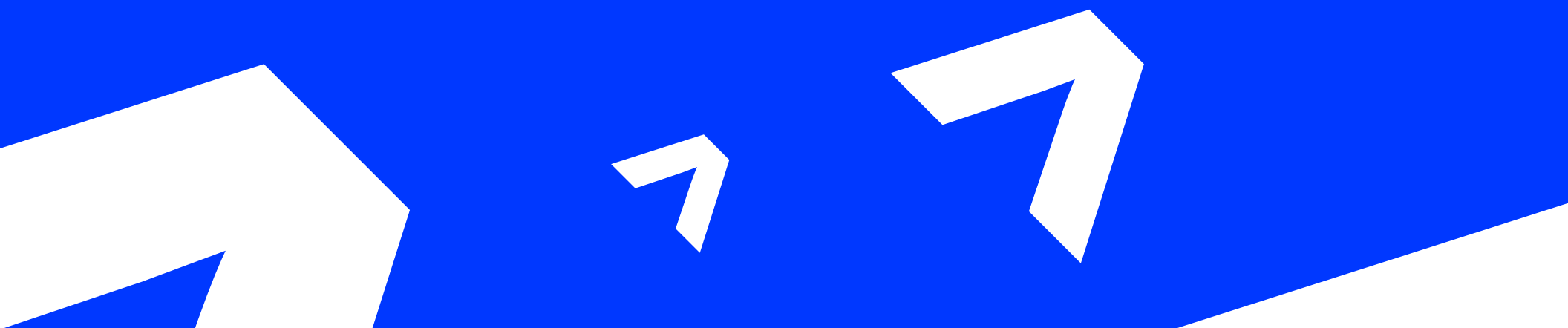


Answering Font Pesky Questions

Although you can't stop folks from questioning your work, you can control how you respond to them.



Reversing Display Type

“It’s easy to be a designer. All you need is a computer and a copy of Canva™.”

Yeah, right... You know better than that.

Often, however, bosses and co-workers critique design without understanding. Your challenge is how to clearly explain good design principles that seem natural to you but arbitrary co-workers or your boss?

Although you can’t stop folks from questioning your work, you can control how you respond to them. You can also use this as an opportunity to educate – and to reaffirm why you’re on the job.

Simple strategies can help you with this process:

- Be businesslike around businesspeople
- Anticipate questions
- Be able justify your decisions

Be Businesslike

Bosses tend to be businesspeople and, by definition, they have more power than you. Treat yours with respect. Even if you think suggestions to set the company quarterly report in Hobo is laughable – don’t.

Anticipate Questions

If you often questions about your typeface choices, be prepared. When making typographic decisions, have clear reasons ready. Trying something new means expecting challenges. Anticipate design questions to handle them confidently.

Justify Your Decisions

The key to anticipating questions is having answers. Justify your typeface choice with sound typographic reasons, not personal taste, to satisfy your questioners – whether it’s en dashes or oldstyle numbers in text.

What follows is just a handful of typical questions – and how you might handle them.

“Why not put all that information on one slide?”

You think: Only poor presenters cram their slides with copy, so they won’t have to think on their feet.

A better answer might be:

Too much text makes slides hard to read and weakens the presentation’s impact. Slides should highlight key points and support the speaker. Cluttered slides with over five bullet points or long text lines distract rather than emphasize, reducing effectiveness. Keep slides clear and focused to enhance communication.

Successful Slides

- **PowerPoint and Keynote presentations are some of the most important business graphics you can produce.**
- **Presentations should not contain too much information**
- **Diagrams and graphs help make complicated information simple to assimilate**
- **When selecting the best font for presentation graphics, prioritize sans serif fonts for their legibility advantages over serif designs.**
- **Diagrams and graphs also help to make complicated information simple to assimilate**
- **Restrict the amount of information you include on one slide**
- **Use rules and bullets only when they add to the understanding**
- **The best colors for PowerPoint presentations include high-contrast combinations like dark text on light backgrounds and vice versa.**
- **Type style and weight changes should be obvious. Subtleties tend to get lost in presentation graphics**

Less is more when it comes to slide content

“Why can’t we use white type against a dark background?”

You think: Reversing type out of a dark background is about as sound an idea as skating on pond ice in April.

A better answer might be:

Reverse type is harder to read than dark type against a light background; studies have also shown that readers don’t like to read reverse type. It can sometimes be effective to use reverse type for a headline, but this normally demands special handling to make it work at all.

William Caxton (1421-1491)

Generally credited with introducing the craft of printing with movable type to England. He also printed one of the first commercial advertisements: a poster which extolled the products and services of his print shop. Caxton was first a successful businessman and government official and only began his typographic career after his retirement from these initial endeavors. The earliest fonts Caxton used were imported from mainland Europe, but once his business was established, he was able to convince a noted Flemish calligrapher to change his profession to that of a typeface designer and move to England to produce fonts of type. Caxton eventually had eight fonts produced for his press; most were of the Black Letter style of northern Germany. One of these is generally considered to be the ancestor of the "Old English" types that are still used today.

Reverse type is harder to read than dark type against a light background

“Why can’t we put the text copy in color?”

You think: Because it will look cheesy and amateurish.

A better answer might be:

Type printed in color lacks the impact of black type. Strong contrast between text and background is crucial, especially at small sizes. For readability and effectiveness, words must stand out clearly, and no matter how bright, color is always paler than black.

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“Why can’t we set this in all caps?”

You think: Only if I want to replicate Trajan’s Column.

A better answer might be:

Over 95% of the type we read is lowercase composition. As a result, we are much more familiar with reading these. Headlines set in lowercase take up less space than headlines set in all-capitals – up to 30% less space. Not only is page and screen real estate used more efficiently, but fewer eye movements are required to take in the same amount of information.

OVER 95% OF THE TYPE, WE READ IS LOWERCASE COMPOSITION. AS A RESULT, WE ARE MUCH MORE FAMILIAR WITH READING THESE LETTERS.

Over 95% of the type, we read is lowercase composition. As a result, we are much more familiar with reading these letters.

Here's another quote. ***“As a designer, if you're not occasionally annoying people by stubbornly sticking to your guns, you're not doing your job.”***

Jeffrey Zeldman

While sticking to your guns is important, doing so without annoying people is equally so.

Typefaces used in this article:

[Helvetica Now](#)

[Egyptian Slate](#)

[New Baskerville](#)