to the grammatical completeness of the statement

introducing the list. **Example:**

There are a number of tags used in HTML, including:

- Image tags.
- Background tags.
- Paragraph tags.

RULE: It's not necessary to use periods after short phrases or single words in a list, if the introductory statement is grammatically complete (see below) or if the listed items are like those on an inventory sheet or a shopping list. **Examples:**

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The software in this price range offers many excellent features:

- Windows 9x and up
- Audio pronunciations
- Rebate
- Tutorial

RULE: When one item contains a complete sentence, punctuate all bulleted items as though they were complete sentences: capitalize the beginning words and use a period at the end of each item. **Example:** You will not be accepted if you have been diagnosed with:

- Arthritis.
- High blood pressure.
- Asthma or some allergies. Please list your allergies and give date of last flare-up.



TIP: If you're creating a long document full of bulleted items, be consistent with beginnings and endings in terms of capitalization and final punctuation.

PLEASE: Avoid Using the Following Format:

We strongly recommend that you

- finish the project by Friday, January 23;
- place everything you've turned in to date, plus this assignment, on a floppy disk; and
- label all file pages (and the disk itself) with your designated code.



TIP: If you want to use the semicolons, then delete the bullets and create a sentence. If you're creating a long document full of bulleted items, be consistent and end each item with a period. Within a grouping, always use all periods or no periods.

Summary

Every document you create will be unique. You don't need to create brochures, newsletters, business cards, letterhead, flyers, or anything else exactly like others you've seen. There are general guidelines, a few rules, and such, but basically you're on your own. Enjoy it! Keep your margins even. If your text needs to be spread out, change the line spacing ([leading](#), pronounced öleddingö), character spacing ([kerning](#)), or font size. Or change the font size.

Ideas

1. Start your own Idea File, a physical box or container that can hold examples you find worth studying for later use. Toss in what you *don't* like, as well.
2. When visiting with clients and potential clients, you'll discover that some conversations will trigger ideas that will lead you to your Idea File. Keep it handy.
3. Study examples from the mail, newspapers, TV, movies, magazines, signs, fence art, buses, highway billboards, etc. Learn to look at color combinations and their effect.
4. Also start a DTP idea directory on your hard drive, with subdirectories like graphics, fonts, color, text, paper, printing, software, etc.
5. Admit to yourself that you don't know everything and never will regarding DTP, but confirm to yourself that you are in a learning mode that will never stop. Every day you can learn something new if you keep your eyes open and think outside the box.
6. Continually take classes (local/online whatever you can find). Get into groups and share ideas. This is a wonderful method of learning. Just listening may help spark a new idea or concept.
7. Don't get overwhelmed or discouraged. Learning what works for you takes time, patience, and a sense of humor.

Final Words

1. Know your audience, and design your document(s) for that audience.
2. Stand back from the page(s) and see if there is balance.
3. Are the margins wide enough so the page doesn't appear overcrowded?
4. Did you use your spellchecker?
5. Did you read the entire document out loud, looking for errors?
6. Mistakes tend to cluster, so if you find one or two close by, search for more. Check the beginning of paragraphs, sections, and pages.
7. If you've done quite a bit of revision, and have tables and charts throughout your document, make sure that every time you say "see Table No. xxxx below," the right table is, indeed, immediately below.
8. Check quotation marks, brackets, and parentheses to ensure they are always in pairs.
9. If you're preparing camera-ready artwork for a print shop, use the brightest white paper possible. Something that has 96 brightness (Photo White) and a weight of 28/70. It's a winner.
10. Know your audience, and design your document(s) for that audience.

Printing Glossaries & Other Design Resources

- <http://my.execpc.com/~bosshard/printing/glossary.html>
- <http://www.printusa.com/glos.htm>
- [Glossary of Printing & Graphic Terms](#)
- [Before & After Magazine](#)
- [Design Elements and Principles](#)
- [Will-Harris House](#)
- <http://www.ideabook.com/default.htm>