Session Outline

▶ **Introduction & Rationale.** *("There is more to typography than typing.")*

▶ **Basic Typographic Principles for Optimal Readability.**

- Typographic Style – What is it? (*"Stylebook Lite": Skimming the Surface*)
  - **Remember:** Even if you are a clumsy or boring writer, the application of proper typographic style to your work will at least help your writing *look* more professional!

- Body Text Principles. *("The goal is optimal readability.")*
  - **Remember:** Optimal readability is achieved by adjusting the variables of type size, line-length (column-width & characters-per-line), inter-line spacing, alignment, and surrounding white space, all guided by principles derived from quantifiable readability studies … *not by subjective whims.*

- Display Type & Headline Principles. *("Aim for legibility, logic, and function.")*
  - **Remember:** For optimum legibility use left-aligned "downstyle" headlines and maintain a fixed hierarchy of headline sizes. Maintain a logical and consistent pattern of spacing between headlines, subheads, and body text. Make logical line-breaks to aid instant comprehension and avoid ambiguity.

▶ **Choosing & Using Typefaces.** *("Be a communicator, not a decorator.")*

- **Remember:** Choose headline and body typeface combinations that serve the mood and message. Be aware that many decorative or thematic typefaces were designed for short headlines or titles only, and should never be used for blocks of body text. The watchword for the neophyte: "Restraint."

▶ **Hazard Warnings.** *("Now you've seen it, so don't do it!")*

- **Remember:** Just because a quick-and-dirty typographic effect is only a click away, it does not mean that you should use it. Avoid witless distortions, vertical type, all-caps script, and type set in a shape. Any special type effects should serve the content. To quote an old pitching coach: "Always have an idea!"

▶ **Typography on the Web and On-Screen.** *("Flexible 'responsive design' helps.")*

- Achieving optimal readability – and "usability" – on multiple devices.
  - **Remember:** The Web is increasingly the first point of contact with visitors. Be aware that the way your site looks on your device is not necessarily the way it will look to everyone else. For on-screen applications in the museum, consider the variables of screen size, viewing distance, and text density.

▶ **Typography on the Wall.** *("Design for the outliers.")*

- Managing the variables of viewing distance, color, and placement in exhibition space.
  - **Remember:** Typography in an exhibition is affected by the variables of wall space, lighting, viewing distance, content, and objects on display. Ideally the typographic design should be accessible to all.

▶ **When to call in a pro: Working with editors, designers, and printers.**

- **Remember:** A *real* editor streamlines your writing while preserving your "voice" – *and* also knows typographic style. A *real* designer is a content communicator skilled at integrating type and image.

▶ **Attendee Questions & Discussion Period:** **"???!!!"** **"!#$$%!?"** **"✳✳✳!!!?"**

▶ **Final Words.** *("Keep up with the latest readability, comprehension, & usability studies.")*

- **Remember:** Stay current with the evolution of reader behavior. In working with type, know the rules before you break 'em. If you must break a rule, do it boldly. Don't be a wimp. Avoid blandness and recklessness in equal measure. Communicate, don't just decorate. Typography is more than just typing.

▶ **Bibliography & Resources.** (available online … *and on the reverse of this sheet*)

Bibliography & Resources

Typography

Bacon, Reginald W. *The Cranky Typographer's Book of Major Annoyances: Helpful Graphics Tips for Do-It-Yourself Designers.* Newburyport, Mass.: Variety Arts Press, 2014.

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Williams, Robin. *The Non-Designer's Type Book*. 2nd ed. Berkeley, Calif.: Peachpit Press, 2006. [You'll never go wrong taking advice from Ms. Williams.]

Reading & Readability Studies

Jabr, Ferris. "The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper Versus Screens." *Scientific American,* April 11, 2013.

Ware, Colin. *Information Visualization: Perception for Design*. Waltham, Mass.: Morgan Kaufmann, 2013.

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Typographic Style & 'Stylebooks'

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law. Edited by Darrell Christian, Paula Froke, Sally Jacobsen, and David Minthorn. New York, N.Y.: Associated Press, 2014. [If you write – or even just *type* – anything for public consumption, this book should be on your desk and never out of reach.]

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing. 7th ed. New York, N.Y.: Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

Williams, Robin. *The PC is Not a Typewriter: A Style Manual for Creating Professional-Level Type on Your Personal Computer*. Berkeley, Calif.: Peachpit Press, 1992.

Writing, Editing, & Content Preparation

Bacon, Reginald W. *The Cranky Editor's Book of Intolerable Fox Paws: Helpful Writing & Style Tips So You Won't Look Stoopid.* Newburyport, Mass.: Variety Arts Press, 2014.

Garner, Bryan A. *Garner's Modern American Usage*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003. [Over 1000 pages to save writers from looking stoopid.]

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. 11th ed. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2003. [A first-choice dictionary.]

Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. [Extolling "cleanliness, accuracy, and brevity" since 1918.]

Exhibition-Specific Resources

McLean, Kathleen. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Science-Technology Centers, 1993.

Ravelli, Louise J. *Museum Texts: Communication Frameworks*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2006.

Serrell, Beverly. *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*. 2nd Ed. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Selected Web Resources

www.DesigningWithType.com. [A supplement to the book.]

www.PracticalTypography.com. [*Butterick's Practical Typography* is a freely-accessible online book by Matthew Butterick.]

www.Spiekermann.com/en/. [Typographer Erik Spiekermann.]

www.smashingmagazine.com. [Web & user experience ("ux") design resources.]

www.uxbooth.com. [Online publication for the "ux" community]

About the presenters

Reginald W. Bacon has been a journalist, editor, publication designer, and typographer for 50 years. He's seen a lot – plenty of excellence but far too much junk. It's no wonder he's cranky. A parallel career as a touring performing artist and scholar of early 20th-century popular entertainment led to his current work in the museum and history field. R.W. Bacon is a graduate of Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications, the Maxwell School of Public Affairs, and the Harvard graduate program in Museum Studies. He is the author of *The Cranky Typographer's Book of Major Annoyances* and *The Cranky Editor's Book of Intolerable Fox Paws (Oops! Faux Pas!),* plus six other books on history and performing arts topics. (For additional information: *www.VarietyArtsEnterprises.com;* email: *VarietyArts@comcast.net*)

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