reasonable design for everyone.
by max g.
max’s rules of reasonable design

So you’re not a designer. So what. Need to make a flyer? Build a website? Make a charming invite for your annoying party? Bad design is toxic and the blast radius of bad design is alarmingly massive. It hurts us all. This is a simple guide you can use to simply stay aware of concepts that drive the most basic designers crazy when overlooked. Maybe you don’t care what designers think. That’s fine, but learning is fun. Keep reading this for fun.
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That circle up there is our hero design element. See how we changed it ever so slightly? With this simple change, albeit incredibly small, we change the dynamic completely. It’s also extremely important to note that we’re using the rule of thirds here...
see what i mean?

this square looks nice here.
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Check out this totally sweet variation. This is just nuts. Now we’re out the box. We can do all kinds of insane shit from here...
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Whoa. That’s pretty high concept. And we’re just using lines and circles here. We’re almost on our way to building a full blown logo. Let’s cool out before it gets crazy...
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Well look at that. It got crazy. We added two more circles of roughly half the diameter of the original circle (that would be the radius, max) and we have ourselve’s a completely new direction. I like it. Let’s keep it there and move on...
"Why in the hell did you add that tiny box in the corner Max?" is probably not what you're wondering, but in case you are, I put it there for two very important reasons. The first being, that I like it there. The second being that it illustrates the importance of margins. If you're going to pay attention to one thing in this snarky PDF, this would be the part to pay attention too. This can get really complicated, but let's keep it simple and practical...
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I have a confession to make. Everything up until this frame was eyeballed into position. I did that because I understand how margins work, so I can make an educated guess as to where I need to place things. I’ve repositioned elements on this frame based on the margins these little squares represent. This will make or break your design. Awareness of this detail makes all the difference, and I bet you never thought that most designers are constantly thinking about these little boxes.
Now that we’ve got that sorted, we can get rid of them and admire our beautifully placed elements. Maybe you can’t notice the difference, but I assure you, your brain says “thank you.” Also, I made that square orange, put it in the corner and added a few more simple variations because I’m the damn designer here. Notice the elements are placed in opposing corners of the document. This, my friends, was not by accident.
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What on earth have you done Max? A new font? How mad can one designer truly be? Fonts are tricky and they always will be. Using multiple fonts can be truly compelling if you know what you’re doing. However, if you don’t, then PLEASE pick one font with a few variations and play with that. It’s simple and effective and it’s an easy way to get used to formatting for different styles. We’re still using the same margins and conventions, but we’ve had to make some small adjustments to make everything fit to the margins again.
Find a theme, make some subtle variations and make it your hero. Create an identity for the moment.
This will save you a lot of time. Figuring out where to put things will get a lot easier and once you understand it, you’ll be able to see it without even trying.
This is outstandingly important and will re-shape the way you see effective design and type-setting. Watch your margins and save the world.
font control

We see the world in fonts. We love them and we hate them. It is an exact science and a crucial art. Good font designers may be some of the last bastions of hope for truly fine art in today’s modern world. The craft is ancient and studied. So tread lightly when you start slapping more than one of those bad boys on your work.
Mostly I made this for my own good as a bit of practice. Obviously these are not MY rules, and by no means should you take this as gospel, but I hope it did SOMETHING for someone. If any of this is interesting to you, then I encourage some research. There are quite literally thousands of years of literature that support and teach good design from nearly every culture on this planet. The exciting thing is that once you have even a basic understanding, you can start to ignore the rules.