

Henninger Helpful Hint



This is a caption set in 10 point type that goes across the width of a page below a six-column photo. This caption is difficult to read because it is set excessively wide. It is especially difficult because there are multiple lines in this caption and readers have to go from the right edge of the caption all the way back to the left to find the beginning of the next line. Typographers tell us that the wider the line the more difficulty readers have when trying to find the beginning of the next line so this can be a real problem for readability and it is not a good approach to setting captions when the caption should be set in multiple legs instead.

Instead of this...



Setting a caption in multiple legs below a wide photo is preferable because we are asking readers to follow the type across a narrower width—in this case, only three columns below a six-column photo. So this cap-

tion is much easier to read because the reader's eye has to travel only a relatively short distance from right to left to find the beginning of the next line of the caption. Work to create a style for captions that outlines

how they should be set for various widths. A format that works well is one leg of type for one- and two-column photos, two legs for three- and four-column photos and three legs for five- and six-column photos.

...let's do this.

Wide load ahead

Occasionally, there's that photo you want to run wide. It's a good shot and you want to give it the play it deserves.

When that occurs, you don't need to run the caption as wide as the photo. Actually, this can create a problem for readers if the caption is more than a line or two deep.

Type set very wide is difficult to follow.

Instead, set up a style that calls for a wide caption to be broken into multiple legs.

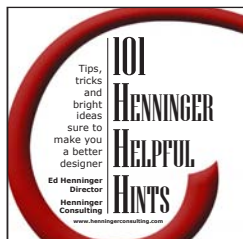
Here's the guide I use in most of my work:

1-2 column photo 1 leg of caption

3-4 column photo 2 legs of caption

5-6 column photo 3 legs of caption

I'm willing to bet those measures will work for you, too!



'101 HENNINGER HELPFUL HINTS

is filled with so many good ideas. You'll find yourself asking: "Why didn't I think of that?"

Kevin Slimp, Director
Institute of Newspaper Technology

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