

The Big Idea
Publishing is bigger than ever, even though paper isn't part of the mix.

DTP TRENDS

PUBLISHING IN THE POST-PRINT WORLD

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Look Ma, No Trees!

Paper-free Publishing Now the Rule, Not the Exception

The explosion of online information in the form of wikis, blogs, and other forms of visual communication has accomplished one thing that environmentalists have dreamed of for years; it has saved millions upon millions of trees once destined for the paper mills, the newspaper presses, and ultimately the bottom of the bird cage.

While the amount of information available to any literate consumer has increased geometrically over the past decade, the percentage of it that has actually been printed has dwindled at an equally exponential rate.

"The first factor that you have to consider is the cost of actually printing on paper," says consultant N.K. Hanz. "The cost of paper, ink, handling and distribution, not to mention the overhead on the printing presses



and other equipment, in comparison to the minimal cost of one workstation and an internet connection—why that makes it a no-brainer!"

"The next consideration is the relative timeframes of ink versus electrons; if you're on a deadline, you can work up to the last minute (and of course we all do) and you can incorporate the latest news the day and even the hour that it comes out. With print, you have to consider all of the leadtime necessary for the printer to set it up, run off your copies, pass it on to your distribution network, and have it delivered."

Finally there's the factor of volume. There is a cost for every person that you want to reach who receives your paper and ink publication, a cost that, granted, goes down with volume, but still is a factor based on the materials cost plus the production cost plus the distribution cost. When you publish online, you can reach twenty million people at no more cost than if you were publishing for twenty.

Typography Still Matters

Lettershapes still contribute to readability and beauty

One of the classic rules of typesetting has undergone a curious inversion in recent years with the onset of digital online publishing. The old tried and true rule was to use bold sans serif fonts, such as *Arial*, for headlines and subheads, and serif fonts, such as the venerable *Times Roman*, for big blocks of body text.

The assumption was that the bolder, starker sans serif fonts had more impact but weren't as readable in dense blocks of text. It was taught that the serifs that ran along the line of type emphasized the baseline and kept the reader's eye from straying to the line above or below, thus increasing the readability of dense text.

This principle had its merit in the days of print, when fine details of typesetting, such as serifs, were more evident than today. The rule of thumb for document setup was about 300 ppi (pixels per inch) for print work,

and only 72 ppi for web publishing. But fine lettershape details, such as the serifs running along the baseline, don't hold up in the low-rez world of online publishing. Cleaner, more modern fonts with uniform thicknesses and no serifs read better on the web. As a matter of fact, a number of fonts and type families, such as the sans serif *Verdana* (which you are reading right now) were specifically developed for readability on computer screens. The fancier families of serif fonts found their place on headlines and subheads, where they could more readily be appreciated.

Choosing a font or combination of fonts is still something of an art. Guidelines and rules of thumb still exist, but often it still comes down to a discerning eye, a reservoir of experience, and a matter of individual style and taste.

A Primer of Typographic Styles

Oldstyle

Adobe Caslon Pro exhibits the thick-thin slant typical of the angle from a handheld quill pen

Modern

Palatino shows the vertical thick-thin alignment of fonts developed in the late 19th century

Slab Serif

Courier displays serifs as thick as the letter strokes

Sans Serif

Arial is the default sans serif font

Script

CommercialScript BT is one of many fonts to mimic handwriting

DECORATIVE

such as *Algerian*, for impact and emphasis, or to create a mood

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Why Another Newsletter?

A number of factors led to the creation of this newsletter. As our lead story pointed out, publishing is bigger than ever, even though paper printing is being phased out. Design basics are still timely and relevant topics for study. Communication is more vital than ever, more accessible than ever, but traditional desktop publishing courses are falling by the wayside. People want and need to communicate effectively, and there's no reason why everyone of them should reinvent the wheel, and impose upon our eyes in the process.

Why the landscape format?

This publication is intended for on-line publication, not print. Computer screens are landscape format. Even the iPad and similar devices, as well as smart phones, can be configured for landscape. A single page of print is most often in portrait format, but consider the book—when opened, it becomes landscape format.



What can readers expect in upcoming issues?

Preliminary plans include issues dedicated to each of the Four Principles of Design—Proximity, Alignment, Repetition, and Contrast. Other topics will include the history of printing and typesetting, features on photography and digital image manipulation, and a look at blogging as autobiography.

<http://digress-with-don.wikispaces.com/Animation>

Other items of interest

If this material caught your eye, you might be interested in the animation project that was created for the same graduate class. The topic is how animation can be used in the classroom, and to see it, follow this link: