DESKTOP PUBLISHING

a DesignClass guide to features & techniques

Version 1.0

MAKE A STATEMENT

Computers have transformed the world of graphics and no place more so than the layout and composition of publications.

Creating newspapers, magazines and posters used to be a laborious task of cutting, pasting and generating photostats to send to print. The range of effects and experimentation of different layouts was limited due to the high cost.

Since the late 1970's, computers and 'layout' software - called DeskTop Publishing (DTP) as it could be composed at your desktop...) - have become more powerful and affordable.

As part of Graphic Communication, you will be expected to be become very familiar with DTP and how to use it to create professional looking layouts that are attractive to a target audience.

DTP is used in conjunction with "Design Elements" and "Design Principles" - having a good understanding of thse can help you compose that perfect layout.

You will be shown how to use the software in class. However, you do need to know some key phrases and definitions for the course exam. This document is designed to help that. Commit these to memory...

Things to know...

1. What DTP stands for
2. Layout terms
3. Types of printer
4. Capturing graphics
5. Advantages of DTP
6. Hardware needed

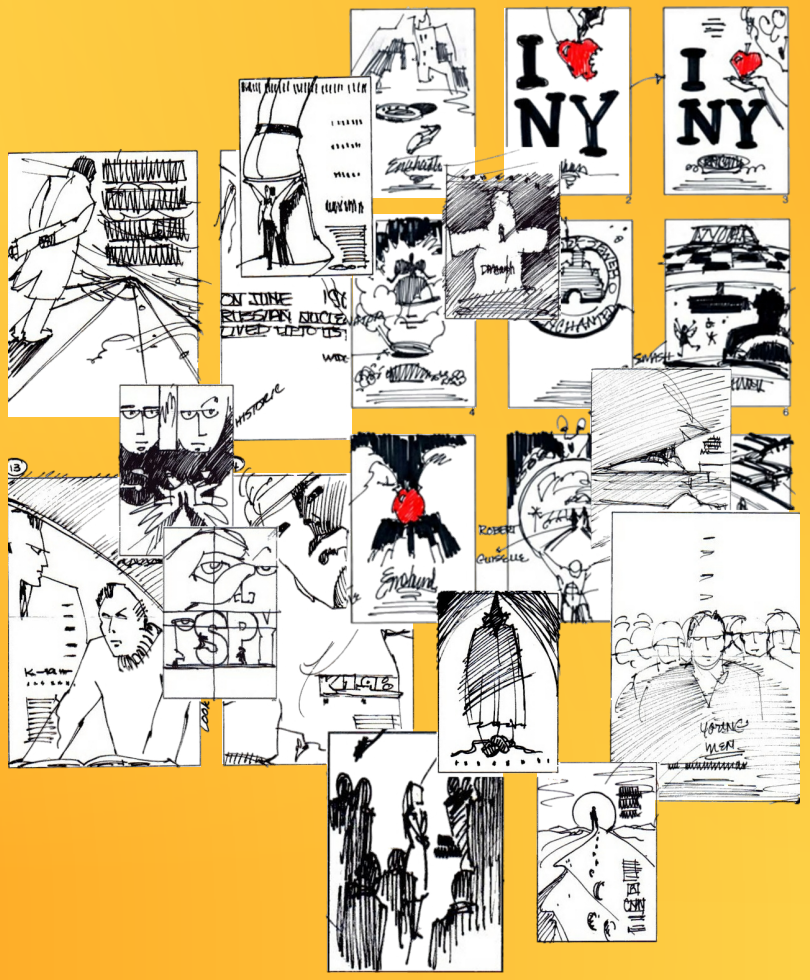
FIRST, GET YOUR BIG IDEA!

THUMBNAILS NOT ART!

Look, to be frank, computers don't come up with ideas. They are mindless speed machines that can help your ideas come to life - but you must have a 'big idea' first. Thousands of design students have committed millions of hours staring at the screen hoping for an idea to leap out from the pixels.

Do some research into your target audience then sketch basic ideas.

Use different weight of black pens and don't be afraid to make mistakes - we all do it. You can add a splash of colour to emphasise a point, but don't spend too long making them art pieces - communicate your ideas and annotate them.



THINGS TO MENTION

Annotations are critical! They allow you to talk about your ideas without being in the room. You can annotate various aspects that may be too time consuming to sketch, or to justify ideas.

Some basic things to annotate about are...

- What colours are you going to use and why?
- What typeface are you going to use and why?
- What graphics or photos are you going to need and where are you going to get them?
- What design elements and principles are you going to apply and why do you think they will be effective?
- Any particular DTP features you are going to use?

A PICTURE SAYS A THOUSAND WORDS...

PHOTOGRAPH

Taking photos can allow you to get exactly what you want to suit your layout idea. You don't need expensive cameras or equipment - many mobile phones have fantastic cameras - and photo-editing software can touch up any image.

If you take a photo, you own it. This is valuable in industry and can be very profitable.

STOCK IMAGES

Getting images other people have made can be fab! Hey, no work for you!

A couple of problems however. Images are controlled by copyright - and if you didn't take the photo, you don't have the right to use it. Don't worry, in school, Google images is okay - but if you are making work public, you need to pay for the right to use the image. It can also be hard to source a suitable image.

DIGITAL ARTWORK

Sometimes photos won't do. You may have a design idea in your head that requires custom made graphics. This can be done by drawing directly to the computer with a tablet or mouse (professionals use tablets).

Like photographs, you will own the copyright to any artwork you make yourself. It takes practice, but well worth the effort.

MAKING IT REAL

INKJET

Inkjet printers can be found almost anywhere. They are inexpensive to buy and reliable.

However the cost of ink is amazingly high - some of the most expensive liquids on the market (next to scorpion venom apparently...)

These printers deliver photo-quality prints with fantastic colour quality...

LASER

Laser printers are the backbone of most schools, universities and offices. They are designed for relatively high-volume printing and come in monochrome or colour.

Whilst monochrome prints can be very sharp, the colour on colour-laser printers can appear washed out and muted - certainly not the quality you will get on screen.

OFFSET LITHOGRAPHY

Printing lots of of something? Well, you probably wont want to use an inkjet (waaay too expensive) or laser (slow, expensive and of dubious quality).

You are going to need to go to a professional and make use of an offset lithography printer. It can appear expensive to get a company to set up a print job, but it is worth it if you are printing thousands of copies...

IN TERMS OF LAYOUT, 1

Title Text
Eh... The title. It names the article... What can we say...

Centre Fold
If a double page spread, it needs a fold point...

Bleed
An image that extends beyond the boundary of the page.

Drop Cap
Signifies the start of the article.

Drop Shadow
A shadow added under an image or graphic to create depth within a layout.

Body Text
The main article text.

Text Wrap
Text wrapped to the shape of an image. This can create unity between text and the image, showing they are related.

Depth-of-Field
Okay, really a photography technique, but many DTP packages can now edit images to add the effect. Images have one point of focus, drawing the eye and creating depth.

Margin
Area around a document.

Gutter
The space between two columns.

STATE of the ARTISTS

by: RUBEN A RODRIGUEZ, DMDT

There is one program of study at TSTC that "creates artists, not technicians," according to Department Chairman J.J. Vavra. "In DMDT (Digital Media Design Technology), we teach our students to create art using tools like Photoshop. We teach them to understand their audience to produce the right type of art for them."

Students of the DMDT Program learn to usecomputer software to create or manipulate still images, createand edit digital videos, and animate 3D images. They also learn different techniques for digital drawing, painting and photography. The department's four computer labs are filled with industry standard Apple iMac computers, Canon 60D and T3i digital cameras for photography and videography.

Photos by: J.J. Vavra, Department Chairman, DMDT

Change in any industry is common, but happens especially fast with the technology fields. It seems that every six months a new program or upgrade is being introduced. All of the DMDT Program instructors either own their own business or freelance outside of the classroom. This gives the DMDT instructors the ability to pass on these industry changes to their students as they happen. The instructors also gather an incredible amount of data about their classes to determine which student projects or techniques need to be updated to improve student learning. DMDT currently has a 92.5 percent placement rate and they are always looking for new methods to improve that

"Our number one goal is to place students, either as a graphic designer or continuing their education. One hundred percent of our grads leave with work experience because of our Portfolio Development class" Vavra said.

The Portfolio class is taken by DMDT students during their last semester. They are instructed in proper resume writing, creating an organized portfolio showcasing their artwork which is ready to send out to prospective employers, and will work at an internship at a local graphic design company. The unpaid internship helps the students adapt to working in a professional office environment.

Andrea Monasmith, a DMDT student, is currently an intern at CM Graphics in Harlingen. "At first I was terrified of the internship because the real-world operates on another level. I quickly found out that I am prepared to meet the standard of the industry in a professional environment today. Instead of turning in a project to an instructor, I am turning it in to a client. I quickly learned I could really do the job. Finding out I could meet the demands of the real world has given me confidence for my future," said Monasmith.

Combining their creative abilities with latest equipment, techniques taught by their up-to-date instructors and the experience gained during the internship, graduates leave TSTC confident about their future success.

Left Aligned
Text or graphic aligned to the left...

Orphan
A stray word, sitting on its own.

Widow
A stray item of text carrying over from the previous column.

Flow text along-a-path

All DTP packages will have a palette of shapes that can be applied to create graphical features quickly.

Copy + Paste

Eh, you copy an item to the computer's memory and then paste a duplicate back onto the page (saves a lot of redrawing...)

Registration Marks

Critical marks when using offset lithography printing.

These are used to ensure the paper is being guided through the printer perfectly straight...

Edited Typeface

Sometimes the perfect typeface needs tweaked to make it fit with your 'big idea'

Most DTP packages will allow you to edit the shape of text to create an effect.

Crop Marks

The area to be cut once a document has been printed - this allows for bleeding images without a white border.

This is commonly done in commercial printing

Quick Shapes

All DTP packages will have a palette of shapes that can be applied to create graphical features quickly.

Layers

To send an item back or forward, so one is front of another.

Rotate

Change the angle of an item

Header Space
The name of the top margin area, above the title.

Fully Cropped Image
Image with the full background removed.

Bullet Points
A small mark to lead some key text.

Square Cropped Image
An image with the left, right, top and/or bottom cut away.

Header
An item or text or graphic within the header space. Usually the name of the publication or chapter title.

Reverse
To colour text white on a darker background (typically black)

Colour Matching
The colour dropper tool, used to match colours on the document.

This can ensure unity in colour usage in a layout.

Right Aligned
An item aligned to the right...

Pull Quote
A copy of the body text that has been enlarged an positioned to create emphasis.

Folio
An item or text or graphic within the footer space. Usually the page number...

Footer Space
Name of the space in the bottom margin.

Sub Heading
A title or highlighted block of text under the main title, usually giving an 'impact statement'.