

Resources

Software and Platforms—A Brief Overview

The Writing Center's visual communication tutors focus largely on sharing basic design principles and strategies to support RISD students' growing graphic design literacy. We do not offer comprehensive technical instruction in inDesign, website construction, and so on. That said, we are happy to speak generally about software and platform choices (outlined below) and to trouble-shoot technical issues on occasion. For more comprehensive technical instruction, we recommend **lynda.com** and **Youtube**.

Presentations

Mac users may want to use **Keynote** whereas Windows users might prefer **PowerPoint**. Google's own **Presentation** application in Google Drive is also rising in popularity. All three have about the same level of functionality and follow many of the same interface patterns and metaphors. **Prezi** is another cloud-based solution. Its infinite canvas approach and ability to easily zoom in and out has gained a following. The most important thing with Prezi, as with all presentation software, is to not rely on its bag of tricks to impress your audience.

Portfolios

All software has a tone of voice, or at minimum contributes to the tone of voice of what it contains. This is especially true of portfolio platforms that have branded themselves to gain users. **Behance** feels appropriate for current students, but might not serve professionals. **Tumblr** is superb for artists and designers whose work is situated in and addresses internet culture and yet feels less appropriate for a newly minted architecture grad. These differences are subtle, shifting, and culturally conditioned. **Cargo Collective** has excellent templates that work in many different contexts and yet it too signals the kind of artist whose work resides digitally. Survey how portfolios "feel" on each platform when considering where to put your work.

Print

InDesign is the go-to software for print design. It is versatile and works well for both posters and books. Depending on your discipline you might also be at home in **Illustrator**, which can work reasonably well for posters, presentations, and multiples where page count is not too high. Illustrator lacks some of the typographic controls and other features that make working with text, especially text over a number of pages, much easier. **Photoshop** should not be considered as a typographic layout tool—use it only for photo editing.

Basic Design Principles

Dondis, Donis A. *Primer of Visual Literacy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973.
A classic on visual literacy in general, not specific to graphic design.

Lupton, Ellen. *Graphic Design: The New Basics*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008. An excellent introduction to the graphic design field as a whole.

Aesthetic/Tone

Kissane, Erin. *The Elements of Content Strategy*. New York: A Book Apart, 2011. Primarily addresses writing but in a way that nicely parallels visual communication design.

Robert Klanten, *Visual Storytelling: Inspiring a New Visual Language* (Berlin: Gestalten, 2011).

Jessica Moon, *30 Compelling Examples of Visual Storytelling on the Web* (Betterment, <http://www.dtelepathy.com/blog/inspiration/30-compelling-examples-of-visual-storytelling-on-the-web>).

Type & Typography

Bringhurst, Robert. *Elements of Typographic Style: Version 4.0*. Vancouver: Hartley & Marks Publishers, 2013. Likely the single best typography “rule” book available. Impressive for its breadth and depth, it doesn’t spend much time on implementation.

Butterick, Matthew. *Practical Typography*. Accessed July 01, 2014. <http://practicaltypography.com>. A decent introduction to practical typography, with just enough typographic instruction to efficiently make communications look professional; a solid web resource.

Dair, Charles. *Design with Type*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967. Especially good for its seven types of typographic contrast.

Denastas, Ann, and Camille Gallet. *An Initiation in Typography*. Zurich: Verlag Niggli AG, 2007. Beautifully designed and does an excellent job of showing how traditional book design principles can work in a modern context.

Felici, James. *The Complete Manual of Typography: A Guide to Setting Perfect Type*. San Francisco: Adobe Press, 2003. Chock full of formulas and guidance for the setting of type.

Felton, Paul. *The Ten Commandments of Typography/Type Heresy*. London: Merrell Publishers Limited, 2006.

French, Nigel. *InDesign Type: Professional Typography with Adobe InDesign*. Second Edition. San Francisco: Adobe Press, 2010. Extremely practical; explains the typographic principle and confines its implementation instruction to InDesign.

Highsmith, Cyrus. *Inside Paragraphs* (Boston, MA: Font Bureau, Inc., 2012). This small volume condenses a significant amount of knowledge about typography into its pages; it is most insightful on the importance of counters and negative space.

Jardi, Enric. *Twenty-Two Tips on Typography*. New York: Actar, 2007.

Kane, John. *A Type Primer*. Second Edition. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011.

Lupton, Ellen. *Thinking with Type*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010; www.thinking-withtype.com.

Grid

Elam, Kimberly. *Typographic Systems of Design*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007. Provides a good vocabulary for describing typographic systems: axial, radial, dilational, random, grid, modular, transitional, bilateral.

Elam, Kimberly. *Grid Systems: Principles of Organizing Type*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004).

Müller-Brockmann, Josef. *Grid Systems in Graphic Design: A Visual Communication Manual for Graphic Designers, Typographers, and Three Dimensional Designers*. Sixth Edition. Zurich: Verlag Niggli AG, 2008. The single best book on grid systems and one of the best books on typography.

Samara, Timothy. *Making and Breaking the Grid: A Graphic Design Layout Workshop*. Beverly, MA: Rockport, 2002

Vinh, Koi. *Ordering Disorder: Grid Principles for Web Design*. San Francisco: New Riders, 2010. Simplifies the concept of the grid and how it is used to structure web pages. Discusses establishing your grid based on the dimensions of a design element whose size is non-negotiable.

Color

Albers, Josef. *Interaction of Color*. Revised Edition. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975. This book revolutionized our understanding of color.

Gage, John. *Color and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Itten, Johannes. *The Elements of Color*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1970.

Kuler: <https://kuler.adobe.com>

Paletton: <http://paletton.com>

Pictaculous: <http://www.pictaculous.com>

Rocket Design, Color Template: <http://www.rocket-design.fr/color-template>

Wong, Wucius. *Principles of Color Design: Designing with Electronic Color*. Second Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1997.

Image and Text

Bang, Molly. *Picture This: How Pictures Work*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000. An illustrator by profession, Bang succinctly describes the different effects images can achieve.

Freeman, Michael. *The Photographer's Eye: Composition and Design for Better Digital Photos*. Waltham, MA: Focal Press/Elsevier, 2007.

Madden, Matt. *99 Ways to Tell a Story: Exercises in Style*. New York: Chamberlain Bros, 2005.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Paradox Press, 1993. Still one of the better books on sequence and juxtaposition; equally valuable for page and screen.

Meggs, Phillip B. *Image & Text: The Language of Graphic Design*. 1992.

Skolos, Nancy, and Thomas Wedell. *Image/Message/Text: A Graphic Design Layout Workshop*. Beverly, MA: Rockport, 2006. Particularly valuable for the "four critical relationships" of separation, fusion, fragmentation, inversion of image and text.

Van Sijll, Jennifer. *Cinematic Storytelling: The 100 Most Powerful Film Conventions Every Filmmaker Must Know*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2005.

Information Design

Baer, Kim. *Information Design Workbook: Graphic Approaches, Solutions, and Inspiration + 30 Case Studies*. Beverly, MA: Rockport, 2008. Offers a broad definition of the discipline, which is both the book's strength (breadth) as well as its weakness (lacks depth). The case studies are a helpful addition.

Fry, Ben. *Visualizing Data: Exploring and Explaining Data with the Processing Environment*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc, 2008. Specific to the Processing language most of the time, but its introductory material is excellent and generalizable. Offers both coding advice/tutorials and solid information design principles.

Katz, Joel. *Designing Information: Human Factors and Common Sense in Information Design*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2012. A highly practical, results-oriented exposition of data visualization.

Rendgen, Sandra. *Information Graphics*. Köln: Taschen, 2012. Massive in size, which makes it unwieldy to carry around, but worth looking at in the library for inspiration.

Tufte, Edward R. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Cheshire: Graphics Press, 1986.

Tufte, Edward R. *Envisioning Information*. Cheshire: Graphics Press, 1990.

Tufte, Edward R. *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative*. Cheshire: Graphics Press, 1997.

Tufte, Edward R. *Beautiful Evidence*. Cheshire: Graphics Press, 2006. Tufte's texts (all four) provide excellent inspiration and instruction through example.

Yau, Nathan. *Visualize This: FlowingData Guide to Design, Visualization, and Statistics*. Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Publishing, Inc. Reviews tools and methods as well as explaining principles; strong in the discussion of data and statistical analysis.

Visual Identity

Wheeler, Alina. *Designing Brand Identity*. (4th ed). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2012. The single best comprehensive resource on brand identity.

Publishing

Paper Supplies:	Paperworks, Pawtucket – paperworks.com
Color Laser Prints:	Concept Link, Providence – concept-link.com
Large Format Prints:	iolabs, Pawtucket – iolabsinc.com
Custom Binding:	Hope Bindery, Pawtucket – hopebindery.com
Online Publishing:	Blurb – blurb.com Lulu – lulu.com/create Edition One Books – editiononebooks.com
Typography:	Adobe Fonts – adobe.com/type