" *Typographic hierarchy is essential to maximizing the likelihood of content being read and understood.* "

Typographic Hierarchy

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Typographic Hierarchy

One of the most important aspects of communicating with type is to establish a strong typographic structure. It establishes a clear hierarchy, that communicates information clearly and conveys meaning. It allows for easy scanning and comprehension, emphasizing key messages and distinguishing between different levels of information.

This organizational system, or roadmap, is achieved through the use of both typographic and spatial elements. The following factors contribute to developing an effective typographic hierarchy:

Type Style
Typeface and weight play a key role in establishing typographic hierarchy, especially for headlines and subheads. Bold (and in some instances very light), decorative, or more distinctive typestyles command attention and convey importance.

Type Size

The viewer's eye is usually drawn to the largest-sized type first (which is usually, but not always, the headline), and then moves on to other elements. Although headlines most commonly appear at the top of a page, this is not a requirement. A well-designed page will guide the reader to the headline and other important elements no matter where they are located.

Graphic Hierarchy
What you need to know

Type style is important
Type style is important for graphic hierarchy as it aids in visual organization, emphasis, readability, and conveying the desired tone.

Type size matters
Font size is important for graphic hierarchy as it helps prioritize information, guide visual flow, and create emphasis.

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Color

The use of color can either draw attention to – or deemphasize an element. Red type on a page with mostly black text will instantly stand out, while making a less important element gray amidst black text will downplay it. Remember that too much color used in too many instances can create visual confusion, which undermines its effectiveness.

Graphic Hierarchy
What you need to know

Use caps and lowercase
The use of capitals and lowercase helps establish visual contrast, highlight key information, and improve readability in graphic hierarchy.

Color is important
Color can aid graphic hierarchy by using contrasting hues, saturation levels, and brightness to emphasize important elements and create visual hierarchy.

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Case

The use of all caps in small doses can be an effective way to draw attention and signify importance, particularly for headings or subheads. Just be aware that all caps have reduced readability, so using upper and lowercase is preferable for lengthy settings and contextual copy.

Placement and Spacing

The placement of all elements, as well as the space between and around them, is part of the overall hierarchy. Keep the most important information prominent. Place all related elements together, while visually separating others to organize the content.

Alignment

How elements are aligned can imply their relative level of significance. Centering usually conveys a sense of importance, and is frequently used for titles, headlines, announcements and invitations.

The MyFonts store from Monotype offers more than 130,000 desktop and Web font products for you to preview, purchase and download. You can also learn about new typeface releases and discover typographic tips and techniques.

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Graphic Hierarchy
What you need to know

Placement and spacing aid hierarchy

Copy placement plays a crucial role in graphic hierarchy, guiding the viewer' attention, conveying information, and establishing visual order.

Space can create order

Whitespace, or negative space, helps create visual order, balance, and emphasis, aiding graphic hierarchy by separating elements and promoting clarity.

Whitespace

Use whitespace, or negative space, to create emphasis and draw attention to important elements. Too many elements on a page, which can create "visual noise" and confuse or fatigue the viewer.

A strong design provides visual cues to lead the viewer through the content. Good typographic hierarchy is essential to maximizing the likelihood of content being read and understood.

Typefaces used in this article

Helvetica Now Pro Display Bold   Helvetica Now Pro Text Medium   ITC Clearface Italic

Helvetica Now Pro Text Light   ITC Clearface Heavy