BY THE NUMBERS

34
Pages in this chapter

6%
Grids

18%
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6%
Pages with art

6%
Modular page design

3%
Front page design

3%
Section front flow chart

18%
Designing page one — a case study

6%
Making stories fit

6%
Inside pages

6%
Double trucks

3%
Bad juxtaposition

3%
Rules of thumb

Percentages may not total to 100% due to the addition of structural pages and exercises.

GRIDS

A page grid provides the structure that keeps elements aligned. Most broadsheet newspapers use a 6-column grid, especially on pages with ads.

Tabloid pages are often easier to produce and cheaper to print. In addition, stories or ads can easily dominate a tabloid page, and tabloids are often popular with readers because they're less bulky and faster to browse. A 5-column format is most common in tabloids.

PAGES WITHOUT ART

With or without art, you can build a page by fitting rectangles together logically. Today, the trend is toward horizontal design.

On a perfect page, every story would have some kind or art: a photo, a chart, a map or some other visual entry point. Make every page at least one-third art.

Add variety by butting headlines, boxing stories, using bastard measures or using raw wraps and alternative headline treatments.

To minimize problems when butting heads:
- Mix styles, fonts or sizes
- Write short

Don't box a story just because you're bored with a page. Box stories that deserve special treatment.

Don't change column widths within a story.

Raw raps only work at the top of a page, beneath a boxed story or below some sort of cutoff rule.

Most readers prefer finding material in the same spot in every issue.

PAGES WITH ART

As a page designer, your job is selling stories to readers. Art is essential, and information art plays an integral part in news design.

Most beginning designers run art too small. Be bold. But balance and separate your art too.

MODULAR PAGE DESIGN

Modules — discrete rectangular units that include the headline, which covers the entire module, the story and all related art elements.

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

Page one should reflect the magnitude of events as well as the complexity of the news. The pages should be clearly organized.

Jim Haag: "[Designers] are expected to be journalists who develop presentations that leave no doubt what the lead story is. There's no more exciting job in the world."

SECTION FRONT FLOW CHART

Start by knowing how many stories you have, their lengths, their relative importance and what the lead story is, then use the flow chart to get a finished page that is reader friendly, with sidebars and graphics.

MAKING STORIES FIT

If a story is too long, trim the text, trim a photo, trim an adjacent story, drop a line from the headline or move an ad.

If a story is too short, add more text, enlarge a photo, add a mug shot, add a liftout quote, add another line of headline, add some air between paragraphs, add a filler story, add a house ad, move an ad.

When you jump a story, make it worth the reader's while (at least 6 inches of text). Start the story solidly with at least 4 inches of text. Jump stories only once. Jump stories to the same place.

INSIDE PAGES

News stories exist to inform readers. Ads exist to make money for publishers. Work with the ad staff to:
- Use modular ad formats
- Use house ads to smooth out awkward holes
- Establish guidelines for key pages
- Establish limits
- Get permission to move ads when necessary

Guideline:
- Work with the ad stacks
- Use alternative headline treatments.
- Give every page a dominant element.
- Avoid dummying photos or boxed stories near ads.
- Save good stories for pages with good news holes.

DOUBLE TRUCKS

Double truck — two facing pages that print across the gutter. Save them for special occasions.

BAD JUSTAPOSITION

Make your design perfectly clear. Beware of modules that seem to overlap whether horizontally or vertically.