



A COLA WHO?

YEARBOOK COLOPHON

“A Cola Who?” This is a phrase often uttered in the yearbook room when the adviser mentions to the editor in chief that it is time to write the colophon for the last deadline. Often editors are flummoxed at the idea of writing a technical piece, but it is a necessary “finish” to a professional publication.

Simply put, a colophon is a statement of important printing information and a reference tool for those interested in the mechanics of printing. The term comes from the Greek word kolophon, meaning “finishing touch” and originating from the Ionian city of Colophon, whose citizens were seen to be of strategic value in battle. Thus if the Colophonians were involved in a fight, the battle would be finished!

Originally the colophon was a symbol of the publishing house that appeared on the title page and sometimes the spine of books. It has evolved from a symbol to a statement which includes such specifics as the weight of the paper, the featured typefaces, the press run and salient business information.

For yearbooks, the colophon also includes the name of the printer, the location of the plant, and the names of the publisher’s representatives, both inside and outside the plant. It is also customary to describe the software and the hardware utilized, in addition to the brands of the cameras. Special enhancements to the cover and endsheets are included as well. This gives others the opportunity to see what is out there as they plan their books. In addition, the colophon provides the perfect place for the concept or theme to be verbalized. Often editors include a description of how the staff determined the theme and how they chose to carry it throughout the book. They provide these examples as a record for themselves and for future staffers who read the colophon.

Colophons often include memberships in state and national organizations such as NSPA and CSPA and end with a list of the honors and awards the book has won the previous year if applicable. Some editors also use the colophon to thank people in the school and community who have helped them with production. Occasionally, staffs will include the colophon on a full spread to offer senior editors the chance to “say goodbye.” Be careful if you choose to do this since the colophon should always be professional in its tone.

If you are unsure of the exact terminology, much of the data that you’ll need can be found on your specifications form or in the paperwork that you receive from the plant. Writing the colophon puts the ideal “finishing touch” on your masterpiece, your yearbook, and once it is complete, the “battle” is finished!

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COLOPHON CHECKLIST



- software/hardware information
- camera brand and model
- concept/theme synopsis
- cover and endsheet specifications
- paper type and weight
- typefaces used
- press run
- name of printer
- location of plant
- name of representative and customer service adviser
- business information (e.g. price of book, number of books sold, etc.)
- journalism memberships
- awards received
- thank you to patrons
- letter from the editor



HALCYON, FOOTHILL HS, PLEASANTON, CA

POW WOW, CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN HS, COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

TITANIAN, SAN MARINO (CA) HS

ODYSSEY, CHANTILLY (VA) HS

INVICTUS, WARD MELVILLE HS, EAST SETAUKET, NY

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