Considerate Typography; How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper; Women and Graphic - A Beginner's Kit

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Abstract

Reviews of "Considerate Typography," by Jan White; *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*, by Robert A. Day ; "Women and Graphics - A Beginner's Kit," special issue of *The Tribune: A Women and Development Quarterly*.

Reviews

"Considerate Typography," Jan White. *Folio: The Magazine for Magazine Management,*March, 1984.

Art director and design consultant Jan White makes a case for "Considerate Typography" in the March issue of *Folio.* He begins with a collection of myths he says are nothing but old habits, but distinguishes them from the "proven principles" of typography.

Among the typographical myths:

"Anything set smaller than 10 point is hard to read."

Nonsense, says White. "It depends on the design of the face and its x-height."

"Breaking up type is desirable."

"Natural breaks emphasized by typography are indeed helpful," says White. Arbitrary breaks just confuse the reader.

"Sans-serif is harder to read than serif."

"It all depends on what material you learned to read with as a kid," he says, pointing out that sans-serif is as familiar to European kids as Century Schoolbook is to us.

It's not easy to distinguish between worn habits and valid principles, White says.

He advocates common sense in selecting a legible typeface, along with a rule of thumb: "If the reader becomes conscious of the typeface it's a bad one. Because the best face is the invisible one."

The "proven principles" he cites include:

—The longer the line, the larger the typeface needs to be. White advises not straying too far from the comfortable reading length of 1½ alphabets—the longer the line, the more line spacing is needed to bring the reader's eye back to the starting point.

He warns against a common error: specifiying the typeface without considering the paper, ink, and printing press to be used.

"When you print on newsprint using fast, crude presses, your chosen face ought to be properly tough. . .to prevent filling up." The texture, color, weight and shininess of the paper have a lot to do with the effect of the finished piece, along with the degree of contrast between the ink and the backround paper.

Good reminders for all of us who work with the printed page. Too often we get caught up in the mechanics of the work, either hanging on to old habits, or trying a flashy new typeface, without considering whether our choices help or hinder the reader in getting the information we're offering.

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Day, Robert A. *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper.* Philadelphia: ISA Press 3501 Market St., University City Science Center, Philadelphia, PA, 19104 1983 (Second Edition).

If you don't have this book, you should get a copy. Not only should it be required reading for scientists and editors, it is an entertaining and educational resource for anyone involved in communication.

Day neatly summarizes "How to. . ." In his last paragraph: Scientific research is not complete until the results have been published. Therefore, a scientific paper is an essential part of the research process. Therefore, the writing of an accurate, understandable paper is just as important as the research itself. Therefore, the words in the paper should be weighed as carefully as the reagents in the laboratory. Therefore, the education of a scientist in not complete until the ability to publish has been established.

Robert Day's now classic book first appeared in 1979 and proved extremely popular because of its simplicity. This new edition has been expanded with three important chapters— electronic manuscripts, book review writing, and oral papers. And like the first edition, it is non-technical. The message gets through.

How to's 29 chapters can be broken into three broad areas:

First, Day defines a scientific paper:

> (1) the first publication of original research results, (2) in a form whereby peers of the author can repeat the experiments and test the conclusions, and (3) in a journal or other source document readily available within the scientific community.''

He notes that ''peers of the author'' also means prepublication peer review. This definition is important to avoid a ''breach of scientific ethics.''

In the next 10 chapters, Day analyzes the individual elements of the paper—title, author listing, addresses, abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion, acknowledgments, literature citations.

He argues that since rules about each element are commonly accepted, once learned, they will easily serve the writer throughout his career. For example, in describing the common error of stating an action without stating the agent of the action, Day brings a touch of humor, ''Having completed the study, the bacteria were of no further interest.'' And when discussing antecedents and the ubiquitous ''it,'' Day quotes a manuscript: ''The left leg became numb at times and she walked it off. . . On her second day, the knee was better and on the third day it had completely disappeared.'' While assuming that the antecedent is numbness, Day feels that the wording results from dumbness.

In the last chapters, Day discusses technical information (preparing illustrations and tables), post writing stages (submission, review, and publishing processes), other types of scientific writing (review papers, conference reports, book reviews), and rules of English. Several appendices (abbreviations for SI units, styles, and spelling errors) complete this book.

This second edition is as equally important a contribution to scientific writing as the first. Those who seek out ''*How to*. . .''will value this resource.

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"Women and Graphics—A Beginner's Kit." Special issue of the *The Tribune: A Women and Development Quarterly*, Newsletter 21 (4th Quarter 1982). International Women's Tribune Centre, 305 East 46th Street. 6th Floor, New York, NY 10017.

This kit contains graphic skill building exercises, directions for making low-cost media materials, two clip art books and a very good media bibliography. Its objective is to assist and support local, national, and regional women's efforts in producing their own information services.

Do you want to know how to produce simple lettering that looks good yet can be produced by hand? Three skill exercises are devoted to freehand lettering, ending in "fat and fancy" lettering suitable for such things as poster headings.

A second group of exercises focuses on simple line drawings, starting with proportions and distinguishing features, moving to faces and emotion, and finishing with movement in a static picture.

In a section covering how to make low-cost media materials, the reader can learn to make rubber cement and a tripod easel. Simple directions and good illustrations make the instructions easy to follow and implement.

Two clip art books are included with this kit. The first is an outstanding series of 15 feminist logos in a variety of sizes. These logos come from a wide range of international sources. The second clip art book is called "Rural Women in Action." It contains 17 illustrations selected from previously published communication materials. All illustrations are reproduced in three sizes. They cover an enormous range of cultures. They lend themselves to alteration, and the readers are encouraged to make these illustrations their own.

The final section in "Women & Graphics. . ." is the annotated bibligraphy that includes books on low-cost media, preparing for the printer, and working with newsletters, visuals, and graphics.

To make it easier for the reader to acquire the books, the authors provided addresses for all publishers. Most of these publishers produce a lot of material for international work and the addresses are themselves an extremely valuable compilation.

IWTC Executive Director Ann Walker and Vickie Semler, Programme Director, co-edited this kit, and their years of ex-

perience in working with international women's efforts show. Although all the material is geared for beginners, the main power of the kit is its emphasis on low-cost production and its you-can-do-it-yourself feeling. It provides a model of the ideas it suggests—with its quality low-cost production, good layout, and fine graphics.

"Women and Graphics. . ." offers the international agricultural communicator a valuable resource for her development work and a positive tool to use when integrating women into agricultural messages. And, as the push for a more systematic view of agricultural development continues with programs like farming systems and women in develop-ment, this kit may emerge as a pioneering effort.

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Correction

An article entitled "Care and Feeding of Metropolitan Dailies and Wire Services" in the July-Sept *ACE Quarterly* carried some errors related to the University of Illinois' use of com-puters. Here, courtesy of Marilyn Upah-Bant, acting media services coordinator at Illinois, is an accurate outline:

The connect-time charge Illinois pays for AgriData Resources' database is $15 per hour and 25 to 50 cents per story report. Whatever their total monthly charge, they think it's worth it.

Through such databases Illinois not only accesses Purdue releases and AP, but also AG A.M. from USDA, the *Des Moines Register,* Commodity News Service, and AgriData News Service ag stories.

Illinois is not transmitting copy to UPI, but would like to; they are transmitting to the local AP correspondent as well as to the Midwest AP bureau in Chicago.

In addition, Illinois is transmitting copy to two to three daily state papers, and to the Illinois Farm Progress publication, *Prairie Farmer.*

Finally, they transmit copy to the University Press to avoid rekeystroking, and hope to test electronic transmission of news releases to country Extension offices soon.