

:: Graphic Design in University Students Newspapers

Every morning, afternoon and evening there are millions of newspapers flying across the world. For many people, the day starts with reading their newspaper at their breakfast or on their way to work. These papers have become necessary in our life. These journals are containing not only information and news about political events, business, crime, culture, opinions, events about sport life and science, country and the world; they are the source of joy and fun as well. Papers also contain advertisements, weather forecast and special supplements. This is what modern newspapers contain.

In this essay, we will make the reader familiar with newspapers, especially with students' newspapers. This paper will deal with a short history of the printed media with attention to the special character of newspaper and magazine, their function and importance. Then, the process and principles of graphic design of newspapers will be presented. The following part of the paper will analyze different kinds of students university newspapers from abroad and from Slovakia, stressed will be especially their graphical aspect. Finally, the results of a student questionnaire research will indicate what might be their idea of a student newspaper. The aim of this work will be to outline an optimal student newspaper and its graphic layout.

:: Short History

Newspapers and magazines are inseparable items of our life. They contain printed information that is treated with high value. Their history dates back to the 13th century England parallel with printing. The first newspaper in England was News Letters, which was only a hand-written leaflet which contained letters and reports. Its Italian brothers were the *Aviso* and the *Gasetta*. These papers contained political and economical information, published in certain intervals and were as topical as possible. These handwritten manuscripts were used until 1448 when Johann Gutenberg's invention redefined the production of papers. He used movable types in its newly invented printing press machine.

On the other hand, historians suggest that Chinese were the first who invented movable type and the paper. When Marco Polo returned to Venice in 1295, he described Chinese printing and the process of producing paper.

The first printed newspapers were published in 1475 in Trieste. The first mass-circulated newspapers were published in 1609 in Strasburg; these were the *Relation* and the *Aviso*. To make a newspaper a mass medium, they needed printing press to produce copies quickly and cheaply, and they had to find mass audience who wanted to read the papers.

:: Newspapers and magazines

A newspaper is a publication containing news, information and advertising. Their main function is to inform: do it quickly and intend to make the reader up-to-date. It may have general or special interest, most often published daily or weekly in mass quantity on low-cost paper called newsprint.

How does it work? Throughout the history of printed press, the process, its production was always changing and growing up to the 21st century. Several trends in newspaper content and layout were apparent, with their aim was to make modern newspapers easier to read.

Usually, two formats are used, the world's format with 7 or 8 columns and the European format with 5 to 6 columns. The shapes of the papers are different, too. The European one, Berliner or "midi", evolves from the metric system of A3 size. The pages normally measuring about 470 x 315 mm, they are slightly taller than the format known as "tabloid" usually used in the United Kingdom. The world's format is larger and based on the traditional dimensions for "broadsheet" front page measures roughly 29½ x 23½ inches.

There are visual elements, lines and frames, which make newspapers more transparent and continuous. Newspapers use dynamic appearance to catch the readers' attention and keep readers interested in the material. There are department headings to help the reader in orientation. Papers use fixed places for main items such as the logo, the editorial, the annotation or the advertisements. In addition, newspapers contain illustrations and photographs which have their permanent place and measure, too. These components are not used keenly; they are only used in order to communicate something significant.

The font selection is essential; it makes newspaper easy to read. There are some tips connected with a specific font which is useful in a newspaper and should be steadily used, because it will be familiar to the eyes of the readers. The size of the font is important, too. The most commonly used sizes are 8 to 11 points in height, but it depends on the design of the font. Line spacing is laced with legibility, too. The most common size is between 10 and 12. I can continue with using the bold or italic version of the font, using underlined or resizing words or use different colours to emphasize something in the article.

In the past, there were handwritten manuscripts and later on, printed newspapers. From the 1840s, there was a boom of the other kind of journals – the magazine with pictures, containing a variety of articles, generally financed by advertising and purchase by readers. The main function of the magazine is to amuse the reader in topics he/she is interested in. It is a periodical publication, but usually with weekly, fortnightly, monthly, by-monthly, quarterly or yearly publishing. Magazines

fall into two broad categories: consumer magazines and business magazines.

A magazine usually contains articles with illustrations or photographs. The articles have a specific way of matter depending on its interest. You can differentiate magazines for children, women, men, magazines about culture, sport, technology and other professional issues.

Magazines are always separated to two parts – paper cover and the inside section. The sections are joining in graphic design, layout and in number of illustrations. These facts define that the magazines needed quality paper and photos in adequate size. These graphical elements are important for magazines, because this is the way they are differentiated from newspapers.

Time is also important for media, because the topicality of articles attracts readers and advertisers. And by all means, advertisers are the main actors of magazines, being their economic foundations.

:: Designing procedure

In the introduction the inside topics of daily newspapers were mentioned. Now let's see them from the aspect of graphic design. The graphic design's main functions are to complete the textual matter with photographs or other illustrations; lead the reader's eyes to the main topic; and help the reader to understand the text easily e. g. with graphs. The designing procedures include creating a layout, the dummies of the newspaper pages; and do the makeup of the whole newspaper – the esthetical arrangement of the textual and pictorial parts of the newspapers. Graphic design procedures maximize the knowledge of bookmaking and graphic art procedures, also the usage of typography and the techniques of making photographs. Its creator, the designer, must have sense to fine arts and aesthetics. The originality of the designer and the graphic design is important, too. This kind of quality refreshes the pages, raises the reader's attention and sells the newspaper. That is why the qualitative and quantitative face of graphical elements must be in balance; and do not overwhelm the textual part, the information, on the page.

Some paragraphs before were mentioned the importance of the size, shape and quality of the paper, the high concern of the visual elements and illustration and the selection of the font. These principles work ages in paper making industry. Only the newspaper layout trends change quite often and sometimes dramatically.

Perhaps the greatest impact on designing has been the computer – it makes journal design easier and more effective. There are some other general principles that make newspaper's layout or design impressive: fewer articles on a page; fewer but larger headlines; more "art" – non-text elements, usually photos included in advertising, boxes for featured stories or outline (or shaded); more white spaces, known as "air", or the imitation of a leading newspaper from abroad or in the country.

:: Different kinds of students' newspapers

There are plenty of journals in news-stands. Nevertheless, here is one that common reader will not buy in news-stand. It is the students' newspaper. There are specific fields that are included in a student newspaper. These are the students' life, the events of their study and sport life, actual stories, professional assets, grants, also jokes, crosswords and program recommendations.

Two nice examples of university newspapers based on newspaper style can be analyzed here: The Oxford Student and the London Student. At first sight both of them have a newspaper format and style, including content. They are colourful and full of pictures. During the years they change only a little, for example appearance of the first page, usually the graphical elements are replaced, or the uniform colour is changed. As a rule, they use the same visual principles, such as the headline remains at the top with a line or frame fragment or that there is a wider line for necessary information about volume, issue, date or for a short advertisement or notice.

The Oxford Student (www.oxfordstudent.com)



London Student (www.London.org.uk)



Slovak newspapers



Newspapers mentioned above are nice issues. But we can find some nice examples in our country which will be presented now. Graphic quality of these papers depends on the fact that they are made by amateur journalists and by layout editors who are not skilful in making graphic design. These newspapers are usually made with computer software which is not recommended for makeup. These papers are printed on photocopier machines on copy paper, because they are without financial aids.

The faculty or department newspapers are mostly published monthly or rare, their format is mainly A4, they have 8 to 16 pages, and the colours are black and white (in printed version) and usually with chaotic design on the front page and with mixed content articles on inner pages. Logos are quiet, headlines vanish, typography is sometimes of poor quality and the pictures are of low resolution.

The more professional ones are made by professional graphic designers (e.g. newspaper Spektrum and 6B), by students of the journalistic department (e.g. newspapers Šušu and Zumag) or by students with sense for esthetic layout.



:: The students want...

There are several issues at the Faculty of Architecture: Spektrum, which is a university newspaper for professors and workers; Alfa, which is the FA professional newspaper and the recently started 6B.



A research between the students, the intended readers, revealed the following facts:

- 83 % of respondents would prefer an issue only for their faculty, not for the whole university,
- 65 % of respondents would prefer a funny magazine with a professional part; the rest would want articles with professional information,
- generally, a monthly of the A4 format is preferred, with 16 to 24 pages. Respondents would like a full-coloured magazine with illustrations and a simple or geometrical look. Students are ready to pay 10 to 20 Sk for an issue,
- the paper should contain information from the faculty everyday life and from the profession, information about the university, with focus on education, research and grants.

These were the main requirements stressed by the students.

:: Student newspaper for the Faculty of Architecture

A more general analysis of numerous titles indicates that a more frequent is the newspaper format not a magazine. The student newspaper should look like a daily newspaper; it should have a clear and visible logo, provoking headlines, interesting pictures, well selected font and attractive layout. Important is the size and the shape of the format, the colour, and the use of graphic elements. Of course, the subject-matter is important, too. A very complex issue is the financial matter, and the printing. The school or the faculty should support all aspects of issuing the students newspaper.

With regard to the fact that the community of the Faculty of Architecture is an art-minded community, might have the magazine form. This form is preferred for its visual advantages. In order to illustrate modern trends in architecture, large and good-quality photos should be use. The magazine should be printed on a medium quality paper not only for the cover but for the inside pages as well. And the full coloured issue would need an adequate printing technology. The insufficient financial resources could be covered by advertisements and financial aids. The latest trends in magazines are A5 format, the so called pocket-size. It fits to the hand and to the bag.

The readers are between 19 and 26, with high education level, studying at a university. The layout must take these facts in account. Therefore, the simple or geometrical look of the paper can be recommended. The design of the layout is defined by type page, font selection, illustrations, visual elements and advertisements. If they are efficiently put together then the newspaper may result in an attractive and effective package.

It is a hard work to create a student magazine for students on the FA STU who have artistic interest. Their expectations of design are higher then the students' of other universities. Because of esthetical sense of students and field of interest of the magazines, the students have more stakes in nice layout and in quality outlook of the magazine. Without a professional team of editors and graphic designers, and without a financial aid of university, it will be hard to realize a successful student newspaper for them. A paper/manual about creating graphic design for student newspapers may help the student editorial offices to create an effective graphic design manual to their papers. It is a way they should made a uniformed and attractive layout for their magazine by this manual.

At the end a summary of importance of the graphic design were recite, an essential element for (university) newspapers.

The graphic design is an arrangement of textual and pictorial parts of the newspaper, the basic elements on a white paper, with an aim to create an esthetical composition. The graphic design procedures maximize

the knowledge of graphic art procedures,
the usage of typography,
the techniques of making photographs,
and its creator must have sense to fine arts and aesthetics.

Esthetical and graphically correctly made newspaper brings common orientation in pages,
catch the readers' attention and keep readers interested in the material,

lead the reader's eyes to the main topic,
and help the reader to understand the text easily.

:: References

- Dominick, Joseph R. (2000) *The Dynamics of Mass Communication* McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Leiter, Kelly; Harriss, Julian; Johnson, Stanley (2000) *The Complete Reporter: Fundamentals of News Gathering, Writing, and Editing* Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Wilber, Rick (1995) *Magazine Feature Writing* New York: St. Martin's Press
- White, Alex (1992) *Type in Use* New York: Design Press
- Click, J. W. (1974) *Magazine Editing and Production* Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Publishers

Ing. Zsuzsa Szenczi Németh