So You Want to Format a Book: How to Make It Professional

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This is a transcript of a presentation given on September 24–26, 2020, at the annual conference of the Latter-day Saint Publishing and Media Association (LDSPMA). You may not reproduce or publish this material without prior written consent from LDSPMA.

Marny Parkin: Hi. I'm Marny. I'm going to be talking about book design today. I'm going to first briefly mention some elements of design that you will hear me speak about, or mention during this class, but I'm not going to go over them very detailed. You can read about them here in the non-designers type book.

This is by Robin Williams, you can get it on Amazon. The principles of design that she covers are; proximity, alignment, repetition, and contrast. And you'll hear me mention those. If you want to learn more about those, read up on it. It's a great book. I use it in my class.

Jumping from that straight into books. If you have a copy of a book, or a couple so you can contrast and compare, that would be really useful, especially if they're in the genre that you're working with.

I'm not going to cover, covers. I... that's in a different class, but a couple of things, just briefly, you do have type on your cover. So it's a lot of things that I talk about with type today, will be relevant.

First off your spine. Your text goes from the top to bottom. If you're in Europe than it will go from bottom to top. And make sure you get your texts going the right way.

Don't ever put your letters so that they are straight up and down and then one at a time, that is extremely hard to read. So don't do that just have it go down your spine. The other thing is Your barcode generally goes toward the spine.

If you can move it around, if you know how to manipulate that, then that's the best place to put it. It doesn't usually matter, but that's typically where most books have it. Okay.

So you have your book. The question is, which way does your book open? This book. Is Japanese manga and so it opens opposite direction from what we normally read most the time is going to open So that you see the first page on the left and not on the right, like this one.

Your first page is your odd numbered page. So start with page one or page I depending on what type of stuff you have in there. All right. So real book this time. Okay.

And when you thumb through your pages. If you're looking for a chapter. If you're looking for a specific section. Most of the time when you flip through you're looking at this right hand page. And so that's why we have chapter starts go on right hand pages.

Anything major. Sometimes it's nice to put your illustrations on the right hand pages so that they'll be seen, unless you want to have them facing your chapter starts. That's a different problem though.

So that's why we have all of our opening pages be on those instead of on the back. Right. The first stuff in your book. There's a lot of different types of things that you can have there. You might start straight up with your title page.

A lot of books have reviews at the beginning. These are on unnumbered pages. This one has a short excerpt to tease people a teaser so that people will want to open the book read it and will know what it's about.

As opposed to what the back cover copy is doing, which is more of a summary sometimes So this is a straight excerpt. You don't have to have that. That's just something that's there. This is the half title page, you may or may not have a half title.

The nice thing about a half title is that on the back of that, you can put other books by this author, or in this series, or something like that, facing your title page.

On your title page, there are three important things. First, is your title. Second is your author's name. And then the other thing, that a lot of self publishers forget, is that you have your publishers imprint at the bottom. So the name of the publishing company, and then the cities where it is located. So if you don't have an incorporated publication imprint then you just don't

put anything there. But normally you'd want to include that if you have incorporated something then do it.

Okay, that's a, that's a big sign that something is self published is you don't have a publishers imprint on that first page.

Right on the back of that is the copyright page, always. Okay. It goes at the bottom of the page. So you have a lot of space at the top, depending on how many permissions and other things. You've got in here.

You might just have just a tiny paragraph at the very bottom of the page.

Just depends on everything that you include there. Definitely you need to have copyright and the copyright symbol and the name of the of the institution that's copywriting it and all rights reserved. That's kind of the bare minimum.

You also should include some way for the people to contact you if somebody wants to have rights to use an excerpt or something. Normally, you say, You can't use anything without permission. Well, they have to have an address or something to contact you, in order to get permission. So if you don't have that on this copyright page, then that's going to make it really difficult for people.

So it's nice to include your, your publication address and stuff like that. Website any type of promotional thing. If you have credits for illustrations or excerpts from other books or things like that, you can put them here. If they're very, very extensive you can put them in the back of the book somewhere else.

Alright, next you typically have your dedication that could go with the empty space up here. If your author doesn't get their dedication in to you before you've got everything typeset. Then you can just stick it in there. Usually there's plenty of space.

And then you don't have to repaginate everything redo your table of contents, stuff like that. So, depends on when you get it sometimes. This one happens to have another half Title I may or may not need that depends on if you're trying to fill out a signature of pages for all of your book. It's kind of optional and then you've got your chapter starts.

There's a lot of different ways to do your chapter start pages. Okay. Most of the time your text comes down from the top. This one does happen to have the chapter at the very top, not all books do Um, but most of them.

Will have some kind of a heading there. All right, it may just be a number, it might be a chapter number and a chapter title. It might just be the chapter title and no number. There's a lot of different things that are done.

Sometimes you'll have an epigram or something that goes in there too. So you have to have enough space. This one happens to come down just a tiny bit. This is a mass market paperback. And so it doesn't have a lot of space in it.

The chapters in this one start following on the end of the last chapter, most of the time, you don't want to do that. This book happens to be 500 pages long. It's huge.

And so they're trying to save as much space as possible. So they have decided to follow on with their chapters, instead of having them start on a new page. Especially if you have a lot of chapters. Sometimes that's nice. This one also has sections.

That have different pages. They are always on a right hand page. They've got a lot of space. They're easy to locate it also has parts at the beginning.

It's in two parts, and six sections and then a whole pile of chapters so kind of depends on how much room, you need to have that you can see this has a graphic element.

Which is nice to add some interest. They've repeated that in their running heads they just have a line up there. They don't have anything with their chapter starts, but that's fairly common to have something with your chapter starts. I don't think I've got, oh yeah I do.

Harry Potter here. It's got a lovely graphic that goes with it. This is for a younger audience so more illustrations are nicer. When you have an older audience, you don't need as much fancy stuff going on.

Your first line of text, though. A lot of times you'll see drop caps. Okay. That means a big capital letter that goes down into the text.

You can do two or three lines that are I've seen some that are larger there. I've seen some that have graphics there instead. This one I can get back into the has what's called a raised cap

instead of a Drop Cap. You can see it sticking up from the text, it starts on the same line as the regular text, but it goes up instead of down so it's a raised cap instead of a Drop Cap Right.

A lot of times you'll see small caps for this line, or you might have it. Do all sorts of different things. There's a lot of different chapter start treatments that you can do. You will note though that there is no indent on the first paragraph. Okay. Anything that is obviously a new paragraph, whether it be after a chapter title or after chapter headings, something like that does not need a chapter paragraph indent. So you don't want to have those in there when you don't need them.

If you've got scene breaks, they don't need to be there either.

Alright scene breaks, especially if you've got a centered ornament or dingbat, if you have an indent following that it can make your ornament look uncentered. So you don't want to have those indented either. There's no need for it because you can obviously tell that it's a new paragraph and that's what paragraph breaks tell us, all right, indents too.

Other things in your books. All right. If you look at your regular text pages. You've got running heads. You may or may not have your page numbers up there. Or you might have them down here at the bottom. They can be on the outside edge. They could be at the in the center.

For fiction, it doesn't really matter where it goes. But if you're doing nonfiction, people use those to locate what chapter they want to be in. And so when you're thumbing through your book, you really ought to have those on the outside edge instead of centered because they're a lot easier to see. Especially if you don't have your book, open very far. You can see those very easily when they're on the outside edge. So pay attention to that don't have them too close to the text, don't have the more flashy than the text. You're not trying to draw the eye, when you turn the page you're trying. They want to just be reading along and if you end up catching their eye with the running heads, it's not doing the right job.

So don't have it too flashy or too big or anything like that. They need to be kind of moderate This one, the same either on the outside edge. They do have a little graphic element, you can do that a lot of times On your first page of your chapter Okay, this book had them.

Had the page numbers on the outside edge but on the first page of the chapter, you don't want to have anything above your chapter title to distract from it. So you can put your page numbers at the bottom. This is called a drop folio. A folio is another name for page number So you can have it down here at the bottom. Or you could have none at all. It just depends on what you want to do with your design.

Things that go in your running heads. If you're doing nonfiction, it helps to have your book title on the left side and your chapter title on the right side or a section or something like that, helps as the locating information so that people can find what they're looking for.

If you're doing fiction, you usually have the author's name. Author's name on the left side and then the book title on the right side. You don't need much more than that. If you've got back matter.

Appendix or something like that, you could maybe put those type of things in the running heads. This has got a excerpt at the back. And so it's got a different running head.

But most of the time, those can stay the same all the way through your fiction. If you're doing that. Speaking of back matter things that go in the back.

You have acknowledgments, you might have your about the author. That's usually the very last thing. You might have an excerpt. You might have an appendixes, indexes, a bibliography, stuff like that.

Many things that can go in your back matter. Right.

One thing that's different with your fiction versus your nonfiction. Excuse me. Is that with your fiction. A lot of times you don't have a table of contents. If you have chapter one. Chapter two Chapter three, especially That's not really useful. I don't ever use a table of contents for looking at stuff in my fiction. I just put a bookmark in or remember the page number and just go to it.

So a lot of times it's really unnecessary, and pages you can save for other things. But for nonfiction is absolutely essential. You don't have to say table of contents. You don't have to say List of illustrations, you can just say content you say illustrations or you know whatever type of thing that you've got there, just as the heading.

It's really redundant to say Table of Contents these days contents is just by itself is sufficient. Okay.

If you've got sections. You can have your sections in there with headings. Make sure there's enough space your page numbers can go in a lot of different places. They can go, usually go On the right hand side, but I've seen them sometimes on the inside, instead of on the out. They

could be right after the end of the text. And so you've got a ragged right side on there or you can have them lined out on the side. Lots of different ways you can do that.

Other things in your front matter beyond List of illustrations. Preface, forward, introduction, things like that. Before you get into your book proper and those usually have Roman numerals for your page numbers as opposed to the Arabic numbers that you have for the body of your book.

Those may or may not start with your introduction. Usually, it starts with the introduction, but sometimes it doesn't.

Alright. One other thing about when you're looking through books. The natural path for your eye starts up on the top left hand side of your page and you scan down. Okay, so you're following The page because we read, top to bottom and left to right and so normally if you're scanning through your pages. That's the way we look at it. So if you have text that goes Either from left to right or from right to left or bottom to top. That's against the path of your eye.

And it's going to be a little harder for people to follow a little harder for people to read. So be aware of that, especially in like ad design. If you're laying out a book with tags. It's pretty cut and dried which way you're going to go with your text, unless you're doing columns.

With multiple sections or things like that. So you have to be a little more careful with that sort of thing.

Okay, let's get into the nitty gritty of some of these different paragraph types in your book. So we talked about your first paragraph. We talked about the chapter titles, a little bit.

Your chapter titles can be splashy you want it to be, obviously, bigger. So that people can see them, have a plenty of white space around them so people can find them, give them some breathing room.

Your regular body text, is usually between nine and 12 points. Okay. You're letting, what word called line spacing or other programs may call line spacing.

The letting is the space in between the lines you usually want to have between two and four points of letting. So if I have an 11 point line. I usually put it on 14 points space because that's three extra points of letting And then you want to have that kind of repeated all the way through. If you've got other elements in your text.

Running heads, bibliography, or, not running heads. Block quotes or bibliography or footnotes, things like that have a similar amount of letting as you do in your body text because the color of the text on the page needs to be similar, all the way through. You don't want to have it standing out and looking weird unless. It's like a heading where it needs to be bold and be so people can find it. You want a nice even color across your pages.

Okay, so here I've got footnotes, the amount of gray on the page is going to depend on your type face on the size on the letting And somewhat on your margins. All of those things are interrelated. And so if you change one thing you probably going to have to change it, other things too, sometimes.

So regular body text for normal adult humans is 11 or nine to 12 point with two to four points of letting. If you have audiences that are older than that or younger than that, then you're going to have something a little larger. Okay.

Harry Potter was the first one. It was for a much younger audience 12 to 14 ish. They've got a lot more space and a lot larger text.

If you can find a hardback sometimes they have a khalfan in the back that tells you about the typeface. And what size they were using they're using like 13 or 14 point. I don't remember.

So a little bit bigger because it's for a younger audience if you get to kindergarten size you're going to be using something very large because they are not used to reading. And so you need something easier for them to see. When we get older our eyesight starts to go and we like to have something a little bit larger again so that we can see it a little better, a little easier. So your audience is going to make some demands on you that it would be nice if you take into consideration. All right.

Let's talk about margins for a little bit here. The margins for your pages depend a lot on your typeface, and on the size of the line of text that you got. Okay. You don't really want to start with your margins, but most programs make us start there, because it says what's your page size and then what are your margins. That's just where they start they got to start somewhere. Okay.

A lot of times, you need to go back and revisit that, once you get your typeface decided and your size and things like that.

Normally for your line length. That's what you need to pay most attention to. It's not your margins, but your line lengths. Okay. We want to have 10 to 12 words on a line average that's comfortable for us to read. So if you have larger text, you can have longer lines. If you have smaller text, you need to have shorter lines.

If you're doing something that does have columns, you can get very short lines with very small, small text. Excuse me. All right, so you'll go 10 point maybe nine point in columns where you wouldn't do that in a in a book width work.

If you change something there. If you change your type face to something that's a lot wider. That has wider character widths then maybe you need to adjust your line lengths. So you'd have bigger margins are smaller margins, depending on which way you need to go.

You can compensate with more space. If you have very long lines, but you need to have small margins, add a little bit more space in your lines have four or five points of letting instead Because that will make it easier for people to read without reading the same line over again. That's what you're trying to avoid.

All right. So your margins are going to be dependent on your typeface and your size and you're letting those are all interconnected. Alright.

The typeface that you want to choose for your text is going to be something that's easy to read. Those are usually called old style font. They've got serifs, which is your first indication that you've got a good font. If it's got a serif usually that's a good sign.

There are some what are called modern faces that have got very thin Sarifs and very thin upright spindly letters that if you try to read in book length. It gets really picket fence type looking and it's very difficult to read. Those are better for headlines and things like that.

For headings. You want to have something that's either bolder, or at least larger. If you want to have more contrast, then you can have something that's san sarif or decorative. This happens to be an academic publication and so it has exactly the same type face all the way through.

Not a lot of contrast, other than the bolding so again depends on your audience. If you want to have something more splash, and if your audience will tolerate that, then, you know, pick something that has a good contrast not minimal contrast. All right.

Speaking of contrast, we want to have... sometimes you'll have headings in your book. If you've got nonfiction.

Or fiction might sometimes too, if you've got different time designations or something like that, your headings need to be distinguishable, especially if you turn the page, you need to be able to tell is this a first level heading or a second level heading.

Typically bold is your first level heading a bold italic or an italic for your second level heading to give those contrasts, you may or may not have more space around those than you.

So just kind of depends on what you want to do. You might have headings that are run in. I don't know if you can see that this is bold here.

This is a third level heading. If you don't want your headings to stand out very much, you might want to start there. You can have, again, bold or italic For those run in headings, you do need to have some way to distinguish them from where the text starts. So you usually have a period or you can have extra space in there to give them a little bit of a break from the main text so people can see them easier. Right.

Your space on them, you need to have more space above the heading, then you have after a heading, a little bit of space after is nice to raise it up from the text and give it some breathing room.

But you want to have more space above it so that it looks like it goes with the text that follows it, that it introduces. This is called proximity. Okay. We want to have things together that belong together and more space between things that don't belong together.

So we have more space above our headings, because they belong with the text that they introduce. Right, same thing goes with block quotes.

And you probably can't see this because it's too small. My block quote is part of the paragraph above it. And so there's less space above, then there is below it.

Right, you put a little bit of extra. It doesn't have to be a lot a couple of points of space is usually plenty So you don't have to be really massive there. You don't need a whole line space. Okay, that's going to be way too much usually You do need to have it block quotes offset on the sides. That's part of what signals us that this is something different. This is not the author's original words, he's quoting this from somewhere else.

Okay, so we inset it on the sides, we have space on the top and the bottom to give it its own little section. Right. How much space we indent it is going to depend on your paragraph indents.

All right. You don't need a lot of room for your paragraph indents, they don't need to be a half an inch, which is what the default tab sizes in word and a lot of different programs. That's way too much. You don't need that half of that is plenty and sometimes even less than that is good.

But you want to have your block quotes line up with those paragraph indents, because then everything has a nice alignment and it looks even All right. It doesn't look messy. It doesn't look kind of half hearted and scattered about Right. I don't know if you can see that but it aligns here, you have a line here, you have a line here where the paragraph indents and back to our block quotes. My footnotes also have the same indents, everything lines up And the alignment or looks really nice and neat and professional, which is what we're going for. Right.

See what else we got in here. The other thing with your footnotes, since we're on that. You've got just regular paragraph.

Footnotes, you don't have to have a hanging indent or anything weird like that you may or may not have your footnote number super scripted. If it is, then you don't need to have a period after it, but you could you may or may not have a space after it.

Most of the time what I do from my work is we just have the number as regular text on the line has a period after it. You could have, like, more space instead of a period, just like you do for your run in headings.

You can have those work the same way if you want so that you have repetition.

But normally it's just a regular paragraph. It is smaller than your body text. And so we'll also have less letting but if I have like three points of letting In my body text. And I also want three points or maybe a tiny bit less in my body or in my footnotes. So the color on the page again looks nice and even.

Right, but your hierarchy, which we haven't talked about Is going to be Your main title. Okay, so that's going to be the biggest thing and then your headings. Okay, first level heading second level headings could be same size or smaller, if there's enough contrast Your block quotes may or may not be smaller in size. If you want, they could be the same size. Your footnotes are

obviously at the bottom of your hierarchy. They're the least important thing on the page. And so they're going to be smaller than anything else. Right.

If we get into the back matter, indexes are the smallest thing in the book. All right, they might be the same size as your footnotes. If you've got enough space for them, but usually they're very small and a lot tighter letting actually here, you can get away with just to cram everything in I don't have a bibliography in this book your bibliographies are going to be kind of the same way.

They can either be the same size as your body text or it can be a little bit smaller. You do have the same line length.

So you don't want to have it too much smaller is going to be harder to read, but usually about the same size and letting but you have a hanging indent instead of a regular paragraph indent. It's going to be, again, the same size you want to repeat that. So, it all looks like it matches.

And Again, if you've got appendixes, or anything else like that. This has got an appendix. It's got the same kind of title structure and the same kind of drop and first paragraph is stuff as everything else in the book does that all matches and ties together.

Okay, if you have lists. I don't think I've got anything that...

It's easy to find lists are going to be, again, very similar to your body text you want them to align. So the indents are going to be similar to your paragraph indents Whether they're numbered or bulleted isn't going to make any difference. You need to decide whether the bullets or numbers are going to be flush with the edge of your text, or if they're going to be indented and then the rest of the item is going to be indented farther than that. They do have hanging indents, a lot of programs have some kind of automatic option. Sometimes the spacing in it is too big. So you might need to adjust it.

It's nice to have a little bit of spacing in between those elements too. So if you can adjust that kind of spacing. That's also nice Captions again are going to be similar. If you've got a contrasting font, that's not too hard to read.

You could have your captions in that contrasting font, if you wanted to. But most of the time you're, again, you're going to have something that's similar to your body text or the same is your body text. So you're using repetition.

But you do need to have some kind of contrast so it might be smaller. It might be a italic At least a lot of space in between. So you can easily distinguish between what's going to be your body types and watch your captions. So you need to pay attention to that sort of thing.

And again, just everything else is going to be very similar. You want to use repetition. You don't need to have a lot of different type faces. You don't need to have a lot of different sizes usually. So Watch out for your alignment. Watch out for your proximity and make sure that things stay together that need to be together and have more space where you need to separate things.

And I think that's about all I've got. So I guess it's time for questions. Thanks.