



PREPRESS TWO CENTS: CROSSING THE BORDER No Passport Necessary

OR: what's so important about margins and image area anyway?

Hmmm...the magazine you're designing has gotten a little copy heavy and you've already made the text as small as you think you can without affecting readability. But you need to squeeze in a little more text. Here's an idea: make the margins smaller.

STOP! While this idea may be tempting, reducing your margins can ultimately lead to lost time, lost information and possibly extra charges. Keep reading for the fascinating facts.

First of all, let's define "margin." Here at CPC, the margin is the space on a page between the trim edges and where the copy starts. Occasionally you'll see this space referred to as the "border." For most jobs, we need a .25 inch margin. (*Note: "border" is less commonly used and we always refer to this area as "margin," but "crossing the margin" just didn't sound as good.*)

The overall size of the page, minus the margin on each edge is the "image area" or "copy limit area." Why is honoring the margin so important?

In web printing, large rolls of paper shoot through a press at hundreds of feet a minute. If you've ever had a chance to watch one in action, you know that at those speeds, the paper wanders a little. Which means that on some of the pages the text and graphics may end up being a little bit closer to the trim simply because the paper shifts slightly back and forth as

it goes through the press.

Then there's the binding process. When all of the signatures are collated and the job is stitched together, it finishes up with a trim to even all of the edges. Even a trim that's just fractionally more than expected can also reduce the size of the margin in the finished piece.

No one wants their finished magazine, newsletter, or catalog to have text that's been cut off. Honoring CPC's required .25 inch margin helps ensure that everything you want your customer to see will be there on the page when your job is finished.

Just think of the margin as your safety net and avoid placing text or graphics within .25 inches of the edge, unless they're going to bleed, of course.

For a downloadable PDF of our *Trim and Bleed* example, please visit the Prepress tab of our web site: www.crescentprinting.com. You'll find this document under Proper Document Construction. And while you're there, check out some of the other cool information we have available to download. There are short articles on some of the basics of file creation, common problems and how to avoid them, as well as some nifty tips and tricks.

If you have questions about your specific project, please feel free to contact us.