



Design 2020 Survey

A look at today & the future

American Press Institute's
J. Montgomery Curtis Seminar

October, 1999



Design 2020 survey goals

- Gauge the industry's thinking regarding design and visuals
- Examine how design world has changed since 1988 and 1992 surveys

Design 2020 survey

- The technical information
 - ✓ 1988 API Curtis Seminar
 - 628 responses from SND, ASNE members
 - ✓ 1992 SND, ASNE Survey
 - 752 responses
 - ✓ 1999 API Curtis Seminar
 - 1,181 responses from SND, ASNE and APME members
 - Printed and Web survey

To refresh our memories

- Design and graphics were “hot”
 - ✓ Interest was high across all aspects of the industry
 - ✓ But we did not know what we did not know



NEWSPAPER DESIGN

To refresh our memories

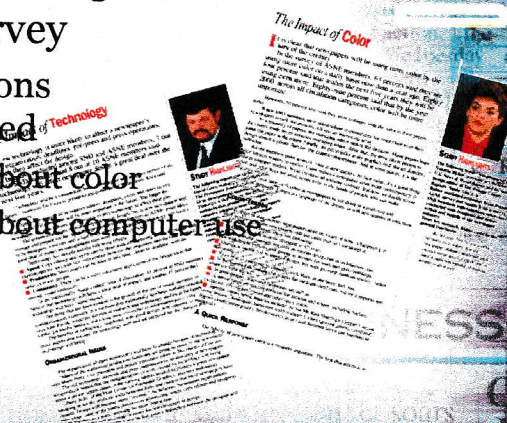
- Our assumptions about the future were based on our optimism
 - ✓ We recognized there were challenges
 - Resources to do the job
 - Finding the right people and organizing them effectively



NEWSPAPER DESIGN

Design 2020 survey

- As the world changed, so did the survey
 - ✓ Some questions were not asked
 - Questions about color
 - Questions about computer use



Design 2020 survey

- Today we will focus on five areas
 - ✓ The importance of design
 - ✓ The importance of visual elements
 - Graphics, photography
 - ✓ Talent – can we find the people?
 - ✓ Online's relationship to print design
 - ✓ Space for visuals within the newspaper

Presentation format

- **1.** Results of the survey section
 - ✓ With a little editorial commentary
- **2.** Comments solicited by Warren Watson or via the electronic survey
- **3.** Roundtable discussion
 - Will try to devote 15 minutes per topic

–John Finneman will serve as timekeeper

Survey conclusions

- The importance of design and visuals remains strong
- We are still optimistic about design and visuals into the future

Survey conclusions

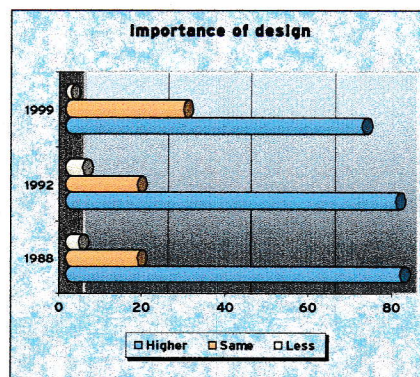
- There is a “disconnect” between *editor* and *designer*
- There is a “disconnect” between *today* and *possible futures*

Survey conclusions

- After looking at the results
After reading the comments
 - ✓ We only asked some of the right questions, but it provides some insight

Maybe we will try again in 2020

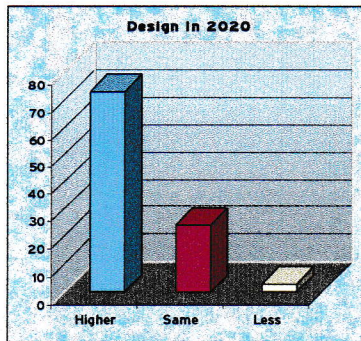
“How important will design be at your newspaper in the next five years?”
In percent



- A plateau, as “same” importance rises

NEWSPAPER DESIGN

"How important will design be at your newspaper by the year 2020?"
In percent



- Not much change from 5-year view

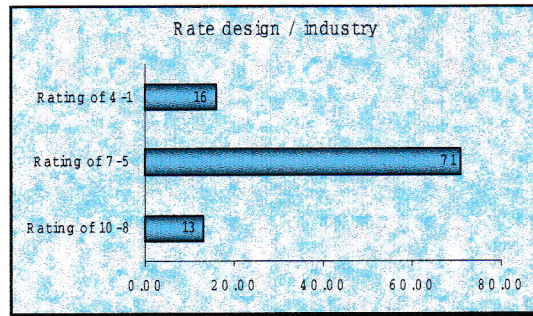
NEWSPAPER DESIGN

Design is important, but how good is newspaper design?

- A new question aimed at trying to judge our industry and own papers
- Pop Quiz
 - ✓ Rate the quality of newspaper design throughout our industry
 - 1=poor, 10=excellent
 - Put your number on a piece of paper and hand it to your neighbor [on the left]

“On a scale of 1 [poor] to 10 [excellent] how would you rate the quality of newspaper design throughout our industry?”

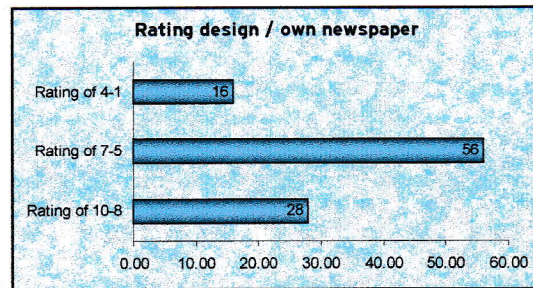
In percent



- The median: **6**

“On a scale of 1 [poor] to 10 [excellent] how would you rate the quality of newspaper design at your newspaper?”

In percent



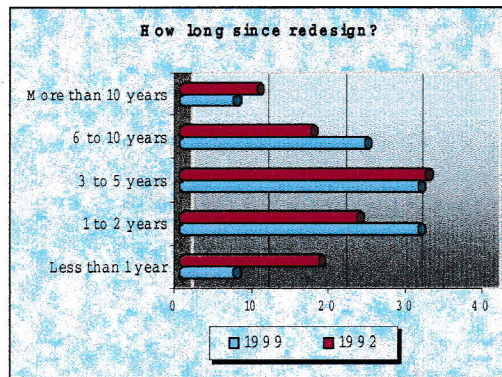
- The median: **7**

Another contradiction about newspapers and design

- Our redesigns are coming further and further apart
- Shouldn't we be changing our look more often?
 - ✓ And the content within?

"How long has it been since your newspaper has undergone a major redesign?"

In percent





Comments

- *“The world around us is becoming more dynamic and visual. Content is still king, but with all the competition around for our readers' time, presentation is becoming more and more important. Good redesigns start with content, but focus on organization, consistency and readability.”*

– Bill Steinauer
Executive Editor
Times Herald Record
Middletown, N.Y.



Comments

- *“I’m surprised by the reaction to more design. Design has not been a factor in our thinking. Readers want content, more local news.”*

– Peter Watson
General Manager
Essex County Newspapers
Beverly, Mass.

Comments

- *“Let me get this straight: 28% of American newspapers think they're an "8" or better? Do these people ever actually leave the office? Do they ever look at other media -- magazines, for instance? Have they noticed how slick graphics are on TV? In books? On web sites? ...*

Comment

- *“Newspapers, in truth, are the bottom-feeders in the great food chain of design. No, wait -- according to MY latest survey, church bulletins are the only form of media more consistently unattractive than the average newspaper.”*

– Tim Harrower
Designer, Author
Portland, Oregon



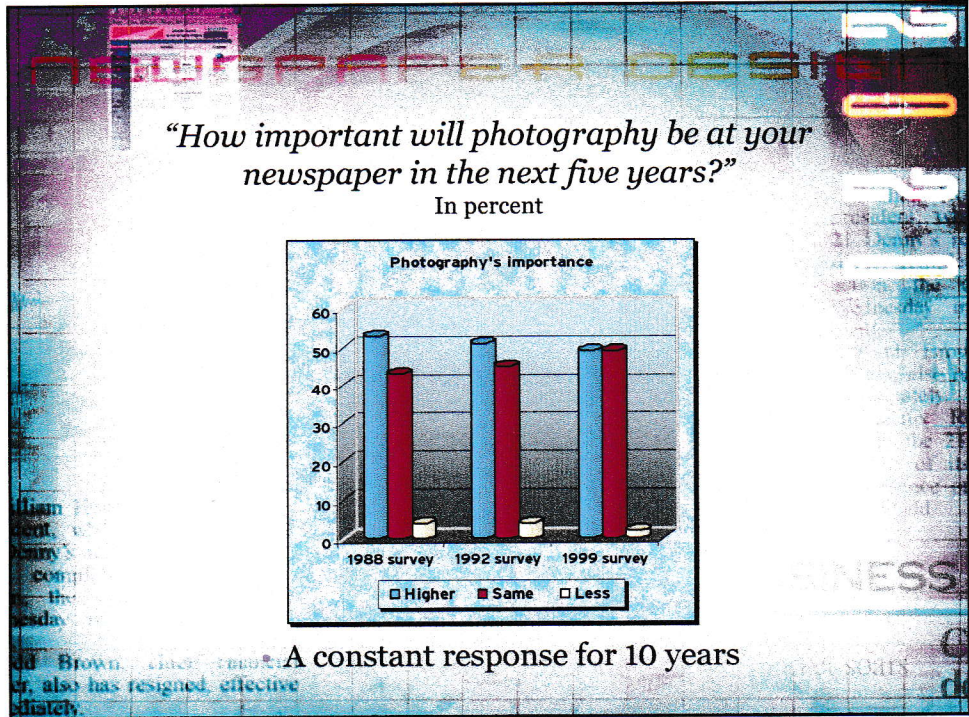
Roundtable discussion

- Warren Watson has additional responses
- What do you think?



The visual elements

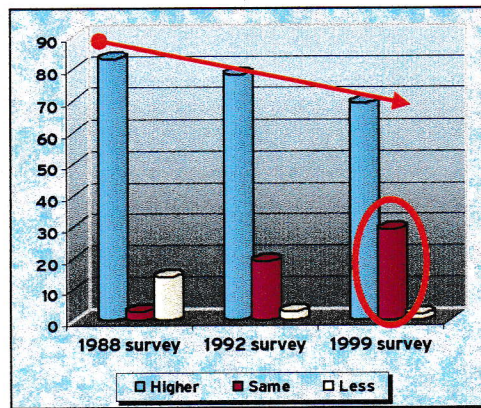
- How important are graphics and photos to our efforts?
- Not only as a creative medium, but also as an information source



- ## The information dilemma
- The world is more complex
 - Our readers are busier
 - Why doesn't the newspaper industry love graphics any more?
 - ✓ Was it just a "fad"?

“How important will informational graphics be at your newspaper in the next five years?”

In percent



A large drop off – is the “bloom” off?

Comments

- ◀ *“When space tightens up, as it will, both graphics and photos will be trimmed back -- in some cases dramatically. Graphics and photos will be important, important to the reader, important to understanding stories, but neither will be accorded the space they have grown accustomed to.”*

– Rob Covey
Design Director
U.S. News & World Report

Roundtable discussion

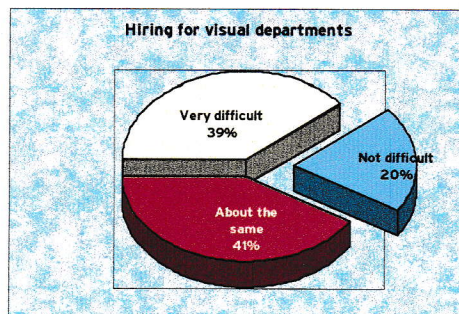
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- What do you think?

The people challenge

- Our important asset:
The people who do the work
- Our greatest challenge:
Find, hire and keep these people

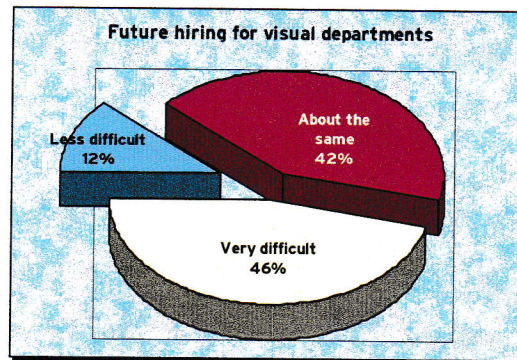
"If you have hired people for the visual departments in the last five years, what were your experiences?"

In percent



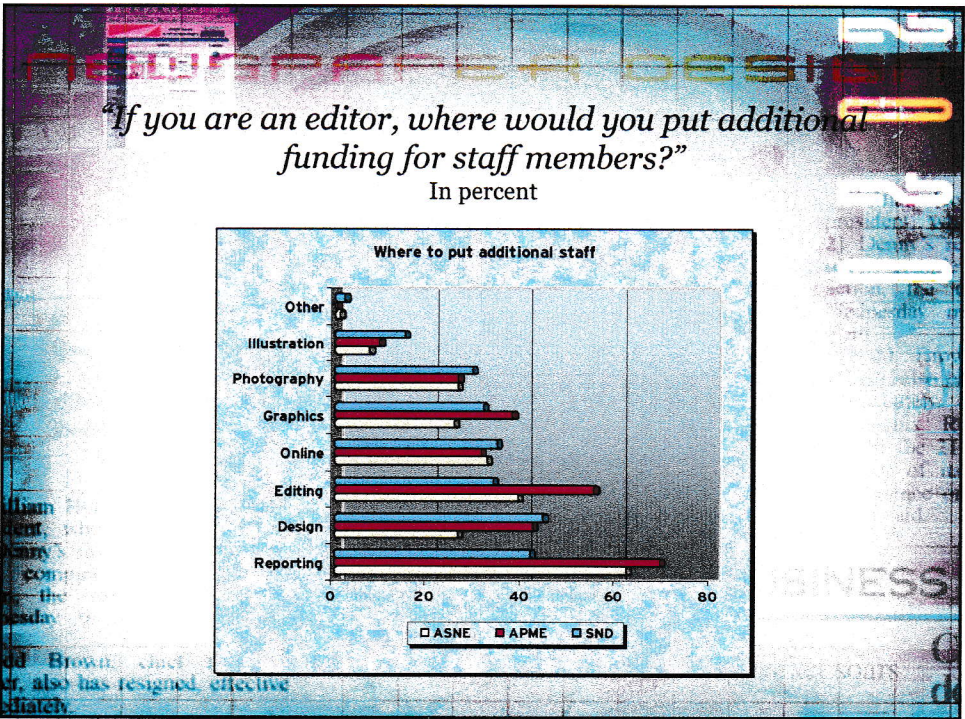
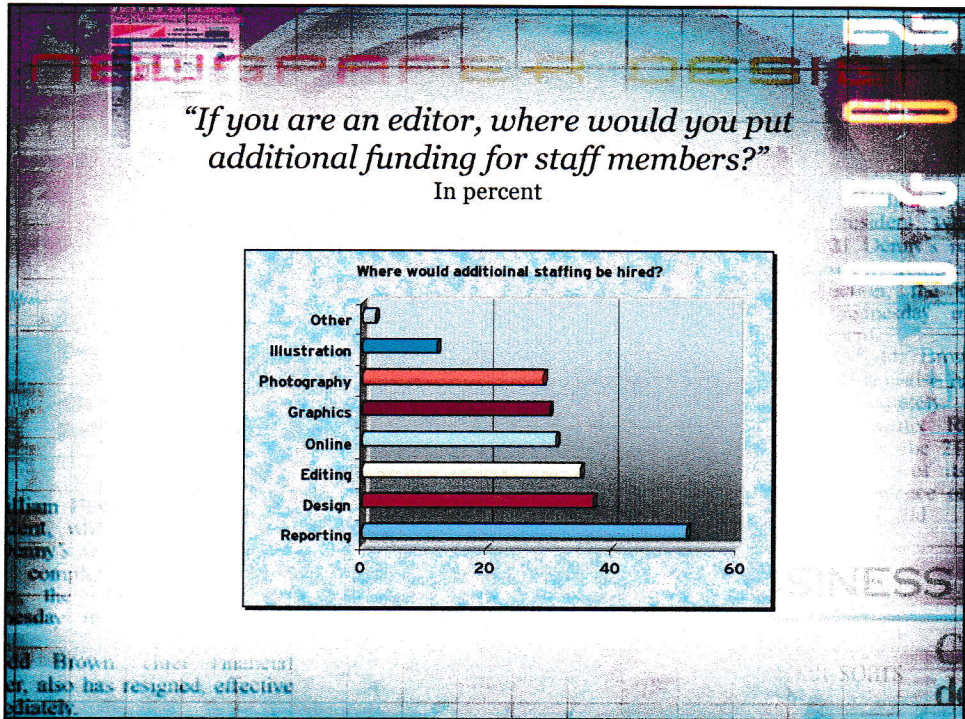
"Looking at the next five years, how difficult will it be to hire qualified journalists?"

In percent



The people challenge

- Even if we can find people, what kind of people do you hire?
- Where do we put our money for talent?
 - ✓ While the visual side has a sense of reality, does it align with the “boss”?



The background of the slide is a collage of newspaper design elements. At the top, the words 'NEWSPAPER DESIGN' are written in a stylized, multi-colored font. Below this, there are various snippets of text from newspaper articles, including 'Business' and 'Brown'.

- Warren Watson has some responses
- What do you think?

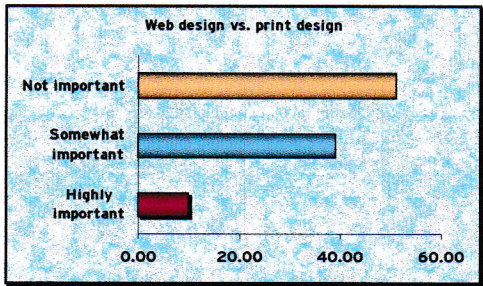
The background of the slide is a collage of newspaper design elements, identical to the one above. It features the text 'NEWSPAPER DESIGN' at the top and various article snippets like 'Business' and 'Brown'.

- What roles do print designers play?
 - ✓ How important is “brand”
- What roles do journalists play?

NEWSPAPER DESIGN

“How important is it for your newspaper Web site to look like the printed edition?”

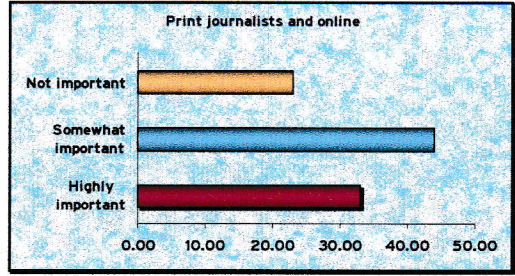
In percent



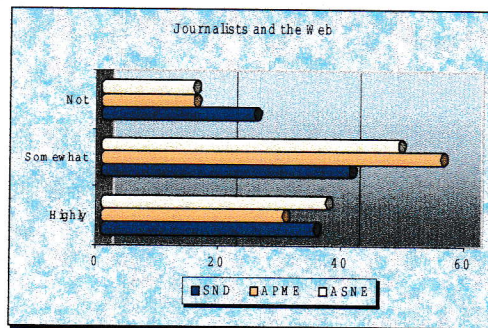
NEWSPAPER DESIGN

“How important is it for print journalists to work on your Web site?”

In percent



"How important is it for print journalists to work on your Web site?"
In percent

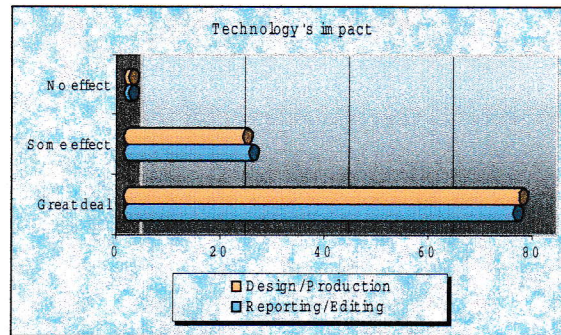


Technology will continue to impact our newsroom

- Most everyone sees the changes
- Are we prepared for even more changes?

"In the next five years do you see new technology having an effect on newsroom reporting and editing operations / design and production?"

In percent



Comments

- "Interesting result. We're seeing a "maturing" of the information graphic. No longer unusual. Now losing its zest. Could be scaling back and yielding to type. The answers on funding suggests to me that online is pulling dollars back to reporting. Also, the fact that design ranks higher than editing, even by a small margin, says a lot -- both positive and negative."*

– Tom Silvestri
Director of News Synergy and Newsbank Editor
Media General Newspapers
Richmond, VA

Comments

- *“What's wrong with the 24% of editors who think technology is only going to have “some effect” on reporting and editing? What rock are they hiding under? Technology has already revolutionized the editing and production process. Computers have made it easier than ever to sort databases and research stories. It's no secret that the pace of change is accelerating. Shame on any editor who can't see it coming.”*

– Brian Stallcop
Executive Editor
The Sun
Bremerton, Wash.

Roundtable discussion

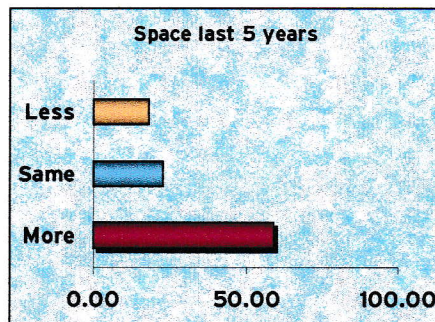
- Warren Watson has some additional responses
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The space race

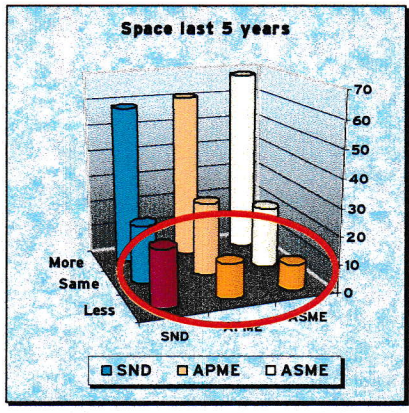
- Our “real estate” is prime
 - ✓ It is expensive and it is shrinking
- Where will we put all those visual elements on smaller page size?
 - ✓ The 50-inch web is *here and there*
 - Soon it will be *every where*

“Compared to five years ago, how much space do you have for visual packages?”

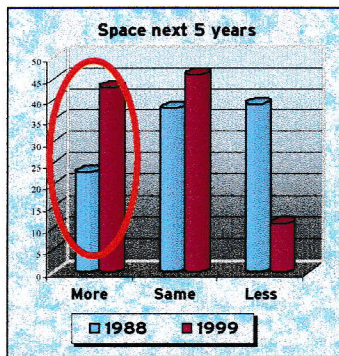
In percent



“Compared to five years ago, how much space do you have for visual packages?”
 In percent



“Looking forward to the next five years, how much space for visual packages will you have?”
 In percent

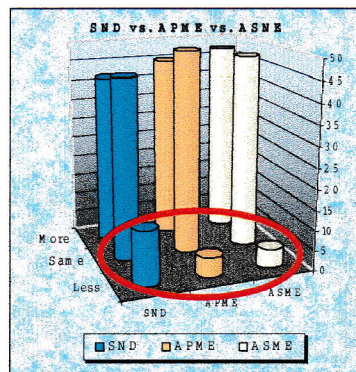


• Oh, happy days? But on what planet?

Space for visuals showed the largest conflict

- Views of designers, etc. [SND] vs. editors [APME and ASNE]

"Looking forward to the next five years, how much space for visual packages will you have?"
In percent



Comments

- “Our paper like many others is willing to devote appropriate space to visual packages. Appropriate is the key word. ... We redesigned recently not just to look better or more sophisticated. The main reason was to deliver information to readers in ways they wanted it. They read the paper quickly in the morning, then go back to it later in the day. This is a reader habit we found.”

– Leonard Fisher
Creative Director
Rockford (Ill.) Register-Star

Comments

- “Newspaper design is dead. News design is alive. Forget print paper. We are in the information business. The news designers of the future will be bi-media journalists, able to work off and on line. Our newsrooms will be integrated or will die. Integration is the magic word. Information is our business, not design.”

– Juan Antonio Giner
President
Innovation International Media Consulting
Group

Roundtable discussion

- Warren Watson has some additional responses
- What do you think?

Some final thoughts

- There is no single future, any more than there is a right answer to the survey
- Our industry's challenges are huge
 - ✓ Revenue
 - ✓ Expense
 - ✓ Mission



Some final thoughts

- We should use this information & this seminar as a springboard
 - ✓ Can we challenge our organizations to look beyond the obvious?



Predicting the future is fun

- We have lots of practice
 - ✓ For some of us, this is the third time at making predictions

Predicting is dirty, stinking...

- After months of careful research and lots of digging, a previous [Design 2000](#) project was uncovered
 - Here's a video of that research



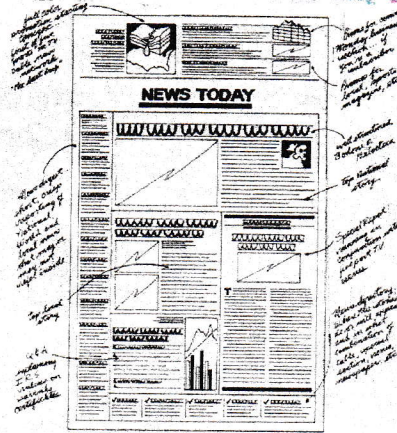
A view from 1981

- Richard Curtis' prototype
 - High story count
 - Ragged type
 - Smaller paper



A view from 1981

- Robert Lockwood's mockup
 - A return to basics



A view from 1981

- Roger Fidler's tablet
 - You were expecting something else?



Looking for our possible futures

- You do research
- You go to conference
- You read books
- You look at other visions

Popular culture gives us a unique vision

- The sci-fi view from “Blade Runner”



Thank you

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