

## **Script: Basic Design**

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### **Slide 1:**

Basics of news design: Building better pages from the beginning.

### **Slide 2:**

Technology, in part, helped create modern design by allowing newspapers to begin reproducing photographs.

### **Slide 3:**

Adding color to news pages also changed the look of the printed page. Modern readers want a way to engage with their news and be part of an experience, not just see words on a page.

### **Slide 4:**

These pages of the Columbia Missourian show how design has changed within the last century, with the introduction of color, modular layout and other elements that help attract a reader's eyes to a page.

### **Slide 5:**

Before you can begin thinking of news pages as complete packages, you need to know what you're working with. These four elements: photos, cutlines, headlines and text are part of every design – or should be. There will be instances when designers don't have all of these elements to work with on a page, but skill and flexibility will help you consider other options.

### **Slide 6:**

While some of these terms are used only when talking about a front page, others appear on nearly every page of a newspaper. It's important to know the correct terms so you can tell others what you need to complete your design.

### **Slide 7:**

Because most newspapers are filled with columns of text, it's important to know about typography. The way type is measured helps share important information to a designer. Staff designers should choose a typeface for their designs that allows some flexibility with weight, such as bold or italics, but typefaces should be consistent from page to page.

### **Slide 8:**

Still confused about how to identify serif and sans serif fonts? Here are a couple of examples of the use of fonts on ColumbiaMissourian.com. See the little "feet" on the headline font? That's a serif font. Those feet aren't present in the photo caption font. That's sans serif.

**Slide 9:**

The headline's job is to attract readers to a story, but it shouldn't oversell a story either. Headlines guide readers from the most important story (biggest headline) to the lesser stories with smaller headlines. The weight and size of a headline needs to match the importance of the story. Headlines also should always be written in present tense, and should be conversational.

**Slide 10:**

Newspapers measure text in inches – it's hard to read one long column of text, so modular design lets one long story flow across several columns of type. Grids keep elements on a page aligned nicely so there's order. It's also good for creating modular layouts –the boxes or rectangles of stories, photos, etc. that are all related to one another and should be packaged together on the page. If you can't fit an entire story on the page – and most newspapers don't – you need to add a jumpline to tell readers where to go for the remainder of the story.

**Slide 11:**

Photographs are often the element in a design that gets the readers' attention first. Most photographs are chosen for publication because they are relevant to the story. Images come in 3 shapes. Horizontal is most common; vertical is less frequent but often more dramatic. Photo dominance is crucial to good design. You need one image that's large enough on the page to tell people it's important. When sizing photos, make sure the faces of people in them are about the size of a dime. Make sure that your photos always have a photographer credit and cutline telling people who took the picture and something about what's happening.

**Slide 12:**

Cutlines are usually written in three or four lines of type under a photograph. Cutlines are necessary to explain the action. In feature design they often are shown on the side of the image instead of beneath it. Caption typefaces are often different than that of the body text on a page to help readers distinguish between the two.

**Slide 13:**

Sketching is an often overlooked process in the work of a designer. Many people are eager to get started on a project and want to put their hands on a mouse first. But drawing a complete sketch can help you visualize all the elements of your design and notice how they'll work next to one another. This work is crucial and should be done first before any computer work. Sketches should be considered the instruction sheet that another designer could look at and then be able to recreate your plan. Sketches should always include all standing elements on a page, such as flags.

**Slide 14: image only**

The designer only shows the main story on the page, not all the standing elements on it.

**Slide 15:**

Most news pages are printed in full color today, which means they have the ability to add “spot” or a single color to help attract readers’ attention to a page. But adding color shouldn’t be a distraction from the story or be done to make the page more “beautiful.” There should be some greater news value or relevance for adding the color. This example shows a good use of spot color on a feature section.

**Slide 16:**

Just to review: There are four elements to every design: Photos, cutlines, headlines and text.

**Slide 17:**

Designers ensure that these elements can work together to help share the news with readers.

**Slide 18:**

Added elements on a page, such as graphics, infoboxes or pullquotes, can draw readers into a story better than text alone.

**Slide 19:**

Visualizing a design by making a sketch can make for more efficient work, regardless of experience or skill.

**Slide 20:**

Want to learn more about design techniques – and how to incorporate them on your publication’s web site? My colleague Elizabeth Connor Stephens has a module on web design that will help you polish your online presence.