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Newspaper design: infographics

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# Newspaper Design : Infographics

presented by Peter Ong

paper presented at the Seminar on Update on Communication Technology

organised by AMIC

November 26,1994

# VISUAL

# What readers expect of their papers VISUAL THINKING

1. News (Of course, stoopid!)

2. Accuracy (Not just some of the time)

3. Credibility (Trying to hoodwink us, eh?)

4. Professionalism (I'm paying you good money)

5. Consistency (I demand it)

6. Respect for their time (Please, please, please)

Findings of Urban & Associates

ume takes inherent part ot course, as we demands crisp the communications process, make-up and and not just a cosmetic Kespecting readers 1 as treating page i jackaging as an ung, c clear writ

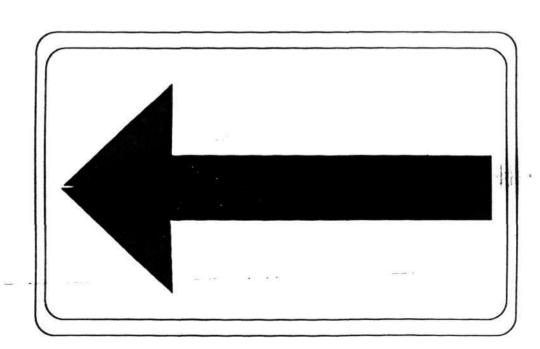
Chris Urban, market researcher

# Secillo

this process involuntary and simultaneous process connected see the landscape; ne process 1s ntuitive, emotional (P) Seeing is a visual We experience 1 ımages. Dai we see a 1

itten word ne verba the code. us we must know the cerebra decode mear ne process is eliberate and Kead

# ONE ONE ONE



thinking. Creative thinking. Lateral thinking. rational. Therefore when writing a story 1t means the shape of information (such as a things in a new way. It requires associative Patterns and dots, rather than logical and hinking visually means we have to see graphic) rather than length.

# Types of newspaper readers

1. Junkies 5%

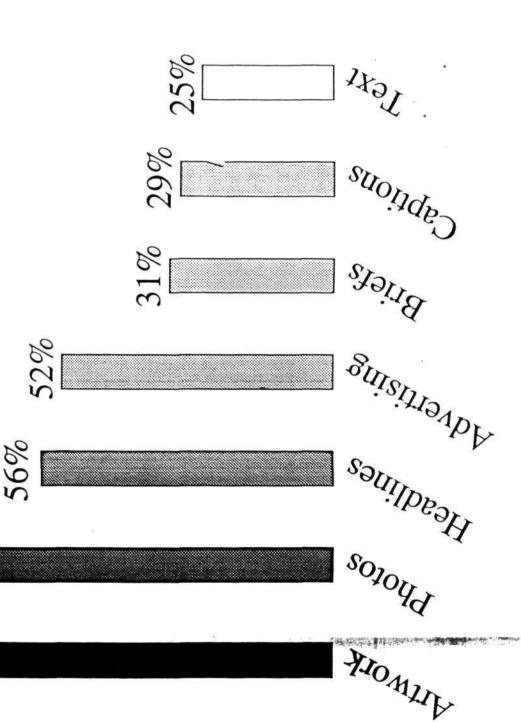
2. Specialists 10%

3. Hardcore 30%

4. Mass market 40%

5. Sunday only 15%

# page ow readers process a 80%



# US newspapers dull, difficult to read, says study

# Call for change in writing style

BALTIMORE — American newspapers are dull and difficult to read. But different ways of writing news articles could help newspapers attract some of the readers they have lost.

That was the conclusion of a major study made public in Baltimore this week at the annual convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

The study suggested that newspapers must challenge many of the rules which had governed journalism for generations.

It was prepared by the group's literacy committee, which was formed partly because of growing alarm that young Americans did not read well enough to understand newspapers and were abandoning them as a result.

The literacy panel challenged the fundamental form used for newspaper articles, the "inverted pyramid", in which the top is heavy with important facts and trails off into less-significant information.

The panel's work is part of growing efforts by news professionals to grapple with the effect of limited literacy and try to re-invigorate newspapers.

The study's conclusions appear to bolster efforts by some newspapers to increase the quality of writing and to vary writing styles.

In addition to aesthetic reasons which had been advanced in the past as reasons for these changes, the report added an economic incentive: Survival.

The study cited newspaper writers and editors who, it said, relied habitually on approaches to writing which were "daunting and difficult to understand for readers".

It said: "The basic conservatism and frantic pace of our profession keep us from enlarging our repertoire of

# THE FOUR APPROACHES

THE researchers had reporters try four different writing approaches.

- Traditional: "Pets remain a popular gift despite the advice of animal advocates."
- Narrative: "Just before Christmas three years ago, Lesly Stevens was forced to play Scrooge. But the result was a better life for Pumpkin, a nine-week-old kitten."
- Radical-clarity (explaining everything): "Imagine yourself in this situation: You get an adorable puppy as a holiday gift."
- "They are the little animals the holiday season purports to adore: The puppies with the big eyes and floppy ears."

Result: The study foundthat the articles with writer's point of view were least effective to readers.

forms. So, year by year, we keep boring and confusing our readers and driving them away."

Experimenting with articles published in the St Petersburg Times in January, researchers had reporters try four different writing approaches (See box above).

Each of the four differently written articles about the same event was printed in some copies of the St Petersburg newspaper and researchers then interviewed readers.

Younger and less-frequent newspaper readers favoured techniques other than the common inverted-pyramid-style article, the study found, suggesting that newspaper writing could be altered to attract new readers. — NYT...

# THE Juture

- Colour will be a standard feature in most newspapers
  - → Editor & Publisher survey
  - **→ New York Times**
  - → Wall Street Journal
  - → In the UK
- Colour printing will be of a very high standard
- Greater use of information graphics
- More distinctive use of typography

# THE Luture

- Pages will be designed rather than laid out
- Tighter editing because readers have less time
- Advent of the quickie paper with many, many editions
- Advent of the fax paper
- Phenomenal impact of desktop publishing

# ESIGNIN ERS

· response de la composition della composition d rganise

Use visual signals to guide hir rate the information 2. L. Package the infor

# RGANISATION

Find sequence and rhythr

# **NICNPOSTING**

Jse visual signals to direct readers into the page with the help of the following

- Logos, symbols
- Graphics, maps, at-a-glance boxes
  - Labels, straps, subheads
- Summaries, standfirsts
- Colour and typography

# THE DECADE AHEAD

# things a paper must do to stay relevant

- § Become more efficient to read.
- § Respond to different levels of interest.
- § Become personally useful to readers.
- § Become more accessible and engaging.
- § Target niche audiences more effectively.

# PACKAGING

. It calls for decision making. Should story be long or short? How should it be played? Length and depth are not synon ymous

2. It calls for design. How can you pcakage the contents into an integral whole?

# THE DECADE AHEAD

# Be personally useful

- § Give better play to topics that affect readers most directly. For example, ho les, personal finance, relationships, etc.
- § Tell mem where to get information.
  - § Focus on impact of stories on readers.
  - § Provide context for readers.
- § Run lots of calendars and listings
- § Explain, explain, explain.
- S Update coverage to recognise the way we live.
- § Put government coverage to the test:
  Does the story affect our readers?

# theNavigator

WAR BEAUTINES WAR

CANADA-U.S. MERGER?

## Friendly takeover

STRUTICISC AND THE

## U.S. proposes ban on deadliest weapons

Gorbacker agrees in principle to Buck intintive

CONTUN FLECTIONS

## Schmidt wins by slim margin

and sound Comm بع جن فينمان يحس andren of the regard



## OIL STILL

2 million 2 gallons hit coast



World cup games

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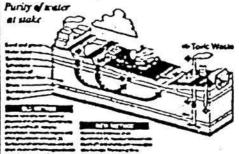


## TO THE READER

# THE CORE NEWSPAPER FOR TODAY'S READERS

wy met genera the treated in other nearcys of information, buth within the literature Control and in other publications. In this town, the more in lor of the series time it summary of the news, as indica to other powers of the total waters and shouth of correct tolorouses. The day's "top store" will be instead, but us, too, will the treath and should the term. These

# Toxic waste disposal



# Pollution czar bans all dumping as other efforts fail



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by bytery equipped to basely such maste.
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500

# WORLD NOTES

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## Good News

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## DISTRICT.

## Non

LOOKING AHEAD

The Australian

## THRIFT VILLAMS



## D.S. ELECTIONS

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# THE DECADE AHEAD

# Be more accessible

- § Liven up mix of stories on the front page.
- § Get reader participation.
- § Familarise readers with reporters.
- § Use more colour.
- § Use more graphics

# THE DECADE AHEAD

# Target your audience

- § Go after women readers
  Run more pictures of women
  See how the competition reaches
  out to women. Examine Women's
  magazines
- Make the same effort with the elderly
- Make the same effort for younger readers

# THE DING

The entire design process always begins with writers.

Reporters should:

- 1. **Integrate** themselves fully into the design process
- 2. Learn to think graphically
- 3. Look for graphic potential in every story
- 4. Collaborate with sub-editors and artists in the final packaging of their stories