

NOTES ON CHAPTER 2

BEST QUOTE

Every story is ... cuttable.

BY THE NUMBERS

28

Pages in this chapter

7%

Stories without art

11%

Mug shots

3%

Text shapes

11%

One horizontal photo

11%

One vertical photo

11%

The dominant photo

7%

Big vertical, small horizontal

7%

Big horizontal, small vertical

7%

Two verticals

7%

Two horizontals

3%

Adding mug shots

STORIES WITHOUT ART

About 70 percent of stories run without art, and the modules containing the story, headline and any art run in rectangles, either horizontal or vertical.

Avoid dummied legs of stories more than 12 inches deep since long legs look gray and intimidating. The longer the story, the more it needs to go horizontal.

Horizontal shapes are pleasing to the eye.

Probably 99 percent of stories run with the headline covering above the text, but in a few situations, it's OK to have a raw rap or sidesaddle headline.

MUG SHOTS

Mug shots attract readers. Run them the full width of a column or half a column. Crop tightly, but not too tightly. Every mug needs a cutline that includes the person's name and title/affiliation.

In vertical designs, mug shots go at the top of the text if they run the full width of the column. Photo first, then cutline, then headline then text.

Some basic rules of modular design

- The headline covers all the text.
- All elements align neatly with each other.
- There's at least an inch of text below the photo.
- The entire module is shaped like a rectangle.

TEXT SHAPES

- A rectangle is the safest shape of all.
- L-shaped text is neat and readable.
- U-shapes break up boring stacks of text.
- Avoid doglegs.
- Avoid backward L-shaped text blocks.
- Avoid forcing readers to jump over art.
- Avoid ugly shapes.

ONE HORIZONTAL PHOTO

Every photo is unique, and every photo deserves special consideration before you shove it into a convenient shot.

- How big should the photo run?
- Is one photo enough to tell the story?
- Does the action in the photo flow strongly in one direction?

Remember the correct order: photo, caption, headline, then text.

ONE VERTICAL PHOTO

Vertical photos, generally two or three columns wide run pretty big, creating a sleek, dynamic design. Stacking photos and stories side by side requires careful sizing but creates graceful design.

THE DOMINANT PHOTO

A strong photo will anchor a story or an entire page. When evaluating a photo, decide which deserves bigger play:

- Do we really need two photos?
- Does one have stronger content?
- Does one have higher readability?
- Does one have superior quality?
- Does one have a preferable shape?

BIG VERTICAL, SMALL HORIZONTAL BIG HORIZONTAL, SMALL VERTICAL

Keep photos/captions in a rectangular package with the related headline and story.

As a rule, mug shots are the only photos that consistently read in one column. When space is tight, or when you just want to squeeze in a bit more art, you can run a vertical photo one column wide.

TWO VERTICALS TWO HORIZONTALS

Always try to vary the sizes and shapes. Using two verticals limits your options.

Pairing two horizontal photos is more common and a bit less limiting than pairing two verticals.

Story design must NOT be ambiguous or confusing to your readers. Modular design does not always avoid ambiguity or confusion.

ADDING MUG SHOTS

Add mugs, but dummy them slightly apart from news photos as a subtle signal to readers that the mug shots are not live.

Whenever possible, add liftout quotes to mugs too. Combining people's faces with their words

- connects them to the story;
- provides extra commentary; and
- creates a visual look that will attract more readers.