

## Aging Eyes How to Make Your Advertising Text Easier for Seniors to Read

### The Problem

As one ages, vision will typically decline. This decline is often manifested by:

- Less sharpness of detail which impacts a senior's ability to read small or reversed type.
- An inability to discern contrast, making it hard to read words that are printed over patterns or pictures.
- Less definition between colors, creating difficulty reading colored type on a colored background.

### The Solution (or at least, some suggestions)

- Use a larger type size. Body copy typeface should be at least 12-14 point size. Most word processing programs default to a 12-point type size. The example below should demonstrate the difficulty a senior might face attempting to read small type:

I know this  
looks like a lot  
of text to read.

But I could only think  
of one way to explain my

point, and that's by asking you to read a large block of text. If you think this is difficult for you, imagine what it's like for an older person with weak vision. Especially, if your sentences are long and complex, not to mention they are introducing new or complex concepts, which are foreign to the older reader. Now imagine printing this on a color or patterned background. Or even better, using italics or reversing the message out of black.

It is even more difficult when the text is in wide blocks...

# I know this looks like a lot of text to read.

But I could only think of one way to explain my point, and that's by asking you to read a large block of text. If you think this is difficult for you, imagine what it's like for an older person with weak vision. Especially, if your sentences are long and complex, not to mention they are introducing new or complex concepts, which are foreign to the older reader. Now imagine printing this on a color or patterned background. Or even better, using italics or reversing the message out of black.

- Use common typefaces. The familiarity of common fonts makes reading easier in every circumstance. Printing these fonts in a medium or bold face type improves communication even further. Notice how a common typeface is easier to read than a tricked-up one. And how the bold type is even easier to read:

*I KNOW THIS  
LOOKS LIKE A  
LOT OF TEXT  
TO READ...*

I know this  
looks like a  
lot of text  
to read...

**I know this  
looks like a  
lot of text  
to read...**

(Tricked-up 12-pt.type)

(Basic 12-pt. serif typeface)

(Basic serif typeface – but bold)

- Stay away from reversed type – especially in large copy blocks – and keep use of italics to a minimum. See how much harder the same copy is to read in reverse – not to mention, in italics:

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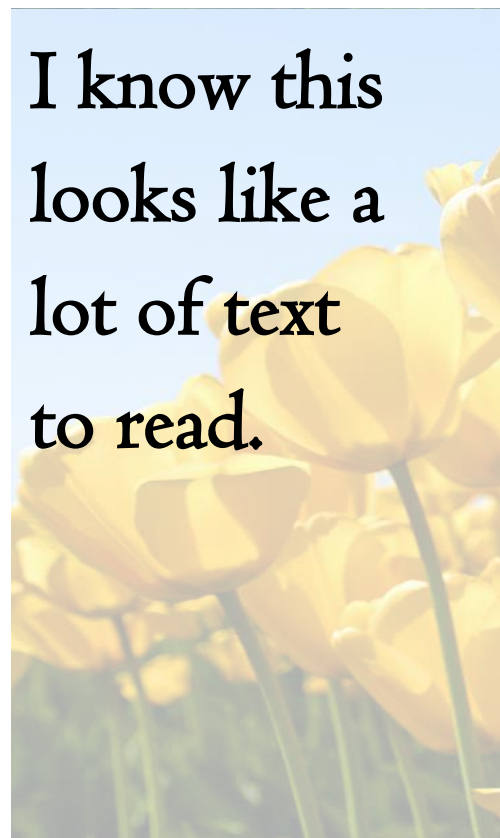
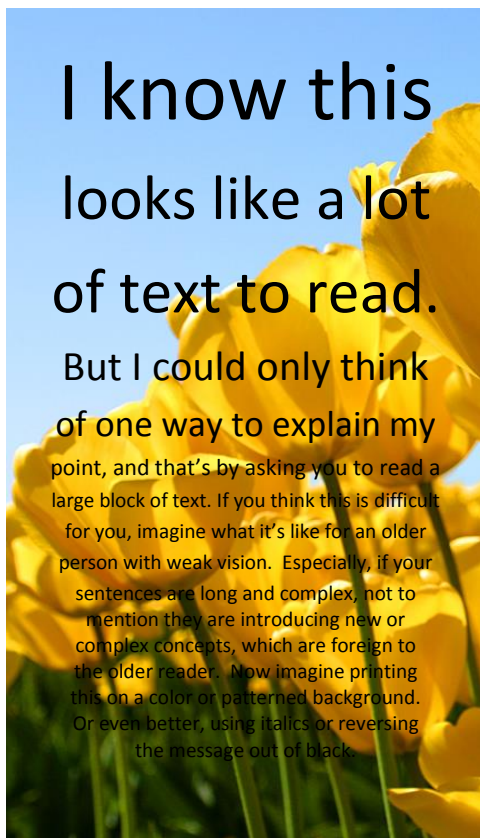
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- Keep the area around the copy uncluttered, with generous margins. The copy will not have to compete against other elements visually. It also helps readability if the text is justified on the left side. The two examples below demonstrate many of the points mentioned above: larger, bold serif typeface; left-justified; uncluttered positioning of the text. You can decide which of these is easier to read...



- Shoot for maximum contrast between the text and the background on which the text appears. Make sure the color of the typeface does not have the same properties as the background color. Get the picture here?

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The final point is this: while these rules are suggested for advertising to older adults, they are generally consistent with good advertising technique, whether the target is seniors, millennials, or anyone in between.

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