Strategy 44—Photos

Editors choose and present photos (which includes sizing, cropping and cutlines and optimizing online—best possible appearance at lowest file size; do not do [this](http://www.phantomshockey.com/roster/) for example)

Know the workflow — who signs off on photos whether they are assigned (required) or requested (may not get them).

**Selecting** photos:

* tell a story, and stand alone
* focus, well composed, no distractions [lamp growing out of person’s head]
* make emotional connection—do you want to linger over it?
* examples: Challenger explosion; Oklahoma City, 9/11

Cautions:

1. Sensitive photos, especially ones from within the community, ones on P. 1 [no bodies unless *completely* covered by police]. See examples p. 278—[Austin paper did get in trouble for a limb protruding from a tarp (third example)]
2. Archive photos: Did someone die, get arrested since [or, is that building gone, renamed, etc.]
3. Reader-submitted photos: Too easy to Photoshop them [recall [airplane](http://www.snopes.com/rumors/photos/tourist.asp) and World trade Center ; or let’s try this [quiz](http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl_image_quiz.htm)]. Might be someone else’s photo; could be staged [grizzly bear grows up with family …]

**Presenting** photos:

Web galleries matter; less freedom on Web to change layout, though

Photos are content, not just decoration. [Form follows function means that the design (form) follows the function (what the content is supposed to convey).]

Have a CVI (center of visual impact) [think hierarchy, or proportion: big > medium > small]  
Consider movement/flow down the page. Vertical [*portrait*] moves eyes down, better in print; horizontal [*landscape*] moves eyes across, better on Web [and therefore don’t crop to a square, unless maybe as a Web thumbnail]

Cropping [This is the only way to change the *aspect ratio*, or shape of a photo. Otherwise you distort.

e.g. you have an 80 by 50 pixel space on the Web (or picas in print) but your photo is 40 X 60. To not distort it, crop, based on photo content to an 8 by 5 aspect ratio (ratio of width to depth, always in that order; think 8 ½ by 11), then enlarge. Something like:

Crop here

40

60

Enlarge

80

50

[Recall that you can “reverse crop” in InDesign by letting the frame show a portion of the image and moving the frame around.]

**Cropping/composition**:

* Often crop edges
* can change from wide to narrow/close-up
* don’t crop to a square
* use Golden Mean proportions: 2:3:5:8 etc.
* use the [rule of thirds](http://vimeo.com/videoschool/lesson/8/framing-and-composition) (Vimeo video school link)—put interesting content at the intersections:
* Don’t point leading lines off the page/screen. That includes where people are looking:

not

* Similarly, have people walk into the frame, not out of it
* be aware of implications [e.g. Obama on the beach]

**Ethics** [?]: Don’t delete people, objects, darken or lighten greatly [famous O.J. Simpson [covers](http://blogcritics.org/sports/article/ojs-last-run-a-tale-of/) on Time V. Newsweek]; they say don’t flop a photo but is it OK to fix a leading lines problem? Take a look at this [blog post](http://www.learnwebdevelopment.com/2010/10/when-does-a-web-photo-become-fake/).

**Cutlines** [some say *captions* are for standalone photos, cutlines, or “cuts” go under pictures that have stories]

1. First sentence [only] is in present tense, then past: President Trump accepts a ceremonial gift from the host of the G-20 summit. Trump was in Mexico to discuss economic issues with the world leaders.
2. Identify the people. From left, Dave Matthews, or clockwise from top, Boyd Tinsley,
3. Don’t state the obvious. Not Carson Wentz throws a pass … , but Carson Wentz leads the Eagles on a game-winning drive.
4. Don’t copy the whole thing from the story.
5. Don’t give away the story
6. Don’t infer emotions. Not: President Obama looks mournful as he peers out into the Gulf of Mexico.
7. Check for errors [what’s it actually say on that street sign?]