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ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN EXHIBITORS

At AmeriStamp Expo 2008, Charlotte, North Carolina WE hosted a panel discussion led by Pat Walker Moderator, with Charles Verge and Darrell Ertzberger, panelists. All have been judging for 18 to 20 years. Darrell is a thematic specialist. All are qualified Chief Judges.

Interacting with Judges

Introduction - given by Pat Walker

Judging Logistics, and when during the process judges interact with exhibitors.

Judges are selected in advance – 6 months or more before a show. Show committees make an effort to include judges who are familiar with a specialty if a specialist society is meeting at their show. As an exhibitor you may ask a show who the judges are if that information is not published. Look at a show website to start with. A national show has 5 judges and up to 2 apprentices. Regional shows often have 3 judges and local shows may have 2.

Judges are given exhibit titles and title pages and synopsis pages in advance. Pay attention to dates specified on the prospectus. You don't want to miss your first chance to interact with the judges.

How much in advance you need to send your title and synopsis depends on the show. It us usually a minimum of 6

weeks, but often much earlier. Having these pages in advance allows judges to research your exhibit subject.

It is very important that the judges know what your exhibit is about. Cute titles and vague exhibit purpose statements are NOT A GOOD THING. A good set of references is a GOOD thing.

Should you communicate directly with the judges in advance? In general, no. If one of them happens to be a friend of yours, don't ask for an advance exhibit critique without letting your friend know you plan on exhibiting where he/she will be judging later in the year. If your judge friend gives you permission to send something – go for it, but respect an answer that "it wouldn't be fair."

Judges arrive at a show anywhere from before the frames go up to after the floor is closed on set-up day. Expect about 3 judges on average to be helping with the mounting or wandering the frames getting an idea of the exhibits quality. It's OK to talk to us during this

time about your exhibit if solicited. However if a judge asks your advice about the subject matter in your exhibit because "you are knowledgeable in this area," make sure that judge knows the exhibit is yours. Sometimes the chief judge asks the jury to convene on set-up day – if that seems to be the case follow advice for "floor work" (see later).

After an organizational meeting (usually at breakfast on the first day of the show), judges work in teams to examine all the exhibits (exceptions APS AmeriStamp Expo and APS Stamp-Show); this process (referred to as "floor work") can take from 5 to 8 hours. During this time, please do not stand near any exhibit when the judges are working on it. Usually we will ask you to move temporarily. Do NOT try to interact with judges at this time unless specifically solicited to do so.

Once floor work is completed, the judging panel meets for "deliberations." This is when the awards are determined.



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FYI during deliberations award levels are not usually explained unless there is an apprentice (explanations are required from each apprentice) or unless there is disparity with the votes. Deliberations can take from an hour to 6 hours [rarely] – typically 2 to 3 hours. Official results lists are given to the show committee for posting the ribbons, preparing the awards and the palmares (awards list). Judges are specifically forbidden to give out results to exhibitors until the show committee makes them public by posting the ribbons. Hopefully this happens before the show opens on the second day.

Also during deliberations, the “first responder” is chosen for the critique. First responses are divided evenly among the judges; we volunteer to handle some exhibits which we have special knowledge of, or which we feel that we have substantive comments to make. Usually we each get one or more which is less familiar.

We spend Saturday morning to early afternoon at the frames making detailed notes for those exhibits for which we have first response. Can you talk to the judges at this time? Yes, BUT – wait until the ribbons are posted and locate the judge who has your first response. The other judges will be busy prepping their own quota. If you get a critique at the frames, don’t expect to get much more at the formal critique session later.

Saturday morning is when scoresheets with comments are completed. Even if a judge shows you yours at the frames, please don’t ask for it. There is usually a system for collecting them and returning them to the exhibitors (via jury chair and show committee) If you have taken yours in ad-

vance it will drive someone crazy trying to find it!!!

The formal critique session is normally Saturday afternoon for 1 to 2 hours.

After the critique and on Sunday judges are available to do critiques “at the frames.” If a specific appointment is made please keep it (this goes for judges and exhibitors). Judges have very little free time at a show, as you can see.

Charles Verge spoke briefly about what exhibitors should expect from judges. He emphasized good preparation and noted that an exhibitor should not underestimate a judge’s personal knowledge of a subject – especially in the thematic area – because of outside interests or profession.

Judges look to see if exhibitors have followed the rules. Judges expect an exhibitor to know more about her subject than the judges do; conversely the exhibitor should expect that the judges know and apply the rules!

Judges should use good manners and always refer to “the exhibitor” and not “he” or “she” unless that exhibitor is known to them.

The Chief Judge should make sure that the critique is positive and constructive and that arguments are avoided or cut off – extensive (belligerent) discussion with one exhibitor is not fair to the others.

Darrell Ertzberger discussed the difficulties of preparing to judge a thematic exhibit – and researching the theme. The best reference for a particular theme may be a several

hundred page book. Judges don’t have time to read that much for a single exhibit.

We all agreed that judges use the internet for general information gathering. Exhibitors should do the same – just to see what is out there. If incorrect information is in Wikipedia, for example, it should be mentioned in a synopsis. If good internet references exist, put them in the synopsis page as well.

Charles suggested that if you have a friend or acquaintance who is an expert in your subject ask them to read your exhibit. He has an exhibit about teeth and had his dentist read it! It will often be fun for them and helpful for you.

Go to the critique – even if you are not exhibiting at a particular show – and listen to comments about all the exhibits. Note examples that judges give of good points or areas of improvement and go look at those exhibits afterwards. (This was emphasized later during the Q&A).

Be aware that judges prepare for the critique with the intent of answering the basic question “how can this exhibit be improved?” If your question is different (usually more specific) state it very carefully and don’t be surprised if the first responder judge has to “scramble” a bit with his/her notes to answer you.

Look at other exhibits for ideas and go on exhibit tours.

Q&A

Ruth Caswell made a point to ask about being able to talk to judges at the frames and how to make sure that this part of the “process” works.

We recommended that an exhibitor makes a specific appointment time with her first responder. Do that immediately after the critique closes; then keep that appoint

ment! If your first responder is catching a Sunday morning plane, talk to the Jury Chair about who else might see you.

It is also OK to ask other judges – not those who judged the show – for advice and input or for explanations. Just be aware that they did not have any advance preparation time, and have not had any interaction with other judges in assessing your exhibit.

For more information on the procedures and criteria used to judge philatelic exhibits, consult the *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging*. Copies are available from the American Philatelic Society, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823 or www.stamps.org.

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This is a publication of WE – Women Exhibitors – Whose mission is to be the vehicle through which women exhibitors can encourage each other through sharing information, ideas, experience, advice, problems, and solutions.

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“Judges must follow their oaths and do their duty, heedless of editorials, letters, telegrams, threats, petitions, panelists and talk shows.”

Janet Klug showed how using Microsoft Publisher can be used to make philatelic exhibits during a seminar at AmeriStamp Expo 2008, This is a synopsis of that seminar.

Making an exhibit using Microsoft Publisher

What is Publisher?

Publisher is Microsoft software that enables the user to create professional-looking publications.

It is **easy to use** (trust me).

Publisher has many features you can customize to the way you work, and it is perfect for making stamp exhibits.

Best of all, you can try it for free with a trial download from Microsoft (details later in this article).

Why use Publisher for making exhibits?

Publisher has ready-made templates that make dandy title pages. You can add your own templates for pages, too.

Horizontal and vertical rulers help with text placement. Unlike Microsoft Word, when you place text or an illustration on a page in Publisher, it stays where you put it.

All essential Word features are still there, such as spell check, fonts, tables, etc. And they are easier to use.

So let's look at what we can do with Publisher.

Title Pages

Publisher has a large variety of "canned" templates. One was used to cre-

ate the title page illustrated in Figure 1. The author changed the fonts and colors, added a graphic of a POW camp guard tower at the top

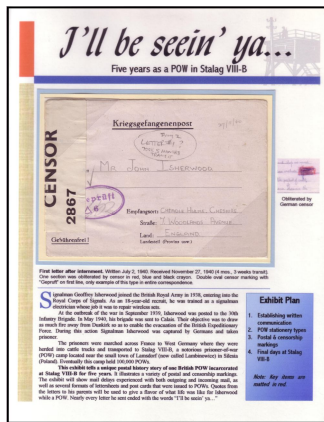


Figure 1. Title page for a one frame exhibit created by the author.



Figure 2. Title page made from scratch with all the design elements created by the exhibitor.

right and a scan of part of the inside of the POW letter that had been censored.

Title pages can also be made from scratch, without using any of the built-in templates. Figure 2 shows a title page that was made this way, allowing the exhibit to design the entire look and feel of the exhibit.

Text can be placed anywhere on the page using text boxes. The boxes can be sized and placed precisely. Subheadings, captions above below or to the side of the



Figure 3. Text can be placed anywhere with ease, and it stays where you put it.

philatelic material are easy to do.

Scans are easily imported into "picture boxes" that can be resized by dragging handles, and then placed exactly where you want them.

It sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?

So how does it work? Let's look at a few screen

Figure 4 on the next page will show you what you see when you start up Microsoft Publisher.

From here, you click "Publications for Print" on the column at the left. This

Why use Publisher for exhibits?

- It is easier to use than most other word processing software
- Publisher has features that make exhibit layout easier
- Text and illustrations are placed in boxes that can be precisely placed on the page
- It is easy and fun!

accesses a large selection of pre-formatted designs that can actually make nice title pages.

Take your time and peruse them all. Do any of them appeal to you? Maybe the one you like isn't perfect for your needs, but it has "good bones." Not to worry. You can customize any of the choices just the way you want.

Do not be fearful to just play with these things. Make a bunch of title pages — even for exhibits you don't have. Learn by doing. "Trial" and "Error" are both great teachers.

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"Probable impossibilities are to be preferred to improbable possibilities."

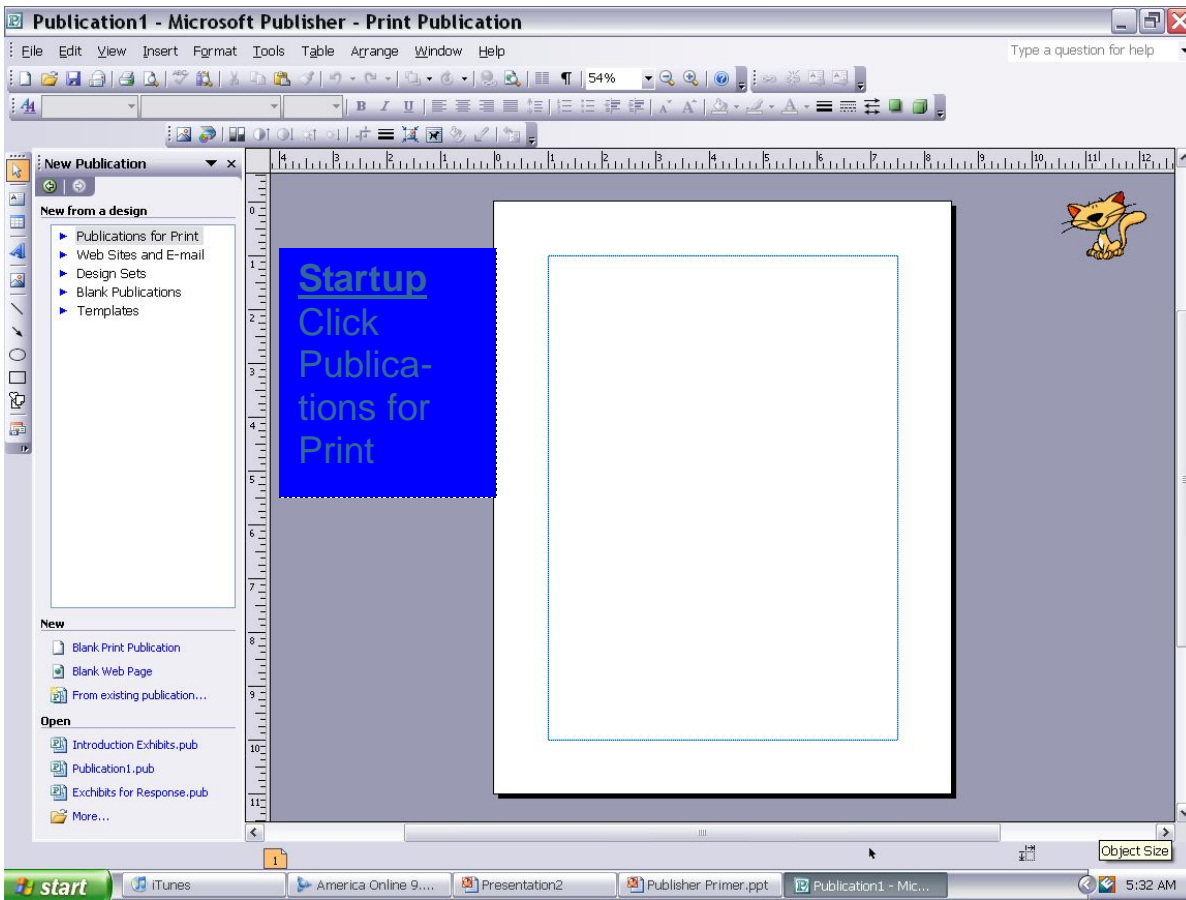
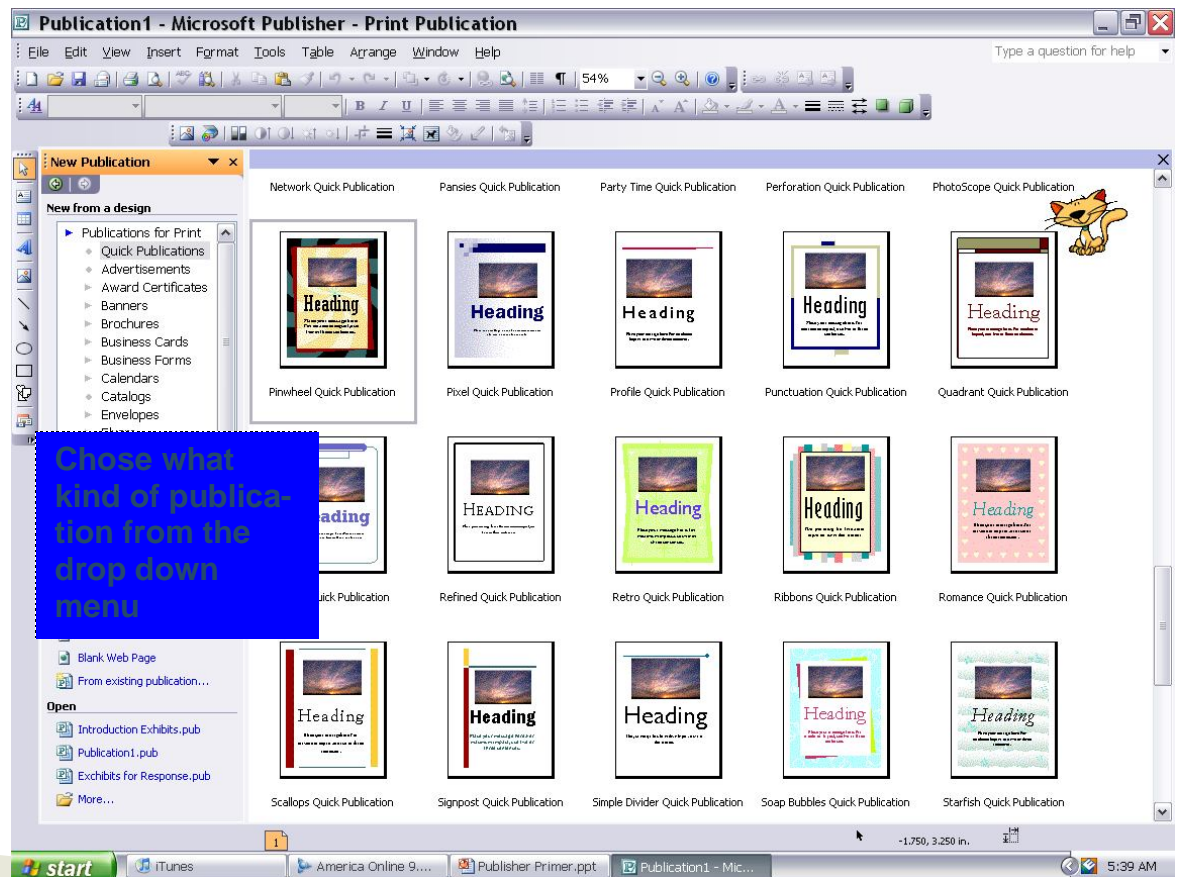


Figure 4. This shows a blank page startup of Microsoft Publisher. From here, select "Publications for Print" from the column on the left.

Figure 5. That will provide a selection of formats that make great title pages! Look through all of them and find one that you like.



"Between us and excellence, the gods have placed the sweat of our brows."

HESIOD

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Click on a page that you like. The blank page on the Publisher screen will transform to the page you have just clicked (Figure 6).

Once you have selected a page design you want to use for a title page, you can change it to meet your needs. Look at the title page shown in Figure 1. This used the same pre-formatted page shown in Figure 6, but I “tweaked” it.

Publisher gives you a lot of ways to change the appearance without doing any of the hard work yourself. Publisher has built in color schemes and font schemes. I have found the color schemes to be very useful, and I enjoy playing with the font schemes, but most of the time I have to change the fonts to something more suitable and easily readable in an exhibit.

Still, it is useful to see what the Publisher designers have put together. It will give you a good idea of what font families and color groups work well together. You don’t get this sort of help from many other word processing programs.

Now look at Figure 7. (For those of you reading this on your computer, you can enlarge the viewing size of this PDF file for better viewing of the illustrations).

I’m working on a new exhibit entitled “Terror in the Jungle.” When it grows up it will be a display exhibit of the counterinsurgency by British troops in Malaya in the 1950s. With my title “Terror in the Jungle,” I envisioned the title page to be in “jungle” colors.

I really thought I would have to do all the color cus-

tomization myself, but Publisher offered me a color scheme called “Grove.” I clicked that and the color bars magically changed to three different shades of green. It was perfect (See Figure 8).

It might seem a big leap going from Figure 7 to Figure 8, but it really only took a couple of minutes. I deleted the picture of the sunset, but that area in the layout was a good place for a philatelic piece. I measured the cover I wanted to go there and then used the mouse to create a box slightly larger than the cover that would eventually be mounted there. A box outline appeared on the page layout where I had put it.

I clicked the “lines” box on the tool bar at the top of the screen and then clicked one of the green colors from the built-in color scheme. Pop! My box had a line around it.

I got rid of the big “Heading” word, and created a text box above the horizontal line for the exhibit title. I inserted another text box for the descriptive text about the cover, just below the box outlined in green that I made to accept the cover. A third text box was made for the body text on the page; and finally I made a fourth box for the plan at the lower right. I added a matching green outline around that.

The completed title page is shown in Figure 8. This sounds really complicated as I write this, but trust me...it only took a couple of minutes to make the boxes and put them where I wanted them to go. The most difficult part of this entire process was writing the text to go in the boxes, but then isn’t that always the case?

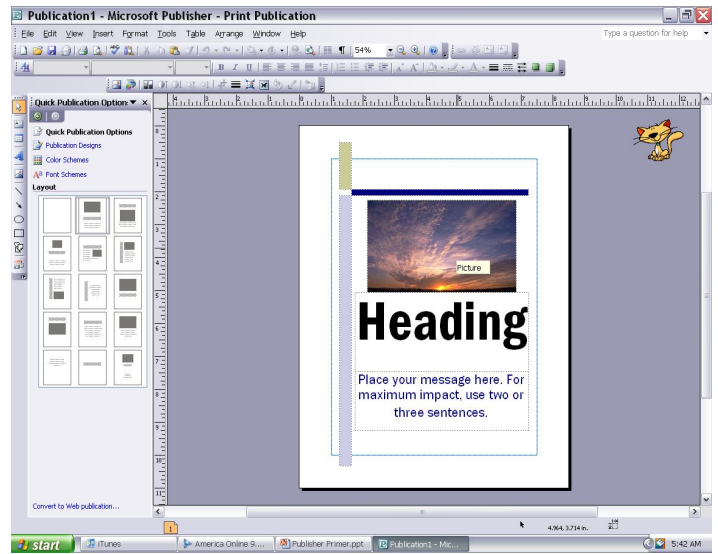


Figure 6. Clicking on the pre-formatted design will pop that design where the blank page used to be on the Publisher screen. Now you can begin customizing it to fit your needs.

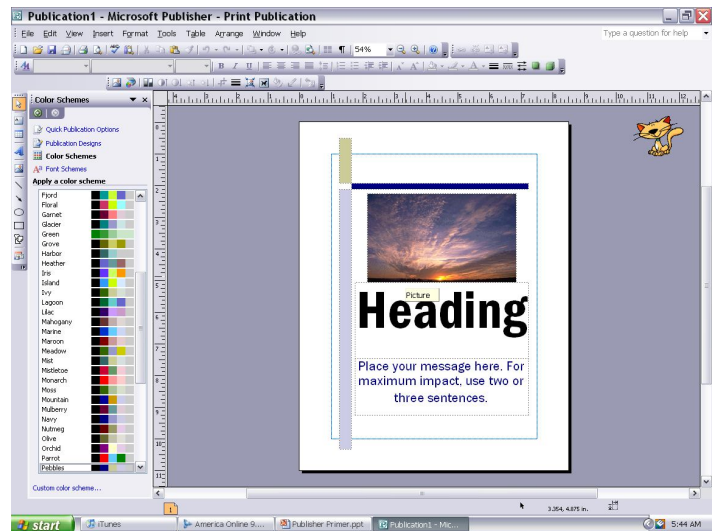


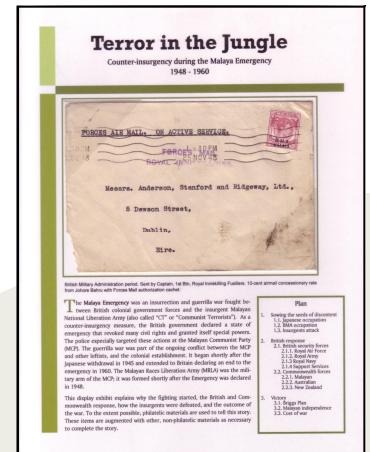
Figure 7. Click “Color Schemes” from the column at the left and a vast selection of possible color schemes will appear in a drop-down menu. Click on them all to see what happens to the pre-formatted design. When you find one you like, click on it.

Body Pages

OK, great. Title pages are a cinch. What about body pages? They are just as easy to create using Publisher and the techniques we have just described.

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Figure 8. Title page created by using Publisher’s color scheme and then customizing fonts, text and adding a box for the exhibit plan.



“What we call ‘progress’ is the exchange of one nuisance for another nuisance.”

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First you need to add a few pages. Use the “Insert” feature on the tool bar. A pretty self-explanatory drop down menu appears. Add the number of pages *behind* the current page.

How ever many pages you add will appear orange tabs near the bottom of the screen. This allows you to move from one page to the next by just clicking on the page tab.

Page 2 will automatically appear on the screen when you click “OK.” At this point it will blank. You then begin to add subheadings, captions, and other text and illustrations. Each of these things will go in either a text box or a “picture” box.

Placing the boxes exactly where you want them is made incredibly easy. Notice on Figure 9 that there is a horizontal ruler at the top of the work area, and a vertical ruler along the left side of the work area. Your cursor will create a line on each ruler that helps you place text and pictures exactly.

Just keep adding stuff until you get the page the way you want it to look.

Figure 10 shows a pretty complicated layout of stamps, covers, text and a scan showing a die variety. At the top of the page in the left corner I placed a two-line subheading. This was reflected in the plan of the exhibit that appeared on the title page. Below that is a boxed notation in red that highlights an important feature of what is being shown on this page...that the stamp is the first printing of multi-

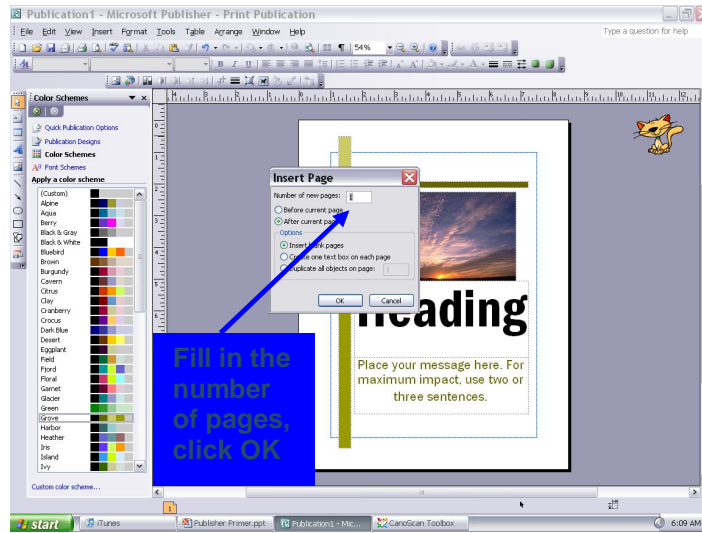


Figure 9. Insert new pages by clicking “Insert” on the tool bar. In the pop-up box, type in the number of pages you wish to insert and check “Behind current page.”



Figure 10. A page from a one-frame exhibit of Tonga's 2d Queen Salote stamps. Each place where there is text or a picture required a separate box.

ple printings that will be exhibited.

Directly below that is a scan of what the first die looks like, enlarged from the stamp so the viewer can easily see it, and then text below that describes in words what you are looking at.

Then come the stamps, from left to right. First, is actually the *reverse* of the stamp, so that the viewer can see the aniline ink bleeding to the back of the stamp. Then there is a corner block, shown to illustrate the line perforations, and finally on the right is a SPECIMEN overprint.

Two covers showing first printing stamps round out this page. Each item has its own text that went into a text box.

Microsoft Publisher has many more features too numerous to mention for this article. I suggest you try it yourself. The current version of Publisher runs on Windows XP or Vista. It requires a 500 megahertz (MHz) processor or higher, 256 megabytes (MB) RAM (random access memory) or higher, 1.5 gigabytes on your hard disk, a CD-ROM or DVD drive to load the software, and a video display of 1024 X 768 or higher resolution.

Download a trial version of Publisher from www.office.microsoft.com or take an online test drive on their website. The purchase price from Microsoft is \$170, but you can probably find it cheaper elsewhere.

I've tried lots of different software to make my exhibits. Publisher works best for me.

“To be able to fill leisure intelligently is the last product of civilization.”

BERTRAND RUSSELL