Glossary of Printing and Journalism Terms

A

Air — An amount of white space in a layout.

Align — To line up typeset or other graphic material as specified, using a base or vertical line as the reference point.

Apex — The point of a character where two lines meet at the top. An example of this is the point on the letter "A".

Art — All matter other than text material; i.e. illustrations and photographs.

Ascender — Any part of a lower case letter extending above the x-height. For example, "b," "d," "h."

Attribute — to write the name of a source for your information when using a quote from a person, or a book, or a part of any copyrighted work.

B

Backslant — Letters that slant to the left, the opposite way from italic characters.

Banner — A large headline or title extending across the full page width.

Baseline — The line on which the base of capital letters sit.

Baseline grid — Design programs have a non-printing baseline grid that can be used for aligning columns of text.

Beat — To cover a particular genre of journalism. (i.e.— Music Journalism or Sports Journalism)

Blanket — A rubber-faced sheet onto which ink is transferred prior to that ink being transferred to the sheet to be printed. The process "offset" is so called because the ink is picked up by the blanket from the inked plate and then "offset" or transferred onto the paper.

Bleed — Layout, type, or illustrations that extend beyond the trim marks to the edge of a page.

Blurb — A short description often run as a pullout in an article or as a teaser to an inside story.

Body Type — The main text of the work, not including headlines.

Bold Type — Type with a heavier or darker appearance. Most typefaces have a bold face. AKA "Bold" or "Boldface."

Border — A continuous decorative design or rule surrounding an element on a page. AKA stroke or rule.

Box — A section of text marked off by rules or white space and presented separately from the main text and illustrations. Longer boxed sections in magazines are sometimes referred to as "Sidebars."

Bullet — A large dot preceding text to add emphasis.

Byline — Reporter's name, which is printed at the beginning of an article. The newspaper's name is often included in the second line of the byline.

C

Caliper — The thickness of a sheet of paper or board. Also the name of the tool used to make the measurement.

Call-Out — A graphic device calling attention to a larger design or diagram. Example would be a rule going from a blowup to the description of that portion of the blowup.

Camera Ready — Artwork or pasted up material that is ready for reproduction. Customers who submit papers on paste-up grids submit camera ready copy.

Capitals — Uppercase letters

Caption — Description of an image or illustration. AKA cutline.

Cap Line — An imaginary line across the top of capital letters. The distance from the cap line to the baseline is the cap size.

Caps — An abbreviation for capital letters.

Caps and Small Caps — A style of type that shows capital letters used in the normal way while the body copy is set in capital letters which are of a slightly smaller size.

Centerspread — Two facing pages of a newspaper or magazine where the textual material on the left hand side continues across to the right hand side. The term "double truck" comes from the letterpress shop where it took two type carts or "trucks" to move a typeset spread. AKA Double Truck or Double Page Spread

Collate — To gather separate sections or leaves of a book together in the correct order for binding.

Color Separations — The division of a multi-color original into the primary process colors of yellow, magenta, cyan, and black.

Column Inch — A measure of area used in newspapers and magazines to calculate the cost of display advertising. A column inch is one column wide by one inch deep.

Column Rule — A light face vertical rule used to separate columns of type.

Condensed — A style of typeface in which the characters have an elongated appearance.

Contrast — The degree of tones in a photograph ranging from highlight to shadow.

Copy — All text to be included in a printed work.

Corner Marks — Marks printed on a sheet to indicate the trim or page corners on the finished piece. AKA Printer's Marks or Registration Marks

Credit Line — The line beneath a photo with the photographer's name.

Crop — The elimination of parts of a photograph or other original that are not required to be printed. Cropping allows the remaining parts of the image to be enlarged to fill the space.

Cursive — Used to describe typefaces that resemble written script.

Cutout — An image where the background has been removed to produce a silhouette. AKA Dropout

D

Dash — A short horizontal rule used for punctuation.

Descender — Any part of a lower case letter that extends below the X-height, as in the case of "y" and "j."

Dek — Headline

Dingbat — A decorative element or ornament used at the end of a paragraph, page or chapter to take up space.

Display Type — Larger type used for headings. Generally 18 points or larger.

Dot Matrix Printer — A printer in which each character is formed from a matrix of dots, generally 9 or 24 dots. They are normally impact systems, where a wire is fired at a ribbon in order to leave an inked dot on the page, but other forms such as thermal and electro-erosion systems are also used.

DPI (Dots per inch) — The measurement of resolution for page printers, phototypesetting machines, laser printers, and graphics screens. AKA Resolution

Drop Cap — A large initial letter used at the start of the text that drops into the line or lines of text below.

Dummy — A preliminary layout showing the position of illustrations and text as they are to appear in the final reproduction.

E

Electronic Publishing — A generic term for the distribution of information which is stored, transmitted, and reproduced electronically. Desktop publishing is one form of electronic publishing.

Em — A square unit with edges equal in size to the chosen point size. It gets its name from the letter "M" which was originally as wide as the type size.

Em Dash — A dash used in punctuation, and the length of one em.

En — A unit of measurement that is half as wide as an em.

En Dash — A dash approximately half the width of an em dash.

EPS — A computer file that contains both images and PostScript instructions. Stands for "encapsulated PostScript file."

Expanded Type — A typeface with a slightly wider body giving a flatter appearance.

F

Face — An abbreviation for typeface referring to a family in a given style.

Filler — Extra material used to complete a column or page, usually of little importance.

Flag — The designed title of a newspaper as it appears at the top of page one. Papers that print multiple sections usually have a different flag for each section, i.e. Sports, Local, Features, etc. The page 1 flag is also called the Mast, but that term does not apply to the inside section flags.

Flush Left/Right — Typeset copy that is aligned vertically at the left or right margin.

Font — A complete set of characters in a typeface.

Format — The appearance of a printed work — the type style, layout, margins, size, etc.

Four Color Process — Printing in full color using four color separation negatives and ink — yellow, magenta, cyan, and black.

G

Gothic — Typefaces with no serifs and broad, even strokes.

Grayscale — An image mode used for black and white printing.

Greek text — A software device where areas of grey are used to simulate lines of text. Used primarily to get around the slowness of high resolution displays. This is how design programs display text when you zoom out and the text is too small to read.

Grid — A systematic division of a page into areas to enable designers to ensure consistently. Acts as a measuring guide and shows text, illustrations and trim sizes.

Gutter — The central blank area between left and right pages, or the space between columns or other elements on a page.

H

Hard Copy — A copy on paper as opposed to on disk.

Headline — The title of an article, usually 3-5 words in large type above the story.

Hairline Rule — The thinnest rule that can be printed.

Hickey — A dust particle sticking to the printing plate or blanket which appears on the printed sheet as a dark spot surrounded by a halo. AKA bull's eye or fish eye.

House Style — The style of preferred spelling, punctuation, hyphenation, and indentation used by a particular publication to ensure consistent typesetting. (The accepted norm is the Associated Press style book as a reference.) AKA Local Style

I

Imposition — The arrangement of pages on a printed sheet, which when the sheet is finally printed on both sides, folded and trimmed, will place the pages in their correct order.

Italic — Type with sloping letters that slant to the right.

J

Justify — The alignment of text along a margin or both margins. This is achieved by adjusting the spacing between the words and characters as necessary so that each line of text finishes at the same point.

K

Kerning — The adjustment of spacing between certain letter pairs to obtain a more pleasing appearance. (VASE or V ASE)

L

Landscape — Work in which the width used is greater than the height. Also used to indicate the orientation of tables or illustrations which are printed "sideways."

Laser Printer — A high-quality image printing system using a laser beam to produce an image on a photosensitive drum. The image is transferred onto the paper by a conventional xerographic printing process.

Layout — The preparation of copy for setting, indicating the position of type and/or illustrations on the page. A drawing or sketch of a proposed printed piece.

Lead/Lede – The first paragraph of a story.

Leading — Space added between lines of type to space out text and to provide visual separation of the lines. Measured in points or fractions thereof. Leading was named after the slugs of lead which used to be inserted between the lines of metal type.

Leader — A line of dots or dashes between two segments of text on a line to make it easier for the eye to follow. This is a common way of display statistics in sports sections.

Lightface — Type having finer strokes than the medium typeface.

Logo — Short for logotype. A word or combination of letters set as a single unit. Also used to denote a specially styled company name designed as part of a company or corporate image.

Lowercase — The small letters in a font of type. Name came from the location of the type case in a letterpress shop. Capital letters were in the "upper case" and small letters in the "lower case."

M

Margins — The non-printing areas of a page.

Mast — The front page flag.

Masthead — Details of the publisher and editorial staff, usually printed on the editorial page. This term is sometimes erroneously used to refer to the front page flag or mast.

Mock-up — A rough visual of a publication or design.

Modern — Type styles introduced towards the end of the 19th century.

Moire Pattern — The result of superimposing halftone screens at the wrong angle, thereby giving a checkered effect on the printed halftone. This often happens when you scan in an image that is printed on glossy paper.

Monospace — A font in which all characters occupy the same amount of horizontal width, regardless of the character. In other words, an "I" takes as much space as an "M."

Montage — A single image formed from the assembling of several images.

Mug shot — A small picture of just a person's face, usually about 6 picas wide. AKA Bug

N

News release — an educated lay-level article, usually around two pages, that describes the significance of a particular body of research. A release is essentially a "cliff notes" version of a technical paper.

Nut graph – a summation paragraph (usually fairly near the top of the article) that gives the reader a basic idea of what the story is about and why he should read it.

O

Oblique Stroke — A slash (/).

Oldstyle — A style of type characterized by stressed strokes and triangular serifs. An example would be Garamond.

Opacity — An element that you can see through.

Op-ed – Stands for opposite the editor, where these pieces normally run. An opinion article

Orphan — A partial line of type on its own at the top of a page.

Outline — A typeface in which the characters are formed with only the outline defined rather than from solid strokes.

P

Page — One side of a leaf of paper.

Page Proofs — The stage in which pages are made up and paginated.

Pagination — The numbering of pages in a book.

Paragraph Mark — A type symbol used to denote the start of a paragraph. Also used as a footnote sign.

Pasteup — The various elements of a layout mounted in position to form camera-ready artwork.

Pica — The standard unit of measure in the printing industry. There are 12 points to a pica and approximately six picas equal one inch.

Pica Pole — A ruler that measures picas.

Plate — The hard surface on which the printer draws, engraves, or etches his design. JS Printing uses an all digital workflow and prints the files directly to polyester plates for printing.

Point — The standard unit of type size of which there are 72 to the inch. Point size is measured from the top of the ascender to the bottom of the descender.

Portrait — An upright image or page where the height is greater than the width.

Proof — A copy obtained from inked type, plate, block, or screen for checking purposes.

Proof Correction Marks — A standard set of signs and symbols used in copy preparation and to indicate corrections on proofs. Marks are placed both in the text and in the margin.

Q
R

Ragged — Lines of type that do not start or end at the same position.

Ragged Left/Right — Successive lines of type which are of unequal length and which are aligned at either the right or left hand column.

Register — The correct positioning of plates to ensure color and black inks are lined up and print correctly.

Rail — A single column that runs from the top to the bottom of a page.

Reverse — To reproduce as a white image out of a solid background.

River — A white space running at an angle from top to bottom on a printed page. This is distracting to the eye and results from improper spacing during typesetting. It is corrected by adding or reducing white space on several lines.

Roman — Type which has vertical stems as distinct from italics or oblique which are set at angles.

Rule — A type-high strip of metal for printing straight, dot-

ted or decorated lines of various widths.

S

Saddle Stitch — A method of binding where the folded pages are stitched through the spine from the outside, using wire staples. Usually limited to about 64 pages.

Sans Serif — A typeface that has no serifs or small strokes at the end of the main stroke of the character.

Scale — A means of calculating the amount of enlargement or reduction necessary to accommodate a photograph or other element within the area of a design.

Section Mark — A character used at the beginning of a new section. Also used as a footnote symbol.

Section — A printed sheet folded to make a multiple of pages.

Serif — A small cross stroke at the end of the main stroke of a letter.

Sheetfed — A printing press which prints single sheets of paper as opposed to a web press which prints from rolls of paper.

Shoulder — The non-printing area surrounding the face of a type.

Sidebar — A short companion article that runs with a main story. Sidebars are often boxed, or in some other way packaged with the main story.

Signature — A section of a book made by folding a printed sheet so that the pages follow in correct order. Also, a letter or figure printed on the first page of each section of a book and used as a guide when collating and binding.

Slug — the name of a story or image file

Small Caps — A set of capital letters which are smaller than standard and are equal in size to the lower case letters for that type size.

Stet — Used as a proof note to cancel a previous correction. From the Latin, "let it stand."

Style Sheet — A collection of styles specifying page layout styles, paragraph settings and type specifications. Used for consistency. Design programs allow you to create your own Style Sheets for text. For step-by-step instructions on how to create Style Sheets, read our TechKnow Lesson "Styles."

Subhead — The secondary headline that runs beneath the main headline of a story. Subheads give more information about a story.

Swatch — A color sample.

T

Tabloid — Either a newspaper that is slightly smaller than a broadsheet, or a broadsheet page printed and folded sideways. See our TechKnow Lesson "Newspaper Sizes" for more details.

Text — The written or printed material which forms the main body of a publication.

Thin Space — The thinnest space normally used to separate words or letters.

Tint — The effect of adding white to a solid color or of screening a solid area.

Transparency — A color or black and white photographically produced image on transparent film.

Trim — The cutting of the finished product to the correct size.

Type — A rectangular piece of block, usually metal, having on its upper surface a letter or character in relief. A printed character.

Typeface — The raised surface carrying the image of a type character cast in metal. Also used to refer to a complete set of characters forming a family in a particular design or style.

Typo — An abbreviation for a typographical error.

U

Uppercase — See "capitals"

U&lc — An abbreviation for upper and lower case.

V

Vertical Justification — The manipulation of text in fine increments to make columns and pages end at the same point on a page.

W

Watermark — An impression incorporated in the paper making process.

Web — A continuous roll of printing paper used on web-fed presses.

Weight — The degree of boldness or thickness of a letter or font.

Widow — A single word left on the last line of a paragraph at the bottom of a page.

X

X-height — The height of a letter excluding the ascenders and descenders. As an example, "x", which has neither ascender nor descender.