Verdis Style Guide

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Text

Styles

When creating a document in Pages, paragraph styles define the typographic characteristics of certain elements throughout a document. By using paragraph styles, such as those in the Verdis Report Template, Verdis will ensure consistent formatting of body text, chapter and section headings, captions, and so on. Styles eliminate the need to format each element by hand. In addition, the paragraph styles in the Verdis Report Template have been designed according to some basic principles of professional typography, and use colors consistent with the Verdis brand.

When creating text that contains multiple paragraphs, it is not appropriate to use both a first-line indent and extra space after each paragraph. The unindented paragraph with extra spacing between paragraphs has a more contemporary, less academic feel to it. The body text paragraph style here has a 9 point space after each paragraph. Thus, it is not necessary to use two carriage returns to start a new paragraph (i.e., don't hit the return key twice)—the template will automatically create some space after the current paragraph for a new paragraph.

Font Options

Headings and titles should be in **gotham medium,** and the size of the text should be determined by the document style. As in this report, color instead of size can be used to emphasize titles. This makes the text more visually appealing and eliminates the need for a large heading title.

For body text, use the font "Garamond." It is a relatively good serif font, and it is also a system font meaning that most users will have it on their computers. The body text in this document is Garamond 11 point. Generally, body text should be between 9 and 11 point, and feel comfortable using half-point sizes (e.g., 10.5 point). Body text of this document is Garamond 11 point, and with the 1.35-inch margins produces an average line of text with about 70–80 characters. This line length combined with line spacing set to a multiple of 1.3 falls within the parameters for good readability.

In the Verdis Report Template and this document, one additional sans serif font is used for tips and instructions. The font is Optima. This is just one additional option to distinguish text that is in the body of the document but is slightly different from the body text. Optima is also a system font and should be available on most computers. This paragraph is Optima 10 point Regular.

Body Bullets

- The Body Bullet text style is the same as the Body text: 11 point Garamond. Unlike "Body," it has the feature of using simple dots for bullets.
  - Refrain from using aggressive or distracting figures for bullets.
  - Praesent integer leo orci aliquam, nibh a. Diam nobis eget, erat natoque integer fringilla viverra. Fermentum pede fringilla urna semper, pede quam scelerisque et enim in commodo, dictum a consequatur arcu.

Text Styles

All Caps

As a general rule, text that is written in all caps is more difficult to read than lowercase. If for some reason you need to use text that is ALL CAPS, adding 5–12% to the letterspacing will increase readability. The same is true for SMALL CAPS. In addition, the point size of SMALL CAPS should be adjusted down so the letters are about the same height as most lowercase letters. Few if any system fonts include a true "small caps" style, so if needed it will have to be approximated. Verdis will rarely, if ever use SMALL CAPS in its documents.

IN PAGES, you can adjust the character or letterspacing by clicking ⚙︎∨ on the font settings icon, underneath the Style section.

Without Additional Letterspacing:	ALL CAPS	SMALL CAPS
With Additional Letterspacing (10%):	ALL CAPS	SMALL CAPS

Bold, *Italics,* and <u>Underlining</u>

All of these styles are used to emphasize text. However, they are not equivalent from a writing tool sense nor a readability sense. As a basic rule, <u>underlining</u> should not be used because it often impedes readability. Instead, only **bold** or *italics* should be used.

If using a sans serif font, **bold** tends to stand out more than *italics* because the italic style of most sans serif fonts is not as distinctive as with most serif fonts. Therefore, when using a sans serif font such as Helvetica or Optima, use **bold** rather than *italics* for emphasis.

The last point here is not to ever combine **bold** and *italics***.** First, it is redundant. Second, it does not help readability. Third, some font families (such as Garamond here) do not include a **bold +** *italic* style so you can't use it anyway.

Punctuation Conventions

This section outlines a few punctuation conventions that Verdis employees should follow. Using the conventions will provide a more consistent and professional appearance to our clients. It will also improve our editing process by allowing us to focus more on the content, rather than the form and technique, while editing our work products.

Ampersand

The squiggly character ("&") above the number seven on a keyboard is called the "ampersand." The ampersand should not be used in place of the word "and" in normal writing. It should only

be used when referring to a company, product, or other title that itself uses the ampersand (e.g., Proctor & Gamble, Smith & Wesson).

Ellipses

The ellipsis, which is a series of three periods (…), is primarily used to indicate a gap within quoted material. Most people will simply type three periods to create an ellipsis, but you should instead use the ellipsis *character* to ensure the periods stay together across a line break.

IN PAGES, type an ellipsis by pressing **option + semicolon**. See below for a comparison:

Using three periods:	"To be, or...to be."
Using the ellipsis character:	"To be, or…to be."

Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens and dashes can be tricky, but using them correctly will add a level of professionalism and refinement to Verdis' written work. First, note there are three distinct characters known as the hyphen (-), the en dash (–), and the em dash (—). Why they are so named is not important. The table below shows the characters (at 24 point size for effect), the shortcuts for typing them ON A MAC, and briefly notes when they should be used:

Name	Character	Shortcut in Mac OS	Uses
Hyphen	-	None. The hyphen is between "0" and "=".	• when a long word becomes deconst-ructed across a line break • some multipart words (i.e., "yo-yo") • compound adjectives (i.e., super-fast delivery)
En Dash	–	option + hyphen	• to indicate a range of values (i.e., 1980–1992) • to emphasize connection or contrast between words (i.e., Kansas–Nebraska Act)
Em Dash	—	shift + option + hyphen	• to break up parts of a sentence (i.e., The em dash breaks up a sentence—it can be use singly or in a pair—and is stronger than a comma.) • might be used where a colon, semicolon, or parentheses won't work

Oxford or Serial Comma

There has been some debate at Verdis about the use of what is known as the "Oxford" or "serial" comma—the comma before the conjunction in a list of items. Although there are two schools of thought on this issue, the safest approach is to use the comma. There may be cases where not using the comma will not lead to ambiguity, and therefore reader attention and meaning are not lost by omitting it. However, it is best to guard against potential situations where omitting the comma leads to reader confusion. Therefore, use the serial comma where applicable, whenever applicable, and in any list-like situation.

Semicolons and Colons

Semicolons (;) and colons (:) can be tricky, but when used correctly can add dynamics and texture to written work. Typing these characters with the keyboard is straightforward, but when and how each are of these punctuation marks are used is not.

The semicolon is used in two situations:

1. To replace a conjunction (e.g., "and," "but," or "so") that would have otherwise connected two independent clauses. Think of it as connecting two complete sentences. Example: Mr. T posed a question; it was persnickety as usual.

2. To separate items in a list where the items themselves contain commas. Example: Last year I visited San Francisco, California; Madison, Wisconsin; and Juneau, Alaska.

The colon is essentially used in only one situation:

1. To introduce and then complete an idea, oftentimes with a list. Example: I prefer a four-course meal: salad, soup, entrée, and dessert.

Spaces

There is oftentimes confusion about how many spaces to use after certain forms of punctuation as compared to others. To make things simple and consistent, *use only one space after all punctuation*. That includes *one space between sentences*. The two-space convention was initiated in the era of the typewriter to help distinguish between word and sentence spacing when monospace fonts were very common. Now, in the era of abundant proportional fonts, digital word processing, desktop publishing, and the Internet (web browsers display only one space between sentences), the two-space convention has been phased out. There are more reasons to use only one space, but there is no need to go into them for purposes of this document.

Page Layout

Margins and Line Length

Historically, margins in Verdis' documents have been typically set to 1-inch all around or smaller. However, for standard fonts this size of margin results in a line length that is greater than 90 characters, the maximum recommended length for good readability. Therefore, set the margins, column width, or table cell width to create a line length that is ideally between 45 and 90 characters.

Page and Section Breaks

It is better practice in a document to use page and section breaks rather than inserting a bunch of carriage returns to get to a new page or section. The benefit is that as the document flows or changes length, the page and section break remains consistent while carriage returns will float around with the text.

IN PAGES, you can insert a page break using the shortcut **command + 6 + - (dash)** or through the "Insert" menu. You can insert a section break by **selecting "section break"** in the "Insert" menu.

Tables and Graphs

Table Styles

The tables below illustrate a couple of good options for Verdis reports. The first one uses a brand color (21, 134, 0) in the column headers and the second one simply uses a heavy black line under the column headers. In either case, its a good idea to minimize the number and heaviness of the cell borders to keep the reader's attention focused on the content. The goal is to minimize unimportant visual information while keeping enough there to delineate the organization of the table. The gray of the row dividers is Verdis gray (153, 153, 153)

Table Example 1

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
This is Gotham Light size 9 font.	Column header fill is Verdis brand shade (21, 134, 0)	Column heading text above is "Heading 4," but change the color as needed to suit the use
Consider the minimum amount of lines needed to make the table legible.	Consider using only horizontal lines between every 2 or 3 rows in tables with four or more rows	Consider using a light shade of grey rather than black to minimize the impact of table lines

Table Example 2

| Categories	Comparison 1	Comparison 2	Comparison 3
Category 1	Characteristic 1 of Category 1	Characteristic 2 of Category 1	Characteristic 3 of Category 1
Category 2	Characteristic 1 of Category 2	Characteristic 2 of Category 2	Characteristic 3 of Category 2
Category 3	Characteristic 1 of Category 3	Characteristic 2 of Category 3	Characteristic 3 of Category 3

Graph Formatting

Verdis' graphs should follow the guidelines in Dona Wong's book *Guide to Information Graphics.* Verdis owns a copy of this book. In particular, follow the guidelines for use of colors in graphs on pp. 40–47, and the guidelines for various types of graphs (e.g., line, column, pie) throughout the book. The graphs below provide some examples of good colors (as RGB shades) for use in Verdis' graphs. Note these are different than the Verdis brand colors, which don't provide enough contrast for graphs. Graph titles, labels, and title should be in the gotham font family.

Captions are Garamond 9 point (same as Footnote Text) and centered.
Change the alignment to suit the context, or use a text box.
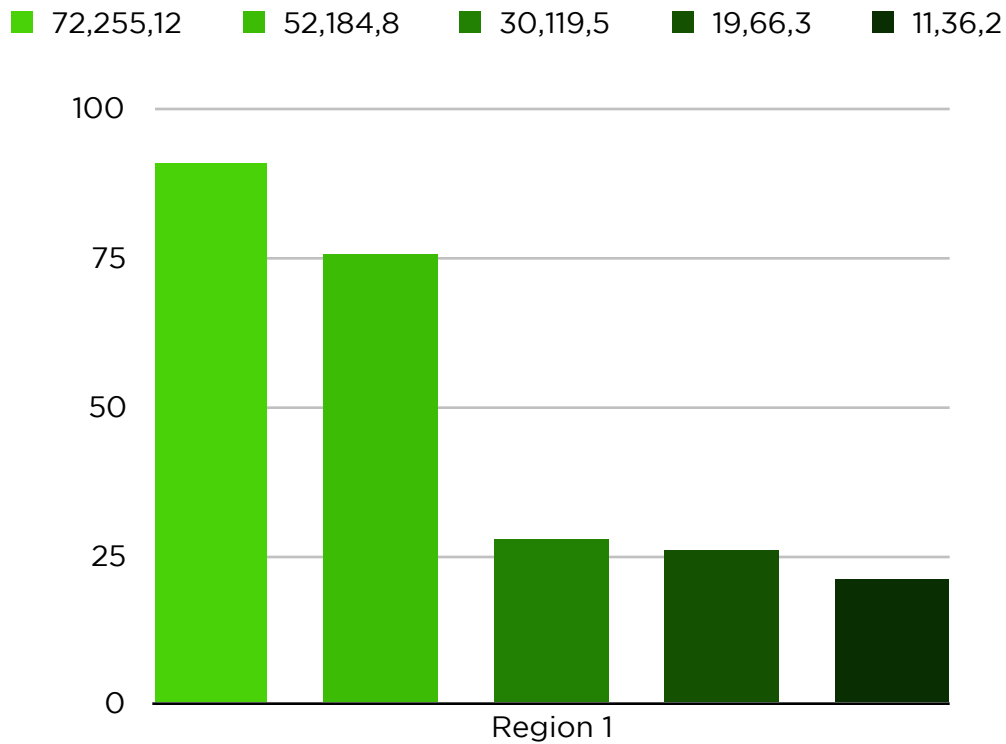
Why Simple Colors?

As explained in Dona Wong's book, color in graphs is yet another layer of visual information for readers to process. When adding additional color to a graph, ask whether the color is being used to communicate actual information. Is it emphasizing something? Is it showing different categories? Just because you *can* use many colors does not mean you should or have to use many colors. Microsoft Excel's default graph colors (and graph formatting in general) tend to violate many of the principles in Wong's book. Pages and Numbers, while producing better graph formatting generally, also tend to overuse colors. Feel free to change the colors from the defaults.

Another reason to use different shades of the same color is to assist individuals who might be colorblind or who might print the document on a black-and-white printer. In both cases, different shades are still distinguishable while different colors (hues) may not be. On a Mac, you can test the effectiveness of the colors used in a graph by changing the display to grayscale to see how distinguishable the colors are in black-and-white. To change the display to grayscale, follow these steps:

1. Open the System Preferences window.
2. Click on "Universal Access" in the top row.
3. Select "Seeing" from the options.
4. In the lower section, click the checkbox for "Use grayscale."
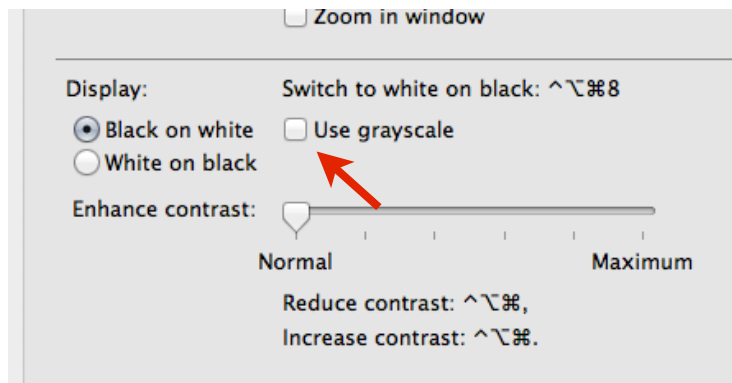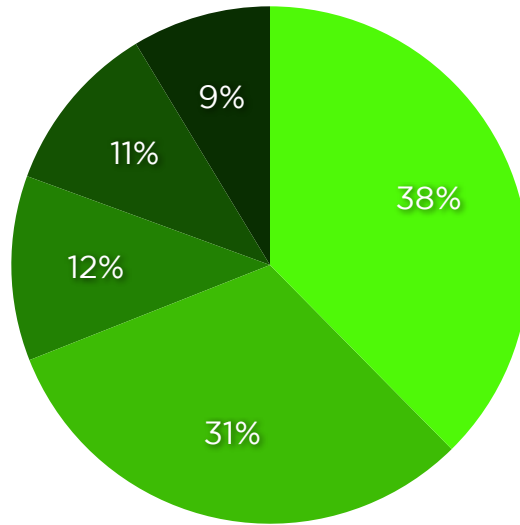
The red arrow in the image above indicates the "Use grayscale" checkbox.

After reviewing the appearance in grayscale, repeat the steps above and uncheck the box next to "Use grayscale" to return the monitor to full color.