

Newspaper Structure

Notes from January 17th, 2008

Making a dummy for your newspaper design is not an exact science. Stories don't always fit the way you want. When it is time to fine-tune a page, you can always trim a photo. Plug in a liftout quote. Write a bigger headline. Change a deck. Shuffle adds around.

But it is very effective to draw a dummy before you start assembling the real thing.

Details of the 4 elements:

Text: A column is also known as a leg (or legs). Each leg is 12 picas 2 points wide (aprox. 2.07 of an inch). Most stories should be explained in more than 1 leg. The standard story usually has 2 legs. Each leg is 2 inches deep. A whole story is 4 inches long.

Headline: A very standard size is 24 points. A headline can easily be adapted according to the hierarchy of the story and position in the newspaper.

Photo: Photos should be measured according to columns and be aligned accordingly. Deep size (height) should be measured in Picas but it is commonly coordinated to inches: 2 and 3 inches sizes are most common for regular pictures.

Cutline: Normally 1 to 2 points smaller than the common size of the running text. Other features like bold, italics or a variation of sans-serifs can be included to differentiate from other text.

How many fonts should be used?

1. Running text: find a font that can be read when the size is small, play with it by looking at the variations: bold, italics, all caps, etc.
2. Headlines: look for a versatile family that can give you variation without using additional families. Find something that can play along with the running text.
3. Typeface for special touches: logo, index, deck, sig, jump line or even liftout quote.
4. Type face for special text: sidebars, graphics photo credits, cutlines need to look a little different from the standard text beside them.

Consider your audience and the age. Who reads newspaper?

One of the basic design guidelines is this: Whether square, horizontal or vertical, stories should be shaped into rectangles.