It Depends

Rune Pettersson – Institute for Infology

It Depends:
ID – Principles and Guidelines
Second Edition

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Preface

Information Design is a multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional, and worldwide consideration. It is not possible to develop a number of firm message design rules telling the information designer exactly how to best design a message and develop information materials. However, based on research it is possible to formulate several ID-principles and then develop a number of guidelines for the design of effective and efficient messages and information materials.

In my own work the goal has been to study the presentation of visual messages and combined verbal and visual messages in information and learning contexts in order to gain a better understanding of the conditions related to the design, use and interpretation of such information. Most of my own work has been related to audience interpretation and perception of messages, visual literacy and the question of a visual language and its representations.

In *It Depends: ID-principles and Guidelines* I present four groups of ID-principles: *Functional Principles, Administrative Principles, Aesthetic Principles,* and *Cognitive Principles.* 150 guidelines are based on a total of 16 message design principles and they may assist the information designer to design messages and information materials that are well suited for the intended receivers. However, the information designer will always have to consider one of the main principles: "it depends."

This second and extended edition includes more guidelines and more references to research than the first edition.

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ID-Foundation

Information design, ID, can be hard to define, and it often goes by other names. I will only mention a few definitions here. Hurlburt[1] noted: "Terms like information design, visual communication, and even graphic design are so broad in their connotations that it is impossible to use them accurately to describe specific functions. The term information design is often used to cover all of the areas of two-dimensional design that are non-persuasive."

Easterby and Zwaga[2] provided a definition when they edited the proceedings from the *NATO Conference on Visual Presentation of Information* in 1978. In the preface[3] they write: "information presentation involves a wide range of professional interest groups concerned with its development and use." Marsh[4] discussed *communication design* for "messages that work" and made a clear distinction between artistic and design approaches. He commented that an artistic approach strives for *perfection*, while a design approach strives for *workability* in a cost-effective context. By careful planning the design approach minimizes need for rewriting and editing. The approaches result in vastly different final products, each with its own use.

In 1993 Wileman[5] noted: "Communication can be judged successful only when it conveys the information it sets out to convey. This is as true for visual modes as it is for verbal modes." Here "visual modes" include all kinds of visual language, and "verbal modes" include verbal language. Because the solution of any information design problem is determined by the interaction between the instrumental and user constraints Flach and Dominguez[6] preferred to talk about *"use-centred design."* According to them success of a specific design depends on the coordination of the two sets of constraints: information with the appropriate means for action, and the means for action with the ap-

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[1] Hurlburt, 1981, p. 22
[2] Easterby and Zwaga, 1984
[3] *Information Design*, p. xxi–xxii
[4] Marsh, 1983
[5] Wileman, 1993, p. 6
[6] Flach and Dominguez, 1995

propriate information. At the same time Mullet and Sano[1] remarked that: "The goal of *communication-oriented design* is to develop a message that can be accurately transmitted and correctly interpreted, and which will produce the desired behavioural outcome after it has been understood by its recipient."

Mok[2] provided the following short definition of the concept information design: "*Information design* is the arrangement of organization models to provide context and meaning for the information." According to Bull[3] *communication design* examines the role of the designer as a strategic architect/visual translator in producing visual language systems that focus on appropriateness, meaning, and the end user. In my view *information design* of today has its origin and its roots in graphic design, education and teaching, and architecture and engineering, or rather construction and production. In all these three broad areas of knowledge people have recognised the need for clear, distinct and trustworthy presentation and interpretation of verbal as well as visual information. I have described information design in the following way[4]:

> "In order to satisfy the information needs of the intended receivers information design comprises analysis, planning, presentation and understanding of a message – its content, language and form. Regardless of the selected medium, a well-designed information material, with its message, will satisfy aesthetic, economic, ergonomic, as well as subject matter requirements."

In my view the main goal in information design is *clarity of communication*, even if we also expect presentations to be aesthetically pleasing, and in some cases also intellectually rewarding. To fulfil this main goal all messages must be accurately designed, produced and distributed, and later correctly interpreted and understood by most of the members of the intended audience. These different processes are guided by *principles*, performed with the help of *tools* and always influenced by the *social context*. As an area of knowledge information design rests on a foundation, which can be expressed in four basic statements: 1) ID is multi-disciplinary. 2) ID is multi-dimensional. 3) Theory and practice co-operate in ID. 4) There are no firm rules in ID.

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[1] Mullet and Sano, 1995, p. 2
[2] Mok, 1996, p. 108
[3] Bull, 1999
[4] Pettersson, 2002, p. 19

ID is Multi-Disciplinary

Information design is a *new academic discipline,* but it is not a new area of knowledge. Manuals and instructions have been preserved since the 15th century. Mijksenaar and Westendorp[1] mention a fencing manual by Hans Thalhoffer (1443). This manual includes visual instructions in wrestling and unarmed combat. From an instructional point of view, there was not much development in visual instructional language from the 15th until the 20th century. They concluded[2]:

> "The next major advance in visual instructions occurred during World War II, when the military used pictorial language to train soldiers. The Walt Disney Company, for instance, adapted its cartooning skills to create training documentation and films such as the movie employing Mickey Mouse to explain how to use a Browning.50 water-cooled machine gun. The defence industry in general also played a role in augmenting and applying visual instructional language during this period."

Since the introduction of the personal computer there has been a rapid development in the production of information materials. The availability of and need for information as the basis for decision-making is continually increasing. Now an increasing number of decisions are being made on the basis of pictorial representations[3]. Visual messages are a powerful form of communication[4]. Visual messages stimulate both our emotional and our intellectual responses and therefore make us think as well as feel. It can be concluded that *the ability to communicate visually is becoming more and more important.*

A group of design disciplines all deal with the "design of messages." This group, *message design,* is an interdisciplinary area of knowledge. It encompasses influences and facts from more than fifty established academic disciplines and established areas of research (Figure 1). The main areas of research may be divided into six groups[5] with "base disciplines." However, also other groupings are possible.

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[1] Mijksenaar and Westendorp, 1999, p. 21
[2] Mijksenaar and Westendorp, 1999, p. 22
[3] Nielsen, 2004
[4] Lester, 1995, p. 73
[5] Pettersson, 2002, p. 8

1. **Language disciplines** such as drama, graphic design, linguistics, rhetoric, semiotics, verbal languages, visual languages and visual literacy.
2. **Art and aesthetic disciplines** such as aesthetics, computer graphics, film and cinema, iconography, iconology, illustration, and photography.
3. **Information disciplines** such as computer science, information processing, and library and information science.
4. **Communication disciplines** such as communication theory, education technology, information design, information technology, information theory, instructional design, instructional message design, instructional technology, journalism, media studies, persuasive design, planned communication, television and video.
5. **Behavioural and cognitive disciplines** such as cognitive science, didactics, information ergonomics, pedagogy, psychology, and sociology.
6. **Business and media production technology disciplines** such as business economics and management, information economics, information management, law, technologies for production and distribution of media.
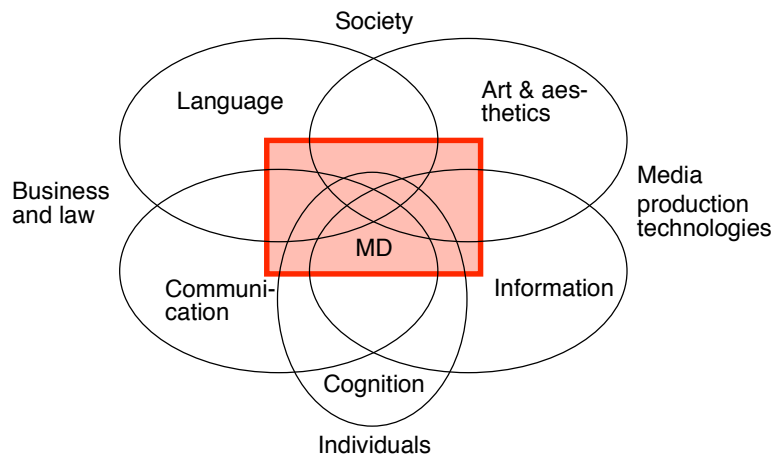
Figure 1. Message design is interdisciplinary and encompasses influences and facts from more than fifty established academic disciplines and areas of research.

This "message design model" is a theoretical model showing that different disciplines influence and contribute to the area of message design. Please note that the ovals in the illustration representing the various groups of disciplines are not meant to be sharp and distinct. The borders between the groups are rather blurred, unclear, and indistinct. Furthermore, the model is not intended to show any exact relationships between the different groups of the

base disciplines. The main components in message design are *words, visuals and forms*. These main components may be used in many different ways to produce, transmit and interpret messages of various kinds in different communication situations. Depending on the different objectives of the messages we can see different "message design groups," all of which are used for communication purposes. These groups are graphic design, mass design, persuasion design, instruction design, and information design (Figure 2).
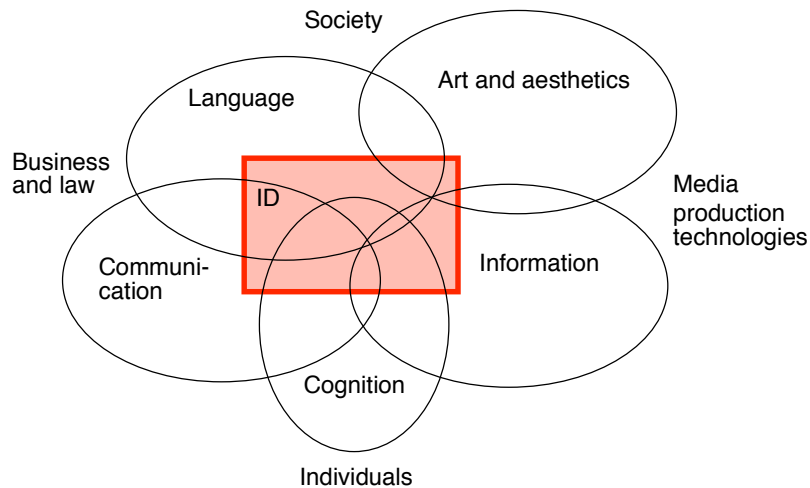
Figure 2. A model of information design (ID). Please note that the ovals representing the various groups of disciplines are not meant to be sharp and distinct.

There are seven distinct groups of information materials:

1. Advertising and propaganda
2. Informative entertainment
3. Brief messages
   Simple instructions
   Prohibitions
   Information
   Warnings
4. Administrative documentation
   Working materials
   Administrative messages
   Business documents
5. Factual information
   Facts
   Descriptions
   Reports
6. Instructions
   Operating instructions
   Production and maintenance
      documentation
   Good advice
   Interfaces
   Recipes
   Guidance
7. Teaching aids

ID is Multi-Dimensional

In his book *Envisioning Information* Tufte[1] argues that the principles of information design are universal. Like mathematics information design principles are not tied to the unique features of a particular language, nor are they tied to a particular culture. Information design is a worldwide consideration. Information design is multi-dimensional.

Different media are able to represent reality with a varying degree of facility owing to differences in their structure, the kind of representation involved, and the content in each specific case. A verbal presentation is an example of a "one-dimensional" representation. The words in a verbal message "flow" in a relatively fixed and often unambiguous form along a time axis.

Drawings and photographs are "two-dimensional" representations. Interpretation of image content is less constrained than interpretation of a verbal message. However, a still picture may always be interpreted in more than one way. Furthermore dioramas, models, sculptures and stereo pictures have a third "dimension." Current laser techniques make it possible to create three-dimensional images, holograms, enabling viewers to actually see "behind" the image objects.

Having a "one-dimensional" and a "two-dimensional" representation at the same time, or even one or more "one-dimensional", "two-dimensional", and "three-dimensional" representations, at the same time, is possible, even commonplace. We may also add "access time" as another dimension. In the future, media might also be able to represent smell and taste, which would add still other dimensions.

Different media are also related to one another in regard to their level of structural complexity. The simplest form of a "one-dimensional" representation is a simple acoustic signal, such as a baby's cry. A higher degree of complexity is found in texts and music. Music is always structurally more complex than text but can, of course, sometimes be "simple" in content. The greater the degree of structural complexity, the closer the representation approaches reality at a given time, in a given place, and in a given context. Marsh[2] however, uses another terminology. He points out that audible dimensions include: frequency, amplitude, complexity, duration, and localization. With this view in mind all representations could be considered as "multi-dimensional."

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[1] Tufte, 1990, p. 10
[2] Marsh, 1983

Theory and Practice Co-operate in ID

Simlinger[1] argues that information design is complementary to information technology in the same way as architecture, or rather "architectural design" is complementary to building technology. Architecture has a practical as well as a theoretical component. This is also true for information design as well as for several other disciplines, such as dance, economics, education, engineering, the fine arts, journalism, medicine, music and theatre. Like the two faces of a coin, *infography* and *infology* are the two main components of message design[2] and also the two main parts of information design.

Infography is the practical component. It is design and execution of combinations of words, pictures, and graphic design. An information designer needs to have good skills in writing comprehensible, clear and consistent texts, in creating clear illustrations, and in a clear, transparent typography and layout that will aid attention, perception, interpretation, understanding and learning for the intended receiver. Often a team of people with skills in different areas are working closely together.

Infology is the theoretical component. It is the science of verbal and visual presentation and interpretation of messages. On the basis of man's prerequisites, infology encompasses studies of the way a combined verbal and visual representation should be designed and produced in order to achieve optimum communication between a sender and a group of receivers. Infology models contain both theoretical (descriptive) elements as well as normative (prescriptive) elements. Complicated language will impair the understanding of the message. Active voice, attention, clarity, comprehensibility, consistency, emphasis, information ethics, legibility, memory, perception, precision, processing, quality, readability, reading value, simplicity, structure, and unity are all key concepts in information design.

Any graphic message should be legible, readable, and well worth reading for the intended audience and any audio message should be audible, distinct, and well worth listening to. Every information designer needs to have theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills. In order to perform sound reflections and make a qualified reflection regarding theory and practice, we need concepts both to structure our thoughts, and to describe them verbally[3].

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[1] Simlinger, 1999
[2] Pettersson, 1989, p. x, 206; 1993, p. 173; and Pettersson, 2002, p. 20
[3] Nordegren, 2004, p. 23–24

There Are No Firm Rules in ID

All information materials must be legible and readable. They should also be well worth reading for members of the intended audience. The information designer should not view communication as complete until the intended audience can understand the messages. Models for design processes include cognitive as well as practical activities and aspects. Shadrin discuss seven and Rowland ten design process activities, or design process steps[1]. The (final) design represents the outcomes of each specific design process, such as processes, products, services, and systems. On a theoretical level the intention of an overall design process, including a number of process activities, might be the same regardless of the specific design area (Figure 3).
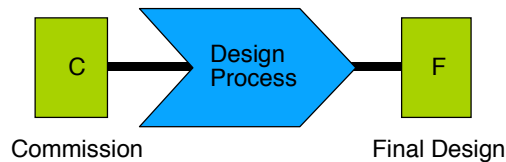
Figure 3. There are many models for design processes. The goal is to produce some kind of master for production of a number of artefacts.

My own "message design model" (Figure 1) and "information design model" (Figure 2) include the following four process activities: analysis and synopsis, production of draft, production of script, and production of original and master. Each activity includes a design sub-process, activity documentation, and a review process (Figure 4).
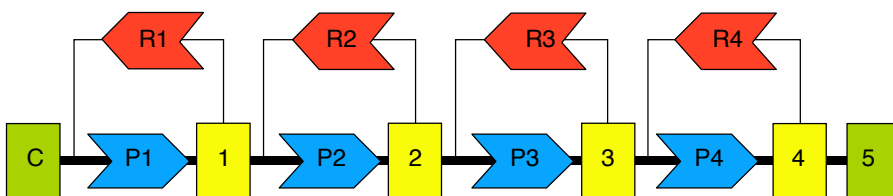
Figure 4. The message and information design processes include production (P1) of analysis and synopsis (1), production (P2) of draft (2), production (P3) of script (3), production of (P4) original (4) and master (5). Each process activity includes a review process (R1–R4). C = Commission.

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[1] Shadrin, 1992, p. 29; Rowland, 1993

Today's design motto is very much: "function can take any form." According to Mijksenaar[1] this phrase is an adaptation of the famous: "form follows function" which can be traced back to the American sculptor Horatio Greenough, who had used it in his text *Form and Function*, written in 1851. However, Mijksenaar and Westendorp[2] conclude: "architects, engineers and designers rarely follow this rule." Several authors have tried to develop firm rules on how to design information materials. This is, however, not possible[3].

A number of authors in various design areas have noted that it is not possible to provide any firm design rules. Several say: "It Depends." Lohr[4] presented an "It Depends Rule." She writes: "Design decisions do not take a cookbook approach. Too many factors influence design. That is why it is considered an art as well as a science." She further writes: "What should you do? It depends … on the learner, the content, the task, the environment, other elements in the visual, and your level of skill." Maybe the situation for information design can be summed up in the expression: "it depends." In each specific case the information designer must be able to analyse and understand the problem, and find one – or more – practical design solutions.

Message Design Principles

A number of authors have offered design principles, a kind of "fundamental truths" in different areas of design, such as *data graphics*[5] *general design*[6], *message design*[7], *instructional design*[8], *instructional message design*[9], *information design*[10]. Some of these message design principles are rather broad and general, while others are quite specific. However, all message design principles should contribute to the design of effective and efficient messages, information materials, and learning materials. These principles (Figure 5) can be seen as a set of guidelines for the message design process.

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[1] Mijksenaar, 1997, p. 15

[2] Mijksenaar and Westendorp, 1999, p. 34

[3] See the section *Information Ethics* for an exception from the "rule of no rules."

[4] Lohr, 2003, p. 81

[5] Tufte, 1983, p. 105

[6] Tufte, 1983; Shadrin, 1992; Rowland, 1993

[7] Pettersson, 1993, 1997; Wileman, 1993

[8] Lohr, 2003; Smith and Ragan, 1999, 2005

[9] Fleming and Levie, 1993

[10] Pettersson, 2002, 2007; Lipton, 2007
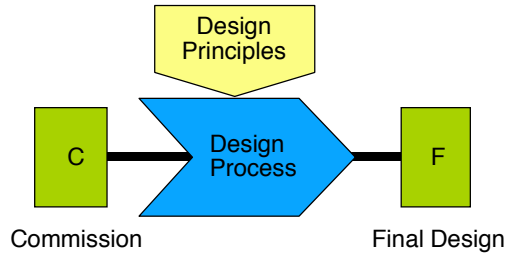
Figure 5. Design processes are guided by design principles.

Incorrect information in newspapers deceives many thousands of readers, and incorrectness on television may influence millions of viewers. Tufte offers six design principles[1] that will result in graphical integrity in the display of quantitative information:

1. The representation of numbers, as physically measured on the surface of the graphic itself, should be directly proportional to the numerical quantities represented.
2. Clear, detailed, and thorough labelling should be used to defeat graphical distortion and ambiguity. Write out explanations of the data on the graphic itself. Label important events in the data.
3. Show data variation, not design variation.
4. In time-series displays of money, deflated and standardized units of monetary measurements are nearly always better than nominal units.
5. The number of information-carrying (variable) dimensions depicted should not exceed the number of dimensions in the data.
6. Graphics must not quote data out of context.

Good designs are intriguing and curiosity provoking, drawing the viewer into the wonder of the data. Tufte noted[2] that graphical competence demands three quite different skills: 1) the substantive, 2) the statistical, and 3) the artistic. Yet most graphical work today, particularly in news publications, is under the direction of a single expertise–the artistic. Allowing artist–illustrators to control the design and content of statistical graphics is almost like allowing typographers to control the content, style, and editing of prose. Substantive and quantitative expertise must also participate in the design of data graphics, at least if statistical integrity and graphical sophistication are to be achieved.

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[1] Tufte, 1983, p. 77
[2] Tufte, 1983, p. 87

The design process includes cognitive as well as practical aspects and activities. Rowland[1] has studied the process of design across a number of professions. According to him main principles of a *general process of design* include the following characteristics:

1. Designing requires a balance of reason and intuition, an impetus to act, and an ability to reflect on actions taken.
2. The design process is a learning process.
3. Designing is a goal-directed process in which the goal is to conceive and realize some new thing.
4. The design process is dependent on the designer and on what he or she designs.
5. The new thing that results from designing has practical utility.
6. Design requires social interaction.
7. Designing involves problem solving, but not all problem solving is designing.
8. In designing, problem understanding and problem solving may be simultaneous or sequential processes.
9. Designing involves technical skills and creativity and rational and intuitive thought processes.

My own studies of processes of *message design*[2] resulted in the following list with twelve design principles to be used in the production of information and instruction:

1. Introduce novel or unexpected events at the start of instruction.
2. Inform learners of expected outcomes.
3. Recall relevant prerequisite information.
4. Present only relevant information.
5. Organise content and present "organisers".
6. Progress from simple to complex.
7. Provide prompts and cues.
8. Vary the information presented.
9. Present examples and non-examples.
10. Provide appropriate practice.
11. Provide immediate feedback or knowledge of results.
12. Review and repeat.

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[1] Rowland, 1993
[2] Pettersson, 1993, p. 88

Smith and Ragan[1] argues that *instructional design* is a systematic and reflective process of translating principles of learning and instruction into plans for instructional materials, activities, information resources, and evaluation. Smith and Ragan noted that an instructional designer is somewhat like an engineer. Both plan their work based upon principles that have been successful in the past. Engineers use principles based on the laws of physics, and instructional designers use principles based on basic principles of instruction and learning. Both groups have a vast number of factors, which often interact, that they must consider. Their "model of instructional design" is based on three phases[2]: 1) analysis, 2) strategy, and 3) evaluation.

The first phase includes analysis of the learning context, analysis of the learners, analysis of the learning task, and writing of test items. The second phase includes development of organizational strategies, development of delivery strategies, development of management strategies, and production of the actual instruction. The third phase includes assessments and formative evaluation, which may lead to revision of the instruction. Many times steps may occur concurrently. Smith and Ragan[3] provides seven critical assumptions underlying instructional design for instructional designers to follow in order to be able to produce "good instruction". The *instructional design assumptions* are:

1. To design instruction, the designer must have a clear idea of what the learner should learn as a result of the instruction.
2. The "best" instruction is that which is effective (facilitates learners' acquisition of the identified knowledge and skills), efficient (requires the least possible amount of time necessary for learners to achieve the goals), and appealing (motivates and interests learners, encouraging them to persevere in the learning task).
3. Students may learn from many different media; a "live teacher" is not always essential for instruction.
4. There are principles of instruction that apply across all age groups and all content areas. For example, students must participate actively, interacting mentally as well as physically with material to be learned.
5. Evaluation should include the evaluation of the instruction as well as the evaluation of the learner's performance. Information from the evaluation of instruction should be used to revise the instruction in order to make it more efficient, effective, and appealing.

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[1] Smith and Ragan, 1999, p. 2
[2] Smith and Ragan, 1999, p. 7
[3] Smith and Ragan, 1999, p. 18

6. When the purpose of assessment is to determine whether learners have achieved learning goals, the learners should be evaluated in terms of how nearly they achieve those instructional goals rather than how they "stack up" against their fellow students.
7. There should be congruence among goals, learning activities, and assessment. Along with learner's characteristics and learning context, learning goals should be the driving force behind decisions about activities and assessment.

It is possible to edit the above instructional design assumptions and turn them into a list of seven *information design assumptions*.

1. To design information set, the designer must have a clear idea of what the user should understand as a result of using the information set.
2. The "best" information set is that which is effective (facilitates users' acquisition of the identified knowledge and skills), efficient (requires the least possible amount of time necessary for users to achieve the specified goals), and appealing (motivates and interests users, encouraging them to read, or listen to, the complete information set).
3. Many different media may be used for distribution of specific information content. Different media have their specific advantages.
4. There are principles of information design that apply across all age groups and all content areas. Users must be active rather than passive, interact mentally as well as physically with the information material.
5. Evaluation of information should include the evaluation of the information set as well as the evaluation of the user's performance. Facts from these evaluations should be used to revise the information set in order to make it more efficient, effective, and appealing.
6. When the purpose of assessment is to determine whether users have achieved the goals, the users should be evaluated in terms of how nearly they achieve those goals.
7. There should be congruence among goals, reading, and assessment. Along with user's characteristics and context, information goals should be the driving force behind decisions about activities and assessment.

Fleming and Levie[1] provided the following twelve general design principles for *instructional message design*:

1. Introduce novel or unexpected events at the start of instruction.
2. Inform learners of expected outcomes.

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[1] Fleming and Levie, 1993, p. x

3. Recall relevant prerequisite information.
4. Present only relevant information.
5. Organise content and present "organisers."
6. Progress from simple to complex.
7. Provide prompts and cues.
8. Vary the information presented.
9. Present examples and non-examples.
10. Provide appropriate practice.
11. Provide immediate feedback or knowledge of results.
12. Review and repeat.

In the 1990s I discussed eight *functional message design principles* for the presentation of clear messages in any medium [1]. These design principles are:

1. Facilitating learning.
2. Providing a clear structure of the message.
3. Providing clarity.
4. Providing simplicity.
5. Providing unity.
6. Securing a high quality of the message.
7. Limiting the total costs.
8. Respect copyright

A few years later I further added two *aesthetic message design principles* to the list: 9) information aesthetics, and 10) harmony and proportion.

Lohr[2] offers three principles that can be used in *instructional design* and *instructional message design* to create more easily understood pictures. The principles are: 1) figure/ground, 2) hierarchy, and 3) gestalt. The figure/ground principle refers to the mind's tendency to organize into figure and ground categories. To facilitate this process the information designer should make the most important information really noticeable. The principle of hierarchy is based on the mind's tendency to process and remember "chunks" of information that in turn are arranged hierarchically. To facilitate this process the information designer should shape information structures to show subordinate, super-ordinate, and coordinate relationships. The gestalt principle encompasses figure/ground and hierarchy principles. Gestalt theory is based on the belief that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The information de-

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[1] Pettersson, 1997, p. 110–118
[2] Lohr, 1993, p. 41–44

signer should combine text and visuals to present messages. Simplicity is an organisation and grouping of data and detail that make the information clear and meaningful. Lipton[1] provides eight principles for *information design*:

1. Consistency (is there a design style sheet at work–for example, does one headline look like another?)
2. Proximity (does the amount of space between elements reflect the relationship between the elements?)
3. Chunking (are related elements grouped and separated from others to make them digestible, instead of dauntingly unbroken?)
4. Alignment (does every element line up with some other one?)
5. Hierarchy (does the most important information look most important– placed at the top, bigger, bolder, or emphasized in some other way?)
6. Structure (is the information presented in a sequence that will make sense to the audience?)
7. Balance and eye flow (is there a clear starting place, and do the type and layout choices support the movement of your eye through the material?)
8. Clarity (is the writing clear and concise, free of unnecessary jargon or undefined terms, and at the right level for the audience?)

In this book I will present some additional *information design principles* for the presentation of clear verbal and visual messages in any medium.

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[1] Lipton, 2007, p. 9

Message Design Tools

The design process and sub-processes are performed with message design tools that are suitable for the type of representation that is selected during an early phase of the work (Figure 6). Main message design tools include text (printed and spoken), symbols, pictures (drawings and photographs), typography and layout, sound and sound effects. These tools have different properties that offer and restrict the foundations for communication
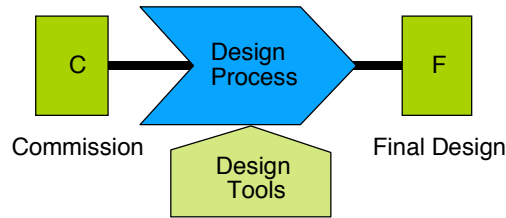
Figure 6. Design processes are performed with the help of design tools.

Representations

For Wileman[1] all kinds of representations of an object are symbols. He argues that there are three major ways to represent objects, from concrete to abstract representations. The first group, *pictorial symbols*, includes photographs and illustrations or drawings. Viewers should be able to translate a pictorial symbol to a real-world example. The second group, *graphic symbols*, has image-related graphics, concept-related graphics, and arbitrary graphics. Image-related graphics are silhouettes or profiles of the object. Concept-related graphics look like the object but have less detail than image-related graphics. Arbitrary graphics are abstract symbols for objects, constructed out of the designer's imagination. The third group, *verbal symbols*, is divided into two sub-groups, verbal descriptions and nouns or labels. Only people who comprehend the language used to describe the objects can understand verbal symbols.

However, in my view there seems to be no major difference in "abstractness" between abstract arbitrary graphic symbols and verbal symbols. Thus, I prefer to distinguish between two main categories of representations: (I) figurative representations, and (II) non-figurative representations. Figurative representations include two groups, visuals and graphic symbols. Visuals include three-dimensional images, photographs, realistic drawings, and schematic

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[1] Wileman , 1993, p. 17

drawings. Graphic symbols include pictorial symbols, abstract symbols, and arbitrary symbols. Non-figurative representations or verbal symbols include verbal descriptions, nouns or labels, and letters and characters.

Figurative representations	Non-Figurative representations

1. Visuals
    Three-dimensional images
    Photographs
    Drawings
    Schematic pictures
	1 Verbal symbols
	    Verbal descriptions
	    Nouns or labels
	    Letters or characters

2. Graphic symbols
    Pictorial symbols
    Abstract symbols
    Arbitrary symbols
	2. Non-visual and non-verbal
	   representations
	   (Sounds)
	   Odours and scents

Languages

Any system used as a means of communications between people can be regarded as a language. While linguistic scientists distinguish between spoken and written language, graphic designers distinguish between verbal and pictorial language. From a design point of view, written, printed, or displayed texts or verbal graphic language are important components of visible language. However, if the linguistic representation (e.g., the medium and its content) is placed at the forefront, another approach is natural. Linguistic differentiation may be based on the form of the messages: words, sounds, images, and other forms. Thus verbal language has spoken (aural), written (visual), and tactile categories. Audial language comprises sound effects, music, and paralinguistic sounds (all aural). Visual language has symbols, pictures, and paralinguistic visual expressions (all visual). Other languages may be based on smell, on taste and on touch.

Languages differ in their ability to express concepts with precision and with flexibility. Only people who have the appropriate knowledge can understand a language. Physics, chemistry, and mathematics, for example, employ non-ambiguous symbol and equation languages. Normal prose is often open to multiple interpretations, i.e., it is ambiguous. Fiction and poetry in particular offer abundant opportunities for individual interpretations. Pictures are normally ambiguous too.

Some Properties of Verbal Language

Verbal languages have digital coding[1] using combinations of letters (including numerals) to represent content. There is no direct correspondence between groups of letters, words, and reality. Each meaning is defined and must be learned. The properties of letters are limited. A letter has a given position in an alphabet. It has a name. It is represented by one or more sounds and is used in a specific context. Verbal languages have varying levels of meaning[2]: (i) phonemes (without meaning), (ii) morphemes (with meaning), (iii) syntagms, sub-meanings, and (iv) complete meanings.

Semantic codes, grammar, and syntax must be exactly defined[3]. A written text works well when the content of the message is analytical, detailed, logical, narrative, theoretical, and sequential[4]. The text can describe facts as well as feelings as long as the language is comprehensible for the intended audience. People usually have no difficulty in reading the jargon used in professional or technical languages but understanding the concepts that the words represent may be difficult for a non-specialist[5]. The more abstract a word is the harder it is to relate it to any specific activity. The use of visuals does not always automatically improve the achievements of the learners. For some objectives text is enough[6].

Some Properties of Visual Language

Visual languages have analogue coding employing combinations of basic graphic elements (dots, lines, areas, and volumes). A given set of basic elements can be combined to form completely different images. Visual languages attempt equivalence with reality. Visuals are iconic and normally resemble the thing they represent. Meaning is apparent on a basic level, but the visual language must be learned for true comprehension. Visual messages are superior to verbal messages when content is emotional, holistic, immediate, spatial and visual[7]. Images and visual language speak directly to us in the same way experience speaks to us: holistically and emotionally[8]. Factors in visual language are

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[1] Elkind, 1975

[2] Eco, 1971

[3] Chomsky, 1959

[4] Melin, 1986a

[5] Melin, 1986b

[6] Dwyer, 1972

[7] Lent, 1980; Zimmermann and Perkin, 1982; Colle and Glass, 1986; Van Aswegen and Steyn, 1987; Boeren, 1994; Brouwer, 1995; and Hugo, 1996

[8] Barry, 1998

related to criteria such as the content and execution of a visual, its context and format, and the subsequent perception, learning, and memory. Content is more important than execution, context, and format. Pictures have a strong emotional impact.

The effectiveness of a visual depends on the medium, on the type of information, and also on the amount of time learners are permitted to interact with the material[1]. All types of visuals are not equally effective. Line drawings are most effective in formats where the learner's study time is limited. More realistic versions of artwork, however, may be more effective in formats where unlimited study time is allowed. The realism continuum is not an effective predictor of learning efficiency for all types of educational objectives. An increase in the amount of realistic detail will not produce a corresponding increase in learning. No pictorial image gains the status of a "statement", unless an explicit reference is made to what it is supposed to represent[2].

Some Properties of Combined Verbal and Visual Language

Texts and pictures represent completely different languages that complement each other when they are used at the same time[3]. Both text and images can be designed, presented, perceived and interpreted in many different ways. The possibilities for using typography and layout, and for combining texts and pictures are virtually unlimited. The interplay between text, picture, and graphic form needs to be studied thoroughly before optimal combinations can be found. There are always several opportunities to convey a message.

Readers often react in a positive way to graphically complex texts. Texts with good typography will be noticed[4]. Dissatisfaction with the execution of a message may cause dissatisfaction with the content of the message. It is more likely that graphically complex texts will be read than "plain" texts. It also takes less time to read a graphically complex text than a "plain" text.

Pictures that will be used for information purposes should always be supplied with legends. This is the only way to assure that information conveyed by these pictures is clear and unambiguous. Even simple pictures need plain legends for the contents and presentation to be conveyable in verbal form. Legends should be written with great care. They heavily influence our interpretation of image content. To a large degree readers see what they are

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[1] Dwyer, 1972
[2] Gombrich, 1969
[3] Pettersson, 1985; Melin, 1999b
[4] Melin, 1999

told to see in an image. To get maximum impact from a visual, the writer or the presenter should introduce the visuals before presenting it. We create a "pre-understanding" of how a picture may be interpreted, based on the context in which the picture is shown[1].

Despite all efforts during the past decades visual literacy has not been able to attract enough interest from society and enough interest from those responsible for the school curricula around the world. An important reason for this may be a general lack of focus. In my view we need to consider combined verbal and visual representations, not only text and not only visuals when we study communication and communication related issues. This is where message design, and its different sub-areas, may play an important role for visual literacists.

Some Properties of Colour as Language

Colour is regularly used in printed materials, not only in illustrations, but also in the text itself. Colour can be used to clarify the structure of the text and to make learning easier. Certain parts of the text may be printed with colours or printed on top of backgrounds in different colours. Black type has good contrast to many light background colours. The legibility will always be affected when there is insufficient contrast between the type and the background.

There are many situations where colour and typographic elements can be used for decoration. However, a decorative use of colour or typography should never be mixed with an intended use to provide a clear structure, simplicity and hierarchy. It must always be clear, and easy to understand for the receiver when colour and typography is used for decoration and when the use is meant to have some cognitive importance. There are strong cultural differences in interpreting the meanings of colour.

Colour blindness, or better still "anomalies of colour vision", is a condition in which certain colour distinctions cannot be made. Anomalies of colour vision is much more commonly observed among men than among women, with estimates ranging as high as 10% of the male population[2]. Only 1% of the female population has anomalous colour vision. The failure to distinguish between red and green is most common. Both hues are perceived as grey. Common colours in graphic symbols are pure yellow, red, blue, green, white and black, or combinations of these. Unfortunately, red and green are often used as

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[1] Pettersson, 1989
[2] Hartley, 1987; Ware, 2004

discriminating colours in symbols and in warning signs. Since many colour-blind people perceive red and green as grey, colour can only be used to code the information redundantly. Colour may be combined with shape, and position, or with both, which is often seen in traffic signs.

Some Properties of Symbols as Language

In his discussion on "*Presentation media for product interaction*" Westendorp[1] noted that *instructive elements* in or near a drawing have evolved rapidly into a special "instructive language." Instructive elements: "are purely symbolic: there are no physical hands, reference letters, numbers and lines, arrows, crosses, dotted lines, exclamation marks, circles, zoom-lines or greyed-out or colored areas on the products." Apart from arrows, lines and pointing hands most instructive elements were introduced after World War II. Some instructive elements are "statements" comparable with individual words[2] or even sentences. A good symbol is designed so it can be used in many different situations and in many contexts[3]. A good symbol is simple, clear, has optimal size, good contrast in form, dimension, and colour. There are, however, cultural as well as individual differences in interpreting the meanings of symbols.

Graphical symbols may be intended to convey generalities of the same order of abstractness as verbal terms. In some cases we can see graphical symbols as visual terms. Graphical symbols may be used to create an overview, identify information, illustrate position, illustrate size relationships, navigate in databases, provide a holistic perspective, recognize information, and represent an organization, a service, or a product. Graphical symbols may supply information and supply instructions.

[1] Westendorp, 2002, p. 48
[2] Westendorp and Van der Vaarde, 2001; Pettersson, 1999
[3] Pettersson, 1999

Functional Principles

The design process is influenced by message design principles, and is performed with message design tools suitable for the type of representation that is selected during an early phase of the work (Figure 7). These principles can be seen as a set of guidelines for design of information and learning materials.
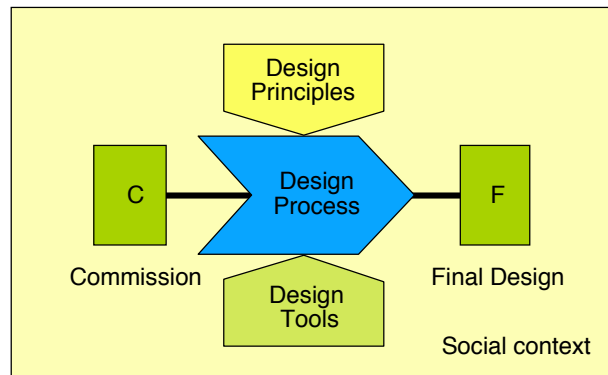
Figure 7. Design processes are guided by design principles and performed with the help of design tools and always influenced by the social context.

This chapter includes a discussion on six "functional design principles." These principles are called: *Defining the Problem, Providing Structure, Providing Clarity, Providing Simplicity, Providing Emphasis,* and *Providing Unity.* Guidelines that are based on these principles will assist the information designer to design information materials that are well suited for the intended receivers.

Defining the Problem

During an introductory analysis and planning phase (Figure 4) it is possible to organize the work, analyse the sender, analyse the intended receiver, analyse the intended message, and select a suitable medium. The message and the medium form the representation (Figure 8).
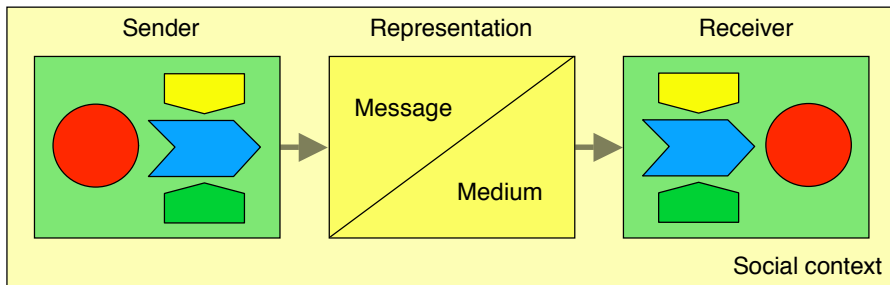
Figure 8. Several activities are involved when an intended message (left circle) is communicated from a sender to a receiver, and received as an internalized message (right circle). These processes are guided by principles (upper pentagons), performed with the help of tools (lower pentagons) and influenced by the social context.

The Sender

A "sender" may be anyone who wants to convey a message to one or more receivers. Sometimes the sender will design messages and develop one or more information materials. However, quite often these tasks are entrusted and left to other people who may be more qualified. The first parts may be left to an information designer, who needs to:

- Define what the sender wants to achieve.
- Decide when this is to happen.
- Find out about the project budget, as well as all other requirements.

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Within an organization it is usually necessary for the sender to employ a total view of information and communication. Information should be related to the overall activity goals for the organization. Various messages in different media should be designed to work together.

The Representation

A representation is a medium with a specific message (Figure 8). In this document the term "information material" is frequently used for pamphlets, posters, and reports, just to mention a few examples. Sometimes a representation is called "information set," or "learning material," or simply "material." Based on how verbal information is presented to the receivers, there are three main types of representations[1].

– We read the printed words in lexi-visual representations, such as messages printed in a book, or messages displayed on a computer screen.
– We listen to the spoken words in audio-visual representations, such as oral presentations with slides or overhead transparencies, and in television programmes.
– We read printed words and listen to spoken words in a combination of lexi-visual and audio-visual representations in multi-visual representations, such as interactive multimedia systems.

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Together with the medium the message is the link between the sender or the designer and the intended receiver. The sender designs the message and sends it off, or makes it available. The receiver receives the message, and may try to interpret and understand it.

The systems of rules that govern spoken and written languages are similar in many ways. In contrast to spoken and written languages, pictures have no general and distinguishing elements that are not bearers of information. Visual languages attempt equivalence with reality. They are iconic and normally resemble the things they represent. Language and cultural differences could impact the effectiveness of visuals[2]. Therefore it is important to select pictures with great care.

The Message

In information design the main objective is to provide information materials, including the intended messages, needed by the receivers in order to perform specific tasks (Figure 8). The receivers may be seen as "doers." They may develop new skills, understanding and experience. Therefore the information designer must:

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[1] Pettersson, 1993
[2] Kovalik, 2004

- Define the purpose and the objective of the message, always keeping the intended receivers in mind.
- Collect and review necessary facts for later use in the design process.
- Consider the use of words, images, and graphic form.

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It is important to define the purpose and the objective of the message, always keeping the intended receivers in mind[1]. However, old traditions may be hard to change. In the 1970s many researchers showed that media provided clear messages about specific gender roles. This is in fact often still the case[2]. Contents in basic textbooks in the United States still show traditional gender roles regardless of the major changes that have appeared in public opinion.

The effectiveness of a message depends on the medium, on the type of information content, and also on the amount of time that receivers are permitted to interact with the information material. There are always several opportunities to convey a message. Marsh[3] provided the following eight guidelines for selecting a visual channel for a message:

1. When messages are complex.
2. When referability is important.
3. When messages are long.
4. When environment is noisy.
5. When arrangement is complicated.
6. When precise spatial discrimination is important.
7. When simultaneous presentation is desired.
8. When more dimensions are required.

Most people believe that pictures tell the truth[4]. At the same time familiarity with the depicted objects themselves is basic and crucial to understanding[5]. The more familiar a message is to its intended audience, the more readily it is perceived.

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[1] Briggs and Wager, 1989; Fleming and Levie, 1993; Pettersson, 1993; Wileman, 1993; Pettersson, 2002; Lohr, 2003; Smith and Ragan, 2005; Lipton, 2007
[2] Hunter and Chick, 2005; Sosa and Kong, 2006
[3] Marsh 1983, p. 101
[4] Lefferts, 1982
[5] Zimmermann and Perkin, 1982

The Medium

Each medium has its own particular advantages and disadvantages. Audio, text, and visuals compete for our attention. It is always important to select the most suitable medium to carry the intended message. Therefore the information designer will have to:

• Select the most suitable medium for the message.
• Produce synopsis for text, pictures, and sound.
• Adopt the graphic design to the medium.

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For many years the media situation was very stable, only expanding a little each year. In the 1950s we had live media, sound media, film media, broadcast media, models and exhibitions, graphical media and telecommunications media. In the 1970s video developed into a competitive medium. At the same time the classical "borders" between the media groups began to dissolve. In the 1980s several new technologies, most based on computers, and completely new media began developing.

In the 1960s Marshall McLuhan coined the expression "The Medium is the Message." This expression has given rise to considerable confusion. Now it is often said "The Message is the Medium." Technology is the servant, and the message, the idea, is the master. However, the medium is not the message. A medium is an aid used in the transfer of information from a sender to a receiver (Figure 8). The term aid is used here as a collective designation for the channel, or information carrier, and the processor/equipment required for encoding and decoding of the information.

The Receivers

The smaller a group of receivers is, the greater our ability is to describe it in a reasonable fashion. More individual characteristics are manifested in large groups. The more information we have on a particular group, the greater our ability is to address this group in such a way that our messages are understood. There are literally many thousands of possible groups of receivers. Therefore it is important for the information designer to:

- Carefully define the group of intended receivers.
- Collect data about age, culture, gender, and socio-economic factors.
- When possible, consider any feedback that may be expressed by any previous receivers.

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The intended receivers of a message are sometimes referred to as "audiences," "information interpreters," or "demographic groups," sometimes as "target groups," or "target populations," and sometimes as "users" (Figure 8). In extreme instances, some intended groups of receivers only consist of one or two individuals. Other groups, like a "general audience," may at the same time include millions of people. However, most target groups are somewhere in between these extremes, but certainly a lot closer to the lower end of the continuum.

Receiver processes include search and selection of information, and mental processing of information. Principles related to receiver processes include attention, perception, learning, and memory. In perceiving a message the receiver uses sensory organs and the nervous system. When a message is internalized the receiver has got new emotions, new experiences, new feelings, and new knowledge. Often individuals will interpret the same representation in different ways. Here age and gender, cultural, economic, historical, political, religious, and social factors may be important. The internalized message will influence the interpretation and understanding of future and related messages. Tools related to receiver processes include catalogues, directories, databases, indexes, and libraries of different kinds.

The Context

Factors inside the medium provide the inner context. In a book it is the relationships between illustrations, headings, tables, texts and other elements of graphic design. Movies and television programs have images, music, sound effects, speech, and maybe texts. The information designer will have to:

• Define the internal context of the message.
• Define the external contexts of the message.
• Define how the context may influence the interpretation of the message.

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When we view a film or a television program our attention is either on the image or on the sound. This is even more obvious when we look at a multi-image slide and film presentation. As soon as the film starts, our attention is directed towards the movement in the film from the surrounding stills. It is impossible for viewers not to be influenced by the film and the moving images. Some computer programs contain advanced animations with interaction between text, images, and even sound. The inner context is an internal context.

When we read a book or view projected images the lighting in the room may exemplify the close context. The entire communication situation, i.e., the senders and the intentions of the message, the receivers and their circumstances all provide the social context. Each context will influence the interpretation of the message. The close context and the social context are both external contexts.

When students work together on assignments they take part in a cooperative learning process[1]. Other students, teachers, the actual building, books, libraries et cetera all provide important parts of the close context which is important for efficient learning. It was found that learners construct understanding by collaborating with classmates and interacting with the various tools, visuals, and information provided within a virtual reality environment[2].

[1] Kristiansen et al., 1994
[2] Donaldson and Acheson, 2006

Providing Structure

At the beginning of a book the list of contents provides the reader with an easy overview of the different parts of the book. The author develops the structure of the book. Later the editor, or the graphic designer, makes the structure clearly visible for the reader using typography and layout with distinct types of headings for each level. A clear and obvious structure will facilitate perception, interpretation, understanding, learning and memory of the information content. Therefore the information designer will have to:

- Develop a clear structure for the content.
- Limit the number of levels in the structure.
- Show the hierarchy and structure of the content in the graphic design.

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Writing processes. The physical act of writing or drawing one's thoughts with the help of a pen and paper, or a keyboard, or a mouse and a computer, does not usually require a great deal of time. It may take more time to work out how the content of the message may be divided between verbal and visual representations than to actually formulate the contents. Writing processes are relatively independent of the language used.

Message contents. Before we can design information material it is important to decide which area and which sub-areas as well as which kind of relationships we wish to describe for the intended audience. Verbal messages work well when the content of the message is analytical, detailed, logical, narrative, theoretical, and sequential. Visual messages are preferred when content is emotional, holistic, immediate, spatial and visual. For complex messages combined verbal and visual representations may be the best choice.

Structure. It is important to arrange information from the most important to the least important[1]. The information designer should limit the content and elements in the design to what your audience needs and group related information to show that it is related. Elements should be aligned with others to help the audience navigate through them.

Level of detail. Subject matter experts often spend far too much time and effort describing very small, and for them, "interesting" details because they happen to have easy access to information about these details. However, these details

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[1] Lipton, 2007

may be of no interest at all to the audience. Before starting to draw or write, it is important to decide which level of detail we need to work on. It is often quite important to avoid too many details.

Number of levels. Readers have difficulty understanding the organisation and structure of text when there are more than three or four levels[1]. However, in scientific and technical documentation more levels may often be required.

Typographic variation. Layout and typographic variation provides a large number of possibilities to make the structure clear[2]. The graphical form should help the reader to benefit from the contents of a document. To this end, we can easily clarify the structure of a document with a distinct table of contents and explicit headings, shown in differentiated, consistent, and well-thought-out typography. Headings, introductions, the main body of the text, and picture captions should be presented in a *consistent way* throughout the entire document. The same applies to series of related documents. On the other hand, different types of documents can be rendered in different graphical forms. It is an advantage to the reader to be able to recognize different kinds of documents on sight, for example, a factual study book, a yearbook, a glossary, an encyclopaedia, or an instructor's guide, on the basis of the different graphical forms. Graphical form must be adapted to the various needs and special requirements of each type of document.

Colour. Colour can be used to clarify the structure of a text. Certain parts of the text may be printed with colours or printed on top of backgrounds in different colours[3]. The use of colour should be *consistent*.

Headings. Headings should be used to make the subject matter readily apparent, and indicate the relative importance of different items in the document[4]. Space and the actual placement of a heading should be used to enhance the hierarchic structure[5]. Headings in different type versions aid comprehension of the text content[6].

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[1] Three or fewer levels (Lang, 1987; Miles, 1987). No more than four levels (Misanchuk, 1992).

[2] Tinker, 1963, 1965; Benson, 1985

[3] Pettersson, 1989, 1993

[4] Jonassen, 1982; Mayer, 1993; Cisotto and Boscolo, 1995

[5] Jonassen, 1982

[6] Jonassen; 1982; Mayer, 1993

Providing Clarity

The *legibility of a graphical message* is determined by the technical design of texts and pictures, that is, their *clarity*. The information designer will have to make the content stand out clearly from the background. In general information materials should be as clear, simple, unambiguous and transparent as possible. We should avoid unusual typefaces, as well as fonts that are too small or too large. We read words in a text as "pictures", not letter by letter. Typeface and font size must be adapted to meet the limitations of the medium and technical production. A message has good legibility if it is easy to read, and if the reader can easily see and distinguish all different parts of the message. Legibility can be measured rather objectively and its quality is assessable whether we understand the content of the message or not. Dissatisfaction with the execution of a message may also cause dissatisfaction with the content of the message. Therefore the information designer has to consider the legibility of text printed on paper, displayed and projected on screens, as well as legibility of pictures, legibility of layout, legibility of symbols, legibility of numerals, and legibility of colours.

Legibility of Text

The concept "legibility of text" refers to a text's external properties[1]. These are properties such as letter size, inter-line distance, line length, the distance between letters, the number of letters per line, the distance between words, headings, the subdivision into paragraphs, headings in the margin, the layout, colour of the printing ink and paper, the paper quality, etc. These different external properties have not been found to have a drastic effect on legibility as long as the text is presented within the framework of variation normally found in contemporary books. Furthermore legibility refers to production and material quality, environmental conditions, room lighting and temperature, noise level, et cetera. Principles for legibility are presented in the following sub-sections: *Legibility of Print Media, Legibility of Text on Wall Charts, Legibility of Text on Computer Screens,* and *Legibility of Projected Texts.*

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[1] Pettersson, 1993; Williams and Tollet, 1998; Lipton, 2007

Legibility of Print Media

A printed text in books, handouts, reports and other printed documents must have good legibility. Therefore the information designer will have to:

- Use clear, direct, simple and transparent typography.
- Use a common typeface, between nine and twelve Pica points, for continuous text in a book, a pamphlet, or a report.
- Restrict the number typefaces and only use a few per information material.

Typefaces

During the little more than 500 years of western printing history, probably more than 60,000 typefaces have been designed[1]. Differences are often subtle. It is not always possible to see the differences without special training. A complete assortment of characters of the same style and size is called a "font of type." We read words in a text as patterns or even as a series of "word pictures," not letter by letter[2]. The distinctive details and the explicit forms of words may facilitate word recognition. The unique properties of each instruction should be a guide to selection of a suitable typeface[3].

Serif typefaces are often considered to be easier to read than sans serif typefaces, except for small letter sizes[4]. Baskerville, Berling, Bookman, Garamond, New Century Schoolbook, Palatino, and Times New Roman can be used successfully for the body text in books, pamphlets and reports. Modern newspaper typefaces include Gulliver, Stone, Swift, and Utopia.

Sans serif typefaces provide uniform weight when there are less-than-optimal reading conditions and are often used for headings, labels in pictures, legends and tables[5]. Helvetica typefaces may be the most widely used among the sans serif typefaces in the world today[6].

Generally speaking *common typefaces* are easier to read than uncommon ones[7]. Private documents may invite the use of ornate and stylish looking fonts[8]. Professional documents, however, require maximum legibility[9].

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[1] Mijksenaar, 1997

[2] Ingvar and Hallberg, 1989; Hallberg, 1992

[3] Black, 1990

[4] Braden, 1985; Benson, 1985. However, Williams and Tollet (1998) suggests using sans serif type to improve legibility.

[5] Benson, 1985; Pettersson, 1993; Lipton, 2007

[6] Collier and Cotton, 1989;

[7] Paterson and Tinker, 1932; Tinker, 1963, 1965; Benson, 1985

[8] Lenze, 1991

[9] Benson, 1985

Type Size

Running text in a book, a pamphlet and a report that should be read in a continuous manner should be set between nine and twelve Pica points[1]Here 40–50 characters will result in a line that is 75–90 millimetre in length. The longer the line is, the larger the type size should be. The shorter the line is, the smaller the type size can be. The x-height is important. Typefaces with large x- heights manage well with smaller type sizes than typefaces with small x-heights.

Palatino 8 p
Running text in a book, a pamphlet and a report that should be read in a continuous manner should be set between nine and twelve points.

Palatino 10 p
Running text in a book, a pamphlet and a report that should be read in a continuous manner should be set between nine and twelve points.

Palatino 12
Running text in a book, a pamphlet and a report that should be read in a continuous manner should be set between nine and twelve points.

Palatino 14
Running text in a book, a pamphlet and a report that should be read in a continuous manner should be set between nine and twelve points.

Stylistic Variation of Type

With respect to width and line thickness a character can be designed in different versions. A typeface may be available as light condensed, light, light expanded, bold condensed, bold, bold expanded, regular condensed, regular, regular expanded, extra bold condensed, extra bold, and extra bold expanded. With respect to inclination a typeface may be designed in italic letter style versions. A typeface may also be available as out-lined, in-lined, and shadowed. The "visual weight" varies. It may be compared with physical weight.

Regular type is easier to read than uncommon type. Boldface or italics should normally not be used for continuous text. Italic print is read more slowly than regular type and is also disliked by many readers[2].

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[1] Braden, 1985; Benson, 1985
[2] Tinker, 1965

Make type big enough to stand out from the background and heavy enough to be visible[1]. Underlining in the middle of a sentence makes the lower line more difficult to read[2].

Regular type
A typeface is often available as regular, bold, italic, and also bold and italic.

Bold type
A typeface is often available as regular, bold, italic, and also bold and italic.

Italic type
A typeface is often available as regular, bold, italic, and also bold and italic.

Bold and italic type
A typeface is often available as regular, bold, italic, and also bold and italic.

Line Length

The length of a line will affect reading speed[3]. The longer the lines the wider the vertical space between them needs to be[4]. Readers tend to dislike both very short and very long lines. Tinker[5] made extensive studies of typography. He worked with characters in sizes of nine to twelve Pica points and recommended ten to twelve words per line. This results in a line length of eight to ten centimetres. There are, however, several other recommendations of line length. Quite often the optimum line length seems to be about 1 1/2 alphabets – 42 characters[6]. This is nine to eleven centimetres with optimum character size, ten to twelve points, at a normal reading distance. A text column may be widened up to 120–130 millimetres to accommodate more text, and still be easy to read for an experienced reader. It is quite clear that too wide lines impair reading. In my opinion the maximum line should not have much more than 60–70 characters. This is except for books intended for highly skilled readers. The optimum line length should be found for each individual purpose and each audience.

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[1] Lipton, 2007

[2] Isaacs, 1987

[3] Duchnicky and Kolers, 1983

[4] Waller, 1987

[5] Tinker, 1963

[6] Pettersson, 1989; Walker, 1990. Other suggestions: 35–40 characters (West, 1987), 40–50 characters (Lipton, 2007), 50 characters (Parker, 1988), up to 60 characters (Zwaga, Boersma and Hoonhout, 1999), 60–65 characters (Miles, 1987).

Costs often force people to use more characters on each line, so that the total number of pages can be reduced.

Too short lines	**S**hort lines	**Optimum line length**
The length of a line will affect reading speed. Readers tend to dislike both very short and very long lines. Quite often the optimum line length seems to be about 1 1/2 alphabets – 42 characters.	The length of a line will affect reading speed. Readers tend to dislike both very short and very long lines. Quite often the optimum line length seems to be about 1 1/2 alphabets – 42 characters	The length of a line will affect reading speed. Readers tend to dislike both very short and very long lines. Quite often the optimum line length seems to be about 1 1/2 alphabets – 42 characters.

Justified or Unjustified Text?

A text may be justified or unjustified. An unjustified text may be flushed left, centre justified or flushed right. There are some advantages and some disadvantages with each system. A number of authors argue that *justified text* is aesthetically pleasing and that it is easier for people to read lines of the same length than reading lines with markedly varying right-hand ends[1]. Readers may even feel that ragged right-hand lines in flushed left text make an ugly and repulsive text column. If justified text is set in lines too short, there will be "rivers of space" between words, or characters spaced out to fill the lines.

At the same time other authors argue that *flushed left text* is a much better choice[2]. The exact spacing between letters and between all the words in unjustified text retains the optimal spacing between letters and between words and so keeps the visual rhythm constant. This aids reading, especially for young, inexperienced and poor readers[3]. Results from reading experiments of justified

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[1] Lang, 1987; Lichty, 1994
[2] Hartley, 1994; Misanchuk, 1992
[3] Zachrisson, 1965; Gregory and Poulton, 1970

and unjustified texts indicated a significant increase in reading time for the groups that read justified texts. There were, however, no differences in comprehension[1]. Whether a text is justified or unjustified causes no significant difference in search time and comprehension of the information content for advanced readers[2]. Until recently most publishers regarded the use of anything other than justified text as unprofessional. Today, however, unjustified text is commonly used for running text in books, magazines, reports, and in some newspapers.

Justified text
A text may be justified or unjustified. An unjustified text may be flushed left, centre justified or flushed right. There are some advantages and some disadvantages with each system.

Centre justified text
A text may be justified or unjustified. An unjustified text may be flushed left, centre justified or flushed right. There are some advantages and some disadvantages with each system.

Flushed left text
A text may be justified or unjustified. An unjustified text may be flushed left, centre justified or flushed right. There are some advantages and some disadvantages with each system.

Flushed right text
A text may be justified or unjustified. An unjustified text may be flushed left, centre justified or flushed right. There are some advantages and some disadvantages with each system.

Centre justified texts are often used for menus, quite often used for poetry, and it is sometimes used for short legends. Centre justified texts are also used for tables of contents. In films and in television programs the participants are usually listed centre justified.

Flushed right texts can be used for legends that are positioned to the left of the pictures, and for tables of contents. This is, however, only possible when the line length is short. Regardless of justification system the ends of sentences should be determined by syntax rather than by an idea of a set width of line[3].

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[1] Trollip and Sales, 1986
[2] Hartley, 1987
[3] Hartley, 1980; Bork, 1982

Interline Distance

The interline distance, interline spacing, line space, or vertical spacing is the vertical distance between the baselines in a text. A 10-point text may be set on a 12-point line in Times. This is written as 10/12, and read as "ten on twelve." The term "leading" refer to the extra space between the lines, the "line–to–line" spacing. In this example the interline distance is 12 points, and thus the leading is two points. Leading is important for legibility. The longer the lines, the larger the vertical distance should be. The reader needs to be able to find the start of the next line without any trouble. In general, the opinion is that as the line length increases, the need for more leading and larger type increases[1].

Text leading should be open enough so the readers don't lose their place, straying into lines above or below them while trying to focus on one. For maximum legibility[2] of the running text in a book a leading should be between one to three points when text size and line length are optimal. Texts on wall charts and overhead transparencies need more space between the lines. Children and inexperienced readers need more leading than experienced readers. Typefaces with small x- heights manage well with less leading than typefaces with large x-heights. Generally speaking, one can use the type size plus 15–30% to determine this ratio.

Spacing

Space between words and between letters varies in each line. First the computer system adds "word spacing" and then, if the space between words becomes too excessive, the system will add "letter spacing." The distance between words shall be smaller than the distance between lines, and larger than the distance between characters. Space between elements should be used as a legibility tool[3]. Space between letters in text should not be too loose, or too tight. When a capital A and a capital V are set together there is too much space between the letters. With *kerning* selected pairs of letters can be pushed together and overlap to create a better optical visual spacing between the letters. Kerning is important for headings in books, handouts, pamphlets, reports and other printed documents, and also for texts on OH transparencies and wall charts. It isn't worthwhile kerning any type under 18 points[4].

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[1] Pettersson, 1989; Misanchuk, 1992; Lipton, 2007

[2] Tinker, 1963; Benson, 1985; Hartley, 1987; Kleper, 1987; Lichty, 1989; Pettersson, 1989, Lipton, 2007, p. 124

[3] Lipton, 2007, p. 122

[4] Hewson, 1988

Legibility of Text on Wall Charts

A wall chart must have good legibility. The information designer should:

- Set text bold and large enough, adjusted to the reading distance.
- Use lower case letters and avoid all-capital printing for running text.
- Restrict the number typefaces.

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Posters and wall charts shall be read from some distance. Therefore text should be large enough[1], and bold enough[2]. Too small or too large lettering will impair reading. The text on a poster or a wall chart may often have to be ten times larger in size than a text in a book or on a print out. Text should be set in lower case letters, because all-capital printing has been shown to markedly reduce the speed of reading[3]. Since the texts on posters and wall charts should be short it may be a good idea to use a sans serif typeface like Arial or Helvetica. If so the running text will need some extra space between the lines[4].

Legibility of Text on Screens

Compared with traditional graphic presentations, a presentation of information on visual displays such as television sets and computer terminals is very limited. Still, information may be presented in many different ways. The design may vary with respect to spatial organization like directive cues, colours, columns, headings, justification, lines, scrolling text, spacing, and twinkling characters or words. A text on a computer screen must have good legibility. The information designer should:

- Use typefaces designed for screen display.
- Use black text on a white or yellow background.
- Avoid the use of all capital letters.

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The quality of visual displays is important for our perception. Colour as well as blank space are essentially free and might be used to increase legibility. Experiments with 11,000 judgments of perceived reading efforts of text on visual

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[1] Ormrod, 1989; Pettersson, 1993; Wileman, 1993

[2] Mayer, 1993; Pettersson, 1993; Wileman, 1993, p. 79

[3] Poulton and Brown, 1968; Henney, 1981

[4] Collier and Cotton, 1989

displays[1] showed that colours presented on colour displays are ranked in the same order as surface colours in traditional print media. Blue was most popular. The best combination is black text on a white or yellow background. Black was also the best background colour, because it has good contrast to most text colours. However, the background colour of a computer screen should be "fairly light" or "fairly dark," depending on the content[2]. The text displayed on a screen should have an opposite ("fairly dark" or "fairly light") colour.

The most important consideration when working with typography and colour for computer screens is to achieve an appropriate contrast between text and its background[3]. They wrote: "It has long been considered that black type on a white background is the most legible (combination). While this combination remains an excellent choice, other alternatives may offer equal if not improved legibility due to improved digital and printing technologies, and the fact that colour is a relative phenomenon. ... Generally, all legibility guidelines related to working with colour and type in print apply also to type appearing on a computer screen." It is also important to use typefaces specially designed for screen display, such as Trebuchet and Verdana[4].

Subjects generally prefer reading text on paper to reading electronic text on a screen[5]. In one experiment proofreading of text from print on paper was 20-30% faster than proofreading from computer screens[6]. Subjects dislike fast scrolling text on computer screens[7]. For maximum legibility on a computer screen double spaces should be used between lines in a continuous text[8]. Blinking and flashing text can be used as an accenting[9].

Legibility of Projected Texts

In verbal presentations, many of the overhead transparencies, slides, filmstrips, and projected computer presentations consist mainly, or sometimes only of text. Here lettering must be considered carefully in order to guarantee good legibility for all listeners. In preparing the material the information designer should:

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[1] Pettersson et al., 1984a

[2] Bradshaw, 2000

[3] Carter, Day and Meggs, 2007, p. 80

[4] Hoffman, White and Aquino, 2005

[5] Wright and Lickorish, 1983; Dillon and McKnight, 1990

[6] Gould and Grischkowsky, 1984

[7] Kolers, Duchnicky and Ferguson, 1981; Burg et al., 1982

[8] Kolers, Duchnicky and Fergusson, 1981; Grabinger, 1989

[9] Rambally and Rambally, 1987

- Use no more than six rows of six words in each image, set in a linear type-face, with characters large and bold enough.
- Maintain a good contrast between foreground and background.
- Avoid graduated and tonal background fills.

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Before the presentation the presenter will need to reduce room illumination and clean slides, lenses, and screens. During the presentation it is important to really project the images in focus and on the screen, preferably horizontally.

Legibility of Pictures

Pictures must have good legibility in all kinds of information and learning materials. The information designer should:

- Use picture elements that are bold and large enough.
- Use a style guide for picture elements in schematic pictures.
- Set words in images and pictures bold and large enough to read.

- – <o> – -

A "good" visual has a high level of picture quality. It is well worth reading and is executed so as to be legible and readable and be displayed in an optimum context in an appropriate format. The visual should convey information without ambiguity. It should be stylish and attractive, and is often, but not necessarily, also aesthetically pleasing. A schematic drawing has good legibility if it is easy to read, from the viewpoint that the reader should easily be able to see and distinguish all the different parts of the schematic picture.

A "poor" visual has a low level of picture quality. It displays poor legibility and poor reading value. It conveys information poorly, is seldom aesthetically pleasing, and often ambiguous. Graphics and schematic pictures can help readers see and comprehend complex patterns[1]. All kinds of visuals should contain essential information and have a good contrast between figure and ground.

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[1] Horton, 1991

Legibility of Layout

An "informative layout" must have good legibility. Therefore the information designer should:

- Use standard page sizes with standard grids for pre-planning of pages.
- Use a clear and simple layout.
- Use arrows, bullets, lines, and symbols in various colours; also margin notes, repetition, and space to highlight relevant information.

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The purpose of work with graphic design is to find a suitable presentation for the content with respect to the receiver, the subject matter, the medium, and the financial situation. A layout is the result of work with graphic design. Within a given area, such as a page in a book, a poster, a label, a computer screen, or a projected image the designer may alter the design of headings, margins, ornaments, pictures, space, symbols, and text. Deliberate typographic variation is used to present the content in the text in a clear way.

The observations on which the "Gestalt theory" is based form a basic part of the graphic designer's craft knowledge[1]. These principles might be seen as relatively inflexible "perceptual rules" that act as a fundamental constraint for the typographer alongside such conventional rules as the left-to-right direction of the writing system.

The page. For reports, and similar documents, it is reasonable to use one, two, or three columns on the page[2]. In multi-columnar layouts the narrow columns should have unjustified lines[3]. In a justified text the distances between the words are too long, creating white "rivers" of space in the text columns. Consistent use of columns will help to establish a regular pattern throughout a project[4]. There are many possibilities for placement of the page numbers. They should be clear and easy to find. Usually readers are likely to look for page numbers in the margin at the bottom of the page[5]. However, this should not to be considered a rule.

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[1] Waller, 1987

[2] Hartley and Burnhill, 1977a, 1977b

[3] Davies, Barry, and Wiesenberg, 1986

[4] Lipton, 2007, p.120

[5] Lipton, 2007, p. 134

Headings. The purposes of headings are to attract the attention of the readers, make the subject matter readily apparent, and indicate the relative importance of items. Headings in large type may be printed in colour. In order to increase the contrast it is a good idea to use larger as well as bolder type when headings are printed in colour. Headings on different hierarchic levels will provide the readers with reference points and help them organize information cognitively for better retention and recall. Headings shall be placed above and close to the following text. This distance shall be smaller than the distance to the previous paragraph[1].

Legends. In information design the main function of legends (or captions as they also are called) is to help the reader select and read the intended content in the picture. We need to tell the readers what we want them to see and learn from the illustration[2]. Thus pictures in information materials should always have legends. This is the only way to assure that information conveyed by these pictures is clear and unambiguous.) Photographs nearly always need a partnership with words that will confirm, clarify and reinforce their messages[3].

Each picture should have a legend, unless two pictures or a series of pictures are closely together. A legend may be placed in many ways. The legend should always be located close to the picture. Readers usually expect to find the legends beneath the pictures. However, legends can also be placed above, to the left, or to the right, of the picture, but never inside the picture frame.

The legend and the picture should interact as parts of a whole. A legend can have a heading as an additional link between the picture and the legend. A good *legend title* provides a short summary of the combined information. The title of a legend should be short and distinct. The legend should have a different typographic size or even a different typeface so it can be easily distinguished from the main text. The legends should not be in negative form in a colour picture since the slightest misalignment in printing makes the legends extremely difficult to read. Never make the legend type larger than the main text. The title of the legend could be printed in boldface.

Space and margins. Space is an important tool in typography[4]: "It is space that separates letters from each other. It is space (with punctuation) that separates phrases, clauses and paragraphs from each other; and it is space (with head-

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[1] Pettersson, 1993; Lipton, 2007
[2] Pettersson, 1989, 1993; Winn, 1993
[3] McDougall, 1990, p. ix
[4] Hartley, 1985, p. 27

ings and sub headings) that separates subsections and chapters from one another." Consistent spacing in a document will help the readers to:

– increase the rate of reading because they are more able to see redundancies.
– access the more personally relevant pieces of information.
– see the structure of the document.

The text-face is surrounded by margins: a header (or top margin) and footer (or bottom margin), an inner and an outer (or outside) margin. They provide space for comments, headings, illustrations, page numbers and personal notes. Margins also provide space to hold a document while reading it. Headings, margins and "empty" space can be used to aid communication when used in a consistent way[1]. A general guideline may be to make all margins one inch on a standard page[2]. However, margins vary a lot. In one study of right hand pages top margins varied between 14 – 35 millimetres[3]. The variation was 6 – 53 for the right margins, 14 – 34 for the bottom margins, and 8 – 28 millimetres for the left margins. The biggest variation was almost nine times.

Legibility of Symbols

The use of symbols has a long tradition and various symbols can be used to aid communication. The information designer should:

• Use distinct colours and simple graphical elements to design symbols that will function in any size.
• Design solid figures with a distinct contrast to the background.
• Use characters and graphical elements that are bold, distinct and large enough.

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A clear and stable figure to ground articulation is essential in graphic symbols[4]. The figure ("foreground") should be organised as one unit with close boundaries, appropriate line thickness and any other graphical means that help the

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[1] Hartley and Burnhill, 1977a, 1977b
[2] Bradshaw and Johari, 2000. According to Hartley (1985, 1994), Lichty (1989, 1994), Misanchuk (1992) margins should occupy 40–50% of the page. Burns, Venit, and Hansen (1988) call for even larger margins.
[3] Ander, 2003; Bergström, 1998; Berndal and Frigyes, 1990; Bohman and Hallberg, 1985; Hellmark, 2000a, 2000b; Koblanck, 1999; Lohr, 2003; Misanchuk, 1992; Pettersson et al., 2004; and White, 1983
[4] Easterby, 1970; Dewar, 1999

visual system to organise the figure as one unit. Criteria[1] for individual symbols or sets of symbols depend on their application. It is appropriate to use silhouette (side) views of certain components such as vehicles.

Legibility distance is essential in the case of traffic signs and many building signs, but not for symbols on maps or consumer products. Black text on a yellow background is superior as compared to white on black, white on grey and black on white[2]. Complex warning messages need a combination of pictographs and words[3]. Warnings must have high contrast relative to the background[4].

Legibility of Numerical Values

Numerical data and information can be presented in tables and in graphs. A table in an information material must have good legibility. Therefore the information designer should:

Tables
- Use type between 8 and 12-point size for table cells.
- Use vertically oriented tables.
- Use rounded off numbers.

Graphs
- Compare lengths of variables to show their relationships.
- Compare areas of variables to show their parts of a whole.
- Use actual figures in graphs when accuracy is needed.

- – <o> – -

Several researchers have studied design of tables aimed for the general public and other non-professional audiences. Generally speaking type size used in tables should be between 8 and 12 points[5]. Readers prefer vertically oriented tables where it is easy to see the target entries, and then quickly find the data in the table cells to the right[6]. It is easy to compare "side by side." Horizontally oriented tables are harder to use and more difficult to understand[7]. It is com-

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[1] Dewar, 1999

[2] Waller, 2007

[3] Dewar and Arthur, 1999

[4] Barlow and Wogalter, 1991; Sanders and McGormick, 1993

[5] Tinker, 1963; Wright and Fox, 1972, p. 241.

[6] Wright, 1968; Wright and Fox, 1972; Ehrenberg, 1977

[7] Wright, 1968; Wright and Fox, 1972

plicated to compare "up and down." Tables may show the maximum of amount of information in the minimum amount of space. However, tables are not always the best way to communicate numerical data.

In *friendly graphs[1]*, words are spelled out, they run from left to right (in western societies), and data are explained. Elaborately encoded shadings, cross-hatching, and colours are avoided. Colours are easy to distinguish, type is clear and precise, and is done in upper and lower case with serifs. In *unfriendly graphs*, abbreviations abound, words run in many directions. Graphics are repellent and cryptic with obscure coding. The design is insensitive to colour-deficient viewers Red and green are used for essential contrasts, and type is clotted and in all capitals in sans serif.

Legibility of Maps

Maps must have good legibility. Therefore the information designer should:

- Use bold and distinct symbols in a consistent size.
- Restrict the number of typefaces and complexity of patterns.
- Provide distinct contrast in form and dimensions.

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A graphic language used on maps[2] consists of visual variables. The most important variables are position and place, form (of symbols), directions, colour, density or greyness, granularity or texture, and size of symbols. A variable can be a dot, a line, or an area. Discriminatory responses to map symbols[3] depend on contrast in *form, dimension,* and *colour*. The problem of discrimination is generally more critical in monochrome maps, in which only contrasts in form and dimensions are possible for lines and small symbols.

The use of colour on maps introduces a large number of variables, which may enhance contrast, and therefore extend the number of perceptual differences that can be employed in discrimination. The effect is to *aid legibility,* and therefore to increase the total range of information which the map can present. Shape and colour components are often used for designating a link or relationship between groups of messages. The recognition of geographical features is much enhanced when areas are differentiated by hue. At the same time, com-

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[1] Tufte, 1983; 1990

[2] Bertin, 1967; Baudoiun and Anker, 1984

[3] Keates, 1982

plex colour arrangements may raise problems in discrimination, so that although multi-colour maps enlarge the graphic possibilities, they also increase the probability of errors in the judgment of discrimination. The most common case of quantitative judgment on maps occurs in the use of proportional symbols, that is, point or line symbols constructed to represent specific quantities.

Legibility of Colour

Colours used in information materials must have good legibility. Therefore the information designer should:

- Use a light or a dark background colour appropriate to the content, and then use a colour with good contrast for the figure or text.
- Make sure that differences between colours are clear and obvious.
- Combine colours with shape in warning signs.

- – <o> – -

As previously colour is regularly used in printed materials, not only in illustrations, but also in the text itself. The most legible combinations of print colours are black or dark brown text on a light yellow background[1]. Black type on a white background gives the highest and most comfortable contrast for sustained reading[2]. Other combinations may attract more attention but are less legible and, thus, require larger type. The legibility will always be affected when there is insufficient contrast between the type and the background.

The background colour of a computer screen should be "fairly light" or "fairly dark," depending on the content. The text displayed on a screen should have an opposite ("fairly dark" or "fairly light") colour[3]. The most legible colour combination is black text on a white or yellow background[4].

Unfortunately, red and green are often used as discriminating colours in symbols and in warning signs. Since many colour-blind people perceive red and green as grey, colour can only be used to code the information redundantly. Colour may be combined with shape, and position, or with both, which is often seen in traffic signs.

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[1] Pettersson et al., 1984a; Pettersson, 1989

[2] Bradshaw, 2000; Lipton, 2007

[3] Bradshaw, 2000

[4] Pettersson et al., 1984a

Providing Simplicity

Readability is determined by how well the contents and the presentation of the contents are adapted to the readers. Today readability of a message involves the reader's ability to understand the style of text, the style of pictures and the style of graphical form. The choice of words, symbols, and picture elements creates the style. The readability is determined by content and formulations, and how well the language and style are adapted to the readers.

There is a close relationship between guidelines that are aimed at providing *simplicity* and guidelines that are aimed at *facilitating perception, processing and memory*. Simplicity in a message will result in easier and more efficient perception, processing and memory of that message. The information designer has to consider the readability of text, the readability of pictures, as well as the readability of graphical form. Providing simplicity in text, illustrations, and graphical form is probably one of the most important principles in information design. It should be a priority for the information designer to make use of the guidelines related to these areas.

Readability of Text

Originally the concept readability stems from education research concerned with the selection of reading material for children of different age groups[1]. Now readability[2] refers to the ease of understanding due to the construction of the text, including the length of words, sentences, paragraphs and the "style of writing." The style of text is decided by the specific choice of words, consistency, and expressions. Abstract words, jargon, long and complex sentences, passive constructions, and stilted language may obstruct reading and understanding of the text content. Furthermore readability refers to the reader's reading skill and interest and how easy it is to read long passages of text[3].

Research into readability has been directed towards finding the characteristics that make texts easy or difficult to understand. Long words and long sentences make a text difficult to read. The number of words in a sentence appears to exert the strongest effect on reading rate and reading comprehension[4].

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[1] Sevrin and Tankard, 1988, p. 70
[2] Pettersson, 1989; Lipton, 2007, p. 10
[3] Williams, 1994; Williams and Tollet, 1998, p. 214
[4] Catalano, 1990; Newell, 1990

An easily comprehensible text is characterized by short sentences, short words, and simple sentence structure. Text should be concise, consistent and precise. Other variables which affect the comprehensibility of text are the vocabulary's degree of abstraction, the number of syllables in words, the commonness of words used, the choice of subject, the subdivision into paragraphs, the prevalence of clauses, headings and sub-headings, line length, inter-line distance, illustrations, the size of letters, the relevance of the text to the reader, and the page size. Principles for readability of text are presented in the following sub-sections: *Readability of Print Media, Readability of Text on Wall Charts, Readability of Text on Screens*, and *Readability of Projected Texts.*

Readability of Print Media

Texts for information materials must have good readability. Language as well as the style should be correct to avoid distracting the readers. The information designer will have to:

- Use an active voice and avoid too many details.
- Use a style guide and make the message comprehensible for the intended receivers.
- Make an overall check of language, writing style and terminology before the script can be confirmed as an original.

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Active, affirmative, clear, declarative, essential and short words in simple, short and precise sentences are the most readable[1]. People may avoid materials that they find difficult and pompous. Readers prefer small text paragraphs to big ones. Often it is quite easy to divide the text in hierarchic and natural parts, portions, or sections. Natural breaks emphasized by typography are helpful. Providing "white space" between portions of the text provides cues to the learners that a new section or a new type of activity follows. The end of a sentence should be determined by syntax rather than by a set width of a line[2].

There are a large number of style guides and publication manuals available. Usually such documents outline standards for design and writing for a specific publication or organization. For example all *journalists* working at *The Economist* are given a stylebook. A condensed version is available on the Internet. Many *editors* may use other well-known style guides like *The Elements of*

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[1] Klare, 1985; Lipton, 2007
[2] Hartley, 1980; Bork, 1982

Style, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *Fowler's Modern English Usage*[1]. *The Chicago Manual of Style Online* is an online style guide. *Technical writers* have several sources for good advice[2]. Like language itself, many style guides change with time. Therefore they are updated on a regular basis. *Researchers* in human centred areas of research may consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*[3] for valuable advice when they want to publish their results in academic journals and conference proceedings.

All those who want to make a contribution to *Wikipedia*, a free online encyclopaedia, can find advice in the *Manual of Style,* a style guide that aims to make the encyclopaedia easy to read, write, and to understand[4]. There is probably a suitable style guide available for everyone. However, it should be noted that there are some style guides that focus on clarity and legibility with guidelines on typography and layout rather than on readability. Furthermore web site style guides focus on a publication's visual and technical aspects, best usage, grammar, prose style, punctuation, and spelling.

When we design information and learning materials, it is very important that the materials are reviewed and approved by people with expert knowledge in the appropriate fields. The effort put into training and learning may actually give a negative result, and the learner may end up less competent than before the learning experience. This may happen when he or she uses information and learning materials that has poor readability of text and pictures, and therefore is hard to understand.

The structure of text should be as clear as possible. Structure can be divided into internal and external textual structure. Internal structure is built into the text itself. External textual structure relates to the embedded strategies, which focus a learner's attention on particular parts of the text[5]. In many scientific and technical reports it is a good idea to put series items in bulleted lists rather than in paragraphs.

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[1] *The Economist* (The Economist, 2003), *The Elements of Style* (Strunk and White 2000), *The Chicago Manual of Style* (2003), *Fowler's Modern English Usage* (2004)
[2] Kirkman; 2003, 2005; Klare, 1985; and Young, 1989
[3] American Psychological Association (2001)
[4] Wikipedia (2007)
[5] Jonassen and Kirschener, 1982

Readability of Text on Wall Charts

A wall chart must have good readability. The information designer should:

- Edit the text into sections that are easily read.
- Check the spelling!
- Use headings and other text elements in a consistent way.

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General design rules should be employed also in the design of text on wall charts. These guidelines are similar to those for readability of text on screens and readability of projected texts. Wall charts used to be a fine complement to textbooks. During the 20th century filmstrips, slides, overhead transparencies superseded wall charts. Later computer assisted presentations superseded these AV-media. Compared with traditional graphic presentations, a presentation of information on wall charts is very limited. Usually people are not willing to read long text passages.

Readability of Text on Screens

For graphic presentations on visual displays such as television sets and computer terminals the information designer should:

- Display data so that it is easy to read.
- Recognize cultural differences.
- Use a "normal" combination of upper and lower case letters..

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General design rules should be employed also in the design of text on screen displays. These guidelines are similar to those for readability of text on wall charts and readability of projected texts. Design may vary with respect to headings, length of lines, justification, spacing and number of columns. Colour as well as blank space on a visual display are essentially free and might be used to increase legibility and readability. All capital letters, *caps*, are harder to read than a "normal" combination of upper and lower case letters[1]. Words become difficult to read which will reduce the speed of reading.

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[1] Tinker, 1965; Kinney and Showman, 1967; Poulton and Brown, 1968; Henney, 1981

Readability of Projected Texts

In verbal presentations, many of the overhead transparencies, slides, filmstrips, and projected computer presentations consist mainly, or sometimes only of text. In preparing the material the information designer should:

- Consider the use of lists.
- Be careful in the use of acronyms.
- Restrict stylized and fancy typefaces to opening frames.

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General design rules should be employed also in the design of projected texts. These guidelines are similar to those for readability of text on wall charts and readability of text on screens. We should not display frames longer than it takes to explain the contents. Always restrict the number of words. Text transparencies are useful for the speaker but may be very boring to the audience. It is also very boring when there simply are too many spelling mistakes. Check the spelling once more. It is a good idea to put the necessary identifications data on each transparency, each slide and each computer file.

Readability of Pictures

Pictures in information and learning materials must have good readability. Therefore the information designer should:

- Write legends to explain pictures.
- Choose illustrations carefully and use visual sequencing techniques to present complex ideas.
- Leave out needless pictures and picture elements and avoid excessive image detail.

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The *style of illustration* is decided by the specific choice of drawings, photographs, schematic pictures, and other kinds of pictures, as well as consistency, expressions, picture elements, and symbols. Images can be readable in the sense that they inspire cognitive and affective processing. A drawing style that includes many different kinds of lines, patterns, shadings, and inconsistent use of symbols may obstruct the reading and understanding of the picture content. A schematic picture has good readability when it is easy for the reader to understand the message. Readability of pictures is governed by the functional

properties of picture variables. *Instructional illustrations* have good readability[1] when the subject matter and pictorial conventions are familiar to the audience and depicted in a realistic manner in illustrations lacking excessive image detail that may distract from the main message.

Depiction of contents. An analysis of a photographic portrayal can identify positive and negative depictions of individuals seen in the photographs[2]. Individuals are viewed more positively when they are shown walking, running or moving than just sitting or standing[3]. Visuals with varied degrees of realistic detail can be used to reduce differences in the performance of learners with different levels of prior knowledge of the subject matter[4].

Legends and visuals should interact as parts of a whole and integrated message. Legends should be written with great care. They heavily influence our interpretation of image content. It is possible to interpret most pictures in several different ways until they are "anchored" to one interpretation by a legend[5]. The only way to assure that information conveyed by pictures in information materials is clear and unambiguous is to write a legend for each picture and tell the reader what to see[6].

A printed photo is, in fact, past tense bud legends are usually written in present tense to immediacy[7]. However, when an activity must be explained, present tense and active verbs are appropriate. The legend should be brief and easy to understand. A general reader knows little, if anything, about the subject matter. The legends and the pictures are kept simple, attractive, and informative. They should not be too complicated and, thus, distracting to the reader. A technical reader will understand technical concepts but may not be familiar with special terminology. A specialist reader has a good understanding of the subject matter. Both the text and illustrations, which may consist of detailed drawings, graphs, technical photographs, ultra-sonograms, or other realistic pictures or symbols, may be detailed.

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[1] Lent, 1980

[2] Moriarty and Garramone, 1986; Wanta and Chang, 2000

[3] Moriarty and Popovich, 1991

[4] Dwyer, 1994

[5] Barthes, 1977; Pettersson, 1987, 1990;

[6] Zimmermann and Perkin, 1982; Bernard, 1990

[7] McDougall, 1990, p. 134

Effectiveness. Most people believe that pictures tell the truth[1]. The effectiveness of a visual depends on the medium, on the type of information, and also on the amount of time learners are permitted to interact with the material[2]. Increasing the size of illustrations by projecting pictures does not automatically improve their effectiveness in facilitating the achievement of the learners. Also language and cultural differences may impact the effectiveness of visuals[3]. Furthermore it is also known that stylized and "simple" pictures are more effective than complex pictures[4].

Usefulness. Picture readability is positively correlated with both the aesthetic rating and usefulness in teaching. The aesthetic rating and assessed usefulness in school were also strongly correlated[5].

Picture readability indexes. I have developed a "Picture readability index"[6] (BLIX). Values range from 0 to 5. A BLIX-5 picture: 1) is executed in a true-to-life colour/ has a clear contrast and grey scale in the picture. 2) Has a shape other than a square or a rectangle or covers an entire page. 3) Has a legend which is brief, easy to understand, and deals with the picture. 4) Is unambiguous and not too "artistic". 5) Has a dominant centre of interest at or near its optical centre (middle of the picture) and few details, which can be regarded as distracting. Picture readability is positively correlated with both aesthetic rating and usefulness in teaching.

A "Photograph readability index" (PRI)[7] was developed a few years later. This index refers to the success of the image as defined by its objective or legend. It may be used to evaluate photos in textbooks. The initial phase gathers information on how a viewer perceives a photograph during an initial brief period, that is, at a first glance. The latter phase entails extended exposure to the photograph and endeavours to reveal how a viewer encodes information while being influenced by a legend. Later[8] the PRI utilizes an interdisciplinary battery of methods adapted from the fields of cognitive psychology, linguistics, reading of text, semiotics, and visual literacy.

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[1] Lefferts, 1982
[2] Dwyer, 1972
[3] Kovalik, 2004
[4] Melin, 1999b
[5] Pettersson, 1983
[6] Pettersson, 1989
[7] Lantz, 1992
[8] Lantz, 1996

Readability of Layout

The style of the graphical form is decided by the specific choices of typefaces for headings, running text, legends, and also the use of justification, number and placement of columns, number and placement of pictures and tables, the use of colour cues, et cetera. All informative layouts must have good readability. Therefore the information designer should:

- Create standard pages for different information materials.
- Avoid dull, exciting, provocative, or too uncommon graphical designs.
- Review typography and layout for consistency of readability.

– – <o> – –

A written text works well when the content of the message is analytical, detailed, logical, narrative, theoretical, and sequential. Visual messages work well when content is emotional, holistic, immediate, spatial and visual. However, combined verbal and visual representations may be the best choice for complex messages. Here the layout is very important.

Paragraphs. White space between portions of a text could be used as a cue to the readers that a new section follows[1].

Headings. Composition, intentional use of space and placement of headings enhance the hierarchic structure in information material and help the readers to get the message[2]. Headings, or headlines, should always be relevant and identify the subject matter. Headings set in different type versions aid comprehension of the text content[3].

Numbering. To achieve a clear structure we can use a combined numbering and lettering system. Main points in a text are traditionally labelled with Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV etc.). Sub points of the first degree are traditionally labelled with capital letters (A, B, C, D etc.). Second-degree sub points are traditionally labelled with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). Numbering and lettering systems can be combined with typographic cueing of headings. Headings set in different type versions aid comprehension of the material.

Placement of pictures. People who have not learned to read or write do not necessarily look at pictures in the order that has been intended by the designer.

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[1] Waller, 1987
[2] Jonassen, 1982; Wileman, 1993, p. 88
[3] Jonassen, 1982

Therefore it often proves helpful, as messages are being tested, to ask several groups of people to arrange the individual message into a sequence that seems most logical to them[1]. This is a way to better get to know the intended audience.

Placement of legends. Several authors have noted that a picture should be located as close to the relevant text passage as possible in information materials[2]. It is usually a good idea to put pictures between the appropriate paragraphs in the text to get maximum impact[3]. Pictures that are put within a paragraph will interfere with the reading of the text. Above the picture, there should be at least one blank line, unless, of course, the picture is not at the top of the page, in which case the upper margin will provide sufficient empty space.

Readability of Symbols

A message may be communicated to the receiver/s or interpreter/s with several different symbols. A symbol may be used to communicate several different messages. People have to learn the meaning of the important symbols within their own society. Therefore the information designer should:

- Use colour, position, size and shape.
- Use a combination of pictographs and words.
- Use realistic figures rather than abstract forms.

- – <o> – -

Many symbols are culturally biased and thus arbitrary to those from other cultures[4]. For example, when using a guidebook with symbols, we often have to look them up in a key in much the same way as we look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary.

    The meaning of symbols have to be learned by the readers. Usually they are not naturally understood. Examination of guidebooks and magazines show that that: 1) A certain meaning is explained with several different symbols. 2) A certain symbol has several different meanings. Symbols are of special value

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[1] Zimmermann and Perkin, 1982; Wileman, 1993, p. 105

[2] Lidman and Lund, 1972; MacDonald-Ross, 1977; Hartley and Burnhill, 1977a; Haber and Hershenson, 1980; Wright, 1982; Braden, 1983; Benson, 1985; Pettersson, 1989, 1993; Mayer, 1993; Mayer and Sims, 1994; Mayer et al 1995; Moreno and Mayer, 2000

[3] Pettersson, 1989, 1993

[4] Mangan, 1978

and importance in maps. A good symbol is designed so it can be used in many different situations and in many contexts. Wogalter[1] concluded that warnings should contain certain elements:

– A signal word such as "Danger" and "Caution" that enables people to recognize that the message is a warning, that a hazard is present, as well as providing information on the hazard level (with "Danger" signalling more serious and probable injury than "Caution")
– A description of the hazard, e.g. in the case of a no diving sign, a statement such as "Shallow water" provides information about the specific danger involved;
– A description of the consequences that could occur if the person fails to obey the warning's directions, e.g. "You can be permanently paralysed";
– The directions or instructions, i.e., the specific actions that should or should not be done, e.g. "No diving".

Readability of Numerical Values

Numerical data and information can be presented in tables and in graphs. A table in an information material must have good readability. Therefore the information designer should:

• Provide all the information the learner will need in the table.
• Group items in a clear way.
• Put target entries to the left of the answers.

– – <o> – -

Wright and Fox[2] made recommendations regarding design of tables in texts for the general public and other non-professional audiences. Some of the recommendations concern readability:

– All the information the learner will need should be presented in the table. That is, the learner should not be required to interpolate, combine entries, draw inferences, or otherwise manipulate the contents of the table in order to determine the correct answer. Rather, the learner should only be required to scan the list to find the correct target entry.
– Items within columns should be grouped and separated from other groups by either white space or rules (lines) in order to facilitate reading without accidentally moving to another row. Groups should contain no more than five items.

[1] Wogalter, 1999, p. 94
[2] Wright and Fox, 1972, p. 241

– Redundant abbreviations of units should not be included within the table entries [although they should be included in the column or row headings].
– Whenever possible, columns should be arranged so that the target entries are to the left of the answers.

Also Ehrenberg[1] provides guidelines for the construction of tables for the general public and other non-professional audiences:

– Numbers should be rounded off to no more than two significant figures to facilitate learners' making comparisons.
– Averages of rows and columns (as appropriate) should be given to facilitate learners' making comparisons of individual cell entries to them.
– Put the most important comparisons into columns (rather than rows), as columns make for the easiest comparisons.
– Numbers in rows or columns should be arranged in some meaningful order whenever possible (e.g., increasing or decreasing).

Readability of Maps

Maps must have good readability. Therefore the information designer should:

• Restrict the number of visual symbols on maps.
• Keep it as simple as possible.
• Be consistent! Inconsistencies will confuse the readers.

- – <o> – -

Symbols are of special value and importance in maps. However, symbols have to be learned by the readers. The way in which different visual variables are combined has greater importance than how the variables are comprehended[2]. Using too many visual variables at the same time makes map reading more difficult. When several variables are used simultaneously the hierarchy of visibility is important. The largest symbols are always perceived first. *Size is more important than form and colour.*

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[1] Ehrenberg, 1977
[2] Bertin, 1967; Baudoiun and Anker, 1984

Readability of Colour

Colours that are used in information materials must have good readability. Therefore the information designer should:

- Use colour to emphasize or to play something down.
- Use colour to show differences or similarities.
- Use colour to help readers recall information and to find things.

- – <o> – -

When colours of equal intensity are compared, the most visible hues are white, yellow, and green – in that order. The least visible hues are red, blue, and violet. Yellow is a powerful colour because of its luminosity. It is especially powerful when combined with black.

Graphic symbols often make use of bright colours to intensify their meaning – in fact in some instances a change of colour creates a diametric change of meaning. Common hues in graphic symbols are pure yellow, red, blue, green, white and black, or combinations of the same. Unfortunately, red and green are quite often used as discriminating colours in symbols and in warning signs. Since many colour-blind people perceive red and green as grey colour can only be used to code the information redundantly. Colour may be combined with shape, and position, or with both, which is often seen in traffic signs. Complementary colours contrast, and they provide a warm – cool effect.

Female and male subjects showed no differences in reading efforts of different colour combinations[1]. Furthermore there was no difference between colour blind (red-green) users and users with normal vision. Colour coding improves attention, learner motivation, and memory[2]. Subjects dislike the use of more than three or four text colours on the same page, screen, or slide. For some learners and for some educational objectives, colour improves the achievement of the learners. However, in some cases the added cost of colour may not be justified[3].

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[1] Pettersson, 1993
[2] Dwyer, 1994
[3] Dwyer, 1972

Sound

In oral presentations it is important that it is easy to *clearly hear* the individual words and sentences. Legibility in the written message is comparable to *audibility* in the spoken message. It is important that the listeners *clearly understand* the words in oral presentations. Readability in the written message is comparable to *distinctness* in the spoken message. Visuals designed to complement oral instruction does not always automatically improve the achievement of the learners[1]. For certain types of educational objectives and for certain types of learners, oral instruction without visualization is as effective as visualized instruction[1]. All types of cueing techniques do not equally facilitate the instructional effectiveness of different types of visual illustrations in oral instruction.

Providing Emphasis

The most important elements in information material may be emphasized to enhance attention and perception. A dark dot in a light field and a jog in a straight line are two good examples of emphasis. Emphasis may be used to *attract*, *direct* and to *keep* attention. Typography and layout will better show the structure and the hierarchy of the content in the information material when important parts are emphasised. The information designer should:

- Use specific elements for emphasis.
- Use clear contrasts for emphasis.
- Use variables like complexity, directionality, exaggerated features, humour, isolation or motion for emphasis.

- – <o> – -

It is possible to provide emphasis in information material with the help of a number of specific design elements. Generally speaking highlighting cues and emphasis in a message will result in attention to that message. We should, however, never overuse any accenting techniques because if we do they may completely lose their meanings and their power to emphasize[2].

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[1] Dwyer, 1978
[2] Dwyer, 1978; Hartley, Bartlett, and Branthwaite 1980; Benson, 1985; Bausell and Jenkins 1987

Emphasis in Text

Boldface or italics should normally not be used for continuous text. Italic print is read more slowly than regular type and is also disliked by many readers[1]. However, the information designer can also use boldface and italics for emphasis of parts of a text[2]. The use of underlining and all capital letters should be restricted to headings and titles, if they are used at all. Usually bold and italics are quite sufficient. Underlining in the middle of a sentence makes the lower line more difficult to read[3]. Shadow and outline letters should be avoided. There are a few other possibilities to emphasize paragraphs in texts, such as adjunct questions[4] to relevant information, and statements of objectives for emphasis[5].

Indents are the distance between the beginning of a line and the left margin. Paragraphs may be indented and/or separated with extra space. Indenting of the first sentence of each paragraph, so called *"first line indents,"* improves legibility[6], as well as comprehension of printed materials[7]. Indenting of every sentence will, however, slow down reading speed.

Hanging indents are used in numbered paragraphs (with or without numbers) and in different "tables." *Nested indents* may be used to graphically show the relationship between sections, sub-sections and paragraphs within a text. When a paragraph extends into the left or right margin this is called negative indents. In this book *negative indents* are frequently used in reference lists. The width of an em dash is commonly used for paragraph indentation. This width is equal to the height of the type. So in 10 point Palatino an em dash is 10 points wide.

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[1] Tinker, 1965

[2] Tinker, 1965; Mayer, 1993; Lipton, 2007

[3] Isaacs, 1987

[4] Mayer, 1993

[5] Briggs and Wager, 1989; Mayer, 1993

[6] Tinker, 1963

[7] Frase and Schwartz,1970

Emphasis in Pictures and Symbols

Emphasis is used to attract or direct attention or dramatize a certain point within a visual. There are a several possibilities to emphasize elements, or parts, within visuals. Many different elements in a visual can cause emphasis. Such examples are[1]: Areas of colour, areas of shading, arrows, change in size, circles or ovals around objects, colour, colour against no colour, complexity, detail against no detail, directionality, imbalance, implied motion, isolation, letters in pictures, light against dark, line drawings in photos, line intersections, lines, position or placement of elements, reducing details, repetition, stars, tonal contrast, variation out of context, and words in pictures.

A special area of emphasis is the design of signs and symbols. Warning signs must have a high contrast relative to their background[2]. Informative words shall be used for signals such as "Danger"; for descriptions of a hazard such as "Shallow water"; and for specific actions that should or should not be performed[3], such as "No diving."

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[1] Areas of colour (Mijksenaar, 1997), areas of shading (Pettersson, 1989; Mijksenaar, 1997), arrows (Pettersson, 1989; Mayer, 1993), change in size (Pettersson, 1989), circles or ovals around objects (Pettersson, 1989), colour (Winn, 1993; Wogalter, 1999), colour against no colour (Pettersson, 1989), complexity (Pettersson, 1989), detail against no detail (Pettersson, 1989), directionality (Pettersson, 1989), imbalance (Fleming and Levie, 1978), implied motion (Pettersson, 1989), isolation (Pettersson, 1989), letters in pictures (Pettersson, 1989), light against dark (Pettersson, 1989), line drawings in photos (Pettersson, 1989), line intersections (Pettersson, 1989), lines (Mijksenaar, 1997), position or placement of elements (Pettersson, 1989), reducing details (Pettersson, 1989), repetition (Mayer, 1993), stars (Pettersson, 1989), tonal contrast (Pettersson, 1989), variation out of context (Pettersson, 1989), and words in pictures (Pettersson, 1989).

[2] Barlow and Wogalter, 1993

[3] Wogalter, 1999

Emphasis in Layout

Most people read instructional materials selectively. Readers rarely, if ever, begin at the beginning and read straight through to the end of a document. Usually we use a combination of browsing, reading headings, looking at illustrations, reading captions, reading certain parts carefully, skimming others, and avoiding some parts completely. Many readers will only spend time on a limited amount of information in a newspaper. It is known that elements like headings, photos, drawings, and information graphics attract attention and often are entry point into a page. Size and placement of such elements influence how the reader will actually read the page. Many readers may jump over too large pictures and never look at them at all.

The competition for our attention is usually very fierce in commercial arts and in advertising. Thus *discontinuity* is often used intentionally to attract and even to hold attention of the viewers. There are a several possibilities to emphasize elements in typography and layout. The information designer can use[1]: Areas of colour, areas of shading, arrows, bold against standard, boldface, boxes, bullets, clear contrasts, colour, colour against no colour, detail against no detail, directionality, headings, highlight relevant information, icons, illustrations, imbalance, italics, key words in red, larger font, light against dark, line drawings in photos, lines, logos, margin notes, repetition, shaded areas against plain backgrounds, small against large, symbols, tonal areas against plain backgrounds, underlining key words, variation out of context, and white space. Italics give emphasis to a word or a group of words. In order not to confuse the readers, it is important to establish a consistent system for how to signal emphasis. Use italics for emphasis sparingly; too many italicised words may reduce the emphasis.

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[1] Areas of colour (Mijksenaar, 1997), areas of shading (Mijksenaar, 1997), arrows (Lamberski and Dwyer, 1983; Beck 1984; Pettersson, 1989; Mayer, 1993), bold against standard (Pettersson, 1989), boldface (Mayer, 1993), boxes (Mijksenaar, 1997), bullets (Mayer, 1993), clear contrasts (Pettersson, 1989), colour (Winn, 1993; Wogalter, 1999), colour against no colour (Pettersson, 1989), detail against no detail (Pettersson, 1989), directionality (Pettersson, 1989), headings (Mayer, 1993), highlight relevant information (Mayer, 1993), icons (Mayer, 1993), illustrations (Mijksenaar, 1997), imbalance (Fleming and Levie, 1978), italics (Pettersson, 1989; Mayer, 1993; Mijksenaar, 1997), key words in red (Fleming and Levie, 1978), larger font (Mayer, 1993), light against dark (Pettersson, 1989), line drawings in photos (Pettersson, 1989), lines (Mijksenaar, 1997), logos (Mijksenaar, 1997), margin notes (Mayer, 1993), repetition (Mayer, 1993), shaded areas against plain backgrounds (Pettersson, 1989), small against large (Pettersson, 1989), symbols (Mijksenaar, 1997), tonal areas against plain backgrounds (Pettersson, 1989), underlining key words (Fleming and Levie, 1978; Mayer, 1993), variation out of context (Pettersson, 1989), and white space (Mayer, 1993).

Providing Unity

Information materials should have unity, an "overall coherence and together-ness." Inconsistencies may confuse the receivers. There is a close relationship between guidelines aimed at providing unity and guidelines aimed at provid-ing harmony. To provide unity in information material the information de-signer can:

- Use style and terminology in a consistent way in each specific information material.
- Use layout and typography in a consistent way.
- Use highlighting techniques in a consistent way.

- – <o> – -

As previously noted many authors have found that pictures should be put as close to the relevant text as possible[1]. Illustrations in textbooks are often "for-gotten" by students as well as teachers; therefore it is important for editors and information designers to clearly instruct the learners to make good use of the pictures[2].

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[1] Lidman and Lund, 1972; MacDonald- Ross, 1977; Hartley and Burnhill, 1977a; Haber and Hershenson, 1980; Wright, 1982; Braden, 1983; Benson, 1985; Pettersson, 1989, 1993; Mayer, 1993; Mayer and Sims, 1994; Mayer et al 1995; Moreno and Mayer, 2000
[2] Reinking, 1986; Peeck, 1993, 1994; Hannus, 1996

Administrative Principles

This category of principles includes the following four design principles: *Information Access, Information Costs, Information Ethics, and Securing Quality.*

Information Access

Regardless of the selected medium and the system for distribution the intended receivers must have easy access to facts and information when they need it. There are two quite different aspects of the concept "information access." One aspect concerns the *external access* to information materials stored in an office and information contents stored within an information system. The other aspect concerns the *internal access* to relevant facts and information contents within a specific information material. First we have to find the correct source and then we have to find the interesting content.

External Access

In order to provide external access to information materials the information designer should:

- Design information materials to fit main systems for storage.
- Use international standards, such as standard page sizes.
- Consider aspects of information security.

- – <o> – -

The information designer is obviously not responsible for how the intended receivers store their information materials in binders, shelves, and archives or in computer based digital systems. However, when possible, the information designer should design for "easy external information access." Information materials should fit the main systems for storage.

In organisations with worldwide activities technical documentation may be produced at one place and distributed over the Internet to many other places. In such cases the typefaces that are used must be available as standard

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selections in computers and in laser printers in all these countries. Nevertheless, printouts made by different printers will not be identical in appearance. Typography and layout should produce good results on standard paper. In Europe, the standard paper size is A4 (210 x 297 millimetre), whereas in the USA, US letter (216 x 279.5 millimetre) is the standard. It is possible to deal with these differences by varying the margins on the page. It should be possible to print a document and insert the pages directly into a loose-leaf binder. This means that right-hand and left-hand pages should have the same appearance, basically a right-hand page layout.

Digital documents may be coded in accordance with the SGML standard, so that it is easy to use the information in different ways and in different formats. Sometimes other standards may be used (like HTML and XML).

The information designer may also be responsible for the appearance of messages in various places such as placements of signs in factory areas, hospitals, sports grounds and other official buildings. Here, the information designer should provide warning signs with properties that are clear and easily noticed in bad and degraded conditions such as fog, weak illumination, and smoke[1]. Put warning signs close to the hazard[2], and provide warning signs with adequate reflectance and good lighting equipment.

Internal Access

In order to provide access to relevant facts and information contents within a specific information material the information designer should:

- Create appropriate indexes and other search systems.
- Provide clear contrast between figure and ground.
- Provide a supporting context for important information contents.

- – <o> – -

In printed books, reports, et cetera it is a good idea to have a list of contents, and one or more indexes. Various indexes, such as a list of illustrations, a list of artists, a list of photographers, a list of references, and a subject matter index with references to page numbers may be very useful. These indexes are easy to compile using modern word processing programs. In computer based systems

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[1] Lerner and Collins, 1983
[2] Wogalter, 1999

it is possible to provide automatic search systems for words, for parts of texts, as well as for pictures.

In camouflage the intention is to hide figures in the background. In information design it is the opposite. Information materials must provide clear contrast between figure and background. Clarity, simplicity, structure, and unity will make information materials well suited for the intended receivers.

Information Costs

The information designer must have control over the costs for the design and production of the information material. It is, however, also important to consider and plan for future costs related to technical production, distribution and storage. This should be done early in the design process. A small mistake may prove very costly. The information designer will have to:

- Consider the costs for design and production of the material.
- Consider future costs for distribution and storage.
- Plan and execute continuous reviews of all costs for the material.

- – <o> – -

Good legibility and good readability are probably always economically advantageous, whereas poor legibility and poor readability may be a costly business for all parts involved. Good design models make the production of documents simple and inexpensive. In my view it is not economical to cram too much information on a page. It is better to edit the text and reduce its bulk, and thereby increase its legibility.

If a document is to have many readers who will try to read and understand it during working hours, the cost of reading the document will be the greatest expense it incurs. Even though it may be expensive to produce information, it usually costs even more to store, access, and use it. Therefore, the more people who will partake of certain information, the greater the total cost will be. Because the cost of reading is closely linked to the type of material in the document and to the various groups of readers it targets, there will be great opportunities to reduce the total costs and save money by presenting the information in a suitable fashion.

Information Ethics

As a rule the information designer *must respect copyright* as well as other laws and regulations that are related to design, production, distribution, storage, and use of information materials. This concerns the use of artwork, illustrations, logos, lyrics, music, photographs, specific sounds, symbols, text, and trademarks. It is also very important to respect different ethical rules, media-specific ethical guidelines, and honour all business agreements. The information designer should:

- Respect copyright.
- Respect ethical rules, and media-specific ethical guidelines.
- Never engage in image manipulation.

- – <o> – -

Image manipulation implies the improper control of people's perception of a given reality through the use of pictures. The ethical rules for the press, radio and television clearly warn against manipulation or falsification of picture content through misleading legends, odd montage, or suspicious trimming. Photo manipulation and stylistic embellishment can be used to create dishonest figures and tables. Presenting inauthentic pictures as though they were real documentary material is forbidden. The party purchasing the right to use pictures is responsible for their proper use. Despite these rules, clear violations occur all too often. In production of news the editors should ask themselves if every photo meets the ethical standards of responsible journalism[1]

The Associated Press has adopted photo manipulation guidelines to prevent dishonest reporting[2]: 1) The content of a photograph will never be changed or manipulated. 2) Only the established norms of standard photo printing methods such as burning, dodging, black-and-white toning, and cropping are acceptable. 3) Retouching is limited to removal of normal scratches and dust spots. 4) Serious consideration must always be given in correcting colour to ensure honest reproduction of the original. 5) Cases of abnormal colour or tonality will be clearly stated in the caption. 6) Colour adjustment should always be minimal.

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[1] McDougall, 1990
[2] Cifuentes, Myers and McIntosh, 1998, p. 170

Securing Quality

In information design the content of the message is more important than its context, execution, and format. Data and facts must be correct and also relevant to the situation. The information designer should:

- Establish a system for control of the different versions of documents.
- Review the information material with respect to credibility, graphic design, structure, style, and terminology before technical production.
- Invite users to evaluate the information material.

– – <o> – –

Good information material has a distinct structure, is relevant, legible and readable for the intended audience. Different information materials may have multiple functions and more than one objective all at the same time. Good information materials make everyday life easier for receivers who need the specific information and provide senders with a good economic return and good credibility.

The information designer may influence the perception of the credibility of text and pictures. The receiver's evaluation of the message will affect her or his evaluation of the source[1]. In information materials photographs and bright, warm colours give credibility to the organization behind the message[2]. Frequent use of archive pictures may cause quality problems. In many situations it may be better not to have any pictures at all than employing pictures of poor quality.

A high credibility message has a good structure, convincing arguments, proper references, and relevant examples. High credibility sources exert a more persuasive influence on the receivers than low credibility sources. Receivers believe in a message of high credibility.

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[1] Fleming and Levie, 1978; Bettinghaus and Cody, 1994
[2] Kensicki, 2003

Aesthetic Principles

Art is valued for its originality and its expressiveness. Focus is on individual artefacts crafted through the manual and aesthetic virtuosity of the individual artist. Design, in contrast, is valued for its usefulness for being appropriate for a particular user and a particular task[1]. The academic discipline "Aesthetics" aims to establish general principles of art and beauty, of harmony and proportion. Aestheticians try to understand art in broad and fundamental ways. Aesthetically pleasing visuals may not be of great instructional value[2]. It is, however, possible that aesthetically pleasing information material will be noticed and used better than material without any aesthetic qualities. The third category of design principles includes Harmony, and Aesthetic Proportion.

Harmony

Certain design elements look good when they are placed together. Other design elements may look ugly and be distracting. There is harmony in information material when all design elements fit well together and form harmonious relationships. Harmony is often closely related to unity. The information designer should:

• Develop standard templates for graphic design.
• Use standard templates for graphic design.
• Find balance between the design elements.

- – <o> – -

Man has an intuitive sense of balance. Information material should display good balance, in a manner, which is interesting but not disturbing or distracting. Balance can be formal or informal. Formal balance has total symmetry and it is felt to be static and harmonious. It may, however, also be boring. Composition can be used to direct the viewers[3].

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[1] Mullet and Sano, 1995, p. 8
[2] Dwyer and Dwyer, 1989, p. 122
[3] Wileman, 1993, p. 93

Informal balance contributes to a feeling of dynamism[1]. It may attract attention to a specific picture, to a part of a text or to the entire information material. However, imbalance and inconsistent use of colours, graphics, or typography, have been found to reduce learning[2].

Aesthetic Proportion

The concept of aesthetic proportion is very subjective. We may all have quite different ideas of what we find beautiful and rewarding, and what we find boring, disturbing, distracting or ugly. The information designer should:

- Find out receiver preferences of aesthetic proportions.
- Be careful using proportions according to the "golden section."
- Never mix a decorative use of colour with cognitive importance.

- – <o> – -

An "information layout" differs from a "decoration layout" in which purely aesthetic aspects are allowed to predominate. When illustrations are not relevant to the prose contents, they do not facilitate the understanding of the text[3]. On the contrary, illustrations can have a negative effect on reading comprehension and prose learning[4]. Therefore illustrations should not be used only for decoration in learning materials. As it is most visuals are too complicated and would communicate better if designers valued simplicity over decoration. Aesthetically pleasing visuals may deceive the learners about their instructional value[5].

There are many situations where colour and typographic elements can be used for decoration. However, a decorative use of colour or typography should never be mixed with the intended use to provide clear structure, simplicity and hierarchy. It must always be clear and easy to understand for the receiver when colour and typography is used for decoration and when the use is meant to have some cognitive importance.

For centuries the proportions according to "The Golden Ratio" has been regarded as beautiful and it has been treated as an important "rule" in architec-

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[1] Fleming and Levie, 1978; Pettersson, 1993

[2] Bradshaw, 1996, 2003

[3] Levin, Anglin and Carney, 1987

[4] Levie and Lentz, 1982; Melin, 1999b

[5] Dwyer, 1972

ture, art, design, and typography[1]. The Golden Ratio has been used in the past to estimate suitable levels for headlines in a document[2]. The size of body-type is multiplied with 1.62, and then rounded off. If the body-type is ten Didot points (=10.7 pica points), and there are four levels for headlines in the document, the following sizes are adequate: 10, 16, 26 and 42 Didot points. These rules are, however, not in accordance with the views expressed by subjects who took part in experiments with design of book pages[3].

The Golden Ratio is also known as the Golden Section, the Golden Mean, and the Divine Proportion. It is an irrational number of a line divided into two segments. The ratio of the whole segment to the larger segment is the same as the ratio of the larger segment to the shorter segment; $(a+b)/b = b/a$.

The principle of the Golden Ratio is comparable to the well-known "Fibonacci numbers": 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, and so forth. This is a close approximation of the Golden Quota (8/5 = 1.6). A Golden Rectangle therefore has sides of approximately the same proportions (8/5). Being multiplied by 1.62 enlarges any such rectangle, and being multiplied by 0.62 reduces it.

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[1] Moriarty, 1991; Bringhurst, 2004
[2] Berndal and Frigyes, 1990
[3] Pettersson and Strand, 2005

Cognitive Principles

How we actually create meaning is an area where a lot of research is still needed. Complicated language, in both texts, pictures and graphical form will impair the understanding of any intended message. Information materials providing the wrong information may actually give a negative result, and the receiver may end up less competent than before. This fourth category of information design principles includes the following four principles: *Facilitating Attention, Facilitating Perception, Facilitating Processing,* and *Facilitating Memory.*

Facilitating Attention

There are always far more stimuli than we can ever notice. Fortunately most stimuli remain unknown, unseen, and unheard of[1]. One of the message designer's and information designer's first problems is to catch the attention of the members of the audience. Then it is up to the designer to hold their attention[2]. Any information material must constantly redraw the attention in order to hold the interest of the viewers alive.

In order to get and to hold attention it is important that information materials facilitate human attention. As previously noted there is a close relationship between guidelines aimed at providing emphasis and guidelines aimed at facilitating attention. Emphasis in a message will result in attention to that specific message. The sub-sections *Attention to Text, Attention to Pictures, Attention to Symbols, Attention to Layout,* and *Attention to Colour* all provide "attention-oriented" guidelines that may be used in the design of messages and information materials.

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[1] Winn, 1993
[2] Fleming and Levie, 1978, 1993

Attention to Text

In order to attract and hold attention to texts in information materials the information designer can:

- Use headings with words that will catch the attention of the receiver.
- Set headings in different type versions to get attention.
- Use italics, boldface or colour to get attention.

– – <o> – -

Advertisements in newspapers, and advertising flyers, must be noticed otherwise they are useless. Here, unusual typefaces can be useful. In these situations the graphical form should stimulate attention, entice the reader to look at the headings and pictures and then actually begin reading the text. Since there are over 60,000 different typefaces (with still more being introduced), it is easy to combine them in many ways[1]. Most of these typefaces are, however, of limited value. Usually only a very few typefaces are needed in information materials.

The intended message may be hidden within verbal or visual puns, within metaphors, satires, parodies, or within humour. In these cases, designers break the traditional rules or guidelines of instructional message design. It might also be possible to deliberately use the unexpected to attract attention to instructional materials.

Headings should always be relevant and identify the subject matter. The purposes of headings are to attract the attention of the readers, make the subject matter readily apparent, and indicate the relative importance of different items in the document[2].

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[1] Mijksenaar, 1997
[2] Jonassen, 1982

Attention to Pictures

The receiver must see or rather "discover" each picture and actually read the message in an active and selective way. The information designer can:

- Provide pictures of people, in particular pictures of their faces.
- Use pictures that are interesting enough.
- Use different types of visuals.

- – <o> – -

Even simple pictures may cause many different associations. Each receiver will place available information in a wider, expanded, "personal" context[1]. Receivers are apparently capable of sensing far more information than is explicitly displayed in a given picture. Using questions to focus the attention of the learners on the relevant visual learning cues does not improve the instructional potential of the illustrations[2]. Legends can effectively direct attention where the designer wishes it to be directed within the picture.

Use arrows, bullets, icons, underlining, margin notes, repetition, and/or white space to highlight the relevant information[3]. Use arrows or lines in various colours in order to draw attention to a picture or to specific picture elements[4].

Use humour as a visual pun to attract attention to the content or dramatise certain portions of a visual. However, humour should be used with great care. Misuse of humour and "funny people" may ruin the intended message. This is sometimes referred to as the "vampire- effect." Exaggerate the shape of a known person or object, as in caricature or cartoons to draw attention to the whole figure or to particular relevant features of it[5].

Generally speaking, people, especially our faces, will get maximum attention in images[6]. There are, however, many more ways to get attention to pictures. The information designer can use arrows and lines in various colours to show direction[7]. Arrows and lines in various colours can also be used to attract attention to specific picture elements within a picture[8]. Furthermore, the infor-

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[1] Pettersson, 1991, 1994

[2] Dwyer, 1972

[3] Mayer, 1993

[4] Lamberski and Dwyer, 1983; Beck 1984; Pettersson, 1993

[5] Fleming and Levie, 1978

[6] Goldsmith, 1984

[7] Beck, 1984

[8] Lamberski and Dwyer, 1983; Beck 1984

mation designer can use caricatures and cartoons[1] and pictures that are tilted on the page to attract attention[2].

Moving pictures in movies and television can trigger associations and easily influence emotions and attitudes[3]. Contrast, graphics, shading, split screens, text, voiceover narration and zoom lens movements are tools to emphasize important details within moving pictures[4].

In one study I have listed 169 opinions[5] about image functions. Researchers used more than one hundred different explanatory verbs to express their opinions. According to scholars in the areas of instructional message design, visual literacy, and visual communication the most common or frequent opinions on functions of visuals concern *attention*: 1) *Attract attention* to a given material or a given subject[6]; 2) *Gain or get attention*[7]; 3) *Hold attention*[8] or *maintain attention*[9].

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[1] Fleming and Levie, 1978, 1993

[2] White, 1987

[3] Zakia, 1985

[4] Leshin, Pollock, and Reigeluth, 1992

[5] Pettersson, 1999

[6] Duchastel, 1978; Peters, 1978; Duchastel and Waller, 1979; Holliday, 1980; Heinich, Molenda and Russell, 1982; Levie and Lentz, 1982; Lamberski and Dwyer, 1983; Evans, Watson and Willows, 1987; Levin, Anglin and Carney, 1987; White, 1987; Pettersson, 1993; Keller and Burkman, 1993; Wileman, 1993; Lester, 1995

[7] Gagné, 1977; Duchastel, 1978; Duchastel and Waller, 1979; Holliday, 1980; Levie and Lentz, 1982; Beck 1984; Evans, Watson and Willows, 1987; Levin, Anglin and Carney, 1987; Moriarty, 1991; Leshin, Pollock, and Reigeluth, 1992; Keller and Burkman, 1993; Pettersson, 1993; Wileman, 1993; Lester, 1995

[8] Fleming and Levie, 1978, 1993, Levin, Anglin and Carney, 1987

[9] Peters, 1978; Keller and Burkman, 1993

Attention to Symbols

The receiver must be able to see or rather "discover" symbols. This is especially true for different kinds of warning signs. Sometimes the information designer may be able to influence:

- Use clear and distinct symbols for warnings
- Put warning signs close to the hazard.
- Use clear symbols for wayshowing.

- – <o> – -

Put warning signs close to the hazard[1]. Provide warning signs with properties that allow them to be seen in degraded conditions such as low illumination, smoke, or fog[2]. Provide warning signs with adequate reflectance and good lighting[3]. Arrows and lines[4] in various colours can be used to draw attention within information materials and also for wayshowing[5].

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[1] Wogalter, 1999

[2] Lerner and Collins, 1983

[3] Sanders and McCormick, 1993

[4] Lamberski and Dwyer, 1983; Beck 1984; Pettersson, 1993

[5] Mollerup, 2005

Attention to Layout

As previously noted layout and typography should be transparent and not stick out and cause any specific attention in information materials. However, sometimes, it may be important to direct attention to specific parts within information materials. In such cases the information designer can:

- Use legends to direct attention and interest within pictures.
- Use "bleed" creatively to expand the impact of pictures.
- Use highlighting techniques to enhance relevant information.

– – <o> – –

When pictures cover an entire page this "bleed" beyond the text-face may expand the impact of attention-getting images[1]. The use of irregular, unexpected, and unstable design will attract attention[2]. It is important to instruct the readers to really use the pictures[3]. Write a legend for each picture[4]. Legends should be used to direct attention and interest within pictures[5].

Put pictures as close to the relevant text as possible[6]. Put pictures between the appropriate paragraphs in the text to get maximum impact[7]. Put pictures on odd-numbered pages. They attract more attention than pictures on even pages[7].

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[1] White, 1987

[2] Fleming and Levie, 1978, 1993

[3] Reinking, 1986; Weidenmann, 1989; Pettersson, 1990, 1993; Peeck, 1993, 1994; Hannus, 1996

[4] Bernard, 1990; Pettersson, 1993

[5] Winn, 1993

[6] Lidman and Lund, 1972; MacDonald- Ross, 1977; Hartley and Burnhill, 1977a; Haber and Hershenson, 1980; Wright, 1982; Braden, 1983; Benson, 1985; Pettersson, 1989, 1993; Mayer, 1993; Mayer and Sims, 1994; Mayer et al 1995; Moreno and Mayer, 2000

[7] Pettersson, 1989, 1993

Attention to Colour

In order for colour to be used as efficient cues and attract attention to, or attract attention within information materials the information designer can:

- Use bold and bright colours to get attention.
- Use colour coding to improve attention.
- Use colour to enhance attention to a visual message.

– – <o> – -

To some extent colour is a language of its own. Colour creates instant impact and it becomes a vital part of the first impression. Therefore colours can be used as effective signals in information design. Bold and bright colours will attract and capture our attention[1].

Colour coding can be used as an accenting device to improve attention in documents, in signs and in symbols[2]. However, the number of colour codes must be limited and they must always be explained[3]. Improper use of colour can be distracting, fatiguing, and upsetting and it can actually produce negative results. (Also see section *Processing of Colour*.)

Colour enhances the attention and perception of a visual message. If people like the contents in a picture, they like them even more when the visual is presented in colour. Although full colour photographs increase the costs, publishers of textbooks should make the number of such books more available to primary audiences[4].

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[1] Ormrod, 1989
[2] Katzman and Nyenhuis, 1972; Lamberski, 1972; Christ, 1975; Dwyer, 1978; Whiteside and Blohm, 1985; Hannafin and Peck, 1988; Pettersson, 1989, 1993; Winn, 1993; Wogalter, 1999; Bradshaw, 2003
[3] Pettersson, 1989, 1993
[4] Ramsey, 1989

Facilitating Perception

Perception is a fundamental characteristic of life. In order to continue living, every organism has to perceive its environment and the changes in this environment. The concept of "perception" is a collective designation for the different processes in which an animal or a person obtains information about the outside world. We organize and analyze information that we have paid attention to. Colours, illustrations, images, lines, pictures, sounds, symbols, texts, and words should be integrated in such a way that they can be interpreted as a meaningful whole rather than a number of individual elements. Perception of two- or three-dimensional representations entails fast, parallel, simultaneous, and holistic processing[1].

In perceiving a message the receiver use sensory organs and the nervous system. When a message is internalized the receiver has got new emotions, new experiences, new feelings, and new knowledge. Often individuals will interpret the same representation in different ways. Here age and gender, cultural, economical, historical, political, religious, and social factors may be important. New impressions are interpreted against the background of our previous individual experience and learning. Experiences and assessments change over time and affect our way of associating. Messages that are contradictory often create more confusion than they provide help. The internalized message will influence the interpretation and understanding of future and related messages.

The Gestalt school of psychology developed about 1912 in Germany. The word "gestalt," means form, pattern or shape in German. It is the basis for the psychological theory that perception is based on patterns. Perception is always organized. We see whole images rather than collections of parts. The whole is different from the sum of the parts. A number of psychologists view our attempts to establish order as an innate faculty carried out in accordance with certain "laws" or principles for display of information.

Closure. Stimuli form meaningful patterns. There is a need for the mind to have a general understanding and it is a key factor in cognitive organisation[2]. We will extract meaning and reach conclusions. If a figure is incomplete, our minds will fill in the missing parts and "close" the outline of the figure. For instance, letters printed with damaged or broken type are typically seen as per-

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[1] Gazzaniga, 1967; Sperry, 1973, 1982
[2] Luchins and Luchins, 1959

fect or whole characters. The use of classical Swiss grid systems in layout is based on regular rows and columns.

Common fate. Objects grouped in a particular way will be expected to change in conformance with this grouping. When change does not follow this pattern, the change is difficult to process.

Continuity. We perceive a slow and gradual change in a stimulus as one single stimulus. It is easier to perceive a smooth continuation than an abrupt shift of direction. Lines moving in the same direction belong together. Straight or curved lines tend to lead the eye along, and even beyond, the line. An arrow or a finger pointed at something leads the eye to it.

Contrast. We tend to order impressions that form natural opposites, thereby reinforcing one another, in groups. We interpret the information from our sense organs with a bias towards constancy. Usually, there is a constancy of size, shape, colour, brightness, and contrast in the perception of known objects. This is regardless of distance, angle, and illumination.

Density. We perceptually group regions where elements have similar density, or "spatial concentration." A visual element may belong to one group even if it is as close to another group.

Figure/ground. We perceptually construct relationships among events, objects, and picture elements. Some elements in a visual are selected as the figure. The remaining elements constitute the background. We see dots, lines, areas, light, dark, et cetera in an organized way. When it is hard to distinguish between figure and background some structures will be perceived as reversible. A small shape within a large shape will be interpreted as the "figure", while the larger shape is interpreted as the ground. A given contour can belong to only one of the two areas it encloses and shapes. Whichever of the sides, the contour shapes will be perceived as a figure. All the gestalt laws contribute to creating a figure. Reality and what we see at any given moment will always be separated and different.

Grouping. The presence of a boundary is not required for the perception of a form or a shape. When small elements are arranged in groups, we tend to perceive them as larger forms. This is similar to "closure". By grouping headings, paragraphs, illustrations, and legends the designer aids communication.

Objective set. Some phenomena are perceived more strongly than others. For example, two lines that almost form a right angle are perceived as a right angle.

Proximity. Events and objects that are close together are perceptually grouped together. The eye tends to be attracted to groups or clusters rather than to isolates. We can use space to group graphic components. Related data and elements should be put in close proximity to each other.

Similarity. We tend to group our impressions on the basis of their similarity. Objects sharing similar characteristics, such as colour, orientation, pattern, shape, size, texture, value are seen together and they belong together. This principle can be used to signal a particular kind of graphic component in a consistent way.

As previously noted there is a close relationship between guidelines aimed at providing simplicity and guidelines aimed at facilitating perception, processing and memory. Simplicity in a message will result in perception of that message. The sub-sections *Perception of Text, Perception of Pictures, Perception of Layout,* and *Perception of Colour* provide "perception-oriented" guidelines that may be used in the design of messages and information materials.

Perception of Text

A text should be well worth reading for the intended receivers. In order to im-prove the reading value of the text the information designer can:

- Use a list of contents to create pre-understanding.
- Provide text with a rich language for pleasant reading.
- Avoid irrelevant information and distracting jargon.

- – <o> – -

In verbal and visual languages prior experience and context are very important to the perception of contents. Perception of verbal content is apparently easier when a text is read than heard. Therefore it is easier to assimilate and profit from a rich language by reading than by listening. It is also known that pic-tures that are relevant to the content of the text will facilitate learning from reading prose[1]. The information designer should consider embedded meanings of different colours when using colours to accent words in a text[2]. Colour and grey scale can be used to influence the perception of size. Open and light forms are perceived as being larger than closed and darker forms of the same shape[3].

It may take only 2–3 seconds to recognize the content in an image[4], but 20–30 seconds to read a verbal description of the same image[5], and 60–90 sec-onds to read it aloud[6]. The intended receiver must get the time that is necessary for reading a text. In verbal and visual languages prior experience and context are very important to the perception of contents.

The perception of linear representations, such as music and text, requires slow and sequential processing[7]. Perception of a text is always relative. There-fore people will perceive a text in different ways. However, there is a large de-gree of perceptual constancy. We can view a text and read it from various dis-tances and various angles and still get the same understanding of the text con-tent[8].

[1] Levin, Anglin and Carney, 1987
[2] Hartley, 1987
[3] Winn, 1993
[4] Paivio, 1979; Postman, 1979
[5] Lawson, 1968; Ekwall, 1977
[6] Sinatra, 1986
[7] Perfetti, 1977; Sinatra, 1986
[8] Pettersson, 1989

Perception of Pictures

Pictures should be well worth reading for the intended receivers. In order to improve the reading value of the pictures the information designer can:

- Use photographs showing people.
- Provide pictures with interesting contents.
- Provide a good contrast between figure and ground in pictures.

- – <o> – -

There are major differences between the concepts "seeing", "looking", and "reading"[1]. The pattern for eye movements and fixations depends on what we wish to see, or are told to see in a picture[2]. Persuasion tends to be accomplished in both children and adolescents almost exclusively through imagery[3]. It is not likely that there will be just one, but several equally good options available for achieving satisfactory communication. The design of a picture can be changed a great deal without any major impact on the perception of the image contents[4]. There is a large degree of perceptual constancy. We can view a symbol or a picture from various distances and various angles and still get the same perception of the content. Our minds constantly fill in missing details and complete images, without our realizing that it has happened.

Generally speaking people like pictures showing people. Pictures are cultural products shared by many individuals[5]. Cultural differences may impact the effectiveness of pictures[6]. An individual who is smiling in the picture is seen as a positive person, while an individual who is frowning is viewed as a negative person[7]. The larger a person's face appears in a picture, the more positively we perceive that individual. And a close-up headshot of a person is more positive than a photo taken from a distance[8]. Colour and grey scale can be used to influence the perception of size. Open and light forms are perceived as being larger than closed and darker forms of the same shape[9].

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[1] Pettersson, 1986a

[2] Yarbus, 1967

[3] Barry, 1998

[4] Pettersson, 1986b

[5] Moriarty and Rohe, 1992

[6] Kovalik, 2004

[7] Moriarty and Popovich, 1991

[8] Archer et al., 1983

[9] Winn, 1993

When a person is shown straight on in a photograph he or she is perceived in a more positive way and perceived as being more in control of the situation than a person who is shown from one side[1]. This person is also perceived much more positively than persons who are shown from behind. An individual appears powerful when he or she is photographed from below with the photographer looking up at him or her. The same individual appears less powerful, and least in control of the situation, if he or she is photographed from above. Individuals shown with closed eyes are viewed more negatively than those shown with open eyes. It is also known that the purpose of a photo is important for our perception of the person depicted in the picture[2].

Perception of Layout

The layout of information material may aid or it may hinder perception of the content. To aid perception the information designer should:

- Avoid too short and too long lines.
- Use colour, orientation, pattern, shape, size, texture, and value to show that objects belong together.
- Make sure that distribution of space reflects relationships.

- – <o> – -

We read texts as "word pictures," not letter by letter. Readers tend to dislike both very short and very long line lengths. As previously noted the optimum line length quite often seems to be about 1 1/2 alphabets – 42 characters[3].

Pictures are perceived more rapidly and readily than text[4]. Sometimes image-enhancements intended to improve the interpretation of image content get in the way of the actual message[5]. A number of studies[6] demonstrate how graphics act as strategies that activate learner's cognitive processes along both horizontal and vertical planes. It is easier to learn left to right sequences than the other way around.

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[1] Moriarty and Popovich, 1991

[2] Moriarty and Garramone, 1986

[3] Pettersson, 1989; Walker, 1990. Other suggestions: 35–40 characters (West, 1987), 40–50 characters (Lipton, 2007), 50 characters (Parker, 1988), up to 60 characters (Zwaga, Boersma and Hoonhout, 1999), 60–65 characters (Miles, 1987).

[4] Fleming and Levie, 1978, 1993; Sinatra, 1986

[5] Vogel, Dickson, and Lehman 1986

[6] Winn, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1993; Winn and Holliday, 1985

Perception of Colour

Colours should be used with care. In order to aid perception of colour the information designer should:

- Consider that many people are colour blind.
- Use colour to enhance perception of a visual message.
- Use colour and grey scale to influence the perception of size.

- – <o> – -

Yellow, orange, and red hues are perceived as warm and active colours. Red evokes feelings of strong emotions. Violet, blue, and blue-green are perceived as cool and passive hues. Blue is often used to represent truth and honesty. White is often associated with innocence and purity, and black often represents evil and darkness. However, it should be noted that certain colours have different meanings in different societies[1].

Subjects dislike the use of more than three or four text colours on the same page, screen, or slide. Colour coding is a good way to show that something is especially important and interesting. When text is shown on a visual display, there is no easily read colour combination. Rather than focusing on specific colours as always best, designers should work to ensure good contrast between text and background[2].

A colour coding process may enable people to retain critical information and disregard redundant and irrelevant information. It is, however, known that extensively trained viewers can reliably recognize only about 50 colour codes. An effective and systematic colour code with a maximum of four to six colours in information material assists the viewer in categorising and organising stimuli into meaningful patterns. The choice of colour and grey scale will influence the perception of size. Open and light forms are perceived as being larger than closed and darker forms of the same shape[3]. (Also see the subsection *Legibility of Colour*.)

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[1] Zimmermann and Perkin, 1982

[2] Bradshaw, 2003

[3] Winn, 1993

Facilitating Mental Processing

There is no direct correspondence between groups of letters, words, sentences, paragraphs, texts, and reality. Understanding the concepts that words represent in various specialist areas and sub-cultures may be difficult or even impossible for all non-specialists. Thus the information designer needs to know the audience.

Visual language abilities develop prior to and serve as the foundation of, verbal language development[1]. Development of visual language abilities is dependent upon receiver interaction with images, objects, and also body language[2]. Because children developmentally cannot or do not pay attention to factual information in advertising – but rather to peripheral cues such as colour and imagery – they tend to process advertising not through logical assessment, but through their emotions[3]. The same visuals are not equally effective for receivers with different prior knowledge. Images and visual language speak directly to us in the same way experience speaks to us, that is emotionally and holistically. There seem to be no major difference between genders in interpretation of image contents[4]. Visual communication is becoming more important as an increasing number of decisions in society are being made on the basis of pictorial representations[5].

As previously mentioned there is a close relationship between guidelines aimed at providing simplicity and guidelines aimed at facilitating perception, processing and memory. Simplicity in a message will result in easier and more effective perception, processing and memory of that message[6]. Design has the unique capacity[7] to shape information by:

– Emphasizing or understating,
– Comparing or ordering,
– Grouping or sorting,
– Selecting or omitting,
– Opting for immediate or delayed recognition, and
– Presenting it in an entertaining fashion.

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[1] Reynolds-Myers, 1985; Moriarty, 1994

[2] Reynolds-Myers, 1985; Fleming and Levie, 1978, 1993

[3] Barry, 1998

[4] Dwyer, 1972, Fleming and Levie, 1978, 1993

[5] Nielsen, 2004

[6] Sinatra, 1986

[7] Mijksenaar, 1997, p. 25

In general one can state that information should be as simple, clear, and unambiguous as possible. However, in any presentation, information can be enriched with a wealth of details. The sub-sections *Processing of Text, Processing of Pictures, Processing of Layout,* and *Processing of Colour* provide "process-oriented" guidelines that may be used in the design of messages in information and learning materials.

Processing of Text

In order to facilitate the processing of text the information designer should:

- Design text to facilitate mental processing.
- Use a variety of examples and non-examples.
- Provide the time that is necessary for the receivers to read, interpret and understand the message in the text.

- – <o> – -

A text can convey information, contain analyses and describe feelings and facts[1]. Reading a text is a very structured activity with several eye fixations on each line[2]. Therefore lines should not be too short, or too wide. Word identification is a multi-stage process, which will take some time[3]. Word naming and word meaning are processed in the left hemisphere[4].

To avoid too large masses of text, it is a good idea to divide the text into sections, subsections, and paragraphs. Headings on different hierarchic levels will provide the readers with reference point and help them to organize information cognitively for better retention and recall. Headings set in different type versions aid comprehension of the text content[5].

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[1] Melin, 1986b

[2] Ekwall, 1977

[3] Sinatra, 1986

[4] Pirozzolo and Rayner, 1979

[5] Jonassen, 1982

Processing of Pictures

In order to facilitate the receiver's mental processing of pictures the information designer should:

- Use line drawings when study time is limited.
- Provide more realistic versions of artwork when unlimited study time is allowed.
- Use graphics in a consistent way.

- – <o> – -

With their many meanings visuals create ambiguity in the reception in a way that most expressions of written language does not[1]. Pupils in junior schools[2] have very low "pictorial capability." The same is true for pupils in intermediate schools, junior high schools, and in comprehensive schools[3]. In addition comprehensive school students are poor at expressing themselves with pictures[4]. Furthermore, inconsistent use of graphics in information and learning materials is quite common. This will reduce understanding and learning[5].

The available study time is important. Line drawings are most effective in formats where the learner's study time is limited. More realistic versions of artwork, however, may be more effective in formats where unlimited study time is allowed[6]. Visual presentation support is persuasive[7]. In a study presentations using visual aids were 43% more persuasive than unaided presentations. At the same time, research in the area of reading indicates that the type of visuals that are used is an important variable in reading comprehension. However, and unfortunately this becomes less important in reality since most students do not attend to the visuals unless they are instructed to do so[8].

There are two kinds of image interpretation[9], one is "immediate" and the other is "analytical." Some assignments cause interpretation of image contents on a low cognitive level, and some on a high cognitive level. People may understand and describe a picture in very different ways.

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[1] Limburg, 1987

[2] Backman, Berg, and Sigurdson, 1988; Eklund, 1990

[3] Backman, Berg, and Sigurdson, 1988

[4] Backman, Berg and Sigurdson, 1988; Eklund, 1990

[5] Bradshaw, 1996, 2003

[6] Dwyer, 1972; Fleming and Levie, 1978; Soulier, 1988

[7] Vogel, Dickson, and Lehman, 1986

[8] Reinking, 1986; Pettersson, 1990

[9] Pettersson, 1989, 1993

Processing of Layout

In order to facilitate the processing of layout the information designer should:

- Use illustrations that are relevant to the content in the text.
- Make close connections between verbal and visual representations.
- Avoid inconsistent use of typography.

– – <o> – –

Graphic design is a tool with which we can manipulate the raw materials – words in different typefaces, sizes, styles, empty space, illustrations, colour, paper and ink, and the final number of pages in a document – to achieve the best possible communications between people. Typographic cuing generally refers to the use of bold or italic type or underlining to signal the important ideas in a text. There is little doubt that cuing does work well in drawing attention to the cued material[1]. The consensus is that readers are more likely to remember cued ideas than un-cued ideas[2]. In one experiment the use of paragraph headings improved learning[3]. However, underlining of relevant information did not have the same effect.

Most pictures can be interpreted in several ways until anchored to one by a legend[4]. Pictures incorporate numerous "correct" interpretations, although not always one anticipated by the picture creator. Interference in presentation, such as inconsistent use of colours, graphics, or typography, will reduce understanding and learning[5].

Text-relevant pictures facilitate learning from reading prose[6]. When illustrations provide text-redundant information, learning content in the text that is also shown in pictures will be facilitated. However, illustrations that are not relevant to the content in the text can have a negative effect on reading comprehension and prose learning[7]. Conveying information through both verbal and visual languages makes it possible for learners to alternate between functionally independent, though interconnected, and complementary cognitive processing systems[8]. Learners are most able to build connections between ver-

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[1] Glynn, Britton, and Tillman, 1985

[2] Hartley, 1987

[3] Cisotto and Boscolo, 1995

[4] Barthes, 1977

[5] Bradshaw, 1996, 2003

[6] Levin et al., 1987

[7] Levie and Lentz, 1982; Melin, 1999b

[8] Levie and Lentz, 1982

bal and visual representations when text and illustrations are actively held in memory at the same time. This can happen when text and illustrations are presented in close connection on the same page in a book, or when learners have sufficient experience to generate their own mental images as they read the text[1].

Processing of Colour

In order to facilitate the processing of colour the information designer should:

- Use colour coding in a consistent way.
- Limit the number of colour codes.
- Find out likes or dislikes of colour.

- – <o> – -

People might see colours in the same way. However, no two persons experience colour in the same way. Thus the human reactions to colour stimuli cannot be standardised. Depending on age, culture, gender, and profession, there are different subjective reactions to colour. There are likes and dislikes of colour, based on general as well as personal associations.

Colour coding will increase understanding and learning[2]. The number of colour codes should be limited and they should always be explained. To avoid confusion and misunderstanding, it is important that colour be used consistently. Inconsistent use of colours will reduce learning[3]. (Also see the subsection *Attention to Colour*.)

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[1] Mayer et al., 1995
[2] Dwyer, 1972, 1978; Epskamp, 1981; Hannafin and Peck, 1988; Bradshaw, 2003
[3] Bradshaw, 1996, 2003

Facilitating Memory

As previously seen there is a close relationship between guidelines aimed at providing simplicity and guidelines aimed at facilitating perception, processing and memory. Simplicity in a message will result in easier and more effective perception, processing and memory of that message. The sub-sections *Memory Models, Memory for Text,* and *Memory for Pictures* provide "process-oriented" guidelines that may be used in the design of messages and information materials. In order to facilitate memory the information designer should.

- Present only a limited number of information elements at the same time.
- Provide meaningful contents.
- Present text and illustrations in close connection.

Memory Models

A number of models or theories describe the transfer of information through memory[1]. One way of viewing memory functions is based on information processing in steps[2], the "*information processing theory.*" The first of these steps is the sensory memory, or the immediate memory, which carries out the storage of stimulus information at the peripheral level. After being processed in the sensory memory, some information is passed on to the short-term memory (STM), operative memory, or working memory. The short-term memory has severe capacity limitations. Miller's initial review of short-term memory research[3] related to items like brightness, colour, digits, hue, length, letters, loudness, pitch, size, and taste. Subsequent studies have come to similar conclusions[4]. The long-term memory[5] (LTM) is what most people mean when they refer to "memory." The long-term memory has episodic memories of specific things we have done, seen, heard, felt, tasted, and so on. To facilitate these processes the information designer should organise information carefully.

The dual-coding theory[6] proposes that rather than just one sensory memory, one short-term memory, and long-term memory, as might be implied in

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[1] Waugh and Norman, 1965; Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968; Norman and Bobrow, 1975; Broadbent, 1984; Sinatra, 1986; Lockhart and Craik, 1990

[2] Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968

[3] Miller, 1968, *The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information*

[4] Case, 1974, 1975; Pascual-Leone and Smith, 1969; and Bazeli and Bazeli, 1992

[5] Carlson, 1993

[6] Paivio, 1990

information processing theory, there are actually separate memory systems for different types of information: one for verbal information and one for imaginal information. Verbal memory includes activity related to language systems (auditory and speech), while imaginal memory includes pictures, sounds, tastes, and nonverbal thoughts (imagination). Memory is greater when a verbal and a visual code are activated at the same time, rather than only one of them[1]. After reviewing picture effects on children's learning

Memory for Text

Retrieval from verbal memory is a serial integration and sequential processing of auditory-motor perception systems[2]. Word identification is a multi-stage process. The right brain hemisphere carries out visual-featural analysis. Word naming and word meaning are processed by the left hemisphere[3]. Utilizing specific textual structure *does not facilitate* recall of instructional text[4]. However, utilizing specific textual structure facilitates recall of instructional text[5].

A meaningful content is understood and learned easier and remembered longer. We best remember what we read at the beginning and at the end of a reading session. The optimum time for learning from reading seems to be 20-40 minutes[6], and then it is time for a pause. We will forget most of what we learn if we do not rehearse the material. After finishing reading, it is time for the first rehearsal, reading keywords and notes. It is a good idea to repeat this after a day, after a week, and after a month. We will remember more from a graphically complex text than a "plain" text[7].

[1] Mayer, 1993; Moreno and Mayer, 2000

[2] Sinatra, 1986

[3] Pirozzolo and Rayner, 1979

[4] Frase and Schwartz, 1979, Hartley, 1980

[5] Frase and Schwartz, 1979, Bernard, 1990

[6] Atkinson et al. 1990

[7] Melin, 1999b

Memory for Pictures

In 1977 one scholar concluded that enough research evidence already had been gathered regarding illustrated text[1]: "No more experiments are required to substantiate the positive effect of pictures on children's learning." However, much more research in this area has been done since 1977. We know that memory for pictures are superior to memory for words. This is called[2] the "pictorial superiority effect". Visual memory is very fast[3]. Emotionally charged pictures may improve motivation for reading and thus improve the memory[4].

Memory for a picture-word combination is superior to memory for words alone or memory for pictures alone[5]. Learners are most able to build connections between verbal and visual representations when text and illustrations are actively held in memory at the same time. This can happen when text and illustrations are presented in close connection, for example on the same page in a book, or when learners have sufficient experience to generate their own mental images as they read the text[6]. Therefore pictures should be put as close to the relevant text as possible[7].

The design of learning materials should be co-ordinated with a theory of meaningful learning[8]. Such a theory[9] was created from components of a generative learning theory[10] and the dual coding theory[11].

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[1] Pressley, 1977, p. 613

[2] Paivio, 1983; Branch and Bloom, 1995

[3] Beaver, 1994

[4] Melin, 1999a

[5] Adams and Chambers 1962; Haber and Myers, 1982

[6] Mayer et al., 1995

[7] Lidman and Lund, 1972; MacDonald- Ross, 1977; Hartley and Burnhill, 1977a; Haber and Hershenson, 1980; Wright, 1982; Braden, 1983; Benson, 1985; Pettersson, 1989, 1993; Mayer, 1993; Mayer and Sims, 1994; Mayer et al 1995; Moreno and Mayer, 2000

[8] Fleming and Levie, 1993; and Mayer, 1993; Mayer et al. 1995

[9] Mayer et al. 1995

[10] Witt rock, 1974, 1989

[11] Paivio, 1971, 1978, 1983, 1986, 1991

Summary

This chapter includes lists of the goals, principles and guidelines used in information design.

ID Goal and Foundation

In information design the main goal is *clarity of communication*. As an area of knowledge information design rests on a *foundation*, which can be expressed in four basic statements:

1. ID is multi-disciplinary.
2. ID is multi-dimensional.
3. Theory and practice co-operate in ID.
4. There are no firm rules in ID.

An exception to statement number four is the only information design rule: "Respect copyright, and other laws and regulations related to information."

ID Principles

Functional principles
    Defining the problems
    Providing structure
    Providing clarity
    Providing simplicity
    Providing emphasis
    Providing unity
Administrative principles
    Information access
    Information costs
    Information ethics
    Securing quality
	Aesthetic principles
	    Harmony
	    Aesthetic proportion
	Cognitive principles
	    Facilitating attention
	    Facilitating perception
	    Facilitating processing
	    Facilitating memory

ID Guidelines

The following 150 guidelines are based on the 16 design principles.

1 Defining the Problems

The Sender
- Define what the sender wants to achieve.
- Decide when this is to happen.
- Find out about the project budget, as well as all other requirements.

The Representation

The Message
- Define the purpose and the objective of the message, always keeping the intended receivers in mind.
- Collect and review necessary facts for later use in the design process.
- Consider the use of words, images, and graphic form.

The Medium
- Select the most suitable medium for the message.
- Produce synopsis for text, pictures, and sound.
- Adopt the graphic design to the medium.

The Receivers
- Carefully define the group of intended receivers.
- Collect data about age, culture, gender, and socio-economic factors.
- When possible, consider any feedback that may be expressed by any previous receivers.

The Context
- Define the internal context of the message.
- Define the external contexts of the message.
- Define how the context may influence the interpretation of the message.

2 Providing Structure
- Develop a clear structure for the content.
- Limit the number of levels in the structure.
- Show the hierarchy and structure of the content in the graphic design.

3 Providing Clarity

Legibility of Text

Legibility of Print Media
- Use clear, direct, simple and transparent typography.
- Use a common typeface, between nine and twelve Pica points, for continuous text in a book, a pamphlet, or a report.
- Restrict the number typefaces and only use a few per information material.

Legibility of Text on Wall Charts
- Set text bold and large enough, adjusted to the reading distance.
- Use lower case letters and avoid all-capital printing for running text.
- Restrict the number typefaces.

Legibility of Text on Screens
- Use typefaces designed for screen display.
- Use black text on a white or yellow background.
- Avoid the use of all capital letters.

Legibility of Projected Texts
- Use no more than six rows of six words in each image, set in a linear typeface, with characters large and bold enough.
- Maintain a good contrast between foreground and background.
- Avoid graduated and tonal background fills.

Legibility of Pictures
- Use picture elements that are bold and large enough.
- Use a style guide for picture elements in schematic pictures.
- Set words in images and pictures bold and large enough to read.

Legibility of Layout
- Use standard page sizes with standard grids for pre-planning of pages.
- Use a clear and simple layout.
- Use arrows, bullets, lines, and symbols in various colours; also margin notes, repetition, and space to highlight relevant information.

Legibility of Symbols
- Use distinct colours and simple graphical elements to design symbols that will function in any size.
- Design solid figures with a distinct contrast to the background.
- Use characters and graphical elements that are bold, distinct and large enough.

Legibility of Numerical Values

Tables
- Use type between 8 and 12-point size for table cells.
- Use vertically oriented tables.
- Use rounded off numbers.

Graphs
- Compare lengths of variables to show their relationships.
- Compare areas of variables to show their parts of a whole.
- Use actual figures in graphs when accuracy is needed.

Legibility of Maps
- Use bold and distinct symbols in a consistent size.
- Restrict the number of typefaces and complexity of patterns.
- Provide distinct contrast in form and dimensions.

Legibility of Colour
- Use a light or a dark background colour appropriate to the content, and then use a colour with good contrast for the figure or text.
- Make sure that differences between colours are clear and obvious.
- Combine colours with shape in warning signs.

4 Providing Simplicity

Readability of Text

Readability of Print Media
- Use an active voice and avoid too many details.
- Use a style guide and make the message comprehensible for the intended receivers.
- Make an overall check of language, writing style and terminology before the script can be confirmed as an original.

Readability of Text on Wall Charts
- Edit the text into sections that are easily read.
- Check the spelling!
- Use headings and other text elements in a consistent way.

Readability of Text on Screens
- Display data so that it is easy to read.
- Recognize cultural differences.
- Use a "normal" combination of upper and lower case letters.

Readability of Projected Texts
- Consider the use of lists.
- Be careful in the use of acronyms.
- Restrict stylized and fancy typefaces to opening frames.

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Readability of Pictures
- Write legends to explain pictures.
- Choose illustrations carefully and use visual sequencing techniques to present complex ideas.
- Leave out needless pictures and picture elements and avoid excessive image detail.

Readability of Layout
- Create standard pages for different information materials.
- Avoid dull, exciting, provocative, or too uncommon graphical designs.
- Review typography and layout for consistency of readability.

Readability of Symbols
- Use colour, position, size and shape.
- Use a combination of pictographs and words.
- Use realistic figures rather than abstract forms.

Readability of Numerical Values
- Provide all the information the learner will need in the table.
- Group items in a clear way.
- Put target entries to the left of the answers.

Readability of Maps
- Restrict the number of visual symbols on maps.
- Keep it as simple as possible.
- Be consistent! Inconsistencies will confuse the readers.

Readability of Colour
- Use colour to emphasize or to play something down.
- Use colour to show differences or similarities.
- Use colour to help readers recall information and to find things.

5 Providing Emphasis
- Use specific elements for emphasis.
- Use clear contrasts for emphasis.
- Use variables like complexity, directionality, exaggerated features, humour, isolation or motion for emphasis.

6 Providing Unity
- Use style and terminology in a consistent way in each specific information material.
- Use layout and typography in a consistent way.
- Use highlighting techniques in a consistent way.

7 Information Access

External Access
- Design information materials to fit main systems for storage.
- Use international standards, such as standard page sizes.
- Consider aspects of information security.

Internal Access
- Create appropriate indexes and other search systems.
- Provide clear contrast between figure and ground.
- Provide a supporting context for important information contents.

8 Information Costs
- Consider the costs for design and production of the material.
- Consider future costs for distribution and storage.
- Plan and execute continuous reviews of all costs for the material.

9 Information Ethics
- Respect copyright.
- Respect ethical rules, and media-specific ethical guidelines.
- Never engage in image manipulation.

10 Securing Quality
- Establish a system for control of the different versions of documents.
- Review the information material with respect to credibility, graphic design, structure, style, and terminology before technical production.
- Invite users to evaluate the information material.

11 Harmony
- Develop standard templates for graphic design.
- Use standard templates for graphic design.
- Find balance between the design elements.

12 Aesthetic Proportion
- Find out receiver preferences of aesthetic proportions.
- Be careful using proportions according to the "golden section."
- Never mix a decorative use of colour with cognitive importance.

13 Facilitating Attention

Attention to Text
- Use headings with words that will catch the attention of the receiver.
- Set headings in different type versions to get attention.
- Use italics, boldface or colour to get attention.

Attention to Pictures
- Provide pictures of people, in particular pictures of their faces.
- Use pictures that are interesting enough.
- Use different types of visuals.

Attention to Symbols
- Use clear and distinct symbols for warnings
- Put warning signs close to the hazard.
- Use clear symbols for wayshowing.

Attention to Layout
- Use legends to direct attention and interest within pictures.
- Use "bleed" creatively to expand the impact of pictures.
- Use highlighting techniques to enhance relevant information.

Attention to Colour
- Use bold and bright colours to get attention.
- Use colour coding to improve attention.
- Use colour to enhance attention to a visual message.

14 Facilitating Perception

Perception of Text
- Use a list of contents to create pre-understanding.
- Provide text with a rich language for pleasant reading.
- Avoid irrelevant information and distracting jargon.

Perception of Pictures
- Use photographs showing people.
- Provide pictures with interesting contents.
- Provide a good contrast between figure and ground in pictures.

Perception of Layout
- Avoid too short and too long lines.
- Use colour, orientation, pattern, shape, size, texture, and value to show that objects belong together.
- Make sure that distribution of space reflects relationships.

Perception of Colour
- Consider that many people are colour blind.
- Use colour to enhance perception of a visual message.
- Use colour and grey scale to influence the perception of size.

15 Facilitating Mental Processing

Processing of Text
- Design text to facilitate mental processing.
- Use a variety of examples and non-examples.
- Provide the time that is necessary for the receivers to read, interpret and understand the message in the text.

Processing of Pictures
- Use line drawings when study time is limited.
- Provide more realistic versions of artwork when unlimited study time is allowed.
- Use graphics in a consistent way.

Processing of Layout
- Use illustrations that are relevant to the content in the text.
- Make close connections between verbal and visual representations.
- Avoid inconsistent use of typography.

Processing of Colour
- Use colour coding in a consistent way.
- Limit the number of colour codes.
- Find out likes or dislikes of colour.

16 Facilitating Memory
- Present only a limited number of information elements at the same time.
- Provide meaningful contents.
- Present text and illustrations in close connection.

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