

Taking Up Space

Taking Up Space is an occasional column written on graphic design issues by Brian Grebow, BG Communications.

Graphic enclosures

This column is about graphic enclosures. By any other name, they are known as boxes, screens, and reverses.

Boxes

Boxes generally set off supplementary information (for example, sidebars, table of contents, and so on). Boxes can also be used to define the borders of a visual, especially around the edges of a photo where the area around the element is light-coloured or indistinct.

Boxes are not generally used around screens. The screen itself, depending on its density, is generally enough.

If you are using a box to surround some text, make sure there is enough white space between the text and the border both inside and outside the box. Text should not touch the box.

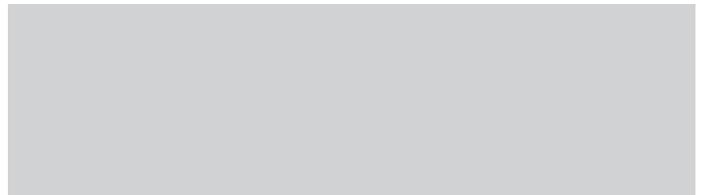


Screens

Screens add contrast and colour to what might otherwise be a 2-dimensional page. They have saved many a layout by breaking up the monotony of black and white. Screens are also useful in columns and rows of numbers: try screening every other column or row to make it easier for the reader to distinguish each set of numbers.

Watch, however, for what colour the text is on the screen. Using black type on a white screen, the screen

should be at least 20%. With white type on a dark background, the screen should be at least 50%. Never put a font over a screen unless it is at least 10 point type.



Reverses

Reverses (white text on a black background) are harder to read. They can be used in limited doses to draw attention to some text. If you reverse any text, make sure it is big and bold enough to read. If it is too tiny, the black will probably spill over during the printing process. As a rule, sans serif text reverses better than serif text.

Graphic Design

Sans serif

Graphic Design

Serif

