

ACUMEN

Manual



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WHAT'S INSIDE

Acumen (noun): sharp insight or discernment.



Acumen is a quarterly publication.

We look at complex issues and take them apart, breaking them down into the individual stories that make up our collective lives. We magnify complicated things, whether it be through photos, long form journalism, or an entire issue's worth of coverage based around a singular topic.

Our goal is to make things worth knowing easy for you to know.

THE LINE

Yeah, *that* line. ☺

While it seems quite arbitrary – a thin semi-transparent rectangle stretched across the bottom third of the page – the line does have its purposes. First, and most importantly, its content serves as a folio, showing readers the issue date, issue name and page number.

But besides the obvious, the line is an element of design on the page. Seamlessly dividing the page into two unequal parts, the line sets up a dynamic environment for the designer to work around and with.

While the line should 99% of the time stay at the same place on every page (there are always exceptions),

it's okay to play around with its design; after all, it does serve as an element of design on the page.

Let's say you are designing a page and placed a photo through the line. Normally, that's perfectly okay. But this photo depicts a vital object to the story that just can't be afforded to be covered up by the line. Well, one solution

could be to make a cutout of the main object and place it *over* the line. While letting readers view the subject of the photo in its entirety, it also gives the subject a little pop from the page.

The important thing to keep in mind is there should be a distinct purpose for choosing to break style, to change the line.



Think about how you can use and manipulate the placement of the title to conquer design of the page. If that means changing the font or font size of the title, so be it.

As always, there are exceptions to rules. Nevertheless, here are the style guidelines for 99% of the titles.



SUMMARY DECK

One or two sentences.
Klinik Slab Book.
Around 14 pt font.

BODY COPY

The rules are quite simple.
Adobe Garamond Pro is the correct font.

Left align, non-justified.
9 pt to 10 pt font,
depending on readability against the background.

No hyphens.

■ symbol at the far right at the end of each story.

CREDITS

Reporters and photographers should be credited on the first spread of every story. The writer is credited for the "words," and the photographer the "photos." This credit normally follows or stands close to the title.

WORDS | ELLEN PENG
PHOTOS | STEPHANIE ZHANG

Designers are credited on every page, normally on the top right corner of the spread. Make sure to turn the text box vertically and line the top with the pink line and the left side outside the purple line.

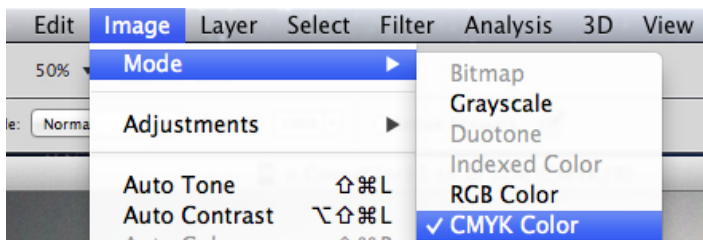
DESIGN BY STEPHANIE ZHANG

PHOTOS

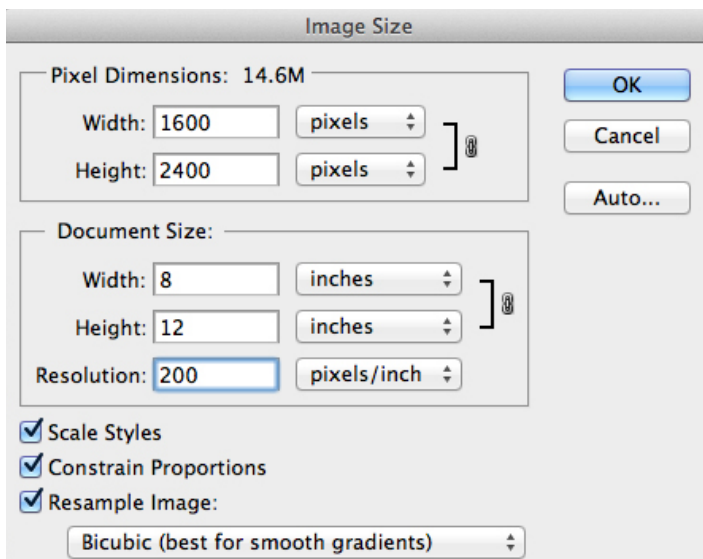
Guidelines for editing photos.

1. Open the photo in Photoshop by clicking and dragging the photo file into the Photoshop icon “Ps” on the bottom of the screen.

2. Change the mode of the photo from RGB to CMYK.

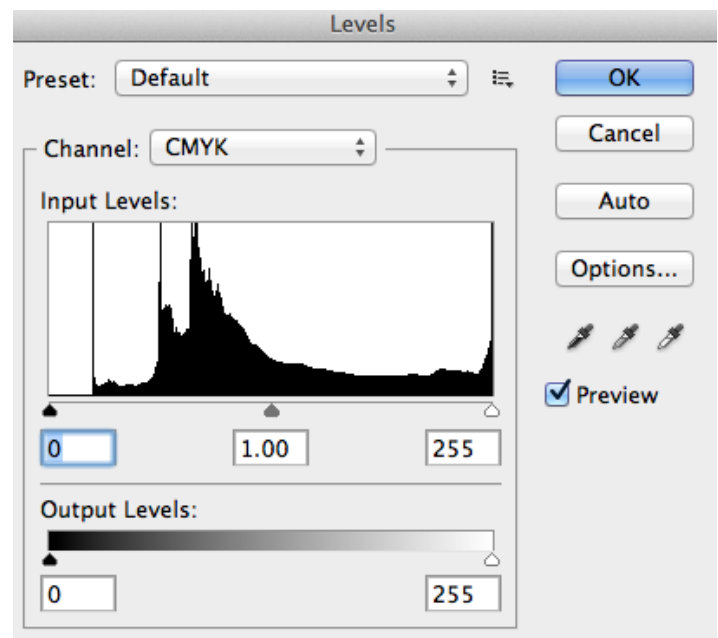


3. (Image >> Image Size) Change the resolution to 200 dpi and the image size to 2400 pixels as the height (or 12 inches).



4. (Image >> Levels) Change the levels of the photo. First click on the third eyedropper on the right the levels box. Then click on the whitest part of the picture. What this does is it makes the whitest part of the picture (what you clicked on) 100% white, which most of the time helps with the brightness of the photo.

You can continue with the black and gray eyedropper if applicable to the photo.



5. Save the photo as a tiff file, and label it “e.lastnameofphotographer.slugline.date” on your flash drive. Don’t forget to put this photo on the server as well.

COVERS

The photos on the front and the back covers go hand-in-hand. They somehow connect to each other to further the meaning of the issue.

For example, let's look at the *Running Out of Time* issue. The two photos are clearly connected since they're pictures of the same clock. But wait. Isn't that kind of redundant?

If you examine the covers a little more closely, it is evident that the front page resembles turning back the clock. However



on the back, it is revealed that the hand is taking out the batteries of the clock in attempt to stop time, bringing us to the

pithy statement on the back: Even if you take the batteries out of a clock, you still cannot stop time.

STAFF

The photo on the staff pages (2-3) should connect to the overall issue. However, try to stay away from using the same subject in the photo as the covers.

In *Running Out of Time*, the staff page's photo was of an hourglass with less than a second worth of sand left to fall.

One key aspect of the staff page is the **letter from the editor**. In here, one of the things the editors should address is the meaning of the photos, if the meaning is not clear.

STEPHANIE ZHANG



THIS ISSUE

The purpose of TOC is to provide an overview of the issue's content. To do so, add photos to the TOC pages (4-5) from the featured stories, as well as any other stories that have strong photos. Try to avoid placing photos on TOC that are too similar to the ones on the story spreads.

The TOC page should have the words "IN THIS ISSUE" on the page. In a more traditional TOC, a vertical line runs through the three i's.

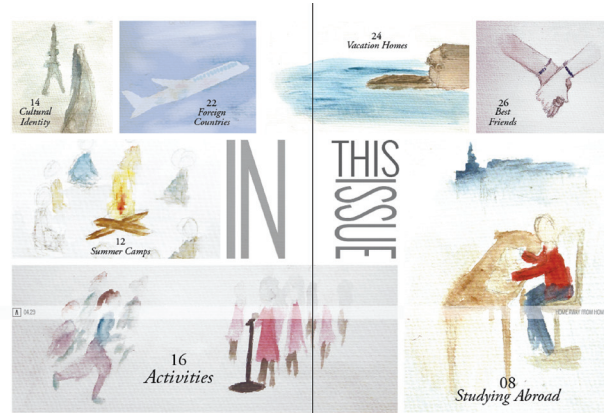
Each story has its slugline on the page, along with the page number. In traditional TOCs, the number is placed on one side of the vertical line, and the slugline on the other side.

TRADITIONAL TOC



◀ This spread has all the elements of a general TOC design, with the vertical line running through "IN THIS ISSUE," and featured photos from certain stories. However, this also has some nontraditional elements, with the black background, black-and-white photos, and graphic disco ball to reflect the issue topic.

NONTRADITIONAL TOC



◀ This spread breaks from the general style, but still keeps the most important elements. Each story still has its slugline with the page number, and the main heading of the page is still "IN THIS ISSUE." Also, the main visual aspects of this page all follow a similar illustration style.

THE MAESTRO

Where every issue begins.

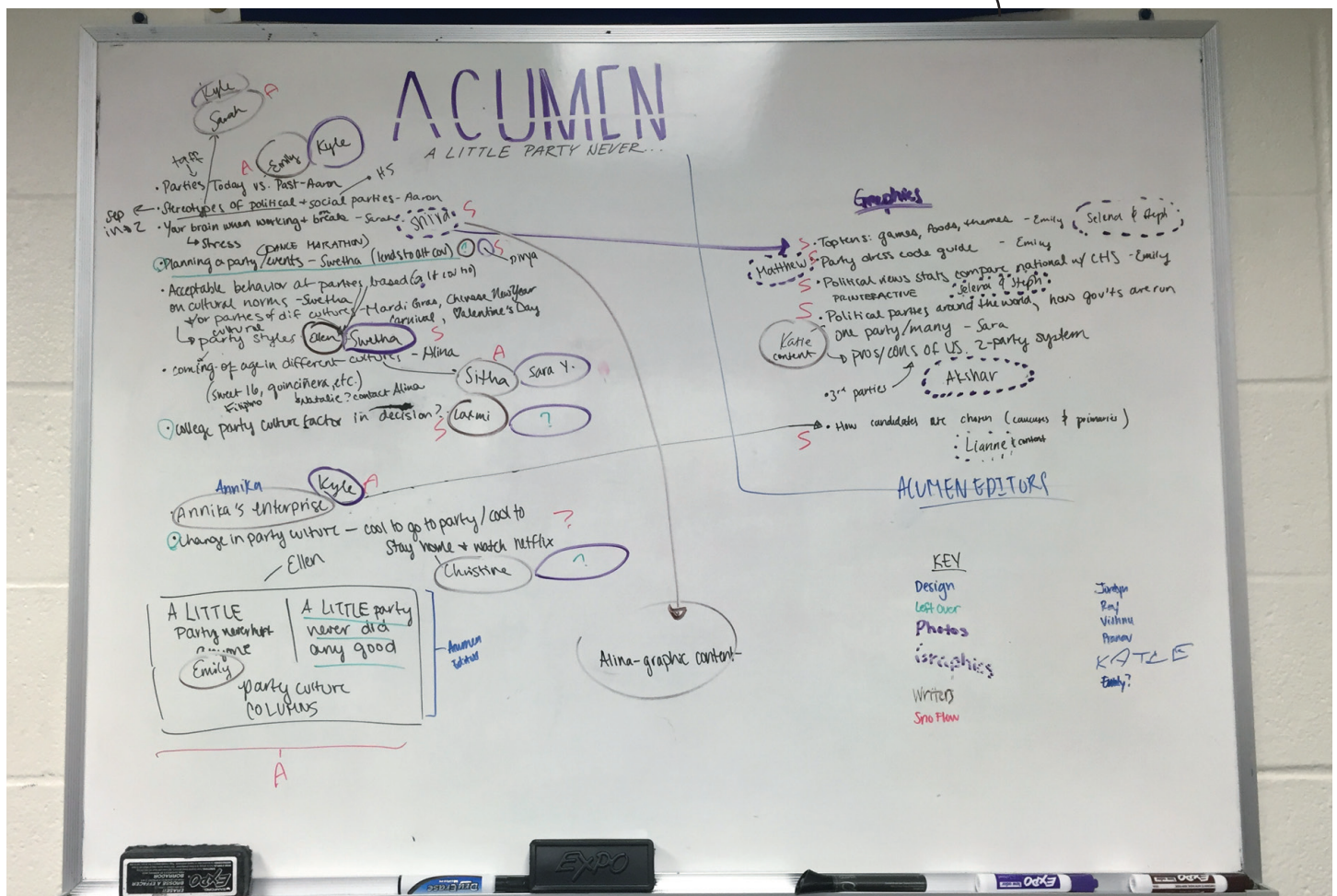
Even before the maestro, decide on an issue topic. The topic should have multiple meanings, allowing for a variety of stories to fit into this one issue. For example, "Skin Deep," the October 2015 issue, lent itself to stories ranging from the meaning of make-up to racial prejudice today.

Then, send an email to staff. The email needs to have the issue topic, issue date, maestro date, requirements (usually two story ideas) and a photo that represents the theme. You may need to emphasize that photographers and graphics artists are still required to bring ideas. Don't forget to mention the food!

On maestro day, take over the conference room. Write *Acumen* on the whiteboard. Shout to the class when it's time. Then prepare for the onslaught.

Make sure everyone has a chance to present their ideas. Reward people with food. Try to keep track of who presented which ideas so that you can give them first priority when assigning content.

At the end of the maestro, assign reporters and photographers to each idea, along with graphic artists if necessary. Color code. It helps a lot. Assign designers as well, to help balance the workload. Once you're done, TAKE A PICTURE.



CONTENT

After the maestro, the editor in chief will send out an overall assignment email, and designers send out team emails as soon as possible. These emails include information for everyone working on a package.

Focus

The angle of the story. Hopefully, this was presented during the maestro. Suggest questions for the reporter to examine.

Sources

Include any that were brought up during the maestro. Provide places for the reporter to start looking.

Logistics

The number of spreads as well as the number of words the story should be. Give a range.

Photos

The types of photos that would go with the story (preferably candid, but can be environmental or posed, or even of food or an object, if relevant).

Graphics

The information the graphic will cover, as well as how that information should be presented. Provide approximate dimensions.

Illustrations

If you want illustrations (as in paintings or drawings), you'll likely have to do them yourself. You can include this in the email so that everyone else is up-to-date on what will be happening with the package.

Team Maestro/Meeting

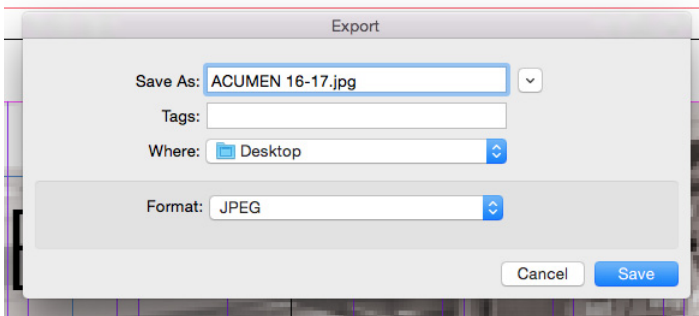
A meeting after sources are sent in for the reporter, photographer, designer, etc. to get together and discuss progress as well as what they hope the spread will look like.

Deadlines

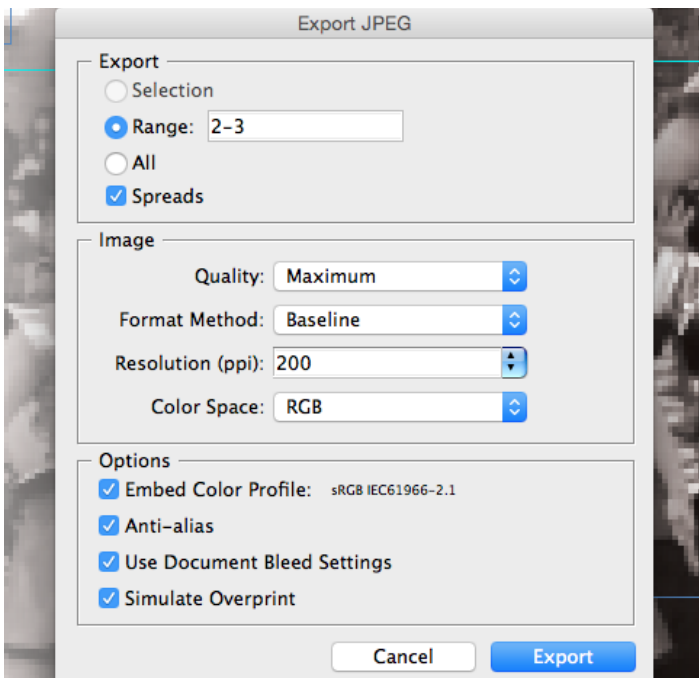
Set source deadline in about another week, story two weeks after that, and photo half a week later, if not the same day. Graphics should be due that day as well.

FIRST PAGE

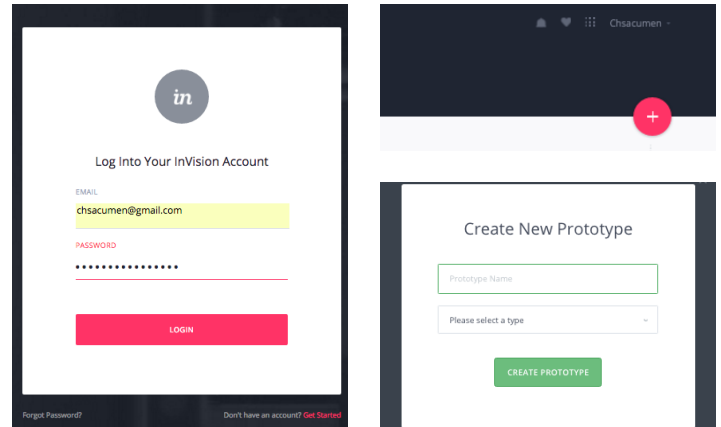
1. Grab a proofreading sheet and a PDF sheet to check through everything yourself before you send your page to be examined by the masses.
2. (File >> Export) Save the page as a JPEG with the name "ACUMEN page range."



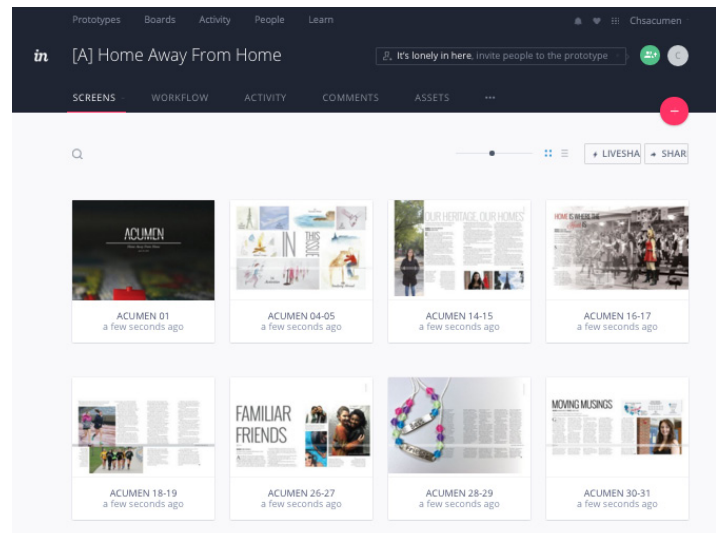
3. Select Range: 2-3. Check Spreads and everything under Options. Quality: Maximum, Format Method: Baseline, Resolution: 200 ppi and Color Space: RGB.



4. Open Invision. Create a new prototype named the issue topic (if there isn't one there already).



5. Drag the JPEG of your spreads into the prototype to upload them. Sort the screens by page number.



6. Create a shareable link to the prototype and send it out to staff along with proofreading requirements. Make sure to include PDF dates so that people know when their proofreading needs to be done by. Also, make announcements about proofreading in class.

PROOFREADING

After people make comments on the spreads, make changes according to their suggestions. Every time you accept or reject a suggestion, mark the comment as

SELENA QIAN

resolved. Make changes at least every other day to keep the comments from building up too much.

Once you change your spreads, go through the first paging process again. Give it the same name and replace the previous screen to preserve the comments.

PDF

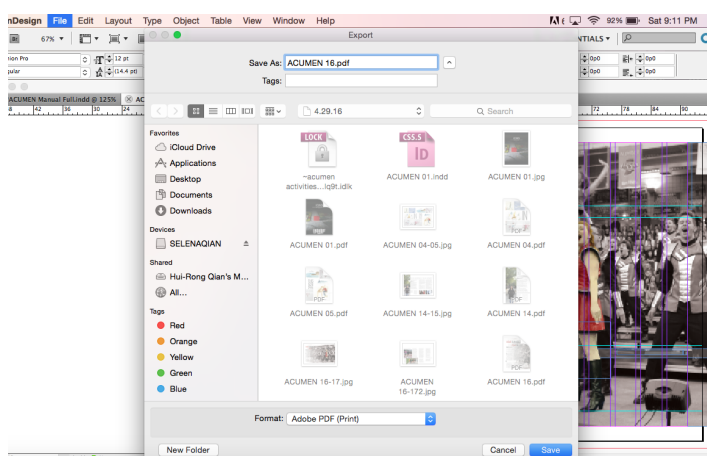
1. Click “Shift + w” (or go to View >> Screen Mode >> Presentation) to preview the entire page on full screen. If any images are blurry, they may not be linked properly.



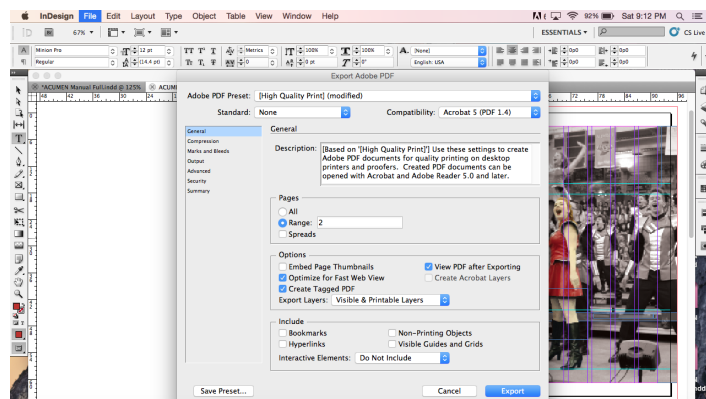
2. Check EVERYTHING to ensure it is all in the proper format and follows style.

3. Save. Call over the editor in chief (or an associate editor) for a final set of eyes on the page.

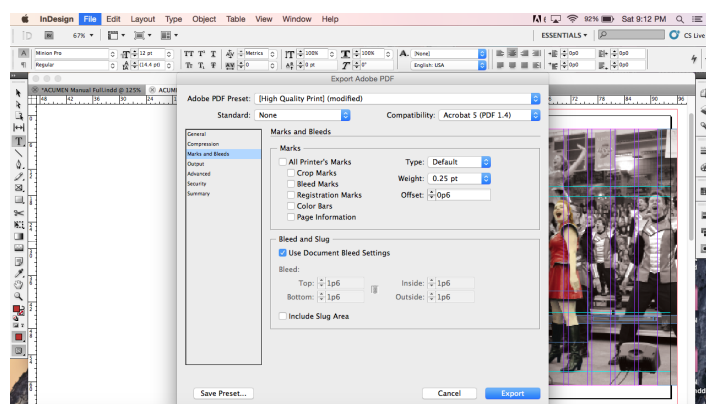
4. (File >> Export) Save the pages as PDF's. Make sure to select Adobe PDF (Print). The file name should be “ACUMEN page number.”



5. PDF each page separately. DO NOT check spreads. DO check Optimize for Fast Web View, Create Tagged PDF, and View PDF after Exporting.



6. Click the Marks and Bleeds tab. Select Use Document Bleed Settings. Hit Export.



7. Do this for both pages of your spread. For the second page, select range 3.

8. Look at both pages one more time together. If there's anything you want to change, go back to the InDesign page, edit it and re-PDF the affected page.

9. Add the pages to the server in the PDF folder of the issue folder.

For ISSUU

Go back to step 5. Do the same process, but DO NOT check Use Document Bleed Settings. Add the pages to the server in the ISSUU folder.

SOCIAL MEDIA

This is a way to continue the conversation through issue cycles, as well as a method to increase the amount of readers who access our content.

Ideally, there would be three or four posts for each issue, starting a week or two before it comes out. In order to do that, content needs to be quick and on time.

Typically, there are two types of posts: individual story posts and full issue posts. The individual story posts are generally posted before distribution, while the issue posts are the day of.

Story Post

1. Choose a short quote from the story.



"I'm just thankful to God that I can still see out of one eye."

2. Add the issue date and theme in this format:

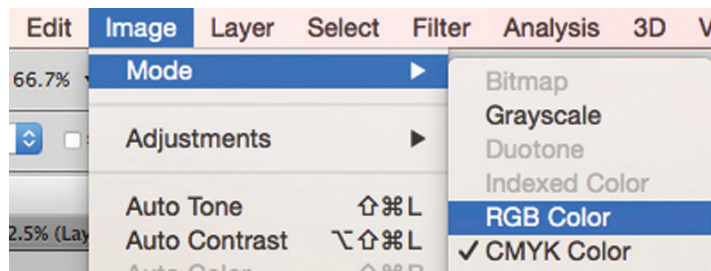
Month Date | Theme



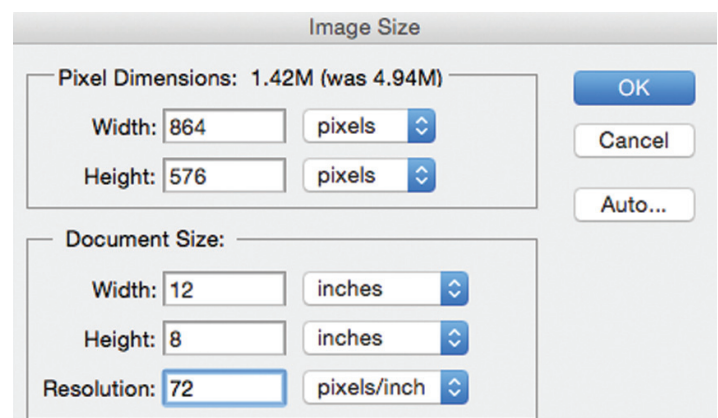
"I'm just thankful to God that I can still see out of one eye."

October 2 | The Way I See Things

3. Choose a photo that goes along with the story. Open it in Photoshop. Change the mode from CMYK to RGB.



4. (Image >> Image Size) Change the resolution to 72 dpi. Save the image as a jpg, and label it "w.lastnameofphotographer.slugline.date."



5. Add the newly saved photo to the post.

October 2 | The Way I See Things



6. Click Post.

For issue posts, follow a similar procedure. In Step 2, add the word "Issue" after the date, and use the front cover photo with the *Acumen* nameplate on it.

**Note: This example comes from Facebook, but the same guidelines can be applied to Instagram.*

EDITORS

As of 2016, there are three editors: **one editor in chief** and **two associate editors**. The editors work as a team, the editor in chief having seniority to train the associates and to avoid

having three different leadership directions.

The editors hold maestros and *dictate content* for each issue, along with designing pages and online posting.

DESIGNERS

Chosen a little bit after the beginning of the school year, a **team of designers** does what its title entails – *design*. As 32 pages is a little too much for three people, and in the past two, to handle, a team of

designers work closely with the editors to craft beautiful spreads.

Their hard work is rewarded with a priceless eye for design along with a design credit on each of their spreads.

ONLINE TEAM

One traditional job of the editors has been to online post their stories. However, with 32 pages distributed among three people, Acumen online posting for only three people is a little

too much to handle.

Instead, **the online team** helps the editors and takes over the much of the online posting and management of chsacumen.com.

REPORTERS PHOTOGRAPHERS GRAPHIC ARTISTS

Reporters write, photographers take photos, and graphic artists illustrate.

An application process for reporters,

photographers and graphic artists begins at the end of the school year to apply for the next school year's staff.

TIPS & TRICKS

Save often, and in multiple places. Save on the desktop, server, and your flash drive. This will make sure you always have an updated version of your page, and if you lose your flash drive, you don't lose everything.

(Edit >> Paste in Place) is your friend, especially when creating new pages. I've found it very helpful when putting the line onto new spreads, as it ensures that the line will stay in the same spot on each page.

Don't look at your old pages too much. Sometimes, if you look at old pages or someone else's pages, you end up emulating them too much. You don't want your spreads to look the same as previous ones.

Don't be afraid to break style. Things like going over the line, different fonts and illustrations rather than pictures are all allowed. Just make sure to have a reason.

Plan ahead. The more you can plan ahead, the better it will be for everyone. Content will come in with plenty of time to design, and no one will be last-minute pdf'ing pages. Also, if any stories fall through, you'll have content to cover those pages.

Make sure you clear up any angles at the maestro. If you don't know what the angle really is, **ASK** whoever suggested the idea.

If you use SNOFlow, use it properly. Layout builder is probably my favorite part of SNOFlow because it lets me see where all the stories will be going and balance the longer ones with the shorter ones. For each assignment, add them to SNOFlow when you send the email, and make sure the content generators understand the checklist and sliding bar.

Send lots of reminders to content generators. Email is a great communication tool. If some people know they don't check their emails often, get their phone numbers.

Make deadlines very clear. Put them in the emails and on SNOFlow. Some people will still need pestering to get things done on time or even at all.

Give missed deadlines. Yes, it's hard to give your friends missed deadlines, but it's necessary. Otherwise, nothing will get done on time.

Have a policy for extensions. Extensions really should only be given if notified more than two days in advance with a valid reason. The reason should show that the person has been planning ahead but had an issue that couldn't be avoided.

Get to know the people you work with. You'll start to figure out their strengths and weaknesses. This will help you to help them and make an overall stronger team. Some people will need more guidance and direction than others.

Coordinate, communicate, commit. The three c's. This goes for everyone working on the issue. Coordinate all parts of the package, communicate with everyone working on it, and commit to getting everything done on time and done well.

Don't be afraid to try new things. DIY is the name of the game when you can't find someone else to do it. If all photographers already have multiple assignments, go out and take your own photos. The same goes for small graphics, as well as any video you'd like to do.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you're stuck with a spread, ask someone else to take a look. *Acumen* editors, *HiLite* management and page editors would all be good sources, as they all have experience with designing pages.

Bring good food. Think donuts, cupcakes, brownies.