

DTP *Guide*

2

A Guide to successful Publishing

Design and Layout

*Part one of a series
investigating good layout
and design techniques.*

Layout of most documents usually falls under one of two layout styles. These are simple and complex.

Simple layout is where the layout is standard throughout the document, whatever it may be - a book, magazine, newspaper, etc. Documents are said to have complex layout is where the style varies from page to page.

The design of the document is also affected by the layout. Simple layouts promoted a universal design style, as in a book for example. Complex layouts provide a way for design to be varied and in some cases very contrasting.

Some examples of simple layout and design are magazines such as Loot, Auto Trader; the majority of tabloid sized newspapers and of course the vast majority of books.

Examples of complex layout and design are too numerous to mention. However, a simple rule of thumb is that most of the hobbyist magazines in the newspaper are of complex layout, and magazines such as Sky and Q.

This points to the fact that simple layouts give a publication a more traditional and conservative image, while complex layouts promote a modern vibrant image.

Of course, the turnaround of an issue of any publication is also a major consideration when deciding what layout to use. For example, Loot magazine (which is distributed in London and Home Counties) is published daily and so couldn't attain that turnaround if they changed to a more complex design and layout regime which required a lot of planning and design work.

So my point is, that when you are deciding how to design and layout a publication think very carefully about the time scale you need to work in. For a monthly magazine you can afford to 'slash out' a little bit when it comes to design

and layout. However, if you plan to produce a weekly or even a bi-weekly report for the company you work for, then complex design will only serve to hinder you - a more simpler design will suffice.

An important factor of a document's design is the font you use for the body text. The body text is the main part of your document, and should, where possible, be kept uniform throughout the document.

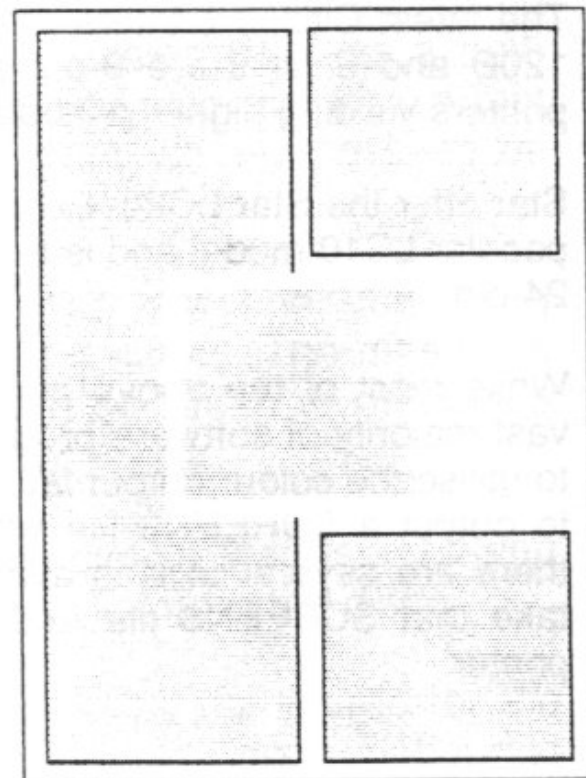
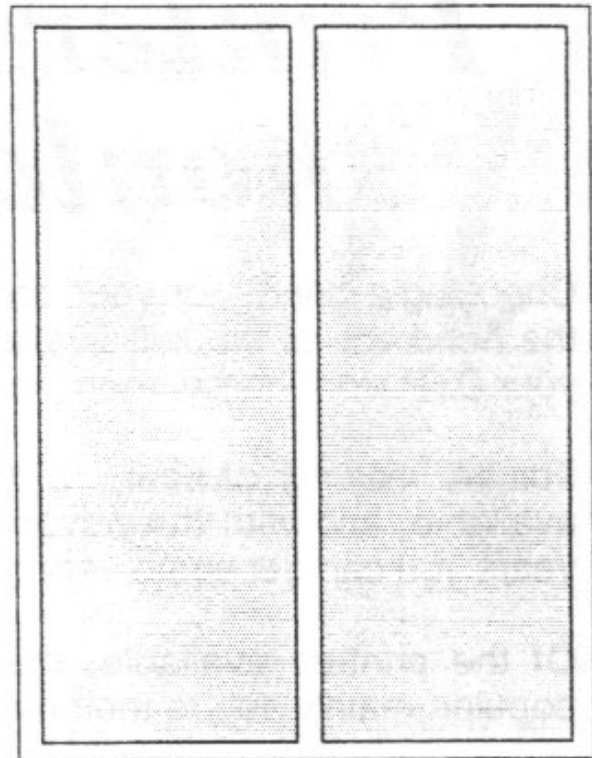
Of the many thousands of fonts available, most fit into one of two categories, either serif or sans serif. Serif fonts have cross strokes, and are generally thought of as more readable for books, newspapers and technical documents. An example of a serif font is Times Roman.

A sans serif font are used for text designed to stand out, in banner headlines for example. Relatively short technical documents, of which Sinclair & SAM Computing is, also benefit from a sans serif body text.

Of course, while on other computers there are many thousands of fonts available, budding Spectrum and SAM publishers have to make do with just a handful. However, let that not be a deterrent, just as 'too many cooks spoil the broth'; 'too many fonts confuse the reader'.

Some fonts will clash with others, while some work well together, and other have no effect when mixed. The general rule of thumb is that, while a serif font will normally mix well with a sans serif font, mixing two of the same type will not.

However, the overall rule of thumb is that if you're not sure if two fonts mix well - don't mix them at all.



Top: An example of a simple layout.
Below: An example of a complex layout.

That's it for this issue, catch the next part of our Design & Layout series in the next DTP Guide

Printers: Which way should you jump?

Choosing a printer for your computer can be a daunting task when you consider the hundreds of models available. However, if you want your printer to become your DTP work-horse, then you must choose carefully.

For the majority of users, a dot-matrix printer is the most cost effective option available, and with the advances in dot-matrix printers over the past couple of years you can get some very good output from them indeed.

Of the printers available, the Citizen and Star range are probably the most popular, mainly due to their reliability and number of features.

The latest Citizen printers are the 120D, 124D, Swift 9 and Swift 24. Both the 120D and Swift 9 are 9-pin printers, while the 124D and Swift 24 are 24-pin printers yielding higher print density.

Star offer the Star LC20, LC 24-10 and LC24-200. The LC20 replaces the vastly popular LC10 model and is a 9-pin printer, while the LC 24-10 and LC24-200 are 24-pin.

While most of the above printers come with options to upgrade to colour, the vast majority of software programs for the Spectrum and SAM doesn't allow you to utilise the colour output facilities of these printers. However, if you simply want to output a SCREEN\$ file which has been created with an art package, then there are several utilities available for both the Spectrum and SAM which will take that SCREEN\$ file and print it out in full colour to a compatible colour printer.

All this talk of dot-matrix printers is fine, but with the price of ink jet printers falling virtually monthly, is an ink jet printer a cheap way to really good quality printing? Well, yes and no. Both the Canon BJ10e and Hewlett Packard DeskJet 500 weigh in at around £300, and offer vastly better print quality than dot matrix printers. In the case of the DeskJet 500, print quality is as good as a laser printer.

However, both use their own proprietary system of printing which no Spectrum or SAM programs yet take advantage of. The only exception to this is with word processors which can output custom print codes, such as WordMaster.

We are currently trying out the HP DeskJet 500 with a number of software programs on the Spectrum and SAM, and we'll be reporting back on our findings in the next issue of The DTP Guide.

TasPrint

An alternative to PCG's Typeliner for printing out your documents with different fonts and typesyles?

We find out ...

TASPRINT PLUS THREE gives Spectrum +3 users the option of printing in different styles on dot matrix printers when using TASWORD PLUS THREE. Each print style is referred to as a font. The Tasprint disc contains twenty-five fonts and also includes a font editor which allows existing fonts to be modified or new fonts to be designed. Also included are two demonstration files.

The program comes in a nice A5 case like the one containing Tasword, along with an A5 sized manual of 24 pages. The manual is well set out and clearly explains the steps to be taken to prepare a program disc containing both Tasword and Tasprint.

Briefly, the program disc is prepared in three simple stages. First you save your working copy of Tasword onto a newly formatted disc.

Secondly, before Tasprint can be used, it must be configured for the make and model of your printer. This is done by running a configuring program which is supplied on the disc. This program lists thirty-seven printers and if your model appears on the list you confirm by pressing the appropriate key. The program then asks whether your printer requires just a carriage return code at the end of each line or both a carriage return code and a line feed code.

If your printer is not included in the list you confirm by pressing the * key and you are then asked for additional information concerning your printer.

My printer, the Star LC24-200, is not included on this list but the manual includes a useful section which enables you to configure the program. Once you have completed this section the data for your printer is saved on the disc so it does not have to be done again unless you changed your printer (or erase the data from your disc!).

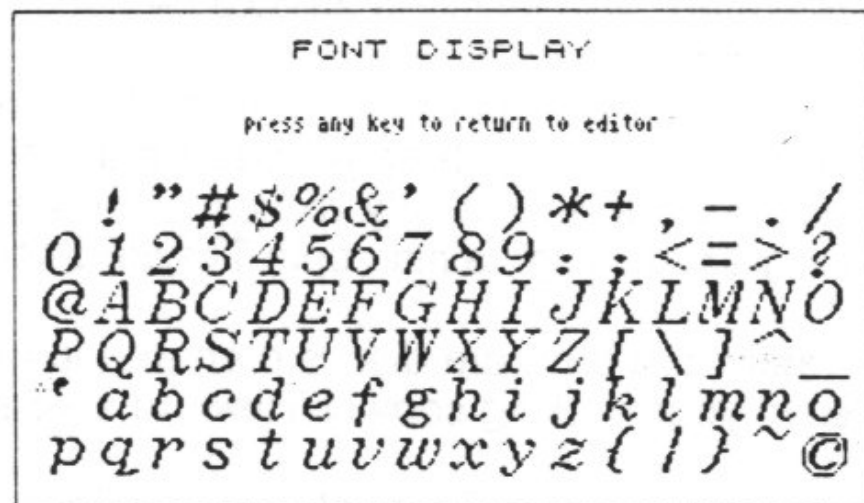
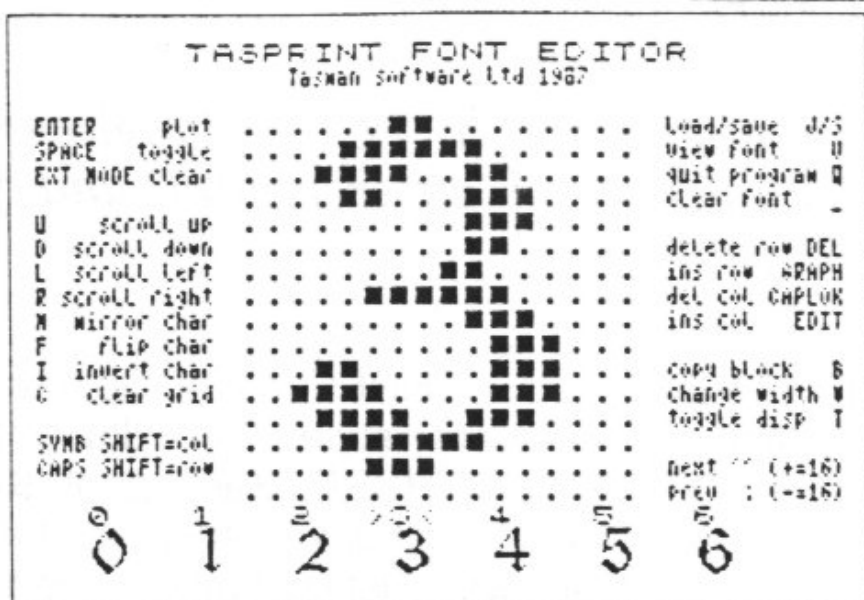
Finally, the Tasprint files are copied to you disc using a transfer program on the original Tasprint disc.

Throughout each of these steps there are adequate on-screen prompts to make this exercise fairly simple.

As Tasprint will only run with version 2.00 or later of Tasword Plus Three it is necessary to replace the program file TC2.BIN on the earlier versions of Tasword with a modified version supplied on the Tasprint disc. The manual contains a short section explaining how this may be done.

The program is now ready for use and is loaded by entering LOAD "RUN". This Tasword/Tasprint program reduces the amount of memory available for text files from 63K to 47K.

Tasprint is controlled from within Tasword by typing printer control characters into the text. These take the form of an explanation mark followed by a letter. Upper case letters are used to switch on the various fonts whilst lower case letters are used to control underlining, inverse printing, proportional spacing, boxing, double height, graphics line spacing, centering, double strike, enlarged printing (double width) and meshing, and to turn off Tasprint.

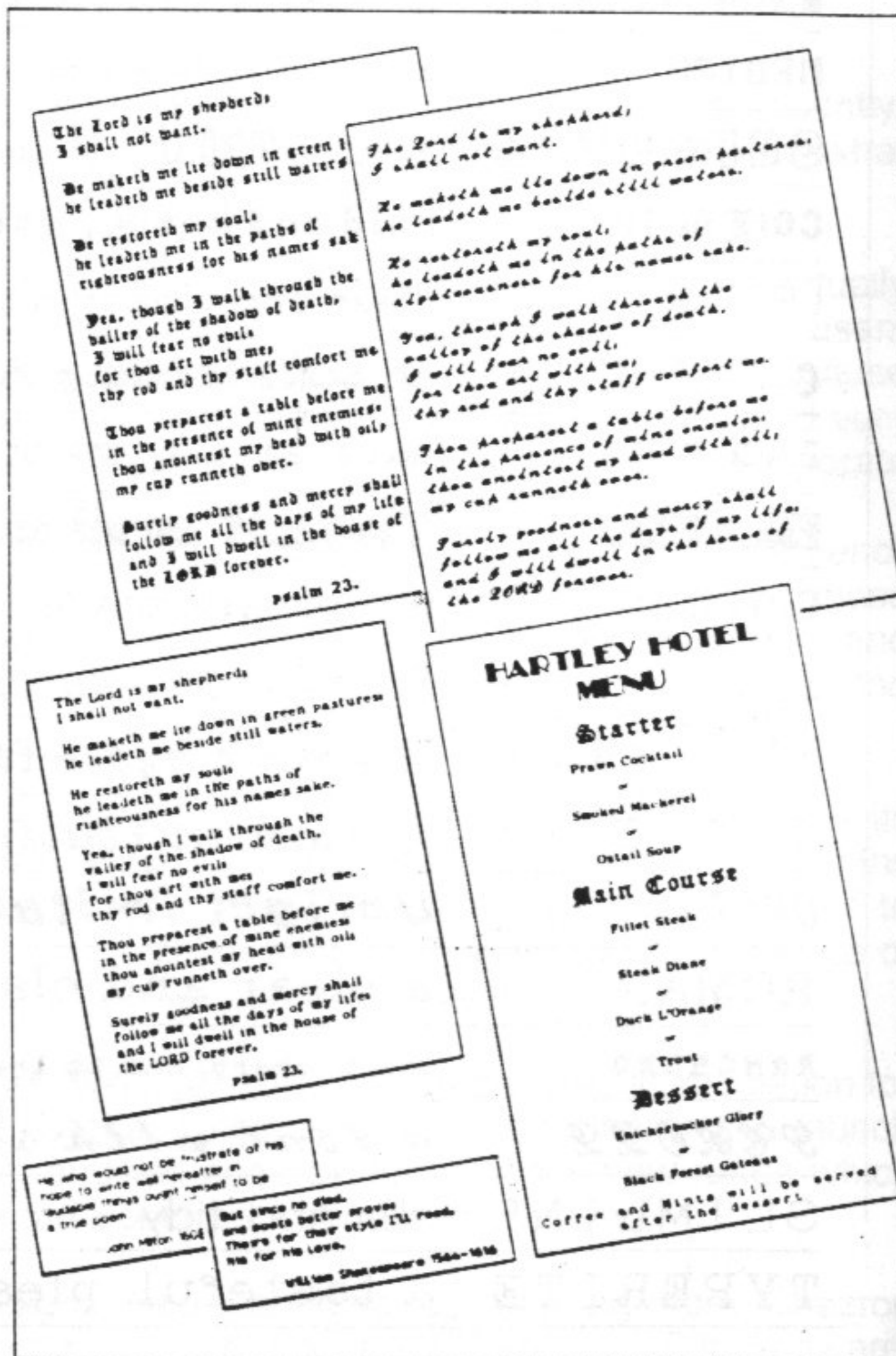


The twenty-five fonts give a varied selection but should you not find one to your liking or wish to amend certain ones there is a font editor on the Tasword disc which is very easy to use.

In using the program I have encountered one problem. For some reason print-outs occasionally produced blank lines and I have found that keying in the usual +3 printer POKEs overcomes this. I can't explain why this happens because I don't need to use the POKEs when just using Tasword.

I have found this program one of the easiest to learn and Tasword users should have no problems on using it. However, at £24.95, the same price as Tasword, I think it is over-priced. A few software companies are currently advertising it at around £19 so if you are thinking of buying it, it is worth shopping around.

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LS2 9LN.
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ANGLICAN	neat and articulate
TYPEIT	<i>typerite in italics</i>
UPRIGHT	solid and readable
heraldic	With Fancy Capitals
UPBOLD	upright and bold
ARTWORK	<i>stands out in a crowd</i>
PAYAGE	a distinctive, flowing font
BROADWAY	good for headings
MEDIAN	a serious, business-like script
SUPASTAR	A striking Font?
COMPACTA	bold and heavy, good for emphasis
LECTURA	clean and pleasing to read
OUTLINE	an outstanding font
BREAKER	UNUSUAL AND EFFECTIVE
BLOCK	Thick and chunky
DATARUN	A FUTURISTIC SCRIPT
SLIMIT	<i>Slimline in italics</i>
cloister	A gothic type-face
ROMANIT	<i>Roman in italics</i>
UPIT	<i>Upright in italics</i>
ROMAN	a clear and classic font
RANCHERO	short, sharp, and to the point
SCROLL	<i>a font with style</i>
SLIMLINE	slim and tidy
TYPERITE	a tasteful, pleasant font

What on earth is ...

Clip Art?

Clip Art has literally flooded onto the Spectrum and SAM market recently. Those of you who have not purchased any or really just do not know what on earth it is, keep reading and you'll find out.

When desk top publishing began to become popular, it allowed virtually anyone to publish anything they wanted. Software was available for users to create nearly anything they wanted. I say 'nearly anything' because although DTP software allowed text, boxes, lines, etc to be created very easily and professionally, you still had to be a good artist to incorporate graphics into your work. An art package was also required.

As the vast majority of us may as well not know one end of a pencil from another for the good it does us when trying to draw, those professionals who did have the 'gift' began to create hundreds and hundreds of pictures and illustrations of many differing subjects and selling them to the likes of you and I who can't draw to save our lives.

Most of the clip art now available for the Spectrum and SAM owes its existence to clip art for the ST and enterprising Danes. About 18 months ago two Danish users converted a whole series of clip art from the ST to the Spectrum using a proprietary disk system. The result was a deluge of clip art to accompany that which was already available in the UK.

At the last count, there are well over 1000 clip art pictures in circulation for the Spectrum and SAM. Garner Designs were one of the first to launch clip art for the Spectrum, and will soon be launching a new range which hail from America where the Spectrum scene is still thriving.

As well as Garner Designs, you can also get clip art from Chezron Software via their Outlet magazine and from Teachers Pet Software.

Several PD libraries stock varying amounts of clip art too.

But simply, clip art can add a professionalism to your work that only a highly skilled graphical artist could achieve. Although illustrations are not a vital aspect of a document by any means, there are many occasions in which a picture or two throughout the document would add that extra sparkle which catches peoples' eyes.

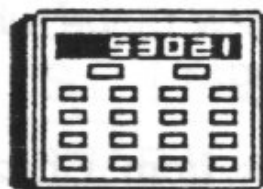
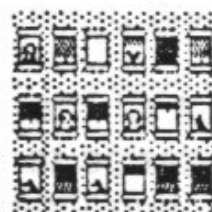
With over 1000 pictures to choose from, its almost certain that you'll find the picture you're looking for. Whether you are using a DTP program or just an art package, the use of clip art can add that bit extra to your work. For those with SAMs, a fair bit of the clip art available is in full colour, or is a 'colourised' black and white picture, and with a colour screen dump utility you can of course output the clip art in full colour.

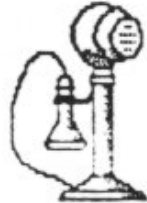
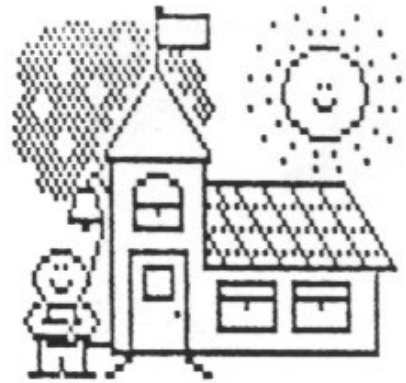
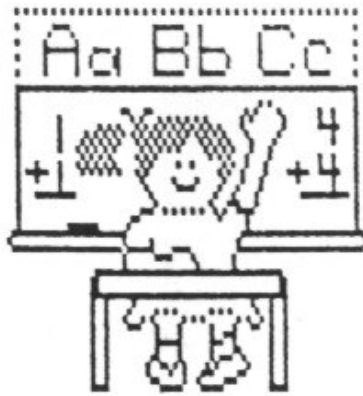
Good Use of Clip Art

The larger the page, the more illustrations you'll be able to use effectively. If too many are used on a single page, then they tend to detract either from each other, or more seriously from the text itself.

Generally, not more than three should be used on a single A4 page and not more than five should be present on facing pages.

To give you a taste of just some of the clip art which is available to Spectrum and SAM users, we've prepared a selection for you...





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