



Typographic products: four pillars

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What columns support the building of any typographic product? What is the nature of each one? The Master's Online in Editorial Design and Typography explores the intricate worlds of the book (text-based or illustrated), the magazine (independent or commercial), the newspaper, the digital formats and the large set of editing conventions. And, in doing so, it dives in a communication channel, the professional written medium, the medium in which typographic products are created and circulated. Each of these products shares the same four pillars, which can be explained as seen below.

Writing (script and 'scriptura')

➤ A fully fledged form of communication. As such, only comparable to spoken language. It allows for a message to be stored and read at a different time and place than that of its creation.

➤ Thought in graphic form. Mainly linguistic thought, but not always. A formula, for instance, is a piece of writing representing an abstract statement, not a linguistic one.

➤ Repertoire of stylized marks, system or code. Some marks represent linguistic units (enclosed in vertical bars): p § ω Δ; others represent abstract or informative notions: 2 \$] → £ #.

➤ The matter which is standardized by Unicode.

«The Master's in Editorial Design and Typography dives in a communication channel, the professional written medium, the medium in which typographic products are created and circulated.»

➤ Hand and arm gesture using a simple device (in handwriting) or complex technological mediation (keyboards, applications, digital devices) when using digital tools.

➤ Actuality, not potentiality. A real macrophenomenon: the sum of all acts of writing.

Text ('textus')

➤ Again, an entity of dual nature: thought set in a graphic form.

➤ Act of expression, aspiration of being understood, purpose of clarity.

➤ A fully developed written chain.

➤ Discourse, a complex statement, ideas in a structure, debate, connotation.

➤ Ferran Toutain (*Sobre l'escriptura*, 2000, 13): writing a text is «a method of thinking; maybe not the only one, but certainly the most articulated, the most precise, the most ambitious».

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☛ Matter on a digital screen or a page, the component which livens up the page or screen.

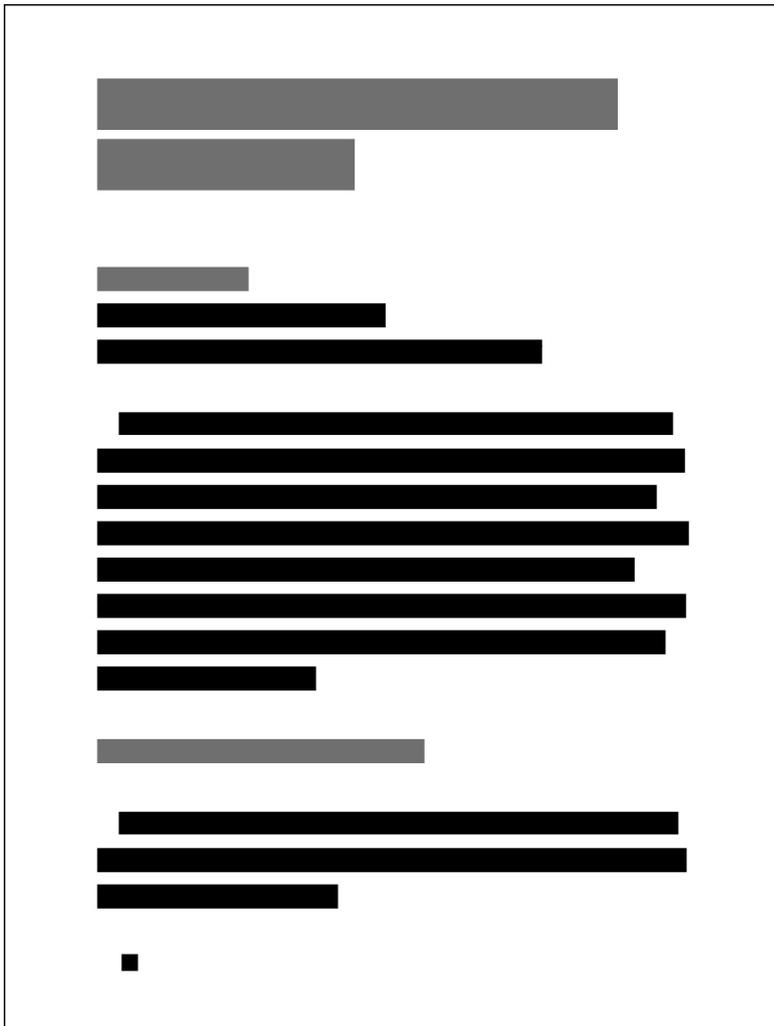
☛ In the digital sphere, either lacking completely of format (plain text) or formatted (rich text).

Paragraph ('παράγραφος')

☛ A block of writing, a component of the discourse, a basic thesis.

☛ A unit of discourse inside a larger unit. Toutain (idem, 62): «[It] cannot be autonomous of the paragraphs preceding it or

All typographic products share the same four pillars: writing, text, paragraph, work



coming after it, and at the same time its independent structure needs to be built. [...] It's a matter, as always, of proposing a subject and unfolding it.»

☛ One piece in the layout, identifiable thanks to specific graphic devices: indentation, white space before and after, a short last line, different body size...

☛ A layout unit with various specializations: running-text paragraph, quotation paragraph, note paragraph...

☛ Balance of black and white, distribution of three whites: between characters, between words, between lines.

☛ The part of the work where typesetting and page layout converge.

Work ('opus', workpiece)

☛ The text, entirely expanded. In classical rhetoric terms: *inventio*.

☛ Graphic composition: presentation of typographic forms in a deliberate harmony. In rhetoric terms: *dispositio*.

☛ Content: distribution according to a plan, line of reading, hierarchy. In rhetoric terms: *elocutio*.

☛ Culmination of a creative, intellectual process.

☛ Publishing: attaining some presence, ideas abandoning whatever cave they were in.

☛ Publishing: seal of approval by author, editor and publisher; an end point, completeness of message and form.

☛ One half of the communicative act of writing-reading. A work ready to be read, waiting for a reader, accessible.

☛ A product readable in circumstances unknown by its creators.

☛ An autonomous, self-sufficient piece of knowledge.

☛ An industrial product, an object (solid or digital) that can be recursively reproduced and with intrinsic economic value, even when it is given out for free. ☛

Bibliographic reference:

TOUTAIN, Ferran (2000). *Sobre l'escriptura*. Barcelona: Facultat de Comunicació Blanquerna.