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# Creating a Page Layout Grid

Professional graphic designers who design magazine layouts in the print industry use a very simple grid structure to layout pages called a “page layout grid”, which enables them to introduce creativity and variety into their publications whilst maintaining design consistency. When properly used, the underlying grid is not apparent to the reader.

This simple format uses a six-column grid on each page. Because this uniform format is the easiest type to lay out, you should try experimenting with the six-column grid. You will be able to lay out more interesting and varied page layouts. Keep in mind that each text block may span two or three of these base columns — but the six-column grid is still underlying the design.

## Standard Six-column Grid

Guidelines:

- Two columns of text improves readability by shortening line lengths.
- The symmetry of two columns puts the reader at ease.
- You may use alignment left, or justified text equally well, depending on the intent of the message. If you use justified text, check that word space between words is not too wide.
- One-column text layout: Don't go across all six columns, three-columns should be the limit for text columns.
- Headlines may go across all six columns in order to provide balance.
- Smaller column for captions or sidebars, or a single column for white space, which gives breathing room to the reader.
- The grid can be divided both horizontally and vertically. This allows symmetry throughout the layout.
- Part of the layout should account for a header, a footer, and a page number if required.

1. **Dead Area:** a margin around the layout in which no live copy should appear. Protects against printer errors and the loss of important information. You can bleed art work into this area, as long as it is extraneous imagery.
2. **Live Area:** the portion of the layout which contains all important information. Gives the reader a border for visual relief.
3. By breaking the layout into six-equal columns you have the opportunity to use a combination of design configurations.



*The underlying six-column grid above with text running in two columns.*

*The same six-column grid below, now displays text and graphics in an easy to edit layout. (Gray boxes indicate images.)*



*Don't feel that you have to fill up all the white space — always leave some white space in your pages, as the professionals do.*

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## Extending the Six-column Layout

You can quickly and easily change the layout of text and graphics on your page because the underlying six-column grid will always give you a uniform arrangement of columns to work with.

