COLOR

History and industry leaders:
- Milwaukee Journal first to use spot color (1891) and first to use a process color photo (1937)
- USA Today, St. Petersburg Times, Orange County Register

Legibility considerations:
- Avoid color screens over long stories or large blocks of text.
- Screens should be no darker than 15%.
- Black on white is most legible.
- Don’t put body text in color. Use color headlines sparingly.
- Don’t reverse white text on color background.

The wise use of color:
- Attracts attention
- Develops associations
- Aids retention
- Creates a pleasing atmosphere
Terms:

**Spot color**: A single color other than black on paper. (Comics are printed with spot color, not process color.)

**Four-color process printing**: Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black (CMYK). Printed with **color separations**. The four plates must be in **registration**: The proper alignment of the colors to each other. The four colors must be printed at different angles to avoid a **moiré** pattern.

- **Black**: 45 degrees
- **Magenta**: 75
- **Cyan**: 105
- **Yellow**: 90

**Primary colors**: Red, yellow, blue

**Secondary colors**: Mixture of two primary colors

**Analogous colors**: Colors adjacent to each other on the color wheel

**Complementary colors**: Colors opposite each other on the color wheel (red and green). The opposite of its primary.
Psychological effects of color:
Warm vs. cool colors
Use bold colors for accents, cool for background colors.

Red: Assertive
Orange: Aggressive
Yellow: Active
Blue: Calming
Gray, Black: Somber

Some colors and color combinations are imbedded in our social psyche. They mean things or represent products or ideas. Be careful when using them. For instance:
- Green: money, St. Patrick’s Day
- Red: anger, love, Valentine’s Day, Coca-Cola
- Red and green: Christmas, Mexico
- Orange and black: Halloween, Kwanzaa
- Red and yellow: McDonald’s
- Green, purple and yellow: Mardi Gras

An interesting fact: In the United States, one of 12 men is color blind, and 1 of 200 women. The most common is red-green color deficiency. Be sure the people selecting color at your publication aren’t color blind!
General guidelines:

- Color creates a **personality** for a publication. Many newspapers create an identity by applying color consistently to standing elements such as the flag, headers and reverse bars.
- As with type, color should **communicate**, not decorate. It must perform a design function.
- Color can help define the beginning and end of a package and help **show relationships** among items. But beware of creating false relationships.
- **Plan for color.** Don’t use it “because it’s available.”
- **Don’t go overboard.** A little goes a long way.
- If you emphasize color with everything, then nothing is emphasized.
- Misuse of a color is worse than using no color at all.
- **Use appropriate colors.** The integrity of a story can be damaged if wacky colors surround it, and the impact of a page will be negative if readers are turned off by color choices.
- Use **bold**, vivid colors for **accent** only, and use **lighter colors** or pastels for **screens**. Colors are like decorative typefaces: In small doses, they attract; in large doses, they distract.
- Don’t trust what you see on your computer monitor. Consult a **color key** from your pressroom or printer to determine what colors are going to look like.
- Lay off the spot color when you have color photos. Let the photos speak for the page.