



Usable Type

*Prepared by USCJ's Committee on Accessibility
March 2003*

Many programs and events rely heavily on printed information, both as part of the advertising campaign and during the event itself. The design of type and how it is applied should be considered, among other avenues, for **newspaper ads, board minutes, budget information, fliers, event programs, name badges, schedules, maps, and exhibit descriptions.**

The following are some general parameters that will help you design printed pieces to make them more usable to the general population as well as people with vision disabilities.

People with limited vision need printed material that is...

- Easy to read, especially if the information is to be read quickly, and in less than ideal circumstances, such as while walking, at night, or at distance.
- Type should be simple and contrast highly with the background.
- When graphics are included, they should be clear and not overprinted onto type.

To make printed materials legible for the largest percentage of the population, they should be prepared...

With content that

- Uses clear, on-technical English in the active voice.
- Has limited sentence length of fewer than 25 words. If possible, keep each sentence to one thought only.
- When in the form of instructional text, it is formatted in either a bulleted or numbered list, usually limited to three or four items per list.

With type design that

- Uses sans-serif or simple serif type faces. Limit the number of typeface varieties to two or three. Examples of sans serif typefaces include Helvetica, Univers, Arial, and Futura. Suggested simple serif typefaces include New Century Schoolbook and Palatino.
- Uses bold face type for single-page fliers that are posted, for example on a bulletin board.
- Is presented in 16-point type size when possible so most participants read it easily.

Examples of Sans-serif Typefaces

Helvetica
Verdana

Examples of Simple Serif Typefaces

New Century Schoolbook
Palatino

Do Not Use the Following Type Styles

Script type

Condensed type

Extended type

Light type

Ornate italic type

- A use line spaces of one and one-half spaces or is double spaced
- Uses lower case letters with initial capitals.
- Avoids underlining except in headings
- Justifies text on left side only. Type that is justified both left and right hinders legibility because it introduces awkward spaces between words that people do not recognize, making text more difficult to read.
- Where narrow columns of text are used, provides at least an inch of white space between columns.

With type and background that

- Contrast with each other. 9characters contrast with background by at least 70%). Avoid combinations such as yellow on gray.
- Are opaque with the use of non-glossy colors and materials. A medium with a matte or other non-glare finish should be used for both the background and the text.

You should strive to produce all printed materials in at least 16 or 18-point type to be readable both by people with low vision and by sighted people. This can be accomplished by using a photocopier to enlarge existing type if this provides good ink coverage or by using a computer / word processor. Even the most rudimentary computers often have the capability of generating type in different fonts, sizes and weights.

The symbol for large print is 'Large Print' addition to indicating that large print and **programs** are available, you may use **membership forms** to indicate that print print. Sans serif or modified serif print recommended, and special attention spacing.



printed in **18 Point** or larger text. In versions of **books, pamphlets, guides** the symbol on **conference** or materials may be provided in large with good contrast is highly should be paid to letter and word

16-point type

16-point bold type

ALL CAPS ARE HARD TO READ IN CONTINUOUS TEXT

Use of Initial Caps in Headlines is Preferred

Source: **Accessible Temporary Events: A Planning Guide**, published by the Center for Universal Design under subcontract with the Southeast Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center. To order a copy of the Planning Guide, contact your DBTAC by calling 1-800-949-4232 (v/tty)



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