
Tracking

In addition to kerning, type settings may also require tracking applied. Tracking values can be set to increase or decrease the overall spacing values of a setting. This can be done for many reasons. Perhaps the particular choice of typeface set at a certain size appears to have letter and word spacing that is too large or small. Tracking can be increased or decreased to adjust and compensate for this in order to improve readability.

Also, as was briefly mentioned earlier, if a text setting is in upper case only, then this will require overall additional spacing. When set together, upper case letters must be allowed to 'breathe'. Because of their more regular appearance in terms of height and width, internal spaces – counters and so on – appear larger; therefore, the surrounding space must be adjusted to compensate for the visual 'holes' that may appear in these kind of settings. The internal and external spaces of these letters when composed need careful attention.

Tracking can also be useful when space is at a premium in text settings; a small 'minus tracking' applied to a text may save valuable space within a job. Applied to text across the pages of a book, this may even reduce the number of pages required or free up additional space for pictures and illustrations. In newspaper or magazine settings, where narrow columns are used, tracking can help to 'ease' an additional word per line.

In general, tracking should be used to make small adjustments to text. Too much additional tracking and words will break apart, too much minus tracking and letters and words will begin to bunch up thereby causing the text to appear spotty or patchy.

Below

Care needs to be taken if applying tracking to text settings, as this may have a detrimental effect on the reading. Only very small amounts should be considered (for example, +3 or -3). Here, zero tracking is most acceptable. Your rule of thumb should be: if in doubt, do not track text.

If lines of type are set too long or too short, it can either become difficult for the reader to locate the next line in *minus 25 units tracking*

If lines of type are set too long or too short, it can either become difficult for the reader to locate the next line in *zero tracking*

If lines of type are set too long or too short, it can either become difficult for the reader to locate the next line in *25 units tracking*

If lines of type are set too long or too short, it can either become difficult for the reader to locate the next line in *50 units tracking*