**WHO SAW INFORMATION**

This fact book for the music industry is "jazzed" up with bright colors and innovative presentation decisions, such as the spherical pie chart, particularly appropriate because the statistics refer to the global marketplace.

**FIRM:** RECORDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
**CREATIVE DIRECTOR/DESIGNER:** NEAL ASHBY
Developing a Grid

There is no magic formula or trade secret to developing a grid, and yet it can be a very illusive design task. My breakthrough in understanding grids came when I sat and watched as another designer sketched and developed a grid for a brochure. Since that opportunity is not always available, here are some other, more readily accessible pointers regarding grid development.

When developing grid systems for repeated use, it is helpful to consider the following strategies:

[1] "Reverse engineer" the grid of a magazine or other publication that you admire. To do this, start with full-sized copies of several of the magazine’s layouts. Taking one sheet of tracing paper, use colored pencils to trace the grid lines you think are there. Designate columns, margins, baselines, page number locations, photo locations, etc. Then move that same piece of tracing paper over to another layout. Are there consistent layout decisions from the first layout to the second? If so, note them and then move that same paper over to a third layout and repeat the process. Through this analysis (which you might try with several different publications), you will uncover what the designer was working with as a basic grid and how he or she molded that system into interesting layouts. The insight you gain can be used to guide your own development and use of grids.

[2] Reverse engineering can also be used beginning with a design of your own. If you have the talent to prepare one interesting layout, but cannot quite imagine how to expand it into a grid, then work on one layout to about 75 percent completion. Analyze it for its placement of basic elements, then try and apply that analysis to a second layout, and so on. Work forward and backward through the layouts, adjusting the grid based on what does and does not work, until you arrive at a final system. By extrapolating from one layout, and then adjusting as various strengths and weaknesses of the system are revealed, you can design a grid based on your own intuition.

[3] When it comes to creating an internal or single application grid, a third strategy is to simply start with one element and let the grid develop from there. For instance, placing the headline type will provide a left and right vertical grid line as well as a horizontal guide. Use one or

More (About) White Space!

White space is an essential element in design, and that includes layouts developed via grids. A grid system should designate both the areas to be filled as well as the areas that are to be left alone. By including a large margin of white space in the basic plan, designers not only provide layouts with a chance to look well-planned and sophisticated, but they also have an area in reserve as a natural outlet for exceptions to the grid’s rules. In these instances the white space can be forfeited to accommodate such elements as an extra large image or additional type. Occasionally infringing on the white space may satisfy a content need, and also offer a rhythmic shift, providing some useful visual tension.
THE GRID SYSTEM that guides these financial layouts for an annual report utilizes a single column grid with a large white space at the top of the page. Occasionally, the white space is used for headline type, but more often it serves as a contrast to the dense information presented over most of the page.

DESIGN FIRM: LOUEY/RUBINO DESIGN GROUP INC.
DESIGNERS: ROBERT LOUEY, ASHLEIGH MOSES

Craig Arnold

Received a B.A. in 1980 from Yale University
and is pursuing a doctorate in creative writing at the University of Utah. Arnold, who has served as an editor at Quarterly Review magazine, received the Amy Lowell Poetry Traveling Scholarship in 1996. His poems "Hate" was featured in The Best American Poetry 1998; other work has appeared in Poetry, The Paris Review, The Yale Review, and The New Republic.

"A gifted collection of daring writing."—W. S. Merwin

Craig Arnold’s Shells is the first book selected for the Yale Series of Younger Poets by the late-induced poet W. S. Merwin. Arnold plays on the idea of the shell as both the enclosing surface of the self and a hard case that wards off the assaults of the world. His poems narrate a series of life stories and events that range from friendships based on fact, "Arnold writes, "are merely stable"—this book is full of wildly unstable and bewitching friendships and other significant relations.

THIS BOOK COVER, in its unfolded form, shows how a grid can guide the placement of elements in a three-dimensional space. Invisible grid lines wrap the book, insuring a cohesive visual experience as a viewer handles the book. Notice the horizontal alignment of the quotation on the back cover, the forward credit on the front cover and the text on the inside front flap. Another vertical alignment occurs along the grid line between the title type and the red shell at the bottom of the front cover. The exclusive use of Bodoni typefaces adds to the structural elegance of the design.

JACKET COURTESY OF YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, DESIGNED BY SONIA SCANLON.
These two CD covers are variations on the same original release. Although their designs do not employ a strict grid, a visual system is at work to ensure that the designs are related. The horizontal flow of the circles, the reuse of the background imagery and the single typeface in a flush left alignment all contribute to the visual relationships that associate the two designs.

Design Firm: SEMILQUID
Designer: MIKE LOHR
more of those guides to place additional elements until another grid line is necessary. Then use one of the new existing elements to indicate where that grid line would be. This strategy can be combined with the reverse engineering strategies mentioned previously as a starting point for a multi-use grid system.

![Diagram of grid system]

Finally, a resource designers often use to inspire interesting proportions in all layout efforts, including grid systems, are two classic mathematical formulas: the Fibonacci Series and the Root-2 Rectangle. In the Fibonacci series (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13...) each number is the sum of the two that precede it. The Root-2 Rectangle is a rectangle with a ratio of one to the square root of two, which can be derived from a square and its diagonal. Both can be found in man-made designs (either by intention or intuition), as well as in nature. The proportions of classic Greek architecture and the nautilus shell are often cited as examples of these "perfect" proportional formulas. The figures on this page are examples of how to use these formulas in the context of developing a grid. In fact, almost any numerological system can be used to help begin a grid system.
**THE SKILLFUL USE of scale, typography, and asymmetrical balance belie the simplicity of the grid that guides feature articles in I.D. Magazine. As shown by the overlay lines, the grid's foundation is two equal-width columns per page, offset by the use of a narrower column as desired. Custom layout decisions, such as the choice to let the introductory type run past the standard column width, or the use of a full-bleed photograph, help individualize each article. Because such decisions are made sparingly, they add interest without undermining the grid's ability to help visually unify the entire magazine issue after issue. (Creating overlay lines to show the grid pattern is a way to "reverse engineer" a respected layout.)**

See page 81 for more on reverse engineering.

> DESIGN FIRM: I.D. STAFF
> DESIGN DIRECTOR: LUKE HAYMAN

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**THESE LAYOUTS ARE** the inside and outside of a folded insert from a furnishing's notebook/catalog. Each folded piece is designed... within a strict but sophisticated grid system, allowing the character of the furnishings to visually dominate the layout. An analysis of the layout, shown... via the overlay lines, indicates the use of flush left typography. It also reveals an interesting decision to have the visual centerlines of images line up with the upper edges of typographic elements. a strategy that takes advantage of the silhouetted treatment of the furniture imagery...
Grids Cannot Live by Lines Alone!

In all uses of grids, the "invisible" lines that form the grid are only part of the formula for imaginative design consistency. Design decisions regarding details such as typography, color and use of photography should all be included in the delineation of an overall system. Visual decisions, partnered with structural decisions, fortify the reason for using a grid in the first place. The following examples explain why this consistency is at the heart of grid use.

In information design, paying strict attention to typographic consistency means that all the states, cities and other identifications on a map must be labeled in a consistent typographic manner, or that timetables employ a consistent use of different typographic weights to distinguish different aspects of the content.

In stationery packages, consistent color and typographic and layout decisions from piece to piece bring together designs that might otherwise not relate to one another because of their size and function.

With magazine layouts, consistent typographic treatment of one element, such as body copy, paves the way for a less rule-bound treatment of other special elements, such as headlines and introductions. You might think of this in orchestral terms: In a musical arrangement, certain instruments play a steady foundation of notes and rhythms so that the soloist can be the star. Even in jazz innovation, there is often a set series of chords from which the musicians improvise. The same sort of balance between things that change—and things that don't—is a crucial decision in multipage design.

QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

How Can I Keep Layouts Interesting Page After Page?

While there are some multipage projects that shouldn't vary much from page to page (dictionaries, for instance), other projects such as magazines, newsletters and brochures need to develop a rhythm in order to maintain their audience. This is often referred to as sequential design. Sequential design is the page-to-page rhythmic balance between elements that change and those that do not. Imagine a trip to Paris. Museums were interesting for three days in a row, but you now feel the need to change your daily rhythm a bit. You spend a day shopping or relaxing in the Luxembourg Gardens before spending the final day of your trip visiting museums once again. As with travel itineraries, the key to sequential design is to know when to keep a layout in its pure state, and when to take a break.

When planning a complete sequence of pages, it's best to start by getting all the elements into their preliminary position according to the basic grid plan, and adjust from there. Analyze the sequential design by turning the pages (in this case, printed pages are better than looking at everything on the computer screen). Try to feel when a spike in the visual action is required. Create exceptions to the basic design to the extent that they are necessary, but not so often that they will undermine the beauty of the design structure. Remember: Establishing the expected is the first step in creating unexpected, visually rhythmic layouts.

QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

What Happens When a Grid Doesn't Accommodate a Particular Situation?

No grid is sacred, and the occasional intelligent, purposeful disruption of the grid can help 1) solve a unique layout problem, and 2) create some excitement within the system. A tip that may help when purposefully breaking the grid is to do so within the same spirit that the grid was devised. For instance, using half of the measure of the existing column width to create a new vertical grid line is a technique that both uses/doesn't use the grid. One word of caution: If you find yourself consistently breaking the grid, then maybe it's time to either reconsider some of your grid design decisions, or incorporate that frequent need into the system itself.
THE THEME OF this annual report for the international relief organization
CARE is "50 reasons to believe in the next 50 years." The reasons are highlighted throughout the publication and always set in oversized type. Each reason is set flush left and spans the width of the page. The body copy is organized according to a grid that divides the page into two main columns, with an overlapping third column centered between the first two that is used for subheads and other highlighted information. The full-bleed photographs and large type contrast well with the thin rules and classic typographic attitude of the text-heavy pages.

> DESIGN FIRM: WAGES DESIGN
> ART DIRECTOR: BOB WAGES
> DESIGNER: RORY MYERS

14/50 Munyantwalu Valens, a Rwandan refugee. "Myself and my family have lost much. But when our two sons awake in the morning and they are eager to fetch water or firewood, we can still feel some hope. For these things we thank CARE."

15/50 Safety. The threat of nuclear war is less today than at any time in the nuclear age.

37/50 Costa Rica. It spends less on its military and more on health and education than any nation in Latin America. And has the highest quality of life. In 1996, CARE will end work there after 38 years.

38/50 Dr. Raul Cadena. He joined CARE Ecuador in 1962 as an office assistant. Today he is an Assistant Director. 94% of CARE employees are national staff at work in their own countries.

> DESIGN FIRM: BBK STUDIO INC.
**THIS VIEWBOOK FOR** the Harvard Medical School uses several interesting graphic strategies to relate the layouts: The grid of images on the cover relates to the position of the black bar in the interior layouts. Although different grids are used for the introductory and secondary spreads, the black bar and typographic attitude remains consistent throughout.

The secondary spreads feature an interesting use of right-hand and left-hand page strategies. In many publications page designs mirror each another across the gutter. In this case the right and left pages are not mirrored when it comes to the columns of text, but do feature mirrored positioning of the page numbers and crest images. The result is a dynamic visual tension between the two coexisting strategies.

**DESIGN FIRM:** Visual Dialogue

**DESIGN:** Fretz Klaeke