

Department of Multimedia Charnwood Imaging Centre

page layout & typography

White Space

Imagine that you've just moved into a new house. Remember how excited you felt about all the extra room in your new house? Now imagine your dismay when you look around, and all you see is wall to wall boxes. You can't stand the clutter, so you go to work unpacking the boxes and putting everything away. Next you throw out the boxes. Suddenly you have a home: there is room to walk around and breath.

White space is the equivalent of uncluttering your home. Just as you don't want wall to wall boxes in your home, you don't want wall to wall text, graphics or boxes in your designs.

White space — the space between visual elements — is an integral part of the message. White space tells you where one section ends and another begins.

Called white space, negative space, or, in letterforms, counterspace, it's the part of the design that "isn't" there. And it's just as important as the elements that are there.

White space is vital to graphic design. The key is to add just enough white space so the eye knows where to go and can rest a bit when it gets there. You can control white space in the following location: margins, paragraph spacing, spacing between lines of text, gutters (the space between columns), and surrounding text and graphics.



The Tennis Group business card, above right, makes good use of white space.

But many customers will insist that everything they do must be on their business card. What if the layout was changed slightly and more text was added (right).

Not only is the lower card too busy, but white space has been trapped between the information on the left and the logo. The customer might have more text on the card, but who's going to read it? Your eye doesn't really know where to look first.



information from www.graphicdesign.about.com

a good site for graphic design related issues with an excellent forum area with highly knowledgeable practitioners willing to help with those tricky technical problems and handy aesthetic hints