



Interior Book Design and Typesetting

by Jill Ronsley

What Are Interior Book Design and Typesetting?

You have typed your book in a word-processing program, such as Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Why not justify the margins, check for typos, and print?

Interior book design—the art of laying out a manuscript—is just that: an art. It is also a science. Interior book design is a skill that improves with experience. Right away, "the difference between doing it yourself and hiring a professional"—that oft-repeated phrase—is clear.

The layout and design of a book should suit the content. A book for children will have a larger font than a collection of academic articles. Screenplays, picture books, textbooks, travel guides, and cookbooks all require careful design. The design of a novel or self-help book should allow the reader to flow through the pages. Why? So he or she fully enjoys reading or easily gains knowledge from the book.

A well-designed book is pleasing to the eye. People may go to the bookstore, pick up a book whose cover and title appeal, open to any page, and immediately decide that the font is too small or the words are too cramped for them ever to read the book, even if they might delight in the content. These are some of the elements that an interior book designer considers when determining a book design:

- page and margin size
- font selection
- paragraph and line spacing
- title page and table of contents
- headers, footers and page numbers (perhaps with a graphic)
- chapter titles or section headings
- graphics placement & design (illustrations, photos, charts)
- layout of special material (such as tables, front matter and back matter)
- use of white space
- hyphenation control
- orphan and widow control
- special touches in the design that make your book unique

Some books contain text boxes that needs to stand out. Perhaps the box would look good with a border or a background tint. All elements must be carefully placed in the layout. Sometimes, the main body of text has to wrap around a chart or an illustration or a paragraph needs a drop cap. The book designer makes this possible.

Typesetting is done after the design is finished. It is the application of the design to your book as a whole. Typesetting includes tweaking the spacing between letters, between

words, and between lines, as well as hyphenation, orphan, and widow control. Good typesetting can make a book look great.

Why Hire a Professional Book Designer?

The content of a book must be reflected in the interior design. An ornate design with borders and script fonts is suitable for some books, while a simple, clean layout is appropriate to others. The design of a children's book should enable a child to read without difficulty. Your book will look as though it was produced professionally if every part of your production—text, graphics, book design, and printing—demonstrates quality and the touch of experience.

A book designer's experience and familiarity with the features available in professional desktop publishing software make all the difference to the final product—your book! In addition to being able to place all the elements of your manuscript together in a pleasing layout, the designer will design a book whose production is as cost-effective as possible. A book that looks wonderful when you open it required skill, time, and careful attention to detail to get it that way.

Finally, the book designer will send your book to your printer in a problem-free format. The designer knows what questions to ask the printer, understands his guidelines and submission requirements, and knows what kind of paper is appropriate for a particular job. He or she will preflight the file and provide any technical information that the printer needs. A file that is not prepared according to the printer's specifications might end up looking very different from what you see on your computer screen, and the printer is likely to add extra charges to make corrective changes.

One more thing! A good designer takes pride in his or her work. No designer wants someone to pick up a book and say, "That was done by an amateur." The professional designer will do his best to make your book a pleasure to read, captivating to the eye, and even admired and emulated by other designers.

Good Book Design Helps Increase Your Book Sales

A well-designed book tells a bookseller or reader that you value your book. People are more likely to buy it if they find it visually appealing. If your book has no eyesores, editorial errors or design flaws, nothing will jump out to make the book buyer think, "This book is not for me." You want people to say, "Yes, I want to read this book!"

Therefore, make sure your book is well-designed and typeset. This will benefit you and help your book attain success. You have already put valuable time and energy into writing the manuscript. Produce an excellent book from start to finish. Your book is worth it!

Copyright © 2006 by Jill Ronsley. All rights reserved.

Jill Ronsley, director of **SUN Editing & Book Design**, provides editing and book design services, as well as the design of promotional materials for authors. She won the Best Book Editor 2005 award from the Editors and Preditors Readers Poll. She has worked on the production of nonfiction books, novels, poetry books, children's books, screenplays, spiritual books, etc. She is the editor-in-chief of *The Blue Review*, a monthly e-zine for writers, and writes two regular columns for *The Review*. Visit <http://www.suneditwrite.com> for more information.