

# Henninger Helpful Hint

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## *This italic head is not hard to read*

**EVEN THE** *italics here in this editor's note are not difficult to read.*

*Running a lot of type in italics—especially in text like this—can be a real problem for readers. In this case, the statement that “Italics are difficult to read” holds true.*

*But it's not correct to assume that italics, in all configurations, are difficult to read.*

*The headline at the top is only 36 units (yes, the spaces count as a unit) and in a type*

*size that's large enough to read easily. To claim that the headline—or the editor's note—is difficult to read is a mistake.*

*Certainly this text is difficult to read and most discerning readers might not even try. That's because they understand that italics set in text can be hard on the eyes and is just too much to have to wade through.*

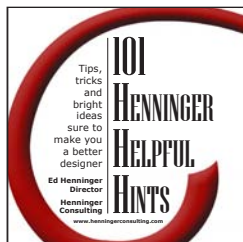
### **An oversimplification**

Let me make it clear: I'm tired of hearing people say: "Well, everyone knows italics are hard to read."

Actually, those who really "know" about italics really know that italics aren't necessarily hard to read at all.

The difference lies in how the italics are used. In a headline...even in a brief note, italics are fine. Put a lot of italics together in text size, though, and you have a problem.

Like a lot of other design elements and approaches...it depends.



### **'101 HENNINGER HELPFUL HINTS**

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Kevin Slimp, Director  
Institute of Newspaper Technology

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