# TERMINOLOGY

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# DESKTOP PUBLISHING TERMINOLOGY

**Active window** The frontmost window on the desktop; the window where the next action will take place. An active window's title bar is highlighted.
**Apple** Company that introduced practical desk-top publishing with the combination of the Macintosh computer and Laserwriter printer. Apple still dominate the market.
**Ascender** The part of a lower case character which rises above the height of the lower case 'x'.
**Baseline** An imaginary line on which type rests. Descending characters (such as the letters g, p or y) hang below the baseline.
**Bleed** Area between the normal text area and the edge of the page. The better DTP packages give you the freedom to make use of the whole page, including the bleed area.
**Body/text matter/copy** The text forms the main part of the document, not including headlines, captions and so on.
**Bullet** Large dot or blob used to add emphasis to text: for example to precede each item in a list.
**Cancel Button** A button that appears in a dialog box. Clicking it cancels the command.
**Central Processing Unit** The 'brain' of the computer, the microprocessor that performs the actual computation in machine language.
**Character** Any symbol that has a widely understood meaning and thus can convey information. Some characters, such as letters, numbers and punctuation, can be displayed on the monitor screen and printed on a printer.
**Character style** Stylistic variations, such as bold, italic, and underline. The normal style is usually known as plain, medium or roman.
**Clipboard** The holding place for what you last cut or copied, a buffer area in memory. Information on the Clipboard can be inserted (pasted) into documents.
**Command** An instruction that causes the computer to perform some action. A command can be typed from a keyboard, selected from a menu with a hand-held device such as a mouse, or embedded in a programme.
**Copy** Printing trade terminology for text, now starting to creep into DTP circles.
**Crop Marks** Alignment marks which detail the edges of a page. Referred to as a register marks or trim marks, crop marks can be used to allow designs to be planned.
**Desktop Publishing (DTP)** Producing high-quality publications using system based around a general purpose personal computer and a laser printer. The total cost of the whole system might typically be around £4,000.
**Dots Per Inch (dpi)** A measurement of output device resolution, a laserprinter is normally 600dpi, an imagesetter can range from 1200dpi to 5000dpi.
**Drop Cap** A large capital letter at the beginning of a passage of text to help legibility. Implemented by the better DTP packages.
**Electronic Publishing (EP)** The usual term for more up-market publishing systems, with prices starting around £25,000. They are usually multi-user systems based around the Unix operating system.

**File Management** A general term for copying files, deleting files, and other work involving the contents of disks.
**Folder** A holder of documents and applications on the desktop. Folders, like subdirectories, allow you to organise information in any way you want.
**Fount (or Font)** All the characters in a particular typeface; nowadays taken to cover the whole range of sizes.
**Font Size** The size of a font of characters in points, equivalent to the distance between the base line of one line of text and the base line of the next line of single spaced text. Examples of Font sizes are 12 point and 18 point.
**Halftone** Way of representing a continuous-tone image such as a photograph so that different grey levels are simulated by a pattern of dots.
**Helvetica** A popular fount, much used for things like headlines, notices and advertisements. Although very legible in small amounts, it is tedious and tiring to look at if used for pages of dense text.
**Hyphenation** The process of splitting long words between two lines of text to prevent the amount of white space between words varying wildly from line to line.
**Kerning** Overriding the default of character spacing by placing one character in closer to another. This can greatly improve the appearance of such words in large type sizes.
**Laser Printer** Key component of a DTP system that gives you the ability to print good-quality text in a variety of sizes and type styles along with graphic elements such as rules. The more expensive machines can print halftone pictures.
**Leading** The interline space between lines of type. The better DTP packages let you control this in very small increments. With metal type the amount of white space between the lines was controlled by inserting pieces of lead, hence the name.
**Legibility** helps the reader to clearly see what the text and headlines are trying to describe.
**Line Length** Measured in picas or millimetres.
**Lines Per Inch (lpi)** Unit of measurement for halftone screen ruling. A frequency of 200lpi would be used for high quality printing.
**Menu Driven Icons** Operated with a mouse to perform certain tasks which are displayed around the screen.
**OCR (Optical Character Recognition)** Text is scanned and characters are changed to ASCII format for editing. This cuts down considerably the need to 'key-in' copy. After editing the text can be saved into any word processing programme, and if required imported for page make-up.
**Orphan** A page which *starts* with a single word or end of sentence.
**Overmatter** Text which does not fit in the area you have set aside for it. The way a DTP package copes with overmatter is a key element in how easy and fast it is to use.
**Page-Description Language (PDL)** A powerful kind of printer-control language used internally by many DTP systems. The PDL provides the package running on the personal computer with a flexible and device-independent way of describing the page it wants to output to the printer. Not all printers understand the small PDL; Postscript and DDL look like being the most common. Simpler laser printers get by without a PDL, limiting what you can do with them.

**Page Make-Up** Process of assembling all the elements that go to make up a finished page, both text and graphics. Traditionally done using a scalpel and glue to paste down strips of typeset text and finished artwork, but now moving towards all-electronic techniques.
**Pica** Traditional printing trade unit of measurement corresponding to 12 points or about one-sixth of an inch. Most DTP programs also let you work in centimetres and inches.
**Point** Another traditional printing unit approximately equal to 1/72nd of an inch - taken by DTP packages to be precisely 1/72nd of an inch. Point sizes are still the standard way of specifying type.
**Postscript** The leading page-description language developed by Adobe Systems. Any DTP program capable of describing a page in Postscript should be able to output in any Postscript-compatible printer or typesetting machine. This holds true whatever the resolution of the output device.
**RAM (Random Access Memory)** Memory in which information can be referred to in a random order. This is a temporary memory of the CPU consisting of a series of numbered locations which can be both read from and written to in any desired sequence.
**Raster Image Processor (RIP)** The key internal part of a laser printer or an intelligent typesetter, which converts the page description written in a PDL into the pattern of fine dots which strongly influences the speed that the printer can achieve in practice, especially with complete pages.
**Readability** is concerned with the style of the author, but can be spoilt by poor legibility.
**Resolution** can be as high as 12,000 or more dots to the inch. An increasing number of typesetting machines can be driven directly by a PDL, giving DTP users the option of getting finished pages typeset at higher quality than 300 dots to the inch that most current laser printers can manage.
**Rule** Printing trade term for a straight line of any thickness. Most DTP packages let you use lines to separate areas of text, and let you specify the thickness. Some packages incorporate a fairly comprehensive set of drawing tools.
**Scanner** Device for converting artwork on paper into a machine-readable form. You can then manipulate it with graphics or DTP software and use it as part of a page. Current low-cost scanners give reasonable quality for fine line art, like drawings and logos. For continuous-tone images like photographs their results fall well short of what people expect from newspapers.
**Scrolling** Describes the action of moving the screen information from the top to bottom also from left to right.
**Spellchecker** Used in most word processing and DTP programs to check spelling of copy which has been set.
**Times** A popular fount originally developed for newspaper use. Most people find it very legible for both long passages of body text and headlines.
**Tint** Pattern of small dots used to create a grey effect. Most DTP packages let you put tints over areas of text and choose the level of grey.
**Tracking** An advanced DTP feature which adjusts the spacing between the characters so as to optimise the distribution of white space within a line.

**Typeface** Style of lettering - broad areas are serif and sans serif.
**Typesetting** The process of converting typed text into a high-quality form suitable for mass reproduction. Traditionally, typesetting was a separate process from page design and make-up, but DTP packages combine all three functions.
**Typesetting System** Expensive, high-quality output for typesetting.
**Vertical Justification** Automatic stretching of the space between lines of text so that the contents of the page or column reach to the bottom. More useful for tables and lists than for solid text.
**Widow** A page which ends with a single line, word or hyphenated word at the botton of the page.
**Wordwrap** Describes the process of automatically fitting words on the screen into lines, by taking over whole words rather than breaking.
**WYSIWYG** What you see is what you get: that is, you can see on the screen exactly what your printer will produce. Many modern word processors are WYSIWYG, but generally just in one fount. A DTP package really needs to be WYSIWYG across a wide range of fount sizes. Although desirable, this is a tall order on a machine like the IBM PC; many IBM programs just make lots of extra hardware to achieve it. Mac packages are much better in this respect.