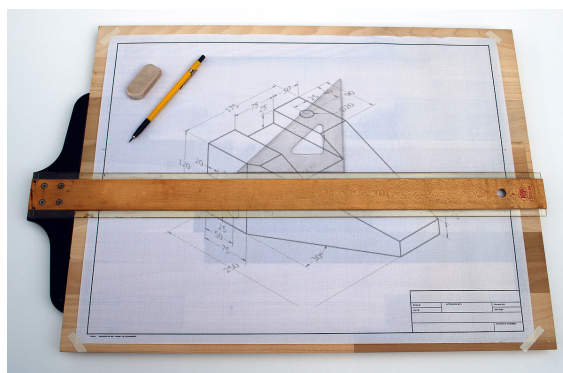


In the seventh grade in Southern California, I wound up in a drafting class. This was before CAD. We used paper and pencil, T-square and triangles. I'd always enjoyed drawing, but this was technical drawing with a lot of rules.

I loved it! I was shown how to precisely describe complex shapes viewed from several angles on paper. I was introduced to the engineer's scale: inches described as decimals instead of fractions. The world made much more sense. I continued with drafting and technical illustration through high school.

In the ninth grade, I took print shop. I found setting lead type by hand to be drudgery, but I learned the very basics and traditions of typography.



One semester of this elective class was enough to show me I didn't want to work with lead type.

In my sophomore year of college, I dated a journalism student who worked part-time in the composing room of the Terra Linda News, a weekly newspaper. I went to pick her up from work to go to dinner and she said no one could leave until the paper was complete. When I asked how I could help, her boss incorrectly presumed I was also a journalism student familiar with cold-type pasteup, and put me to work. Within a couple of months, I was made production manager of that paper. After attending college full time for four years I was surprised to still be four units short of graduating from San Francisco State University, but I was too immersed in work to care about having a degree.

I devised a pin registration system for this company which was soon producing two community weeklies. This system aligned pasteup flats, page negatives and offset lithography plates. We got a Compugraphic Compuwriter which produced crisp type (one font/size at a time) from a keyboard on photographic paper instead of strike-on text or display type set by dialing a wheel for each letter on a Verityper Headliner.

I figured out a way to accurately produce matching pieces of type from this machine, two of which could be pasted together to yield the mixed type everyone's familiar with seeing in restaurant menus and supermarket ads. A whole list of items like this could be made in just two pieces! Such a labor saver compared to pasting down a bunch of loose pieces.

After a few years, I married my journalist girlfriend and moved north to work for the Petaluma Argus-Courier. It was a small daily newspaper which had a much

Nine pieces to paste up

Loin of Pork	Tender, young	Lb.	59¢
Pork Shoulder	Smoked butt	Lb.	79¢
Chicken Breasts	with wings	Lb.	39¢
Bologna	or Liverwurst	Lb.	65¢

Two pieces to paste up

Loin of Pork	Tender, young	Lb.	59¢
Pork Shoulder	Smoked butt	Lb.	79¢
Chicken Breasts	with wings	Lb.	39¢
Bologna	or Liverwurst	Lb.	65¢

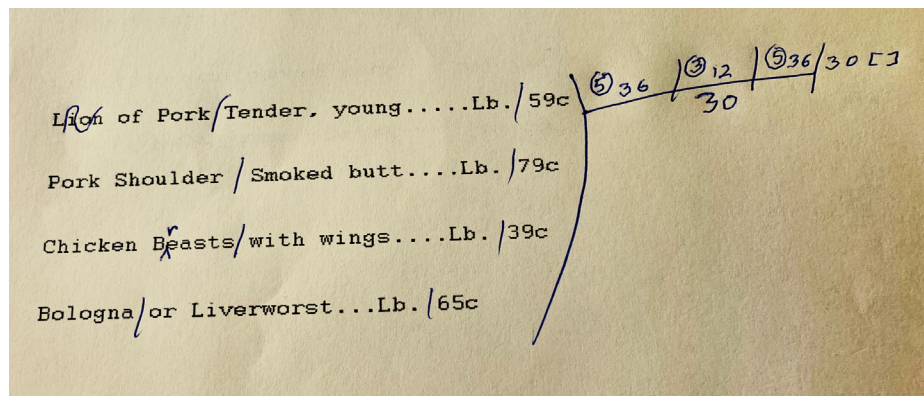
more sophisticated Compugraphic ACM 9000 which could mix *eight* fonts in *twelve* sizes (7 point to 72 point). The operator of this machine was setting “blind,” however; there was no video screen to show him whether the type was overlapping or not.

He depended on someone having marked the typed copy



Compugraphic ACM 9000

Notice there's no monitor to show what has been composed.



Spec'd ad copy

with the size, leading and line lengths he should use (called “spec-ing type”). That’s what I was hired to do. The publisher had seen my two-piece trick and, although this more modern equipment could do that in one piece, it showed him I’d be able to spec type.

Eventually, this machine was replaced with a pair of Compugraphic AdVantages. This machine was digital, no longer relying on filmstrip fonts. Images to be used in the ads were very coarsely outlined by the operator so he could place type around them on his CRT screen.



Compugraphic AdVantage

The term used to describe this miraculous technology was WYSIWYG: “What you see is what you get.” It also stored the type for entire ads on 8” floppy discs. At the time it was an incredible improvement.

I was part of a small team integrating a mainframe computer with monitors on newsroom desks, and I wrote a tiny program in BASIC which measured the length of the stories typed into TRS-80 Model 100 laptops which the reporters used. The paper was owned by the New York Times, so they wound up using my program in this fast-changing field.

I took classes in the evenings at Sonoma State University to finish my bachelor’s degree, but I couldn’t attend my graduation because it was on a Saturday and I was in charge of the composing room on Saturdays. They sent me my diploma in the mail.

My wife and I looked forward to having children, and I wanted to be able to capture moments of their lives with a camera, so I took up photography. I read how-to books in the local library, then attended seminars put on by leading portraitists such as Dean Collins and Linda Lapp who toured the nation. Soon people were offering me money

to create portraits, even though this was only an after work interest. Eventually I joined professional photography groups and attended West Coast School of Professional Photography on my vacations.

For 13 years in four cities, I taught weekly evening photography classes to over a thousand amateurs, showing them how to take better photos with their film cameras. Film photography was much more difficult to learn than today's digital photography. A student couldn't be sure what they'd captured until the film was developed later, so they had to be able to visualize the outcome.

To change color balance (say, if you went inside a building or back into daylight) or to change ISO, you had to change the type of film. With this in mind, I taught them how to change film in mid-roll and change back to a previous roll of film.

My wife eventually left me, and we'd never had kids, but I was able to create photos for other families, and won some awards along the way.

Desktop publishing was emerging as the technology of the future, and PageMaker was



developed for use on the latest invention, the Apple Macintosh desktop computer. This put page composition on an entirely new plane.

After 17 years at the Argus-Courier, I left and took a semester-length course in Aldus PageMaker at Santa Rosa Junior College. For the next year I used PageMaker as a one-person composing room to produce the Sierra Club's tabloid newspaper, the Redwood Needles.

I went to work for the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, a much larger daily than the Argus-Courier. They were upgrading to a huge Macintosh-based system related to the one with which I had become adept.

Even darkroom work was going digital, so I took several Photoshop classes at SRJC outside of my working hours. Soon the internet was the new form of mass communication, so I took classes in HTML and Dreamweaver. PageMaker was superseded by InDesign so I took classes in that and in Adobe Illustrator.

In taking all of these graphics classes, I'd accumulated 60 more college credits which were not my objective. SRJC gave me the Adobe Achievement award for my acquired skills with their programs.

I had designed my bp logo in 1994 and I refined it and animated it for my web site which I built in 2002. I left the Press-Democrat after four years and used these skills as a freelancer to increase the traffic and sales of local businesses.

I'd known my Canon 5D-MkII digital cameras could also shoot video, but I had to take college classes in Premiere Pro and After Effects to make use of this feature. Soon I was able to add video production and editing to my services.



In freelance work, I saw that self-marketing, administration and client education took a large unpaid percentage of my time and didn't include paid vacations or other benefits.

I found a job with the Terlato Wine group, a Chicago company which owned four California wineries. My office was at Rutherford Hill Winery overlooking the Napa Valley. I was originally hired as the graphic designer for the four wineries, but when I asked where their photo library was in the computer system, they said they had nothing but a few bottle shots which they hired a freelancer to do periodically. I negotiated with them and became their graphic designer *and* photographer. It was a wonderful fit, working with terrific, talented people. The word synergy has been overused, but our team was greater than the sum of its parts. I worked for them for the six years before I retired.

The moral of this story, if there is one, is I found things that interested me, several of which paid well. I pursued these lines of work as they evolved, taking classes from experts so I could ride the waves of new technologies and deliver what the market needed.

In retirement, I continue to have access to these wonderful Adobe products, so I use them for fun, and answer questions from people on the web who are struggling with some aspect of Photoshop or other programs.

Those questions are what led me to write the tutorials and articles on my web site. Other articles are simply about things that popped into my mind, which I thought you might enjoy.

