

Re: This Lispofobics really gone too far

Source: <http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/Lisp/comp.lang.lisp/2005-05/msg00637.html>

- *From:* Kirk Job Sluder <kirk@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 07 May 2005 05:06:44 GMT
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Ulrich Hobelmann <u.hobelmann@xxxxxx> writes:

> Ok, but (I was in the USA the last 9 months and there) I saw lots of
> cases where we were supposed to turn in double-spaced stuff and I
> wonder why.

To my knowledge, it's a relic of the old publishing method where the copy editor or proofreader indicated needed changes using symbols above and below the line of text. Then the copy was shipped back to the author who was responsible for the necessary changes. The author then submitted a corrected draft. That copy, if approved would be sent to the typesetter (with perhaps more notes in the margins and between the lines) who then created beautiful single-spaced copy. This process is also why some publication styles put the tables and figures at the back of the manuscript.

I actually participated in this process when I was a kid, printing out reams of double-spaced thesis on a dot matrix printer connected to a C64. My dad was pretty cutting edge in musicology at the time for using a word processor. You must remember that although LaTeX goes back to the 1970s, most people didn't have access to high-quality printers until the mid-90s. Thesis styles are a relic of the recent past.

If you are curious, here is a list of proofreading symbols:
<http://webster.commnet.edu/writing/symbols.htm>

I learned to write on a typewriter, so I'm comfortable printing out double-spaced copy, proofreading with a cup of coffee and bagel over lunch, and making the edits in the afternoon.

> Oh, I'll surely use whatever format they want. It's just that most
> theses I see (and most papers published anywhere) are single-spaced,
> and my supervisors also never mentioned that I should use other than
> single-space.

Many journals have a "submission" and "publication" style. Usually the "submission" style is both typewriter-friendly and double-spaced to be editor-friendly. Then the "publication" style is single-spaced and reader-friendly. This is slowly changing. The American Psychological

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Association just recently (last three years) approved the use of italic and bold text in their "submission" style.

- > For my Spanish paper that made sense, but in a doctorate thesis there
- > should (I hope!) be no need to write lots of stuff between the lines;
- > margins are totally fine.
- >
- > Well, I'll see what my professors will tell me...

The problem is that just about everybody uses letter or A4 paper. With 10–12 point text, letter and A4 is too wide by a huge margin. There are three ways around this: huge margins (shortens the width of lines), increase the whitespace between lines (helps to keep the eye on the line), or multi-column text. Multi-column text is out of the question because it can be a PITA even with a good typesetting program. This leaves two alternatives that end up with a lot of whitespace on the page.

I'm certain that in 20 years, graduate schools and publishers will shift to a standard that takes advantage of high-quality laser printers, software and multimedia. Until then, I fear many of us are doomed to use word processors to imitate typewritten text.

- >
- > ---
- > No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's
- > consent. — Abraham Lincoln

Kirk Job–Sluder

"The square-jawed homunculi of Tommy Hilfinger ads make every day an existential holocaust." —Scary Go Round

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• *Follow-Ups:*

- ◆ **Re: This Lispofobics really gone too far**
◇ From: Ulrich Hobelmann

• *References:*

- ◆ **This Lispofobics really gone too far**
◇ From: antoanjamison
- ◆ **Re: This Lispofobics really gone too far**
◇ From: Andreas Thiele
- ◆ **Re: This Lispofobics really gone too far**
◇ From: alexanderonline
- ◆ **Re: This Lispofobics really gone too far**
◇ From: alex goldman
- ◆ **Re: This Lispofobics really gone too far**
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- ◆ **Re: This Lispofobics really gone too far**
◇ From: JB
- ◆ **Re: This Lispofobics really gone too far**
◇ From: alex goldman
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◇ From: William Bland
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