

Type was originally designed to be read with ease.

We've crunched it, stretched it, smooshed it and whooshed it. We've trampled it, filled it, curved it and twisted it. We've shattered it, splattered it, squashed it and twirled it.

We've even been very creative with it, but in doing so, we have sometimes caused it to be totally unreadable.

Along the way, we seem to have forgotten that type was designed to be read with ease.

In recent years, with technological advances in desktop publishing, graphic designers have been able to create headline, copy and caption designs in unique ways. Some designs can be read with ease; however, others are totally unreadable. Even spreads or copy areas that are designed professionally may not illustrate sound use of typography.

Two schools of thought exist in typography and design. Some designers believe type is an art form in and of itself. They create typographical

designs that are difficult to read so the reader will actually spend time looking at the design and reading through it.

Others lean heavily toward designs which make copy easy to read, allowing the reader to skim through copy, locate information and read without visual interruption.

Both design styles have merit. However, problems arise when designs are developed without reason or purpose causing difficulty for the reader. Therefore, it is essential that the designer understand the

rules associated with typography before breaking them.

Most typographic experts sort type into seven groups: oldstyle roman, modern roman, sans serif, square serif, script/cursive, text and novelty.

OLDSTYLE ROMAN

Oldstyle roman includes fonts which have serifs, small strokes projecting from the tops and bottoms of the letters. The serifs in this group are roughly hewn into each letter. In addition, there is little difference between the thin

Knowing which **font** is the best for any given **task** begins with knowing what **groups** of fonts are **good** for copy, headlines and display uses.

• BY LAURA SCHAUB

and thick portions of the letters in this type group. These characteristics help the reader distinguish each letter separately; therefore, this group is the easiest to read. Oldstyle roman can be used for headlines, body copy, captions, logos, and other type-heavy areas. It works well for almost any design. Examples of oldstyle roman type include Palatino, Garamond, Caslon and Times.

MODERN ROMAN

Modern roman type faces also feature serifs; however, they are precisely attached to the ascending and descending portions of the letters. A dramatic difference exists

OLDSTYLE ROMAN

Caslon
Times Roman
Palatino

MODERN ROMAN

Bodoni
Baskerville

between the thin and thick portions of the letters. Modern roman fonts are an excellent choice for headlines, logos, nameplates, and subheadlines; however, they should not be used for body copy, as the thin lines tend to disappear when the type size is reduced below 14-point. Examples of modern roman type faces include Bodoni, Photina, Caledonia and Americana.

SANS SERIF

The sans serif type group has no serifs attached. Because of their lack of serifs, they are more difficult to read than oldstyle or modern roman type faces. Sans serif fonts work well for advertisements, head-

SANS SERIF

Optima
Helvetica
Eras
Franklin
Gothic

lines, subheadlines, and small copy areas, such as captions or secondary sidebars. This type group includes Helvetica, Arial, Franklin Gothic and Optima.

SQUARE SERIF

Square serif, also known as slab serifs or Egyptian fonts, have a heavy appearance. The serifs actually resemble small blocks or rectangles. Square Serif fonts work well for serious logos which reflect an unwavering attitude. Because this type group is so heavy, it does not work well for secondary headlines, body copy or captions. It should be used to reflect a certain mood or to set a certain tone. Examples of square serif type include Rockwell, Clarendon, Courier and Aachen.

TEXT

Text type, also known as Black Letter, resembles the hand-written copy produced by monks prior to Johannes Gutenberg's introduction of moveable type to the western world. Ornate in appearance, fonts in this group convey a feeling of tradition and formality. Some newspapers, such as The New York Times and The Dallas Morning News, use text type for their nameplates. Text fonts are often found on wedding invitations and other important documents, such as diplomas and certificates. However, they are rarely used in contemporary publications and should never be set in all caps. They should not be used

for body copy or captions. Examples of text type include Linotext, Cloister Black, Goudy Text, Wilhelm Klingspor and Old English Text.

SCRIPT & CURSIVE

Scripts and cursives are also used to convey a tone or mood. All resemble handwriting. Scripts appear to be connected while cursives do not. Some are ornate in their appearance and reflect sophistication. Others look more like notes scribbled hurriedly to a friend. Because they are difficult to read, they should never be set in all caps. In addition, they should not be used in small copy areas. Examples of scripts include Shelley Allegro, Snell Roundhand, Brush Script

SQUARE SERIF

Aachen
Rockwell

Linotext

and Gando Ronde. Cursives include Mistral, Zapf Chancery and Monotype Corsiva.

NOVELTY

Novelty faces reflect a variety of moods in their design. Some of the popular "grunge" faces, such as Harting, Remedy, Paisley, Salsa, Texas Hero and Chromosome fall into this category. Designers should use these types carefully, always with a specific reason or purpose in mind. Ornate faces and others in this category which are difficult to read in large sizes should never be used for body copy or captions.

HARMONY

When mixing type faces in headline designs, advertisements, logos, and pages, graphic artists should use

ASSIGNMENT

DIRECTIONS: Below are five common alignments of body copy. On a separate piece of paper, write a few sentences explaining which is the easiest to read and why. Then find an example of each in a newspaper or magazine, cut it out and tape it on a separate piece of paper. Label. Enclose in your personal design clip file.

ALIGN LEFT

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ALIGN CENTER

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FORCE JUSTIFY

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either “family harmony” or “blending harmony.”

Family harmony is achieved by staying within the same type family, such as Berkeley, and using a variety of styles within the design, i.e., Berkeley, Berkeley Medium, and Berkeley Book Italic.

Blending harmony features type from three different groups, such as an oldstyle roman, sans serif and script. Rarely do designers mix types from more than three groups. And almost never do designers mix fonts from the same type group, such as two oldstyle romans or two sans serifs in the same design.

Type consistency within a publication is also a must. For example, in a newspaper or newsletter, primary headlines should be set in one font throughout the publication. Primary sizes should be standard sizes, such as 30, 36, 42, 48, 60 or 72-point. Usually primary headlines are set in bold type with secondary headlines set in a lighter type. Secondary headlines are at least the size of the primary headline. Standard sizes for secondary headlines are 14, 18 and 24-point. Standardizing headline sizes throughout a publication helps maintain consistency.

Other type elements which should be designed and set in a consistent manner throughout a publication include bylines, jumplines, standing headlines, captions, folios and folio tabs. Defining stylesheets in PageMaker or QuarkXPress not only ensures consistency but also makes page design easier and faster.

READABILITY

When using type on a page or spread, designers should try to remember several important points to avoid problems with readability.

1. Avoid overprinting or

reversing captions or other type on photos. Place captions and type on white areas or on very light screens, if possible. Sometimes it is acceptable

SCRIPT & CURSIVE

Flemish Script
Schooner Script
Kaufmann

NOVELTY

Remedy
CHROMOSOME
Harting

to reverse type on a black or solid, dark-colored area; however, if the type is reversed, it should be set a little larger (possibly 12-point) to improve readability. This should only be used on short secondary coverage areas, such as lists, bulleted items, or other types of informational graphics.

2. Avoid running type on ghosted photos. It makes the type difficult to read in addition to ruining the photo.
3. Avoid printing type on patterned screened areas. This, too, slows readers and causes them to skip the copy.
4. Avoid the use of all-caps in headlines and other copy areas. All-caps are much more difficult to read than are caps and lower case or sentence style copy.
5. Avoid setting body copy wider than 20 picas or narrower than 10 picas. Copy set too wide causes the reader's eye to “get lost” in the story. Copy set too narrow, espe-

ASSIGNMENT

DIRECTIONS: Below are some common styles of type. Find an example of each in a newspaper or magazine, cut it out and tape it on a separate piece of paper. Label. Enclose in your personal design clip file. Which would you use in blocks of body copy?

normal

italic

bold

bold italic

underline

outline

reverse

shadow

ALL CAPS

Determining the optimum column width for body copy.

The optimum width of a column in picas is one and one-half times the point size of the type. For example, if the body copy type is 10 points, the optimum column width is (10×1.5) 15 picas.

The maximum width is also approximately equivalent to the width of one and one-half alphabets set in the appropriate size and font.

cially copy that is justified, causes large “rivers” of white space to form in the copy, thereby distracting the reader. To reduce the “rivers,” the designer could justify narrow copy to the left to improve readability.

6. Use larger type (18-point) and extra leading or white space between lines when running copy wider than 20 picas to increase readability.
7. Set large areas of body copy in a 10 or 12-point oldstyle roman face. Break up the gray space using subheadlines (12 or 14-point bold), large initial letters (14 or 18-point), icons, or one line of extra white space between large blocks of text. Select a method of breaking up gray space and use it consistently throughout the publication. Avoid starting a second or third column with subheads or initial letters; it confuses the reader who may think this is where to start reading. Avoid bumping subheads and initial letters from column to column. Instead, scatter them through the story so that they don’t “touch”

each other.

8. For captions, use 8-point type which contrasts in some way with the body copy. In other words, if the body copy is set in 10-point Palatino, the designer may want to set the captions in 8-point Helvetica bold to create contrast for the reader. The designer may also want to use a 12 or 14-point small headline over the captions to “match” the design of the headline. These elements should become a part of the “style rules” of the publication and maintained consistently throughout the publication.
9. Type should never be placed vertically or diagonally down the page. Vertical or diagonal placement of type causes extreme difficulty for the reader. Readers are accustomed to reading from left to right rather than from top to bottom.
10. When using type as a primary emphasis area, such as for a large headline, try to make a verbal-visual connection between the content of the photo and the kind of type and design style for the headline.

For example, if the headline reads, “Fade to Black,” the designer may want to actually “fade” the word, “Fade,” and set the word, “black” in heavy, black type. The photo illustration that might accompany this primary headline should also display the concept and connect to the angle of the story.

But above all, remember: type was designed to be read with ease.