

Communication

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Most Versatile & Potentially Complex

Grids were an important factor long before the International Graphic Design, or Swiss, movement, made them a focus.

And even Josef Muller-Brockmann recognized that the grid was not an end in and of itself, saying: "The grid system is an aid, not a guarantee. It permits a number of possible uses and each designer can look for a solution appropriate to his personal style."

Grammar and syntax organize language, defining how nouns are related to vowels, the subject and object of a verb, etc. It is the structure of language that gives it meaning. The same is true of visual communication. The organization of shapes defines letters, the organization of letters defines words, the order of words defines meaning.

This visual organization extends beyond language. Typographical decisions organize complex language into hierarchies, and visually groups similar types of information. These aid a reader to understand the relationship of different kinds of information, and often help the reader decide what, at any given point, what he or she want to read. We learn some visual language structures at a very early age. Capital letters and periods mark the beginning and ends of sentences, word spaces define the extent of the words we read, letters alone at the top of a page give the title of a piece of writing, etc.

As we grow older, our understanding of conventions of how words are presented grows more sophisticated. The professional typographer, however, should have the most sophisticated view of all. Grids and other forms of organization. The page grid is often what we think of when the

word 'structure' comes up in typography. However, other elements also structure the information in a similar way to the grid. The establishment of a usable hierarchy and a logical way of presenting information to readers is dependent on the way that information is located on a page, screen or other context, as well as how it is presented in terms of size, colour, typeface or other typographical parameter.

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International Graphic Design

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