

## Camera-Ready Copy As a Service to Newspapers

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## Camera-Ready Copy As a Service to Newspapers

### Abstract

Using camera-ready copy to serve newspapers more effectively is an idea most agricultural information staffs in the states are considering.

# Camera-Ready Copy As a Service to Newspapers

Mike W. Sampson

USING CAMERA-READY copy to serve newspapers more effectively is an idea most agricultural information staffs in the states are considering. Slightly more than one-fifth of the states have either gone to camera-ready copy or have been experimenting with it. Each state seems to have its own reasons for deciding on camera-ready copy, and each also has its particular method of implementing and handling the service.

In mid-1972, extension editors in all states were surveyed about their successes, failures and ideas on camera-ready copy. Information obtained from 42 editors concerns only camera-ready copy used for distribution to newspapers; I made no attempt to cover topics such as in-house use of camera-ready materials for publications, etc. From the replies I received, there are some generalizations about the use of camera-ready copy.

- For the most part, the primary audience of camera-ready copy endeavors seems to be weekly newspapers. The dailies like to have everything match, and therefore prefer to set their own copy. Some dailies will take screened photos though.

- A good many editors feel that camera-ready copy is here to stay and sooner or later, the states will have to get with it. The smaller states on the East Coast do not yet see as pronounced a need for camera-ready copy as do states in the South, Midwest and West.

- Generally, editor interest seems to be fairly good. Camera-ready copy benefits will miss the letterpress papers, but the num-

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\*Material in this article was summarized at the 1972 AAACE meeting in Tucson, Arizona.

ber of letterpress papers decreases each year. Offset printing equipment now represents the majority of weeklies in most states.

- There are four main questions concerning going camera-ready: (1) costs involved; (2) overall usage expected; (3) the problem of choosing type faces and sizes; and, (4) selecting column widths that will suit the newspaper editors. The main type size used by the states is 9 point, and a 10½-pica column is the most popular choice. Costs will vary with the kind of operation a state sets up.

- Before getting into camera-ready copy, most states who have experience favor getting information on type and column widths from the state press association. Some associations even may have surveyed their editors to see how they feel about camera-ready copy. At any rate, such a survey probably is in order. Checking signals with other states who have gone the camera-ready route would be most helpful.

- As with any move to provide newspapers with more and better service, one must weigh the costs in equipment, manpower and effectiveness that will be gained or sacrificed before deciding for or against camera-ready copy.

These are only generalizations, and situations differ in each state so much that one state probably could not judge its own potential success by the success another state has had with camera-ready copy. One good recommendation though would be to try a few experiments to see how editors react to receiving camera-ready copy, headlines or even screened prints.

## Responses

\*State has tried or is using camera-ready copy.

**Auburn University, John L. Parrott.** Alabama has not tried camera-ready copy, but hopes to move in that direction in the near future.

**University of Alaska, John H. Bemis, Jr.** Alaska doesn't use camera-ready copy, but some of the weekly papers and "special" suburban editions have been known to shoot Alaska's entire publications and run them.

**University of Arizona, Gordon J. Graham.** Bob Fowler, visiting with editors, says one told him he thought weekly paper editors he knew in the state would not be interested in print-ready copy, primarily because of column widths and type faces. Two other editors said they would be interested though, and recalled using camera-ready 4-H copy from the Chicago congress

last year. The managing editor of the *Physiology* newspaper would be most receptive to camera-ready news releases from the College of Agriculture. He wasn't worried about column widths because boxes and rules could compensate for variations. Conclusions: "The camera-ready market is not crowded now, but may be in the future as more sources such as ourselves 'keep up with the times.' And if we don't go to it, where are we from a competitive standpoint? Money seems to be the barrier that prevents us from sending out camera-ready copy right now. Maybe we can figure a way around that in the near future."

**University of Arkansas, David E. Ryker.** Arkansas does not have access to equipment, without going commercial, to do camera-ready copy. The state is interested in it and hopes to go this way in the future.

**University of California, Ralph D. Smith.** California has not made any effort in the camera-ready direction. With the vast number of newspapers, large and small, there is no justification for trying camera-ready copy without a lot of preliminary study.

**Colorado State University, Robert E. Rees.** Colorado does not send camera-ready copy to newspapers.

**\*University of Connecticut, Alexander R. Gavitt, Jr.** Connecticut made its first venture into the camera-ready field last August. The state mailed both mimeographed and camera-ready packets of 16 gardening articles to offset dailies and weeklies. A 10-pica column width was chosen because this width was felt to be the most suitable to most offset papers. The poor selection of headliner type sizes presented a problem. Connecticut reported the take as "minimal," and one suspected reason was lack of space in the papers. "Any way you look at it, mimeographed releases are the easiest to do and send to the papers. But, in the final analysis, the question must be raised—do they get used or are they thrown away? Also, I believe that camera-ready copy is perhaps more suitable to large states having many offset papers. In a small urban state, such as Connecticut, where daily and weekly competition is great and space is limited, our chances for success appear small."

**University of Delaware, Jerry L. Webb.** Delaware has done nothing with camera-ready copy, but is watching with interest. The university deals with no more than 20 papers and finding a format acceptable to most of them would be difficult. Editors say they don't mind setting copy themselves as long as they get the material in time. The state doesn't plan any experiments for the time being.

**\*University of Florida, Hervey Sharpe.** Florida has sent out camera-ready copy on several occasions, but has met with little success. Papers seem to prefer setting their own type.

**\*University of Georgia, Virgil Adams.** Georgia's camera-ready copy experience began in 1969 and it went completely camera-ready in mid-1970. "We felt we had to go the camera-ready route. We have over 200 weekly newspapers in Georgia and virtually all of them are printed offset. Those which are still letterpress will either go offset or out of business in the next few years, in our opinion." Although the state didn't make a thorough study of acceptance, usage apparently increased 25-50 percent. Dailies insist on original copy

and are concerned with everything matching. Georgia uses 9 point Century on 10 and sets copy to a 10½-pica width, selected after observation and a check with the state's press association. Georgia also sends headlines. For photos, the state uses slick proofs. "We find very little difference in cost between regular copy and camera-ready. In fact, we may be saving a little money on paper." Georgia uses an IBM Model IV magnetic tape Selectric typewriter with reverse search, code conversion and composing compatibility. The unit costs about \$10,500. After setting the copy it is shot on an ITEK and reproduced on a 1250 Multilith. For photos, Georgia uses an ITEK 12-18 plate maker with an 85-line screen.

**University of Idaho, M. William Stellmon.** Idaho has no experience in providing camera-ready copy to papers.

**Purdue University, Edward C. Ferringer.** Indiana has done nothing in the camera-ready copy area. About 50 percent of the state's 282 papers are offset, and more are expected to change over. "Eventually we will probably move to camera-ready but we are not ready at this point."

**\*Iowa State University, K. Robert Kern.** For five years Iowa has been using camera-ready copy to provide the photographs that go with the twice monthly home economics news service to the daily women's page editors. "We began this to show the editor what photographs were available." Nearly all who use the service use the reproduction proofs though. "We have not seen any important value in packaging full story camera-ready. We do not object in principle to the good package. However, we have not felt that the additional expense would be justified. We don't believe the cost of composition is likely to be a significant deterrent to the use of our story if it is one the editor thinks is good for his audience." Full-treatment camera-ready is a practice that did not offer much "pay-off" for Iowa.

**Kansas State University, E. D. Warner.** So far, Kansas has not used camera-ready copy, but hopes to go this way in the future with its press releases.

**\*Louisiana State University, A. V. Patterson, Jr.** Louisiana is in the "experimental stage" of camera-ready copy, limiting itself to feature material in separate mailings, with an occasional photograph or graph included in the weekly news packet. No formal evaluations have been made, but on observation the take seems to be "excellent." "We worry a little bit about not having the 'in house' capability to do camera-ready and whether or not we can depend on the university print shop or commercial printers to meet deadlines." Louisiana has used both a complete camera-ready approach as well as camera-ready artwork only, with cutlines or story in conventional form. Media use in either case seems to be about the same. "Camera-ready copy is here to stay and I feel that we will probably convert to it after we have worked out a method of operation to our satisfaction."

**University of Maine, Ronald H. Knight.** Maine has not experimented with camera-ready copy and has not discussed the possibility seriously.

**University of Maryland, Jack Jackson.** Maryland has studied the possibility of using camera-ready copy but has decided against implementing it. The clipping service indicates mimeographed stories are fairly well accepted by

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local papers throughout the state. "We still prefer to provide the agent and editor" the opportunity to localize stories. A review of papers indicates it would be difficult to produce camera-ready copy meeting all their format requirements. The production of camera-ready copy doesn't appear feasible for Maryland.

**Michigan State University, Joe Marks.** Michigan doesn't use camera-ready copy.

**\*University of Minnesota, John M. Sperbeck.** Minnesota is in the process of coding results from its clipping service of a study regarding usage of camera-ready vs. mimeographed stories. Data will be available in a few months, and will show copy and headline modifications by papers. Eighty percent of the state's papers are offset. "Most editors seem to like camera-ready copy, especially if it has some local application. Frankly, I think that some of the editors who use camera-ready copy are a little on the lazy side—we're saving them some time so they take advantage of it. I think it's typical that editors of the better weeklies might rather get stories typed and double-spaced so it's easier to make changes. Minnesota has sent 15 or 20 stories camera-ready and reports basically good results. The state uses 10 on 11 Press Roman for body type and from 18 to 36-point News Gothic or Condensed Gothic for headlines. Stories are set on an IBM Varityper at a 10½-pica width, with a one-pica gutter for two or three column stories. "One thing I'm guarding against is using the camera-ready service to rehash some old stories or to get coverage on stories not especially newsworthy. I think this hurts our credibility in the long run. We tried sending some condensed 'research highlights' out in January—stories were fairly newsworthy but had been previously reported. The take wasn't good."

**Mississippi State University, Jan Carter.** Mississippi has not tried to furnish any of the state's newspapers with camera-ready copy, but has made two surveys to check its feasibility. One survey indicated the dailies would not accept camera-ready copy unless it was exactly their type size and column width. Eighty-six percent of the weekly newspapers said they would accept copy set in 9-point type in a 10½-pica column. Ninety percent of the weekly editors also said they would use more Extension Service material if it were prepared camera-ready. For more complete information on the two Mississippi surveys, Jan has data in published form.

**\*University of Missouri, Delmar Hatesohl.** Missouri has not done much with camera-ready copy except for such use that is made of a clip sheet called the "Missouri Farm News Service." The clip sheet occasionally is picked up by editors and run, but Missouri isn't sure how much usage is made of the service. The state is considering camera-ready copy on a larger scale, but wants to look at the question in detail.

**Montana State University, Sam D. Rosen.** Montana does nothing in the camera-ready copy line, nor sees it as likely in the near future.

**\*University of Nebraska, Dan Lutz.** A survey of newspapers guided Nebraska to go with the Century type family set 10½ picas wide. Nebraska checked with Georgia before leaping into camera-ready copy and has put out several packets of stories. Nebraska would like to send screened photos, but

doesn't have the equipment and personnel yet. Although the packet approach has been used mainly, except for some mass distribution stories, Nebraska hopes to move toward camera-ready copy in its weekly news packet.

**University of Nevada—Reno, Dave Mathis.** Nevada doesn't use camera-ready copy to distribute material to the seven dailies and some 20 weeklies it serves. "We are interested in camera-ready copy and may adopt it as a method of information dissemination when we feel it is warranted."

**University of New Hampshire, Henry W. Corrow.** New Hampshire has not tried camera-ready copy.

**Rutgers University, H. Russell Stanton.** New Jersey does not provide camera-ready copy. "In my opinion, our publishers are individualists, and camera-ready copy would remind them too much of the old boilerplate which most, if not all, have outgrown."

**\*New Mexico State University, John M. White.** A few years ago New Mexico typed up a lawn and garden tips column with even right-handed margins for possible duplication in newspapers. The papers themselves would have to reduce or enlarge type and column width. When the service was discontinued, editors did not complain. New Mexico now is considering another try soon with type set at the campus typesetting center. Cost would be about \$8 a page.

**North Dakota State University, J. J. Feight.** North Dakota has not been faced with the decision to go camera-ready. The majority of the state's papers are still letterpress, but replacement equipment is offset, and "it won't be long that we'll have to take some action."

**Ohio State University, Austin E. Showman.** Ohio has considered camera-ready copy, but the "cons" seem to outweigh the "pros." Discouraging aspects are the cost of equipment, the lack of uniformity in column widths and type sizes among the 200 some weekly papers in the state. Inflexibility of copy from the newspaper editor's standpoint is a concern too. Surveys by the Ohio Newspaper Association indicates most weekly editors aren't too keen about receiving such copy. "In states where there are many small rural weeklies, I can see how camera-ready copy could have considerable merit."

**\*Oklahoma State University, Charles N. Voyles.** Oklahoma is waiting in regard to full-scale camera-ready copy. The state does have a mailing piece, called a clipsheet, that is suitable to photograph. It is a general university clipsheet so it carries a variety of subjects. Some papers use the clipsheet as is; other reset the copy.

**The Pennsylvania State University, Glen W. Goss.** Pennsylvania has had no experience with camera-ready copy.

**University of Puerto Rico, Francisco Toro Calder.** Puerto Rico has had no experience with the use of camera-ready copy.

**\*South Dakota State University, John L. Pates.** South Dakota is in the experimenting stage with camera-ready copy. Roughly 55 percent of the state's papers are offset, a 15 percent increase over three years ago. What materials that have been sent camera-ready have had "good success." So far, South Dakota's main efforts have been articles with art of some kind, either



screened photos or maps. Camera-ready precipitation maps were sent with mimeographed stories, but the take was below normal. The state used 10½-pica columns, as per the recommendation of the state's press association.

**\*University of Tennessee, C. Edward Bible.** Last fall Tennessee ran an informal experiment to get some idea of the consequences of furnishing camera-ready copy in the weekly news packet. The experiment included weeklies and dailies from several sections of the state. Tennessee supplied camera-ready copy to the selected papers for 10 weeks, and found that those receiving camera-ready copy did increase their use of state news service stories. There seemed to be no decline in usage of county staff material. Tennessee plans to start providing all newspapers in the state with camera-ready copy in July or August, probably using typesetting equipment in the university's public relations department before getting its own equipment. "All of the comments we received from newspaper editors were favorable. The only unfavorable note we made was that newspapers tend to hold some stories for publication at dates later than the release dates on the stories. This could be a significant problem for a 'Now is the time' story. Stronger wording in the release date line might help solve this problem."

**Texas A & M University, William E. Tedrick.** So far, all Texas has done about camera-ready copy is talk. Information indicates most of the weeklies and many dailies are offset. There seems to be variation in column width and type, "so we're not quite sure how you would overcome these problems in making camera-ready copy available to the weekly papers in particular. I think there is a place for this in our shop and hope we can initiate it sometime in the near future."

**\*Utah State University, Cleon M. Kotter.** Utah has had practically no experience with camera-ready copy, and has hesitated to move in this direction because of the small number of papers and diversity of make-up used in the state. "We seriously question whether it would be the best approach for the weekly papers, even if there were no extra cost involved." Most mail that hits an editor's desk goes into the wastebasket unless it can be immediately identified as having a local angle. Utah has sent slick proofs of pictures or mats with a caption already set. This slightly increases use over a black and white glossy, but the state questions if the additional usage justifies the extra cost.

**University of Vermont, Jack Spaven.** Vermont has not tried camera-ready copy.

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Joseph J. Bryant.** Virginia does not yet use camera-ready copy, but is leaning in that direction. The acceptability of camera-ready copy is not questioned and small newspapers in particular would be grateful for time-saving copy. Papers also would welcome camera-ready copy as a source of filler at deadline. Virginia Tech sees three questions to answer in proposing camera-ready copy: 1) Cost—should reflect differences between standard duplication of releases and camera-ready. 2) Selectivity—which releases will be camera-ready, or should all be camera-ready? A survey is needed to determine which newspapers will or will not use

camera-ready copy. 3) Style—what type face and size, headlines and column width would be most compatible to those of the papers being serviced?

**Federal City College, Charles Freeman.** Washington, D.C. has had no experience in camera-ready copy.

**\*Washington State University, M. W. Sampson.** Washington State ventured into camera-ready copy, headlines and screened photos in March, 1971, with a mailing to all weekly papers in the state. All but 37 on the state's weekly mailing list are offset. The take was not too good on the one-shot item, but more than half of the editors replying to a follow-up survey card said they would be interested in camera-ready on a regular basis. Body type was 8 on 9 set to a 10½-pica line. The screened photo was shot with an 85-line screen. Column widths for weeklies in the state run from 9 picas to 15, but most editors said they would use 10½ picas. Another mailing in June, 1971 was a screened photo and cutline only. The take was low. "Washington is eager to try more experiments so we'll have some foundation to base a decision on when we need to choose to stay with multilith releases or go camera-ready."

**West Virginia University, Joseph L. Fasching.** West Virginia does not send camera-ready copy, but because more and more of the state's papers are being printed offset, there is a good chance camera-ready copy would be used if the state provided it.

**University of Wyoming, Vern E. Shelton.** Wyoming does not send camera-ready copy.