

GRAPHIC GUIDELINES

Designing the News Page

The tabloid format we use is roughly half the size of a broadsheet page. It is 11 inches wide and 17 inches tall. Some tabs use four columns to a page, but most prefer a five-column format for maximum flexibility. This format also conforms to most ad sizes.

Because gossip newspapers, such as the National Inquirer, are printed in tabloid format, the word “tabloid” sometimes carries a negative connotation that it does not deserve. Tabloid should only refer to the size of a newspaper, not its contents.

Advantage of tabs:

- Their smaller size makes them easier to produce and cheaper to print.
- They’re popular with readers because they are handier, less bulky and faster to scan.
- Editors and advertisers find that their stories and ads can dominate a page more effectively than in a broadsheet.
- It’s easier to create separate sections.

PAGE STRUCTURE:

Stories should be shaped like rectangles to keep pages neat and well organized, whether they are stacked vertically or horizontally, and whether they use art or not.

Generally, the strongest story (most newsworthy) goes at the top of the page with the largest headline. This guideline works for the entire publication as well. In The Signal, the most important news story runs on the top of page one. The second most important news story runs on page one after that, and so on. Page one news stories will jump to page 6.

HEADLINES:

- Headlines vary in size from 14-84 points. Broadsheets use larger sizes than tabloids. As a rule, headlines should get smaller as you move down the page. Every story must have a head. Smaller stories get smaller heads.
- Avoid butting headlines. That means running two headlines side by side. If you can’t avoid it, you can box a story to keep readers from becoming confused. Or, you can make one headline span several columns in large type over a horizontal story, and another cover only one column width, running in smaller type, down several lines.

- In news stories, the headline usually sits on top of the text and should cover the story. But features sometimes break that rule and put the headline over one column or two or down the side for visual interest.
- Never allow the art element to come between the text and the headline. For example, don't run a head, picture and then text. As a rule, heads should touch the text. The proper order is photo, outline, head then text.

BOXING STORIES:

We use a five-column format (each column about 12 picas or two inches wide). When you box a story, your box eats up a little of that column width, but within the box you can vary the number of columns to compensate for the loss. For example, you could use two bastard legs inside a box that would normally span the width of three normal columns. Then place a normal two-column story beside the box. When done correctly, this also helps to relieve monotony on the page.

Note: Never change column widths within a story.

ART:

In a perfect newspaper, every story would have some sort of art: a photo, a chart, a map – or at the very least – a pull quote. In reality, though, actually producing that much art would take a colossal amount of work and might actually be too distracting to readers.

As a rule, in a typical issue of either the New York Times or USA Today, 70 percent of the stories run without art, 25 percent use just one piece of art, and 5 percent use two pieces.

For page designers, a good rule of thumb is to make every page at least one-third art. Feature pages may use more.

There are times, however, when art for a story, or even a whole page, just doesn't exist. When there are no good quotes to play up. Where there's no time – or artist – to produce a chart or a graph. In this case, your page may be gray, but it doesn't have to be bland. Instead of simply stacking stories on top of one another, you can add variety by boxing stories, using bastard measures, or using raw wraps and alternative headline treatments.

In general, avoid using clip art. It makes the paper look unprofessional, which is the opposite of your goal.

If you screen an image or place a gray box behind text it should be no more than 25 percent of the density of the original images.

PHOTOS:

Photos should be saved as Tiff files, at resolutions between 150-200 dpi.

Photos printed in a newspaper should be a little lighter than “ideal” to account for grain of the newsprint. Be particularly mindful of this when using digital pictures.

Photos accompanying stories: Proper order is photo, cutline, headline and text.

Photos should always face into the page. People should not look off the page. Actions shots (i.e. a racing car) should not move the reader’s eye off the page.

Give each page a dominant photo – one that is substantially bigger than any competing photo to give a page motion, variety and impact. This is particularly important in a photo spread.

If there is only one photo on a page, it should run big enough to provide impact and interest – to visually anchor the page.

Mugs usually run the full width of a column and 3-4 inches deep. We use these only when we have no better alternative available. In vertical designs, mugs go at the top of the story. In descending order, you should have a photo, cutline, headline and text.

Some layouts use a photo in the middle of a column. It’s better not to do this because readers might think the story has ended and that a new one begins below the photo.

Avoid putting a photo at the bottom of a leg of type because readers might assume it belongs to another story.

Sometimes half-column mugs (occasionally called porkchops) let you display a mug without wasting space. These work best in wide bastard legs. The text should be at least 6 picas wide (1 inch) where it wraps around the mug, or it will be too thin to read.

Photos should be bordered by a one point rule line.

CUTLINES:

Most newspapers run their cutlines in a different typeface to distinguish the cutlines from the text. Some use boldface, some use italic and some use san serif type.

On news pages, they should generally run below each photo. But to add variety, especially on feature pages, cutlines can run beside or between photos.

Length: Cutlines below a photo should align along both sides of the photo. They should never extend beyond either edge. If a photo is more than 30 picas (5 inches) wide, cutlines should be set in two legs side by side.

TYPE:

Serif type is preferred for body copy. Usually a paper picks one type family and style for body text (i.e. New York Times, 12 pt.). Roman type is generally plain, as opposed to bold or italics.

Never change typefaces, text sizes or column width within a story.

Type 8 pt. or smaller is difficult to read and should be used sparingly.

The optimum depth for legs of text is 2 to 10 inches. As a rule you should not go over 12 inches. The column becomes too difficult to read.

The standard width for most columns is 12 picas wide (2 inches)

Use italics, boldface, reverses, all caps and any other special effects in small doses.

Spaces in type are more apparent when the type runs in a narrow column. So when you are typing stories, remember to space only once after periods. Also avoid hard returns.

Text must be done in Quark, not PhotoShop. Do not scan text.

COLOR:

All color images should be saved as “CMYK,” not “RGB.”

The Signal is budgeted for full color on four pages (1, 4, 5 & 8). That rest of the issue will be printed in black and white.

COPYING THE SIGNAL ISSUE ONTO ZIP DISK FOR PRINTER:

We actually submit our pages to the printer over the Internet, but the following is good information if you ever need to submit on a disk as a backup:

Check to make sure that all text, fonts, graphics and photographs have been successfully transferred to a zip disk or a CD by:

1. Create two folders on the zip disk: one for fonts and one for graphics. Photographs go in the graphics folder. When all of The Signal files have been

transferred onto the zip, there should be three icons: 1) the InDesign file, 2) the font folder, and 3) the graphics folder.

2. Remove the zip disk from the computer that has the files stored on its hard drive and insert the disk into a different computer. (This step makes the computer depended on the zip disk for the files and ensures that the files are there.)
3. Open The Signal issue in InDesign.
4. Go to the **Utilities** menu at the top of the screen and open **Usage**:
 - Check Fonts – make sure there are no fonts “missing.”
 - Check Graphics – make sure there are no graphics “missing.”
 - Check to make sure that black and white graphics are saved as grayscale.
 - Check to make sure that color graphics are saved as CMYK and use uncoated pantone colors.
 - Check to make sure that all graphics are saved as Tiff files.
 - Check Photographs – make sure there are no photos “missing.”
 - Check to make sure that black and white photos are saved as grayscale.
 - Check to make sure that color photos are saved as CMYK.
 - Check to make sure that all photos are saved as Tiff files.