

Document Writing Tips

1. Never “underline” text or titles for emphasis.

- The PC is not a typewriter. (See Book # 1 by Robin Williams)
- In the days of the typewriter this was the only way to add emphasis.
- Underline is also the international symbol for an internet [Hyperlink](#).
- The reader has as the urge to click on your “underlined text”.
- Use *Italic* or **Bold**.
- **Increase Font Size with Bold Attribute.**

• Be Bold Don’t be a Wimp!

2. Avoid using more than two font types in one document.

- Use **Serif Fonts** for body text and **Sans Serif** for headlines.
- **serif - Readability**

A small decorative stroke at the end of a letter’s main strokes.

Extensive studies have concluded that serif type is more **readable** in extended text than sans serif type. It’s not clear exactly why; suggestions are that the serifs tend to lead the eye along the horizontal line, or that the thick/thin variations in the strokes of most serif types eases reading.

- **Sans Serif - Legibility**

A type face that does not have serifs.

Sans Serif, on the other hand, has been shown to be more **legible**. What’s the difference? Well, legibility refers more to character recognition than to reading blocks of text. Put in practical terms, sans serif is easier to recognize at a glance for short little bursts of type, such as headlines on a page.

3. AVOID USING ALL CAPS.

- All Caps are difficult to read because the words appear to be square.
- At a distance the shape of the words can help identify the spelling.
- **The Dog and Cat** is easier to read than **THE DOG AND CAT**.
- All caps in an e-mail message means you are angry and shouting.

4. Avoid using Fonts that are too small (8pts).

- Fonts too small (8pts)
- Your Fonts size should be 10 points or 12 points for body text.
- This document uses 16 points **Bold Sans Serif Arial** type for headings.
- This document uses 12 point **Serif Palatino Linotype** for body text.

5. Avoid cluttering your document with distractions.

- White space on the page makes your document cleaner looking and easier to read.
- Background patterns & graphics can be distracting to the reader.

6. Avoid using too many words in one line.

- Use 10 to 15 words per line.
- Look at magazines to see how the professionals do it.
- Magazine columns use few words per line.

7. Avoid Centering

- If text is aligned on the left or right the vertical line that connects the text is much stronger because it has a hard invisible edge to follow. This gives left and right aligned text a cleaner and more dramatic look.

John Smith

153 Main Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 43294
Phone 563-2341-8955

Left Aligned

John Smith

153 Main Street
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Phone 563-2341-8955

Right Aligned

John Smith

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Centered

- **Centered** text forces your eye to jump around to find the words.

8. Be consistent throughout your document.

- Use Proximity, Alignment, Repetition & Contrast (See Book # 2 by Robin Williams)
- Don't change **font types** in the middle of your document.
- Don't change **bullet types** in the middle of your document.
- Don't change **line spacing** in the middle of your document.
- Don't change **paragraph style** in the middle of your document.
- Don't change **page layout** in the middle of your document.

9. Avoid the use font colors.

- Use sparingly.
- Using a **variety** of colors can make your document look **clownish**.

10. Use background colors or patterns carefully.

Be sure the background does not blur the foreground text.

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Desktop Publishing Books www.amazon.com **by Robin Williams** (Not the actor) <http://www.ratz.com>

The author recommends these books be read in this order.

1. The PC is Not a Typewriter

A style manual for creating professional looking type on your PC.

2. The Non-Designer's Design Book

Design and typographic principles for the visual novice.

3. The Non-Designer's Type Book

Insights and techniques for creating professional-level type.

4. How to Boss Your Fonts Around 2nd Edition

A primer on font technology and font management on the Macintosh.

5. The Non-Designer's Scan and Print Book

All you need to know about production and prepress to get great-looking pages.

6. Robin Williams Design Workshop (Page 122 the Secret to good forms)

Ideal book for the aspiring designer wanting to advance to the next level of expertise and creativity.

7. The Non-Designer's Web Book

An Easy guide to creating, designing, and posting your own web site.

8. Web Design Workshop

The principles of creative, effective design to the Web.