

Desktop Publishing and Printing

Graphic Layout

Layout is how elements of your editorial project are presented on the printed page. These elements may be only text, a combination of images and text, or perhaps solely images. Most editorial projects, however, have a combination; note that “images” is used loosely, as special fonts are sometimes treated as images. Layout has to begin with a consideration of the technical details of printing – a book of color photos, for instance, will be costly if the photos are large. Text must not be placed too close to the margins (because of the vagaries of cutting the paper on which the book is printed).

Editorial projects that minimize paper waste will be less costly. The way to do this is to make jobs with dimensions that are multiples of a standard piece of printer’s paper. For instance, in Europe the standard size of paper used by printers is 1188cm by 840cm; this is known as A0 in Europe. A sheet of paper half that size (840cm by 594cm) is called A1, half that again is A2, and so on. The standard “regular sheet” of paper is the A4, which roughly corresponds to our 8 ½ by 11. If you notice, the Little Blue, closed, is about an A6, one quarter of an A4.

Once you have the text ready in your word processing program, you have to use a pagination program to do the layout. The most-used programs are Quark xPress, Adobe In-Design, and to a lesser extent Corel Draw. It’s likely that the newspaper you read this morning or the poster on your wall was laid out using one of these programs. These programs allow you to combine text and graphics to lay out editorial projects. Essentially, you create a file of a specified size and open text and graphic boxes inside that layout. Once finished, the project is outputted as a pdf file. This stands for Portable Document Format, Adobe’s proprietary format that is the printing industry’s standard. A pdf combines the layers of a layout in one, much smaller file; this file, a pdf, can be read by anyone who has Acrobat Reader (freeware from Adobe), and printed by anyone with printers. See the Layout sheet at the end of this file.

Printing

The next step is the actual printing of the book. One of the first things you have to decide is whether or not you will use traditional (offset) printing or digital printing. As technology progresses the two processes are becoming more and more similar, however the differences are essentially the following. In offset printing, the digital file is transferred to four aluminum plates, each of which is then placed on a machine. Each machine then passes over the paper to be printed on and leaves one of the four colors used for offset printing (cyan, magenta, yellow, black). Every color in digital files has a four-number number to tell the machines how much of each ink to put down (this is the CMYK number, K standing for black). With this process, there is a large “set up” cost involved in making the aluminum plates, but thereafter the cost-per-copy is low. For example, to print one thousand of the Little Blue guides would cost about €1800, whereas three thousand of the guides would cost only €2300, far less than twice as much. Offset printing therefore is useful when the number of copies is high.

Digital printing, on the other hand, has no set-up cost because there are no plates to be made. The digital file directs the digital printer on how much ink to lay down. It is possible, then, to print single copies (drafts) or small numbers of copies. The disadvantage, however, is that the quality tends to be slightly lower, and the cost-per-copy is almost identical (and always higher than offset); the per-copy cost of the Little Blue is about €9 whether you print one, fifty, or a thousand.

Before printing, you need to submit a request for a quote. For a printer to be able to give you a price, s/he needs information about a number of variables. The first is what size the job will be, both open and closed formats. For example, the Little Blue, when closed, is 15cm high and 10cm wide (this is called A6 in Europe, but we’ll get to that later). When open, it’s 15cm high and 20cm wide. This information is important because it tells the printer what size paper has to be used (that is to say, how many jobs can be printed on one sheet) and whether there are folds in the job. The second part is the paper and printing format. With books, this is separated into two parts, one for the cover and the other for the interior. This tells the printer if you are using color or black and white, and what thickness or “weight” paper you want to use. Usually this will run something like this: “Cover – four-color printing front and back, 100 lb. matte paper, Interior - four-color printing, 80lb. matte paper.” You then have to specify binding. Options include staples (less professional look, limited to a certain thickness of book), gluing (inexpensive but not always very durable), or saddle-stitch (most books have this – it’s very durable, more expensive). Here is what a quote request might look like:

Project Name: The Little Blue

Format Open: 210mm wide by 148mm tall

Format Closed: 105mm wide by 148mm tall

Printing: *Cover* - 250g glossy paper printed in four-color; *Inside* - 100g opaque paper, 200 pages, four-color offset printing

Binding: Saddle-stitching

Quantity: Please give per-book and total price for 1,500 and 3,000 copies

Other things you may see on the response-

File: Print-quality pdf file

Payment: 50% on delivery and acceptance of a draft edition, difference on delivery of final product.

Delivery: To your main offices

Validity: This estimate has a validity of 30 days.

VAT: Not included in price


Protection

Once you have your work finished, you should consider a copyright. By U.S. law, you do not actually need to send a copy of your printed work to the Copyright Office – simply putting somewhere on the work “Copyright 2005 by XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX” is enough. However, this does not prove that this was actually the date of publication. By sending a copy of your work along with a copyright application (available at www.copyright.gov/forms/formpai.pdf) to the Copyright Office, however, you essentially date the first appearance of the material. The cost, in addition, is minimal (about thirty US Dollars). Another thing you can do is to buy an ISBN number and barcode, which allows people from all over the world to identify.

Graphic Layout

DAY TRIPS

Norcia



Why visit Norcia you ask? It's a delightful little town (birthplace of Saint Benedict) and mountain retreat. First attractive restored architecture, many churches and pretty fountains, a cheerful atmosphere and excellent food! It's specialties include the black truffle (tartufo), great mountain cheeses, cured hams and salami. The Norcians are famed pork curers and even today you still see butchers in other parts of Italy called un norcino, after the town. The town's prized black truffle itself is expensive but numerous local restaurants serve it affordable with homemade pasta dishes - not to miss! "Carriero del Monte" (Via Affari 12, moderately priced) is the best local Norcian restaurant. The Fair of the Black Truffle occurs the last weekend in February. Mmmmm, andamof! You can make this a daytrip by car, but probably need to stay overnight in Norcia or nearby Spoleto if you are traveling there by train or bus.

GETTING THERE FROM PERUGIA
By train and bus: Estimated travel time: 3h 45m. Take train to Spoleto (possibly changing in Foligno). Then take the bus called "Spoleto-Norcia (1 of your three hours of travel time) from Spoleto's Piazza Vittoria. www.trentitalia.com Spoleto's Busline (0743) 212.209
By bus: stimated travel time: 2h 20m. Only one bus daily (Perugia-Norcia-Cascia) runs from Piazza Parigiani in Perugia to Norcia, direct. Mon-Sat Departure 14:10, arrival 16:30. A returning bus to Perugia leaves the next day at 6:15AM. Spoleto's Busline (0743) 212.209

LEARN MORE
Tourist Office in the Municipio (Town Hall) (0743) 824.911
www.bellalumbina.net/norcia/home_eng.htm
www.norcia.net/norcia.html (in Italian)


Graphic layout with a pagination program is the beginning of all editorial projects. The most-used programs are Quark xPress, Adobe In-Design, and to a lesser extent Corel Draw. It's likely that the newspaper you read this morning or the poster on your wall was laid out using one of these programs. They allow you to create a file with multiple, independent layers. These can be conceptualized as a number of transparent sheets, each with a graphic or text in it, laid one over another.

The document to the left, for example, is a file I created with Quark xPress. Each element is independent of the others and all of its characteristics can be changed. For the text box on the top, I selected white text and a green background, while the other boxes below have a white background and smaller black text. You can control the size, angle, color and many other variables for each element. If one could look at this file "side-way," the various elements would appear stacked like the lines below the layout, one on top of another (often what order the elements are stacked is important for the layout).

Once finished, the project is normally outputted as a pdf file. This stands for Portable Document Format, Adobe's proprietary format that has become the printing industry's standard. Not everyone may have Quark xPress installed on their computer, but almost every computer in the world has Adobe Reader (free-ware from Adobe), a program which allows one to visualize and print pdf documents. A pdf combines the layers of a layout in one, much smaller file. All the layers of the document become sandwiched together in one, easy to carry file. This file can then be emailed to the printer, who prints it. The pdf, however, is a "closed" file: it cannot (like the Quark file) be modified in any way. It's like a membership card that has been laminated and is therefore no longer open to changes.

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www.thelittleblue.com