



GOT A COMMENT

**YOU THINK
WE CAN PRINT?**

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C/O THE PUBLISHER
GRAPHIC EXCHANGE
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NICK SHINN HITS THE MARK

Re: Good Reading—Against
Obscure Typography by Nick
Shinn (GX Jan/Feb 2002)

Every two months GRAPHIC
EXCHANGE hits my office and
usually hits the growing stack
of periodicals I less than peri-
odically read.

I have worked in advertis-
ing long enough to have met
(and in some cases worked
with) people who were mas-
ters. Gary Prouk. James Patter-
son. Mary Wells. Charlie
Moss. And I had the honour to
meet and have an interesting
chat with Krone.

My background is creative
(writer, although after Queen's
I got a degree from Ryerson in
Photographic Arts so I'm not
visually illiterate). Today I own
a small company in Toronto.

I can't tell you how many
times I have argued, bullied,
etc etc art directors and design-
ers based on hard-to-read type.
Eight point reversed out type
is hard to read. It's not a matter
of taste, it's a matter of human
physiology, and unless I missed
something in the New Eng-
land Journal of Medicine, this
physiology has not changed
recently.

Thank you for writing that
article. It is now required read-
ing for freelance art directors
and designers who want me to
pay them money for their bril-
liant work. Because aside from
'brilliance', I also insist on skill.

**WILLIAM LOWER (BILL), PRESIDENT
LOWER CANADA, INC.
TORONTO ON**

DROP SHADOW TIP

I enjoyed your article on ob-
scure type and the craft of ty-
pography in the latest GRAPHIC
EXCHANGE, but in your sidebar

on Legibility (top of page 24)
your suggestions for creating a
drop shadow are a bit out of
date.

The main problem with
your methods is, in both the
QuarkXPress and *Illustrator*
examples, you suggest creating
a copy of the type and placing
it behind, which introduces
the problem of multiple blocks
of type. Whatever editing you
do to the white type, also needs
to be done to the black type
serving as your drop shadow.
That makes for twice as much
work and twice as many errors.

Here's a better way in
Adobe Illustrator 10:

1. Select the block of type; 2. In the Appearance palette fly-out menu choose Add New Fill;
3. Drag the newly created Fill below Characters in the Ap-
pearance palette; 4. Select Fill
again and select Effect> Dis-
tort and Transform> Trans-
form; 5. Enter the horizontal
and vertical offset for the "drop
shadow".

This method keeps the type
and drop shadow together as
one object in a "live" state that
can easily be edited and spell
checked.

A similar live effect can be
achieved in *InDesign 2.0* with
soft drop shadows.

**COLIN SMITH, TECHNICAL RESOURCE MGR
ADOBE SYSTEMS INC.
TORONTO, ON**

**[Thanks for the tip, Colin. In fair-
ness to Nick, his drop shadow
description was only out of date
by a month or two, since Illus-
trator 10 and InDesign 2 have
just been released recently. But
for the large number of design-
ers who are still working with
older versions, this one tip alone
might be enough to prompt
them to upgrade.]**

MISSING TRACES

Let me say that I always enjoy
reading your publication. The
articles are always timely and
for the most part, informative
and very well-written.

I have just finished reading
your Jan/Feb 2002 issue and I
have to comment on the arti-
cle written about tracing (Just
an outline?). This is an aspect
of digital graphics that I work
with on an almost daily basis as
a small prepress service bureau
working mostly with the screen
printing industry. We do file
conversions, camera ready art-
work and film output, and of-
ten run into bitmap images
that have to be converted to
vector art.

I found this article very bi-
ased towards *Illustrator*. The
writers do indicate that they
mostly use *Illustrator*, but it
seems to be to the exclusion of
other graphics software, the ob-
vious one being Corel. While
Corel got an 'honourable men-
tion' at the end of the article, it
was only for their AutoTrace
module which was deemed to
be "pretty decent". No men-
tion was made at all of *Corel-
Trace*, which can go up against

Adobe Streamline and comes
bundled with *CorelDraw*. I
have downloaded and tested
Streamline and it did nothing
more or better than *CorelTrace*
does for the extra US\$200.

As for other standalone soft-
ware packages for converting
raster (bitmap) images to vec-
tor, I'm not sure the folks who
researched this article know
how to do an Internet search. I
spent about two minutes (not
two days) typing 'Bitmap to
vector conversion software'
into the Google search para-
meter and came up with pages
of listings. *Adobe Streamline*
appeared about half way down
the second page. I have tested
EuroVector in the past (good,
but kind of pricey) and I now
have two other demos down-
loaded for testing, both under
US\$100.

On a positive note, the
'Tips for better tracing' were
very good, but on the whole,
this article was a major disap-
pointment. I have come to ex-
pect better research and a
more balanced viewpoint from
your publication.

**ELLEN FARETIS
ELBY GRAPHICS
TORONTO**