

# The Newsletter on Newsletters

Semester 2, 2010

## Content, design key to reaching publics

The key to newsletter effectiveness is identification with the audience.

Newsletters are tailor-made for the situation, the time and the audience. Most have a chatty, informal style. Their hallmark is specialized information, condensed from many sources, and brief, to-the-point writing. A newsletter's appearance should be appropriate to its purpose, subject matter and audience.

Design tells readers the "attitude" of the publication, its approach to subject matter and which items are especially important.

Some items are always boxed or have other distinguishing features telling readers something about their contents. Readers get the habit of seeking these elements for favourite information.

Newsletters can be printed on a large sheet 297 by 420 mm, folded to produce four A4-size

pages or on an A4 sheet front and back for two-pages. More pages can be added. Other sizes include tabloid and standard newspaper size.

Simplicity is stressed in newsletters. One font, usually a serif font for readability, is used for body copy. Another font, often sans serif, is used for headlines. Another font may be used for the nameplate, masthead and other recurring features. A limited number of graphic elements is used consistently.

Newsletters most often have one to three columns. Multiple columns give a more readable line width, greater opportunity for creative design, and more variation and interest. They make it easier to use graphics and illustrations.

A three-column format is more like a magazine or miniature newspaper in appearance and can blend the best qualities of both magazine and newsletter designs. ♦

## Good headlines tell story at a glance

Headline and outline writing is as much an art as a skill.

A headline tells the story's essentials, its main aspect. A headline grasps the feature twist of the story, if there is one. Editors get ideas for headlines as they edit the story.

The most important part of headline and outline writing is getting the facts straight. Headlines should be specific, clear and unambiguous. Outlines should, too, with all names spelled correctly.

Cutlines describe what's going on in the picture without belabouring the obvious. Sometimes they add information not apparent in the picture. They should complement the article they accompany, although they can add new information. Pictures should illustrate the article.

Headlines are skeletonized sentences—with a subject, verb and object, usually. Articles,



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such as "a," "an" and "the," are usually dropped. Periods are not used. Commas are substituted for "and." Nonessential modifiers, including personal pronouns, are dropped.

Cutlines are written in full but short, direct sentences. They are written with the assumption that

the reader will read the article for missing information. All people, except very large groups, and key objects should be identified fully and clearly, from left to right. That is so standard that you don't have to tell the reader the identification is from left to right.

Cutlines differ from captions, which label a picture, such as a mug shot or a shot of something such as the NUS entrance art, above left.

Both headlines and cutlines are written in present tense.

*See Headlines, p. 2*



NUS Entrance A

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## Headlines, from page 1

If a headline has more than one line, key facts go in the top line. Editors work on the whole headline at once so that a line and the thought break together and verbs, where practical, are not split.

Quotes in headlines take single quotation marks: Mayor Jones: 'I quit!' Persons being quoted can also be indicated in this form: 'I quit!' - Mayor Jones. Headlines use the colon or em dash instead of a comma.

Numerals are used in headlines instead of writing out numbers, even numbers under 10. Numbers in cutlines follow standard AP style.

Headlines are written in bold and should be proportional in size. That means that in an A4 newsletter, the typesize is no more than about 24 points. Headlines must extend at least three-quarters across a one-column story and at least half-way across the last column of a multicolumn story.

Cutlines often are written in a different font, a special style, such as italics or bold, and usually a little smaller than the body copy.

Whatever font and style are chosen, they should be used consistently throughout the newsletter for both headlines and cutlines, although headlines may have diminishing size as they are placed down the page. ♦



The NUS campus is set on a rolling landscape with many beautiful trees.

## Newsletter layout easy in InDesign

InDesign makes creating professional-looking newsletters fast and relatively easy. Here's how.

Create a folder for all text and graphics for the newsletter. Open the InDesign application. Choose **InDesign > Preferences**. Select **Units & Increments**. In the Preferences dialogue box, change **Ruler Units > Horizontal and Vertical** to Picas.

To create a new document, choose **File > New > Document**. In the New Document Setup box, designate the number of pages, page size, page orientation, number of columns, gutter width, and margins. Save As, giving your document a unique name.

Adjust columns to custom widths by dragging the column guides. To place items on the page, use the InDesign toolbox. If it's not visible, choose **Window > Tools**.

Use the **Selection** tool to drag guide rules from the horizontal and vertical rulers. Guide rules help when placing elements such as headlines, quote-outs, pictures and boxes.

To work with colour, choose **Window > Swatches**. Note the available colours: CMYK for print and RGB for Web. Now we'll add a spot color. On the **Swatches** window, click the triangle on the top left of the palette. Choose **New Color Swatch**.

In the New Color Swatch window, change **Color Type** to Spot and **Color Mode** to a library, such as Pantone Solid Uncoated. Type the number of the Pantone color you want in the window or scroll to it. The new color

will appear in the Swatches window.

To create a color line, select your new colour in the color **Swatches** window. Change the **Tint** at the top of the Swatches window to any percentage by sliding the selector.

In the control window, set the line width and style. Hold down the shift key to keep a line straight.


To create colour type, use the **Type** tool to create a text box. Activate the control window, and select the font, type size, leading and style. Click on the colour swatch you want. Type inside the text block. Use the **Selection** tool to position the text block.

To create a headline, click the **Type** tool on the left edge of the first column of the story and drag a text box to the right edge of the last column. Set the headline font, size, leading, style and colour. Type the headline.

Prepare body copy in a word processor. Edit text, single-space and **Save As Text Only**. In InDesign, click on the **Paragraph Styles** tab of the Swatches window. In the Paragraph Style window, set **Basic Paragraph** with **Basic Character Formats**.

Go to **Indents and Spacing** and set the **First Line Indent** proportionally for the newsletter's narrow columns.

Draw a text frame. Go to **File > Place** and open your plain text document. The story will automatically fill the text frame, with text formatted as set in Paragraph Styles. Adjust the length if necessary by "word-editing." Align the top and bottom edges of the columns. Once it fits, **SAVE**. ♦



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