ENCOOP Newsletter

The *ENCOOP* newsletter is a revision to *The Kilowatt*, a member-oriented cooperative newsletter published by Kiwash Electric Cooperative. I revised the newsletter in Spring 2009 Semester for an assignment in English 516 Topics in Print Production: Newsletters.

Background of the Project

As part of a graduate course in writing newsletters, the English 516 course instructor assigned a project to revise a newsletter using InDesign. The assignment required that we use the basic elements seen in newsletters and use design principles to make the newsletter bold and vibrant.

To pick a newsletter to revise, I reviewed newsletters that have a large readership, in contrast to small business or hobby clubs. I chose *The Kilowatt* newsletter because it relates to my domain knowledge in electrical systems and experience in utilities.

My intent for the revision was to cultivate a sense of Green Energy ethos to align with current legislative and public relations trends in the electrical power industry, replacing the ethos cultivated by Kiwash Electric Cooperative. Along with their membership, Kiwash Electric Cooperative cultivates a political autonomy of focusing on energy costs, fossil-fuel generation, and energy conservation in contrast to the marketing of Green Energy.

In addition to revising for Green Energy ethos, I wanted to make the newsletter easier to read for the cooperative membership majority, who are elderly readers.

The newsletter I revised was the October 2008 issue of *The Kilowatt*. To manage the images in the 2008 issue, I used Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Acrobat. Once I had placed the images in the InDesign page layout, I manipulated the images for clarity and created additional graphics. For example, the event calendar on page 6 was created with the InDesign drawing tools.

Strengths of the Document

My intent for revising the newsletter was to cultivate a Green Energy ethos while making the newsletter easy to read. The front page is a good example of my approach, which involved a new rhetorical strategy in the use of color and typeface to create eye-catching headlines and banners.

What works well in the *ENCOOP* newsletter is a cohesive design strategy using the design principles of repetition, proximity, and similarity to create a bold and vibrant page design. Good examples of elements that follow the design strategy are in the newsletter banner. The new banner incorporates vivid colors and elements like the red Kiwash logo, red horizontal rule, and Eco Green title *ENCOOP*. In addition to a vivid color strategy that is repeated on each page, I repeated elements in the banner throughout the newsletter to enhance cohesiveness in the newsletter.

To cultivate the Green Energy ethos, I changed to a color strategy involving a vivid color palette of Eco Green and Cyan. This color strategy reflects a North American view of a clean environment,

including such elements as green grass and blue skies. To make the text easy to read, I chose a typeface strategy that consists of a Verdana typeface for its functional terminals, a font size for aging eyes, and 18pt leading to improve the contrast between the type and page. Although serif typefaces are chosen for their readability and horizontal flat stroke, a large typeface and its serifs weaken the contrast on the page. Although the Verdana typeface includes a san serif typeface, the typeface terminals include a semi-curved flat horizontal stroke. This makes the Verdana typeface an excellent choice for readability and good contrast.

Weaknesses of the Document

Although the typeface strategy of increasing the font size makes the newsletter easy to read for elderly readers, the strategy affected the grid system. The strategy caused the original content (text, photos images, and graphics) to drive the grid system outward, which makes the page design challenging. The effect is a revised newsletter incorporating single-page spreads with modified grids, which are complex, asymmetrical, and inconsistent among pages — a poorly designed grid system. For example, a larger font size forced me to reduce images so the images could be placed close to the related text, as seen on page 4. This caused the grid system to grow and change from a two-column grid to a complex asymmetrical grid. This change violated the consistency in using a two-column grid system for even pages, as seen on page 6.

Changes I Would Make to the Document

Although I believe the rhetorical strategy works in the *ENCOOP* newsletter, I could improve the cohesiveness of the *ENCOOP* by changing the grid system. Instead of single pages having their own custom grid, I would design a single page grid for the title page, and odd and even pages.

Along with a new grid system, I would change design elements that conflict with the Green Energy ethos color strategy seen in the *ENCOOP* title and headlines. The conflicting design elements weaken the cohesiveness. These elements are the Eco Green gradient grid fields, and the gray-scale photo images of the elderly. The gradient blending takes on the color of a pickle, and the gray-scale photo images go against industry trends in ECO newsletters, which use light green colors and vivid color photo images. I would remove the gradient from grid fields, and to avoid over emphasis, use a lighter contrast of Eco Green. To align with industry trends, I would remove all gray-scale photos.