



## Making Things Look Good to Read

By Veronica Valero: Written for the Golden Gate Computer Society Newsletter

### BOOK: The Non-Designer's Design & Type Books, Deluxe Edition

by Robin Williams (not the actor)  
Peachpit Press, © 2008,  
ISBN 13: 9780321534057, \$45.00.

#### THE HOOK

Have you ever opened a book and felt emotion without reading the text? Have you ever visited a website and felt relaxed and even a bit inspired by your experience just by staring at it? What about that ad that caught your attention, did you ever wonder why? And, when you got a flyer in the mail, why did you read it but not the others?

If you've answered "yes" to any of these questions – then you've had a "great design" experience without really knowing it.

#### WHY BOTHER?

In this flashing, speeding world, where everyone—everywhere—wants to catch your attention, "great design" is a must to edge out the competition. But, what if you're not into marketing or design? What if you only want to use your nifty word-processor with all those fun curly fonts to invite a group of friends to your dog's obedience training graduation? Or, what if your science fiction writing group thought it would be fun to do monthly newsletters with the groups' great out-of-this-world stories and you were picked to design the layout (*You should never have showed them—and bragged—about the "garage sale" flyer you created with Microsoft Works. But that's another story!*) What do you do?! Call your local, independent bookstore and order Robin Williams' *The Non-Designer's Design & Type Books*, pronto!

#### A TWO-FOR-ONE DEAL

This book is two bibles in one: The first is, *The Non-Designer's Design Book*. The second one is, *The Non-Designer's Type Book*. Both are filled with wonderful "golden rules" that will make your desktop publishing experience actually fun AND relaxing. It's possible because the basic rules—Principles— are so simple!

#### BOOK ONE

The four principles for *The Non-Designer's Design Book* are: (1) Contrast, (2) Repetition, (3) Alignment, (4) Proximity. Ms. Williams fleshes out each of these principals with "before & after" visuals to explain what she means. She shows common errors and how a few simple changes can make a "bla, bla" ad, flyer, or newsletter into a very stunning—or at least eye-catching—piece. And, that's what you want: to catch your reader's attention and make them look, then read.

Ms. Williams also goes into color basics. She explains what the color wheel is all about and shares about color relationships between shades, tints and tones. She discusses warm and cool colors, along with CYMK vs RGB and which is for print and web. All this is done with color graphic samples, both how-to's and how-not-to-do's, which helps you get it.

#### BOOK TWO

Before the second book gets into its principles, *The Non-Designer's Type Book* first gives you an interesting but brief history lesson on type and typography: It started with the scribes, then Gutenberg's press, then the mighty typewriter, followed by a major paradigm shift into computers—where everyone can now be a typesetter—but only good ones are those that follow foundational rules. These rules are: (1) Make thy text readable. (2) Make thy fonts legible. (3) Know thy punctuations rules. (4) Use thy types wisely, both Expert and OpenType. (5) Space thy type right. (6) Thy beauty is in thy details. (7) Thou shalt not be a wimp! Have fun, be bold, be brave, be creative, but not all on *thee* same page!

These two Non-books-in-one practice what it preaches: all these principals are incorporated into this book. So, not only is it eye-catching and easy to read, it is also captivating and keeps your attention while you read. And it's also beneficial: now you know the *secret* to good design AND how to do it! Below is an example of a "before" and "after" ad based on the design principles presented in this book:



**Want to be an  
UNDERSTANDER?**

How'd you like to . . .

understand every word and every nuance in a Shakespeare play?

Can you imagine . . .

going to see a play performed and actually understanding everything that's going on?

What if you could . . .

laugh in the right places in a play, cry in the right places, boo and hiss in the right places?

Ever wanted to . . .

talk to someone about a Shakespearean play and have that person think you know what you're talking about?

Would you like to . . .


have people admire and even esteem you because you know whether or not Portia cheated her father by telling Bassanio which casket to choose?

It's all possible.

Live the life you've dreamed about!

Be an Understander!

For more info on how to wisen up and start your new life as an Understander, contact us right away: phone: 1-800-555-1212; email: Ben@TheUnderstanders.com



*Before the 4 principles of design are added*

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Ben@TheUnderstanders.com



*After the 4 principles of design are added:  
Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, Proximity*

**EVERYONE BENEFITS:**

This book is not only beneficial to those getting into design by choice or by election, it also benefits those in the design business, both print and web, both designers and assistants, both professional and volunteer—even those in between. As writers should now-and-then brush up their skills by reading *The Chicago Manual of Style*, and as artists will benefit from reviewing *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, anyone that sits in front of a computer to create copy that you want others to read, will benefit from reading these two-books-in-one. As they say, "It's not what you say, it's how you say it!" So, too, "It's not how you type it, it's how you present it!" I love all the Robin William books I've read, they are all 4 stars, both in readability and information. Out of a 1-4 rating, **I give this one 4 stars too!**

*Veronica C. Valero started her own computer tutoring business seven years ago in Marin County, California. She is a member of the Golden Gate Computer Society [www.ggcs.org](http://www.ggcs.org) and had been writing book and software reviews for GGCS for over seven years. She also co-led the Small Office Home Office Special Interest Group (SIG) for two years.*