



AOL Visual Identity Guidelines

MOVING THE BRAND FORWARD
JANUARY 2004 / VERSION 2.0



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Introduction

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Introduction

Overview

The new America Online brand identity represents the next phase in our company's growth and a renewed commitment to serving our members. With our first major rebranding initiative in a decade, we are sending a powerful message to the marketplace that AOL is "moving forward."

What will amplify this message is consistency. World-class brands succeed because they make a clear and consistent impression on consumers at every point of contact.

AOL is no different. From the products we offer to our promotional events to our direct mail and advertising to the way our customer representatives answer the phones, every single AOL contact has the potential to build and reinforce our new brand direction.

The renewed AOL brand is nothing more than a concept until our employees, partners and products make it real. By consistently representing the brand in the experiences we create online (and off-line), together we will help customers see that AOL is on their side, now and into the future.

Visual Identity Guidelines

What are visual identity guidelines?

Our visual identity is bigger than a logo. Our visual identity is our brand story told through our visual language. Because our logo cannot tell this story alone, it's supported by color palettes, typography, imagery and graphic elements.

When used properly and consistently, this comprehensive visual language acts as a shorthand for our brand, communicating "AOL" at a single glance.

Identity guidelines are simply the rules of use for this visual language. They show you what works, what doesn't, and how to make the elements work together. They ensure that our visual language will be used with accuracy and consistency. And they help more consumers recognize our brand – building our presence and message in the marketplace.

Who are these guidelines for?

If you are in any way responsible for communicating the AOL brand, these guidelines are for you. This includes:

- Marketing Managers
- Art Directors
- Packaging Designers
- Programming and Product Designers
- Writers
- Production Managers
- Printers



Brand Strategy

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Brand Strategy

Brand Positioning

“AOL is the service that is on my side.”

AOL is the service that is built and staffed by people who genuinely care about my online experience and work on my behalf. Far from a faceless collection of software and data, this is a living, breathing service that puts me first and stands up for me.”

Our brand positioning defines who we are and what we stand for. While it is not meant to appear in communications verbatim, its spirit should guide everything from marketing, product development, customer service, and messaging strategy.

Our brand positioning was tested not with one or two consumers, but more than ten thousand of them. We spoke to new, current, lapsed, and prospective members, even outright brand rejecters, across all audience segments and targets. The message that came back was loud and clear: consumers would give AOL their loyalty if we would be their advocate in a changing online world.

AOL started out this way, getting everyday people online to experience the promise of the Internet. As the online world grows more and more complex, consumers continue to search for a trusted online partner—one that provides them with experiences that enrich their lives and does it in a way that puts their needs first. Consumers have told us they believe AOL can and should play this role, that AOL can once again be the service that is on their side. But it means we must commit to this challenge every day, in everything that we do.

Straightforward

Trustworthy • Genuine • Respectful

Not complicated or misleading

Responsive

Resourceful • Dependable • Helpful

Not self-interested or irrelevant

Innovative

Intuitive • Inspiring • Dynamic

Not out-of-touch or overpowering

Personal

Approachable • Caring • Warm

Not distant or arrogant

Brand Strategy

Brand Attributes

Our brand attributes are a natural extension of our brand positioning, defining a brand personality that is consistent with “a service that is on my side.”

There are four primary AOL brand attributes, each with three additional words that further define the subtleties in the concepts. The attributes are not meant to work in isolation; for example, AOL is never straightforward without being personal. Each attribute complements the other three to create a balanced personality.

Use the attributes as guideposts as you work. When you complete a project, ask yourself: “Does what I’ve produced support the idea that AOL is straightforward? Responsive? Innovative? Personal?”

Brand Strategy

Brand Voice

Our brand voice adds further dimension to the positioning by illustrating how AOL can speak with clarity, consistency, and impact. These six qualities should guide the tone and manner used in our communications to create the voice of an empowering advocate.

Additional information on the brand voice with tone and manner guidelines can be found on our Intranet (see page 80 for contact information and keyword).

Straightforward

AOL is up-front, candid and informative

Communicate in direct, plain-spoken language and provide all relevant information to help consumers make good decisions

Friendly

AOL is warm, human and down-to-earth

Communicate in a clear, conversational style, be personable, and address consumers as equals

Helpful

AOL is attentive, accommodating and empowering

Communicate clear choices—customized whenever possible—to help consumers get what they want

Inspiring

AOL is confident, experienced and imaginative

Communicate a sense of optimism and ingenuity, delivered with a touch of humility, to instill confidence among consumers

Respectful

AOL is considerate, gracious and to-the-point

Communicate with courtesy, respect and consumer-focus for the value of their time

Positive

AOL is upbeat, energetic and dynamic

Communicate in the active voice and frame messages in positive and encouraging terms

Brand Strategy

Messaging

The AOL messaging strategy determines exactly which products, programming, features, or enhancements we want to focus on in our communications. While our brand positioning and attributes are constant, the specifics of our messaging adjust to accommodate our sales and marketing goals.

For example, we always want to be known as “the service that’s on my side,” but we might illustrate this through a particular service or content area, depending on our near-in objectives.

Brand Strategy releases the latest messaging strategy a few times a year, outlining the current overarching message (i.e., safety and security) with the proof points or features that support it (SpyZapper, McAfee VirusScan, Clear My Footprints).

The most current document can be accessed on our Intranet site, and updates will be added as they are released (see page 80 for contact information and keyword).

The Logos

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America
Online.®



TM

AOL.®



TM

The Logos

The AOL Service Logos

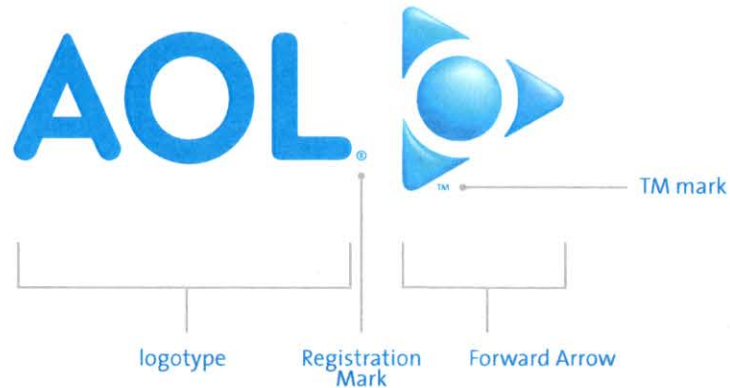
As we revised our logos, members were our first and final sounding board. They decided when we strayed too far from our core equities and when we hadn't pushed far enough. In the end, we found that they were even more comfortable with dramatic changes than we were. They told us to look more modern, more innovative, more like the technology leader that we are.

Symbolically “moving forward,” the new logos connect the heritage of the brand to the future of our business. Key visual equities, like the color blue and the iconic triangle, tell members and AOL employees alike that we are the same brand they've come to trust over the last two decades. But subtle changes point to the future. The new logotype is **friendlier** and **more contemporary**. And more notably, the triangle has evolved into a directional arrow, pointing the way forward like the guide we hope to be for our customers.

America Online Service Logo



AOL Service Logo



AOL Blue

The AOL logos are made of AOL Blue:
 PMS 3005 U
 RGB 8/96/168
 CMYK 100/40/0/0

The Logos

The AOL Service Logos (cont.)

The AOL Service brand has a distinctive visual personality that should adhere to visual identity guidelines and be consistently communicated across the organization. Please note that these logos should be used for AOL service and not the corporate brand.

The Logos consist of the Forward Arrow and the logotype. These elements have been designed to appear in a fixed relationship that must never be altered. Always use approved artwork.

Any use of the **Forward Arrow alone** is considered an exceptional circumstance and must be approved by the Brand Strategy group. The Forward Arrow symbol may only be used separately from the logotype on the AOL service in specified locations, such as a product or application icon. **It is critical that the Forward Arrow always stay visually associated with AOL so that we do not jeopardize brand recognition.**

Multi-band Logo Lock-up: Horizontal



Multi-band Logo Lock-up: Vertical



The Logos

The Multi-band Logo Lock-ups

The Multi-band Logo Lock-up was created as a sign-off for the brand campaign that launched in the fall of 2004. The addition of the multi-band messaging serves to communicate that America Online has products and services beyond dial-up.

The America Online Multi-band Logo Lock-ups are the preferred versions of our logo for Marketing Communications. Please use them when you want to call out the breadth of our service offerings. For more information on choosing which logo to use, please see page 13.

The logo lock-ups consist of the America Online Service Logo and the Multi-band message. No words should be substituted or added to the Multi-band message. These elements have been designed to appear in a fixed relationship that must never be altered. Always use approved artwork.

Wherever space allows, use the horizontal version of the lock-up. The vertical version is available for use when space is limited, but please respect the logo's minimum size requirements on page 17 to ensure the Multi-band message is clearly legible.

Multi-band Logo Lock-ups



Service Logos



The Logos

Choosing Which Logo to Use

The Multi-band Logo Lock-ups are our preferred logos for marketing communications. Please use this logo whenever space allows and when you want to call out or create messaging around the breadth of our service offerings. Whenever possible, use the horizontal version. A vertical version is available for use when space is limited.

The Service Logos should be used on any item or communication where the Multi-band message is not appropriate. In this case, the America Online version is still preferred. The AOL version of the Service Logos is available for small scale applications and most places on the service.

Note: all below information is applicable to the Multi-band Logo Lock-ups as well. Please see pages 77-78 for file naming conventions.

	Logos with gradient (preferred)		Logos with flat color (alternate)	
positive <i>for use on white or light backgrounds</i>				
reverse <i>for use on dark backgrounds</i>				
positive <i>for use on white or light backgrounds</i>				
reverse <i>for use on dark backgrounds</i>				



PMS 282 is the recommended background color when using the reverse blue gradient and flat logos



The Forward Arrow symbol in the reverse blue flat version features PMS 2925 in order to contrast with the background.

The Logos


Logo Variations

The Positive Gradient Blue and Reverse Gradient Blue are the preferred versions and should be used whenever possible. The gradient versions have the strongest impact and convey depth and dimensionality for the brand. The flat versions should be used only when production limits the quality of the gradient effect or the background interferes with the gradient logo's visibility.

AOL Blue is the equivalent of PMS 3005. The logos should not be rendered in metallics or any other colors not specified here.

See the following pages for further detail on logo variations and usage across various applications.

Note: all below information is applicable to the Multi-band Logo Lock-ups as well.

	  Color logos with gradient	  Black logos with gradient	  Color logos with flat color	  Black & White logos with flat color
four-color printing process	●		●	
two-color printing process	●	●		
one-color printing process	●	●		
newsprint (black ink)		●		●
electronic media (e.g., web, PowerPoint®)	●	●		●
word processing (e.g., Word)	●	●		
television advertising	●	●		
billboards, signs & banners	●	●	●	●
embroidery			●	●
silk-screen			●	●
embossing/debossing etching/engraving/thermography			●	●
painting			●	●

- recommended version
- alternate version(s)

The Logos Logo Usage

This usage chart suggests the best logos to use in a variety of applications. This chart applies to both the Service Logos and Multi-band Logo Lock-ups.

The Positive Gradient Blue and Reverse Gradient Blue are the preferred versions and should be used whenever possible.

The gradient versions must be printed with a screen to properly achieve the gradient effect. In those cases where a screen is not possible, the flat versions should be used.

If you are working in a medium that falls outside this chart, please contact the Brand Strategy group to discuss the best solution.



Multi-band Logo Lock-up



Service Logos



The Logos

Clear Area

A minimum amount of space should surround the entire logo to enhance the presentation and impact. Logos should stand out clearly from their surroundings, and should be **protected with adequate white or clear space from competing visuals, graphics and text.**

The clear area around the logo is identified by "x" which is the equivalent to the height of the circle in the Forward Arrow. Violation of the clear area will inhibit legibility and diminish the impact of the logos.

The Multi-band Logo Lock-up is an approved exception to the clear space rule for the America Online Service Logo. It was designed specifically to create a visual relationship between the logo and the multi-band message. However, please note that the Multi-band Logo Lock-up has its own set of clear space rules that take this relationship into account.

Multi-band Logo Lock-up: Horizontal



print: 1.25"



on screen: 185 pixels

Multi-band Logo Lock-up: Vertical



print: 1.125"



on screen: 170 pixels

Service Logos



print: .5"



on screen: 54 pixels

At very small sizes, it is acceptable to remove the TM and ® symbols but you must receive approval from Brand Strategy and Legal before proceeding. See page 18 for further guidance.

Forward Arrow



16 x 16 pixels

The Forward Arrow may only be used by itself in exceptional instances, approved by Brand Strategy.

The Logos

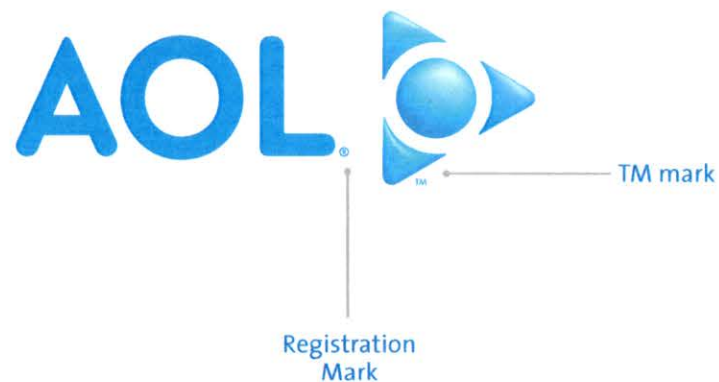
Minimum Size

Multi-band Logo Lock-ups: When reproduced in small sizes, the horizontal version of the Multi-band Logo Lock-up should appear no smaller than 1.25 inches for print and 185 pixels for on-screen use.

The vertical version cannot be reproduced as small without compromising the legibility of the multi-brand message. It should appear no smaller than 1.125 inches for print and 170 pixels for on-screen use.

Service Logos: When reproduced in small sizes, the Service Logos should appear no smaller than .5 inches for print and 54 pixels for on-screen use.

The **Forward Arrow** should appear no smaller than 16x16 pixels for on-screen use. It should not appear by itself in print applications.



The Logos

Trademark and Registration Mark

Despite its sometimes inconspicuous presence, the trademark and registration mark symbols are a powerful tools, marking our logo as a legally recognized image. Because these symbols signal the logo's protected status, they must appear with the logo whenever possible (see below for the rare exceptions to this rule).

The lock-up here shows the relationship in size between the logo and the symbols. You may find that when the logo is dramatically increased in size, the trademark and registration mark will need to be minimized. Use your judgment to determine the proper size, but please ensure the symbols are visible and legible.

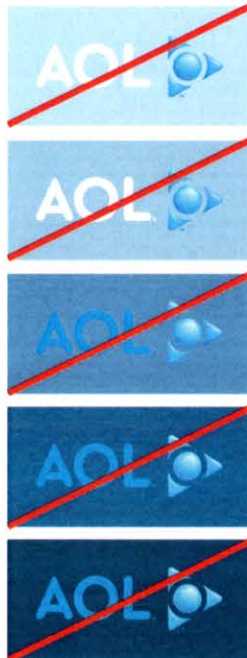
There are also instances where production limitations or methods—in embroidery, for example—will compromise the legibility of the symbols. In these cases, it is acceptable to remove the TM and ®, but **you must receive approval from the Brand Strategy and Legal groups before proceeding.**

Gradient Logos

Do:

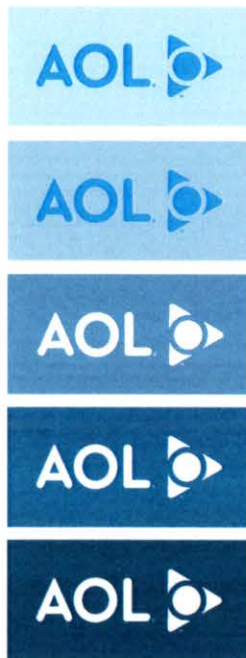


Do Not:



Flat Logos

Do:



Do Not:



The Logos

Background Control

The logos must be placed on backgrounds that offer sufficient contrast to make them clear and legible.

Do not place the logo on busy or textured backgrounds that will diminish legibility.

If the background is dark, use the Reverse Gradient Blue or the Reverse Flat White Logo.

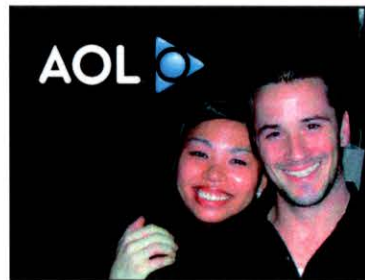
If the background is light, use the Positive Gradient Blue, the Positive Flat Blue or the Positive Flat Black Logo.

When using the Reverse Gradient Blue and Reverse Flat Blue Logos, PMS 282 is the recommended background color to ensure that the logo pops off the background. This will also reinforce the branding (see page 26 for further guidance on using AOL blues).

Correct usage of the Positive Gradient Blue Logo on light backgrounds



Correct usage of the Reverse Gradient Blue Logo on dark backgrounds



Incorrect usage of the logos placed on an image

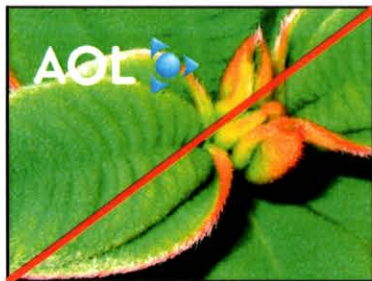
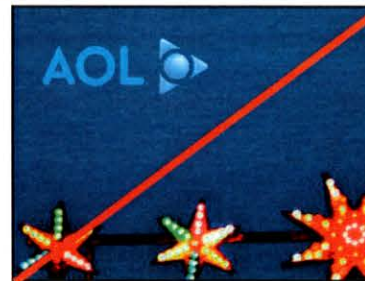


Image obscures legibility of logo



Background doesn't offer sufficient contrast

The Logos

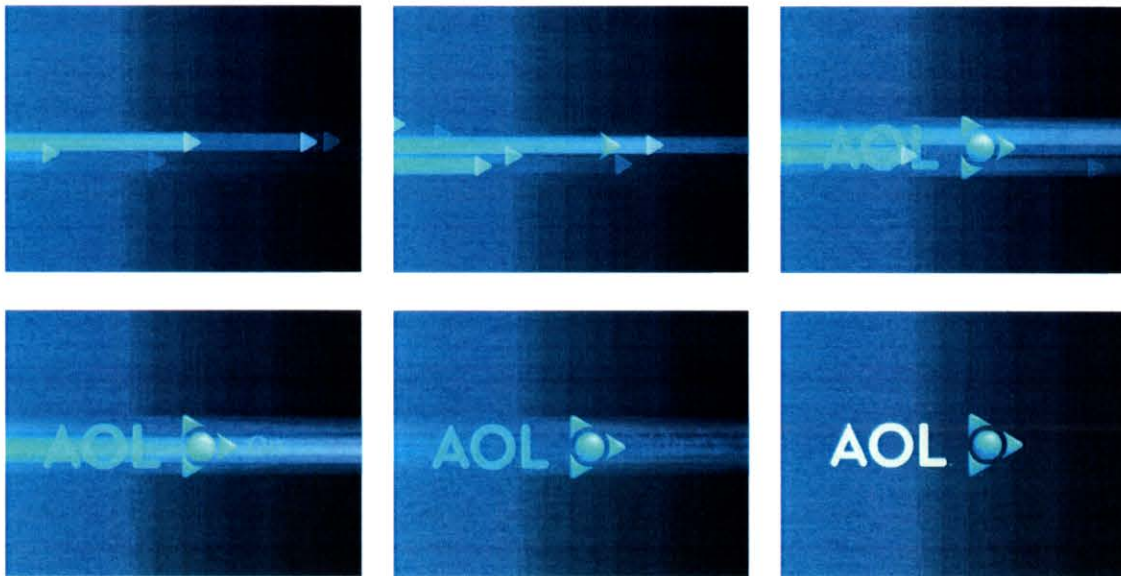
Background Control (cont.)

When the logos are placed on imagery, be sure that the background is uniform in tone and does not interfere or compete with the logo any way. There must be **sufficient contrast** between the logo and the background to ensure legibility.

Here are some examples providing correct and incorrect usage of the logos on light and dark colored backgrounds.

The Logos

Logo Animation

*Keep in mind:**Do not let the logo bounce or give it exaggerated movements.**Do not place images inside the logo.**Do not place other logos in close proximity to the AOL logo.**Do not let the animation distort the logo.**Do not animate isolated pieces of the Forward Arrow.*

While logo animations are one of the most dynamic expressions of our brand, it is important to make sure these elements **maintain the integrity** of the logo and the brand as a whole. Always use animation purposefully, where the style of movement is simple and aids, not impedes, logo recognition.

The logo's overall color tone should remain close to AOL Blue. However, you may use subtle lighting effects to highlight the smooth, reflective surface of the logo.

The Forward Arrow can be used as a pointer device to lists or attributes, but the relationship between the Forward Arrow and the logotype must remain fixed. The logotype can never appear separately from the Forward Arrow, even if only for a short time during the animation sequence. If the logo is made to spin or rotate, all elements should move together as a unit.

Ultimately, the final frame must show the logotype and the Forward Arrow in a static position.

You will find sample files to reference on our Intranet site (see page 80 for contact information and keyword).



Use only approved colors when reproducing the logo



Never skew or distort the logo



Do not outline the logo

The Logos

Incorrect Logo Usage

The AOL logos are original pieces of artwork that must never be reset, altered or repositioned in any way.

Do not scan, electronically reproduce, or recreate the AOL logos. No attempt should be made to reproduce the AOL logos or use any logo other than the approved artwork provided by Brand Strategy.



Do not add elements to the logo



Never use tints or screens of the AOL brand colors in the logo



Do not rotate the logo



Do not place imagery inside any part of the logo



Do not lock up any non-approved text or messaging



Do not rearrange the logo's elements



Do not turn or rotate the Forward Arrow



Do not add gradation or alter the logotype in any way



Do not replace the logotype with a font

The Logos

Incorrect Logo Usage (cont.)



Do not use the logotype alone



Do not use the logo in a headline or text



Do not pull elements from the different logo variations



Do place the logo on a patterned background



Do not change the typeface of the Multi-band lock-up



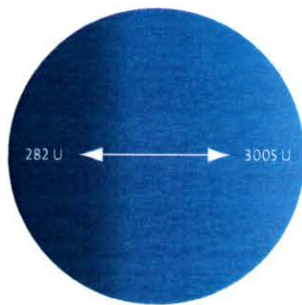
Do not reconfigure the Multi-band lock-up



Do not insert a word between the logotype and the Forward Arrow

Color Palette

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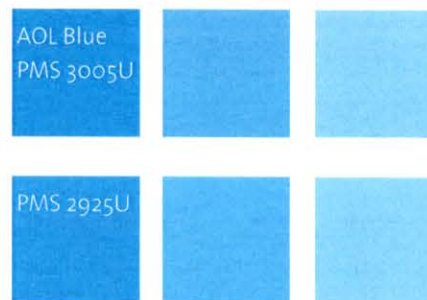
The AOL Blue Gradient is comprised of the two core AOL Blues. The gradient moves horizontally, and can either run dark to light or light to dark.

Placing the logo on the AOL Blue Gradient



Always place the logo on the darker blue (282 U) of the AOL Blue Gradient to ensure sufficient contrast.

Tint Equivalents



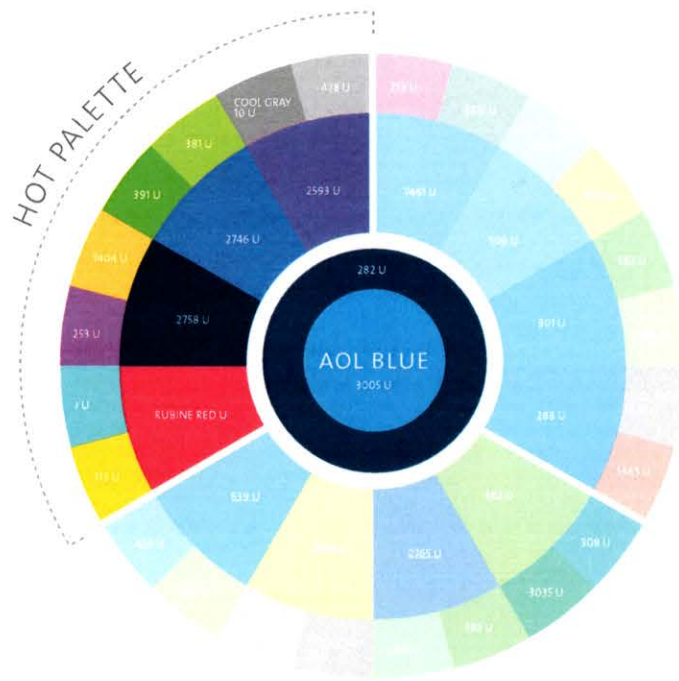
Color Palette

AOL Blue Gradient and Tints

AOL Blue is the shade of blue most associated with AOL. Drawn from our logo, it is our core brand color and has been cited by customers as one of our most recognizable brand assets.

With our new identity, we have introduced a secondary blue to complement our core brand color. This darker blue was added to give more contrast to our brighter core blue.

*TINTS AND CALL OUT COPY
TO COME - JENNY AND
CRAIG*



Color Palette Hot Palette

Our second palette features the brightest secondary and accent colors of our spectrum. This palette will allow applications to have a more promotional, eye-catching style.

Suggested applications: product- and offer-specific communications.

Sample layouts of color usage



Typography

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Thesis

Typography

The Thesis Family

The Sans

The Sans Extra Light
The Sans Semi Light
The Sans Light
The Sans
The Sans Semi Bold
The Sans Bold
The Sans Extra Bold
The Sans Black

The Sans Extra Light
The Sans Semi Light
The Sans Light
The Sans
The Sans Semi Bold
The Sans Bold
The Sans Extra Bold
The Sans Black

The Serif

The Serif Extra Light
The Serif Semi Light
The Serif Light
The Serif
The Serif Semi Bold
The Serif Bold
The Serif Extra Bold
The Serif Black

The Serif Extra Light
The Serif Semi Light
The Serif Light
The Serif
The Serif Semi Bold
The Serif Bold
The Serif Extra Bold
The Serif Black

The Mix

The Mix Light
The Mix Semi Light
The Mix
The Mix Semi Bold
The Mix Bold
The Mix Extra Bold
The Mix Black

The Mix Light Italic
The Mix Semi Light Italic
The Mix Italic
The Mix Semi Bold Italic
The Mix Bold Italic
The Mix Extra Bold Italic
The Mix Black Italic

The use of typography is an important element in maintaining a clear, well-defined and consistent brand.

One distinct type family has been chosen to support the AOL logo and to establish a proprietary look for all AOL communications. Within the Thesis font family there are three distinct styles.

The Sans, The Serif and The Mix are all highly legible and flexible, and have a wide range of type styles interchangeable for headlines, subheads and text.

As the signature font for our brand, Thesis should be used across all our communications, both online and offline, whenever possible. Otherwise, see the following page for acceptable system texts.

The Thesis family of fonts is available for purchase at www.fontshop.com.

Keyword Type Treatment

AOL Keyword: **NFL**



The Sans Semi Light

The Sans Bold

This type treatment is recommended to distinguish keywords from surrounding text and enhance their visibility.

Arial Tahoma

Arial

Arial Regular

Arial Bold

Tahoma

Tahoma Regular

Tahoma Bold

Typography

Type for Electronic Media

For electronic media applications in which Thesis is not available, such as HTML text and PowerPoint®, Tahoma and Arial are recommended system texts. Tahoma works best for stand-alone words or sentences, while Arial should be used for blocks of text.

On the Service, please adhere to the following usage guidelines:

Thesis: Graphic headers and titles

Tahoma: Button text

Arial: Header navigation items, bodies of text and mail content



Thesis

Arial

Tahoma

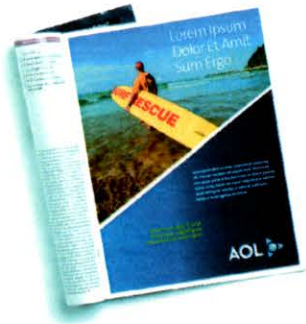
Typography

Typography Spectrum

Thesis Sans Light

Lorem ipsum dolor
sit amet nonummy

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur
adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod
tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat.



Thesis Sans Light lends an elegance to this layout and plays a more supportive role to the imagery.

Thesis Sans Bold Italic

***Lorem ipsum
dolor sit amet.***

***Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur
adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod
tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat.***



The italics and bolding in the headline make this piece feel slightly more promotional in order to be read from a distance.

Thesis Sans Black Caps

**LOREM
IPSUM
DOLOR!**

**Magna aliquam
erat volutpat.**



With all-caps, bold weight, multiple colors, and a large font size, this highly promotional headline practically jumps off the page.

The Thesis family contains a variety of effects that appropriately reflect the mood or look of any application. Options such as Sans and Serif faces, line weights, type styles, size and color offer plenty of room for customization.

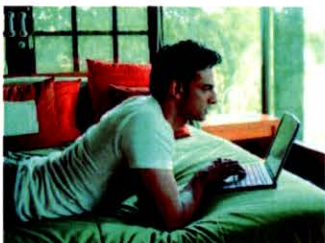
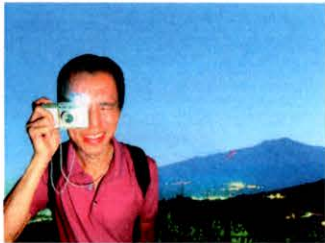
The spectrum on the left shows the flexibility of Thesis in action.



Imagery

- 35 Photography
- 36 Photo Collage
- 38 Screen Shots
- 39 Iconography

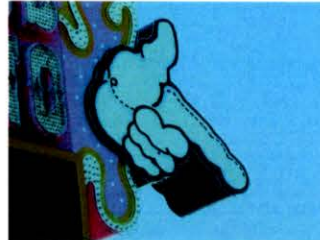
Technical/Product



Lifestyle



Metaphorical/Abstract



Imagery Photography

The use of photography is one of the most immediate and tangible ways a brand connects with consumers.

A style called “Member Photography” has been chosen to convey the human aspects of the AOL community and reflect the brand attributes. While photography is not required in any of our online or offline materials, it should always reflect this style wherever it appears.

The style includes three thematic “buckets”—Technical/Product, Lifestyle, and Metaphorical/Abstract—that will ensure a diversity of subjects and landscapes while we also feature the benefits of our service. With millions of members and customers, AOL can “own” this style of photography in a way competitors can’t. The types of shots, colors and feelings they can evoke and how they’re used all contribute to reflect the brand attributes.

This style captures people in real-life situations and reflects the diversity of our customer base, the breadth of their interests, and the warmth and approachability of AOL. Subjects should look candid, relaxed and friendly—as if they have been caught by family and friends in a moment. Whenever possible, find photos with vibrant, rich colors that complement the colors of the AOL palettes.

The Brand Strategy group is working with various AOL teams to find photos to meet their needs and to bring the style to life across a range of channels and media. We will provide further details and examples in the coming months.



Imagery

Photography: Photo Collage

One way to illustrate the size and diversity of our membership is with a photo collage. To keep this grid of imagery from becoming too uniform, use the following guidelines:

- Include people of different ages and ethnicities and in a variety of situations.
- Incorporate landscape, object, or animal photography.
- Intersperse blocks of color from our color palettes.
- Vary the sizes of the photos and color blocks within the grid structure.

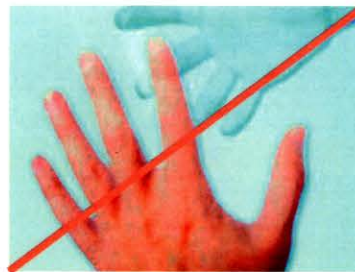
Imagery
Photography: Incorrect Usage



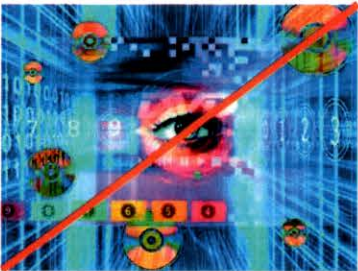
Do not use clichéd photos of the office environment.



Do not use studio photography.



Do not use staged photography.



Do not use computer generated illustrations that are cliché or portray technology as cold.



Do not use unnatural or "Photoshopped" scenarios.



Do not use scenes that feature frustration with technology.

Full Window Screen Shot



A thin white border produces a staging area around the screen shot.

A 50% opacity drop shadow tight to the white border provides separation from the background.

Cropped Screen Shot



Imagery Screen Shots

There are many occasions for marketing materials and member education when we will want to highlight features of the service through screen shots. To ensure clarity, we must treat them in a consistent manner. Please note that this treatment does not apply to screen shots used internally or on the service.

When showing the entire window, add a thin white border to create a staging area. A 50% opacity drop shadow will help separate the page from the background.

If a specific portion of the page is being featured, focus on that content by cropping the window and adding the thin white border. A drop shadow is not needed when cropping a window. Follow the examples provided on this page. Make sure the information being highlighted is legible.

Keep in mind:

Do not show the desktop background behind the window

Do not round the corners of the screen shot

Do not use multiple screen shots when one will do

Imagery Iconography

Our iconography system is currently under review by Brand Strategy and Product Design. Looking forward, these symbols will be updated to be more approachable and straightforward in keeping with our brand attributes. With both monochromatic and full-color versions, the icons will offer flexibility in usage across online and off-line communications. Please return to this section over the coming months to access the new artwork.

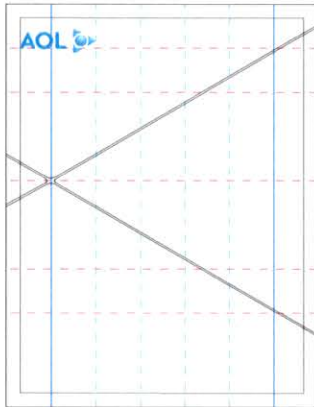
Future icon usage will be limited to navigation functions, much the way computer desktop icons are used. Icons should not be used as a decorative or symbolic device (for example, a mailbox on a print ad to suggest our e-mail capability).

Only use approved icons from our iconography system. Any requests for new icons should go to Product Design, who will partner with Brand Strategy on design and approval.

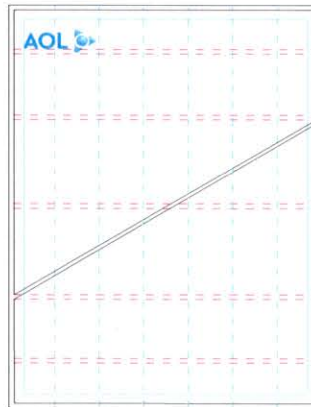
Graphic Elements

- 41 Introduction
- 42 The Intersection
- 46 The Angle
- 50 The Arrow
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- 57 The Pointer

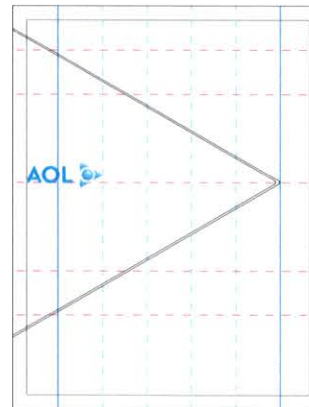
The Intersection



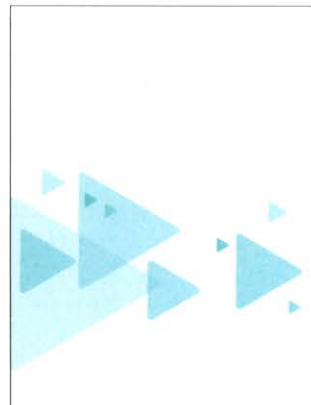
The Angle



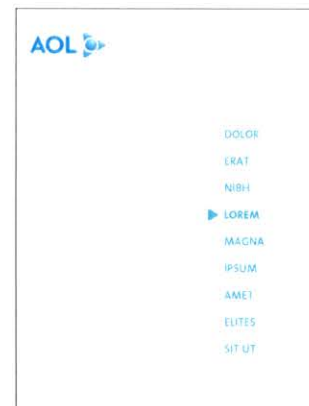
The Arrow



Motion Triangles



The Pointer



Note: To simplify the illustration of our graphic system, we have used the AOL Service Logo across all of our examples. Any of the logos could appear in their place. See page 14 for more information on logo usage.

Graphic Elements Introduction

Taken as a whole, the AOL graphic system is the most complete expression of our brand. While the AOL logo communicates our name and overall personality, the graphic system subtly conveys the many faces of AOL, easily adapting to various messages and moods.

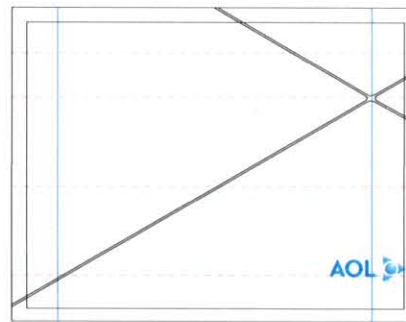
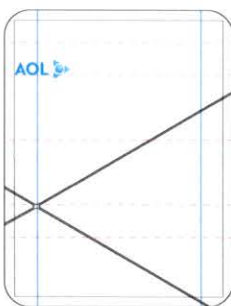
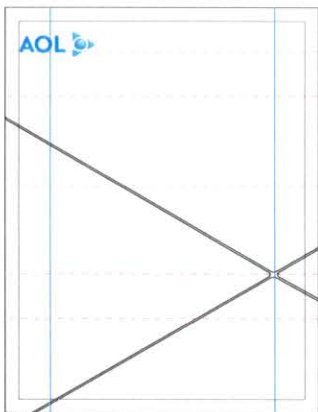
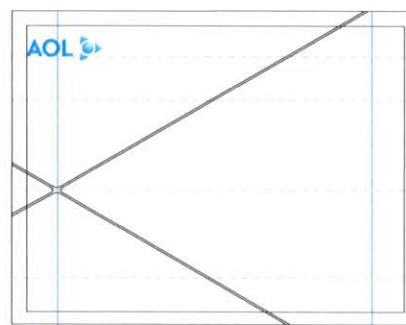
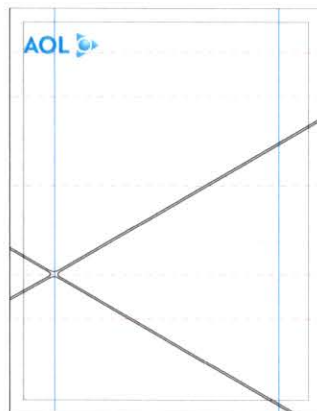
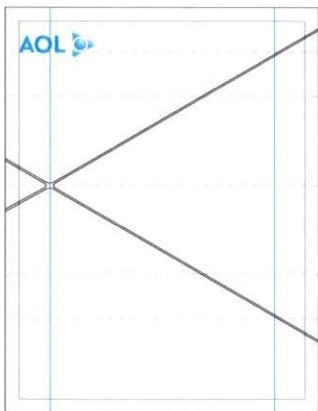
Our graphic system was developed specifically to support the AOL logo, and consumers told us that the logo best communicates our brand attributes when positioned within it. With a variety of components to combine or use separately, it's a highly flexible system that can fit any application, accommodate both text- and image-heavy layouts, and organize information elegantly and intuitively.

As with our logo, use only the artwork provided; don't recreate the elements of our graphic system.

Template files for all Graphic Elements are available through the Brand Strategy group. See page 79 for file naming conventions.

Graphic Elements

The Intersection



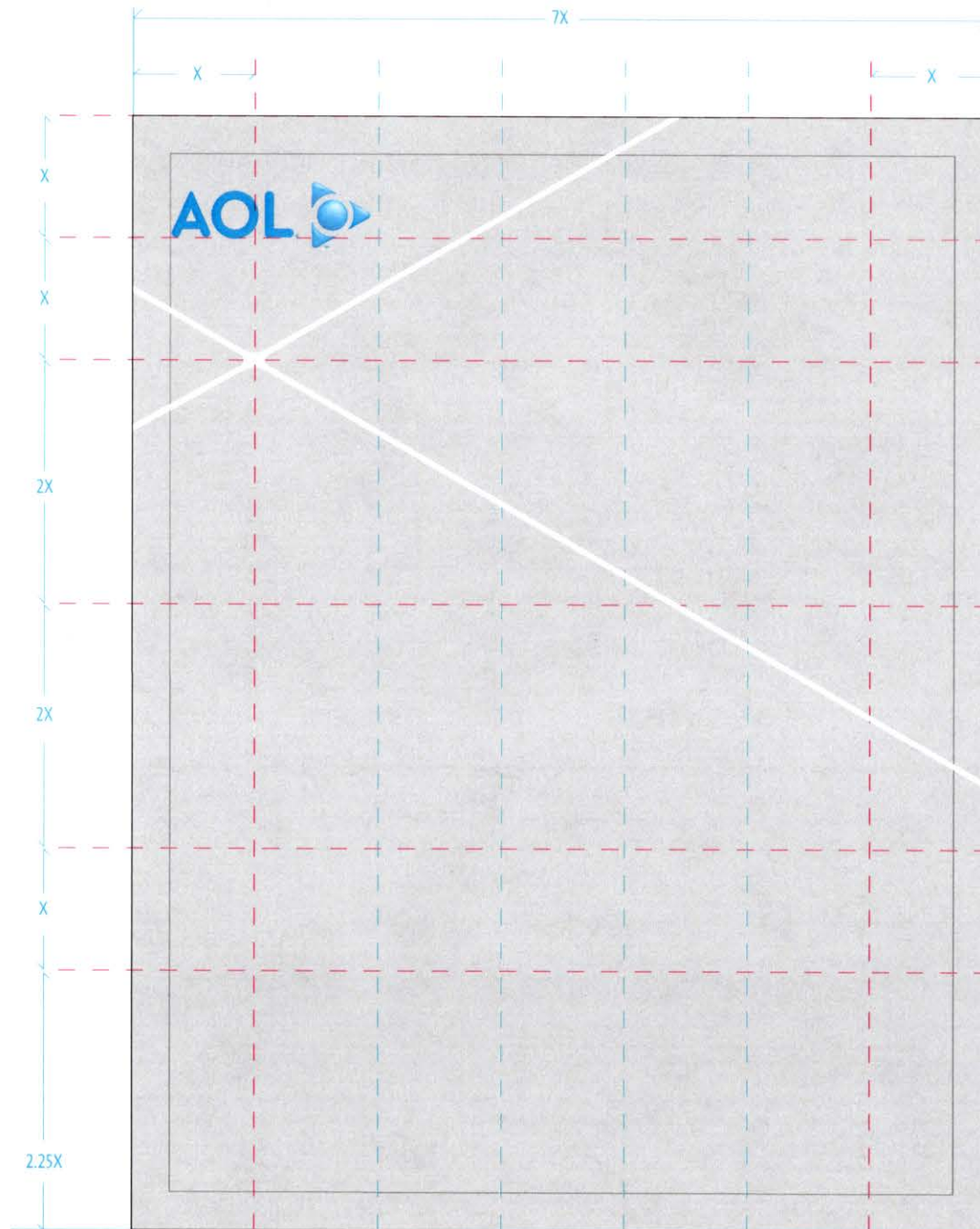
The Intersection suggests the meetings and connections fostered by AOL. Graphically, it compartmentalizes the page, forming distinct spaces that can contain content and create a hierarchy of information.

This device can move vertically or horizontally on the page. The point of intersection itself should always sit on the far left or right gridline.

Please note that when using the Intersection, the logo usually appears in the upper left-hand corner of the layout. If necessary, the logo can move to the bottom left or either of the right-hand corners (such as on a right-facing print ad in a magazine). Avoid placing it near a gutter or letting it “drift” to the middle of the layout.

To create the most contrast on the page, the intersecting lines should always be white and bleed off the page where possible.

See the following page for further explanation of the grid shown in the examples to the left.



Graphic Elements

The Intersection (cont.)

We have created a grid to illustrate the correct placement options for the Intersection and the logo. As shown here, x equals the width of the logotype.

The far left and right keylines (shown in red) are exactly $1x$ distance from the layout's edge. These vertical coordinates are the only places the point of intersection should fall. The same rule applies to the horizontal keylines (also in red).

The width of the intersecting lines of the Intersection should be no thicker than the space between the triangles and the central circle in the logo's Forward Arrow.

You may not be able to replicate the grid shown here on every application. As your application changes in size and shape, please try to recreate this grid as closely as possible.

The logo sits in the preferred position in the upper left-hand corner of the layout

Correct application of color in intersecting lines (i.e., white)

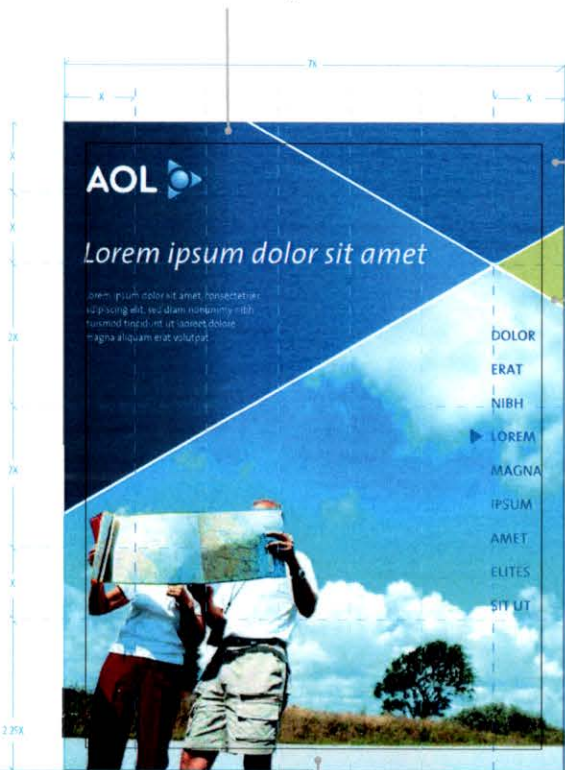
Gradient blue used correctly

Graphic Elements

The Intersection: Correct Usage



Use of transparent color over image aids in legibility of text. Use only colors from the Marketing color palette.

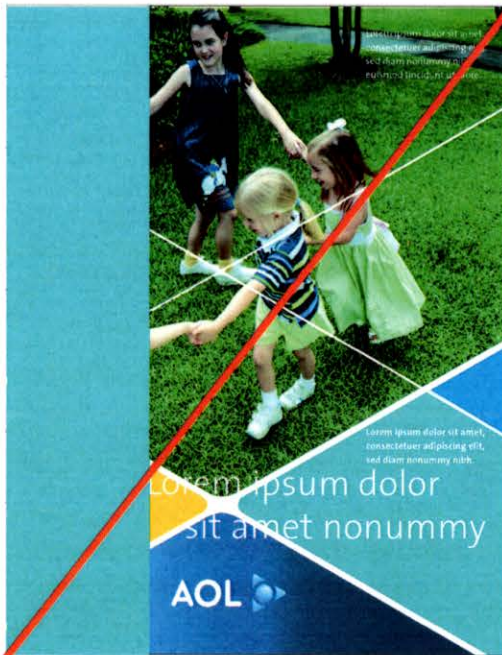


Note use of "Member Photography"

Note use of Classic Color Palette

The Intersection sits correctly on the grid and bleeds off the page

Graphic Elements

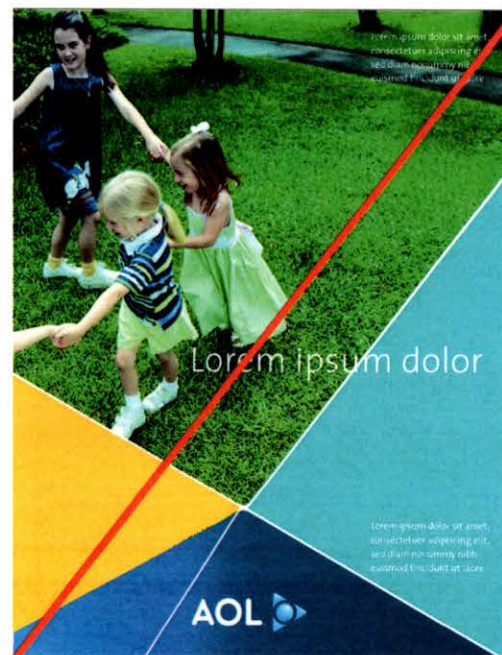
The Intersection:
Incorrect Usage

Do not start the Intersection in the center of the layout.

Do not make the intersecting lines too thick.

Do not use multiple Intersections in one layout.

Do not place text over the Intersection.



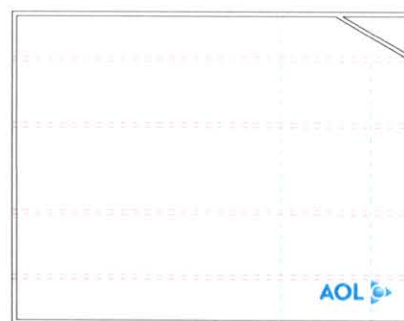
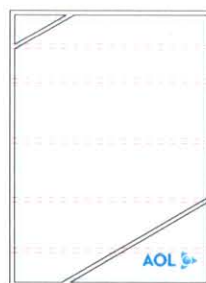
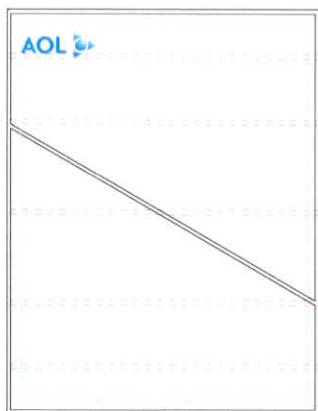
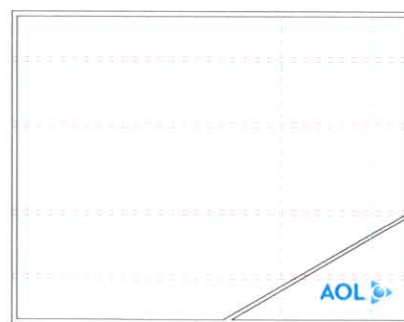
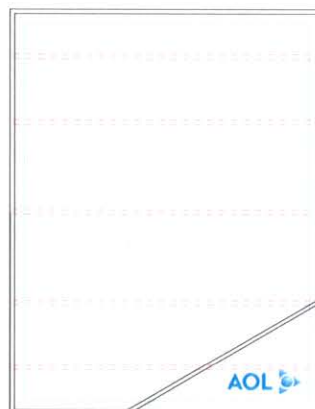
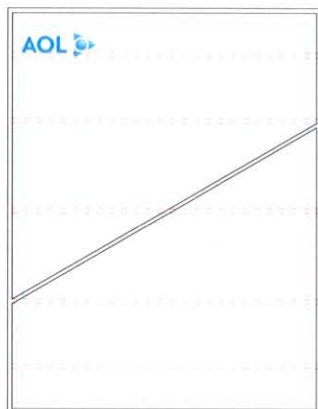
Do not recreate the Intersection. Use only the supplied artwork.

Do not subdivide the natural quadrants created by the Intersection.

Do not let the logo drift to the middle of the layout; it should be anchored to the left-hand or right-hand side of the layout.

Graphic Elements

The Angle



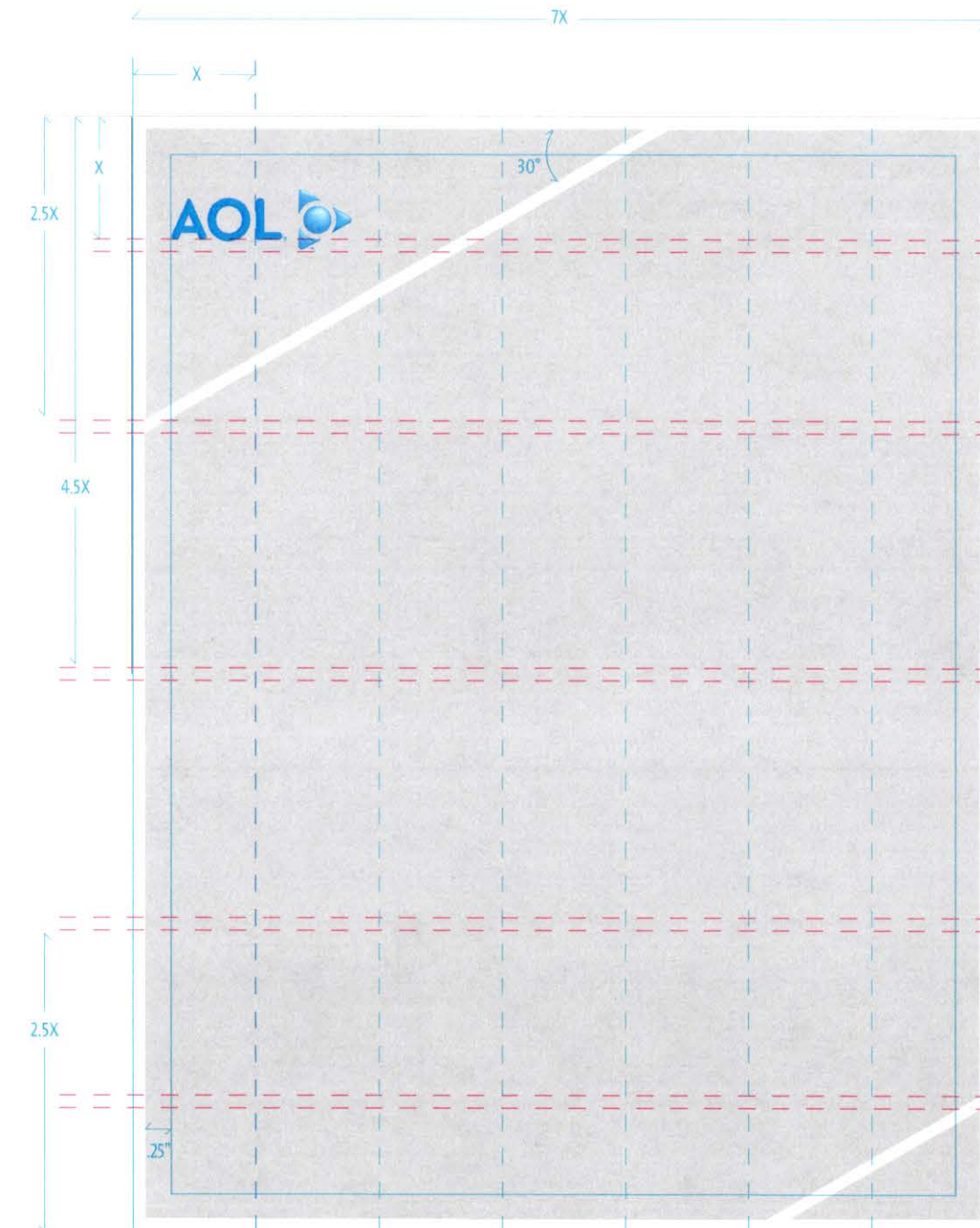
The Angle was created as an alternative to the Intersection. It offers more flexibility on the page and is often used to create a protected area for the logo while simultaneously outlining zones for content. In this case, be mindful of the logo's clear space rules.

The Angle is always used in combination with a 1/8 inch white border around the perimeter of the layout. The Angle itself should be the same width.

When using the Angle, the logo should be placed in one of the corners of the layout.

The Angle can bisect the page at the specified points outlined on the following page.

To create the most contrast on the page, the Angle should always be white.



Graphic Elements

The Angle (cont.)

We have created a grid to illustrate the correct placement options for the Angle and logo. As shown here, x equals the width of the logotype.

The horizontal keylines (shown in red) mark distances of x and $2.5x$ from the top and bottom of the layout. These are the only points at which the Angle may begin and end. The Angle must always touch edge to edge on the page.

Always use an Angle of 30° . This is based on the Angle found in the Forward Arrow of the logo.

If you are using two Angles on one layout, they should be parallel. You should not use more than two Angles on one layout.

Depending on where you place the Angle, it will create distinct spaces of two different sizes. The larger size is open enough to comfortably contain the logo, but the smaller size should be reserved for very small amounts of information, or small graphics.

The width of the Angle line should be the same as the white border surrounding the layout.

You may not be able to replicate the grid shown here on every application. As your application changes size and shape, please try to recreate this grid as closely as possible.

Graphic Elements The Angle: Correct Usage



The Angle appears in white and bisects the page at a correct specified point on the grid

The Angle touches edge to edge on the page and is the same width as the border

Correct use of the Angle at 30°



Note use of white border around the perimeter of the layout

Note use of "Member Photography"

Graphic Elements

The Angle: Incorrect Usage



Do not fill the border or Angle with color. These devices should always remain white.

Do not use multiple Angles going in different directions in one layout. If you are using two Angles in one layout, they should be parallel.



Do not create shapes outside of the Angle.

Do not add a keyline when using the Angle with a white field.

Graphic Elements

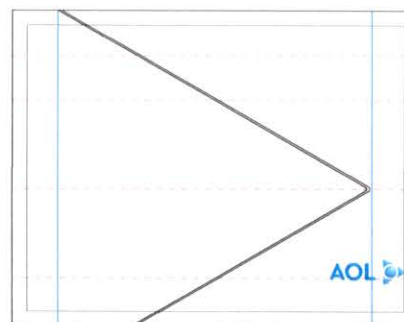
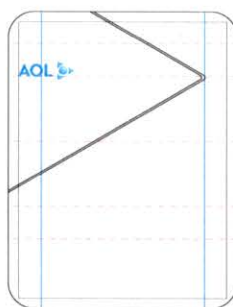
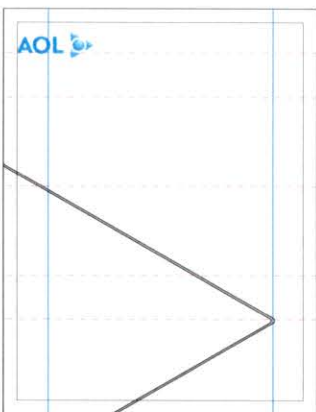
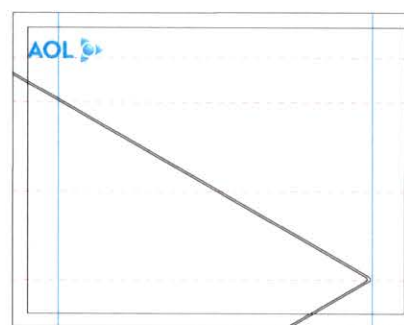
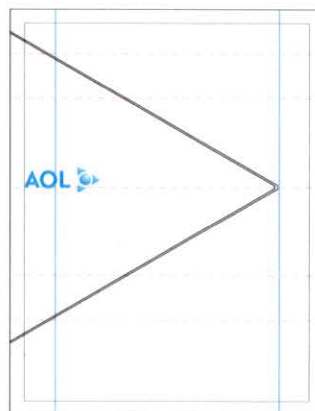
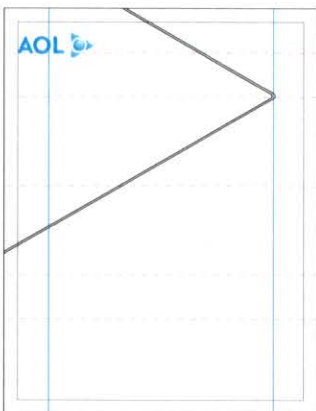
The Arrow

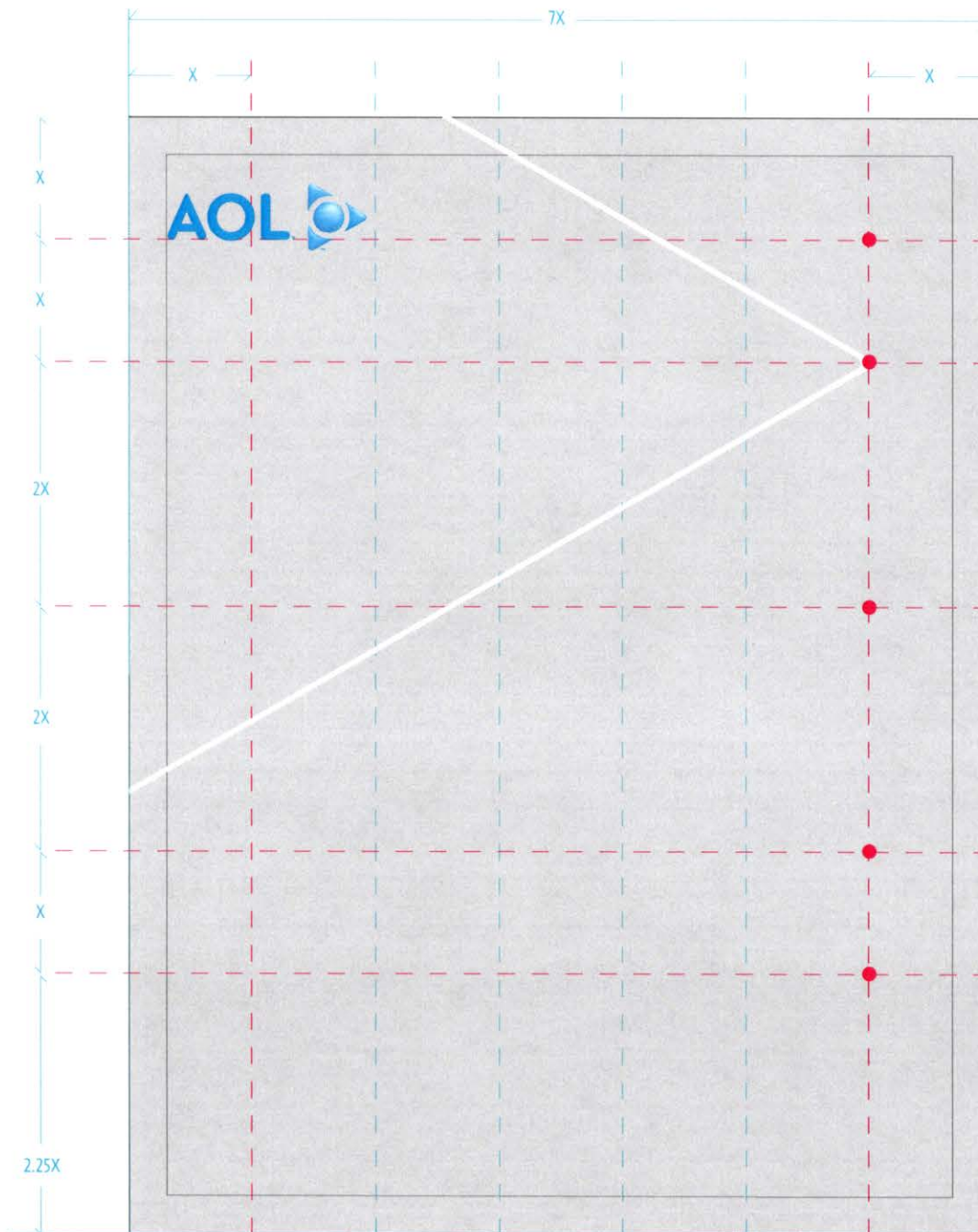
The Arrow provides another alternative to the Intersection. It can move to any position on the page to accommodate content.

The Arrow should always point toward the right-hand side of the layout. This mimics the Forward Arrow in the logo and reinforces our message of “moving forward.”

The Arrow should bleed off the page wherever possible.

When using the Arrow, the logo should stay anchored to the left- or right-hand side of the page, but can move up and down along the edge.





Graphic Elements

The Arrow (cont.)

We have created a grid to illustrate the correct placement options for the Arrow and the logo. As shown here, x equals the width of the logotype.

The far right keyline (shown in red) is exactly $1x$ distance from the layout's edge. This point is the only place the tip of the Arrow should fall. The same rule applies to the horizontal keylines (also in red).

The width of the Arrow line should be no thicker than the space between the triangles and the central circle in the logo's Forward Arrow.

You may not be able to replicate the grid shown here on every application. As your application changes size and shape, please try to recreate this grid as closely as possible.

The Arrow always points toward the right-hand side of the layout



The tip of the Arrow sits exactly $1x$ distance from the layout's right edge



Graphic Elements

The Arrow: Correct Usage

The fill area of the Arrow is white and is no thicker than the space between the triangles and the central circle in the logo's Forward Arrow

Graphic Elements

The Arrow: Incorrect Usage



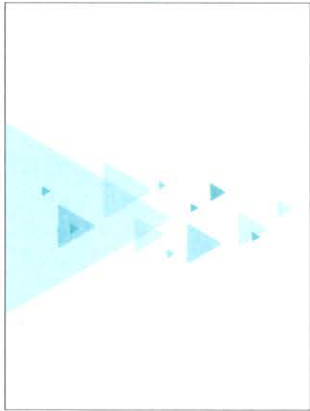
Do not rotate the Arrow device. The Arrow should only point to the right.



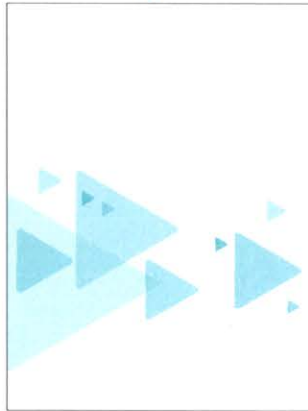
Do not recreate the Arrow shape. Use only the approved artwork.

Do not fill the Arrow line with color. This area should remain white.

Motion Triangles A



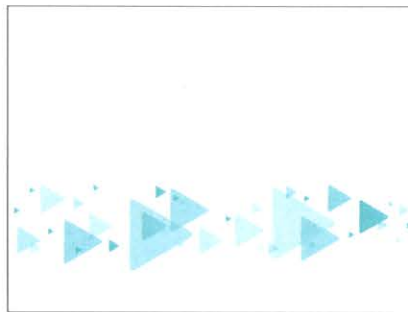
Motion Triangles B



Motion Triangles C



Motion Triangles D



Graphic Elements

Motion Triangles

These patterns of repeating triangles can add visual interest and enliven a more static layout.

The four pieces of art here are the only acceptable configurations. Do not rearrange or change the proportions of the elements in each configuration. You may, however, use cropped sections of the patterns or repeat a pattern in a loop.

Only use one pattern at a time. Do not use two or more patterns in combination.

You may increase or decrease the Motion Triangles configuration in size, but not by more than 50% in either direction. It is better to choose the appropriate size pattern than to dramatically resize.

The Motion Triangles work best as percentages of one color. Do not use a variety of colors within one pattern. The Motion Triangles are transparent, but they cannot be filled with imagery or photographs or used as a holding device for other elements.



Motion Triangles can be used as a primary graphic device

Graphic Elements

Motion Triangles: Correct Usage



When used with the Angle, the Motion Triangles can appear as a subtle background texture.



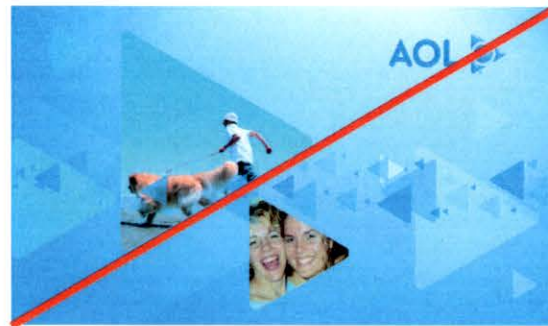
Motion Triangles should take a supporting role when used with the Intersection or Arrow.

Graphic Elements

Motion Triangles:
Incorrect Usage

Do not use the Motion Triangles in a primary role along with the Intersection.

Do not place the Motion Triangles over people's faces or text.



Do not use multiple Motion Triangle patterns in one layout.

Do not rotate the Motion Triangles to run in the opposite direction.

Do not use Motion Triangles as a holding device for imagery.

Graphic Elements

The Pointer

Like many of our graphic elements, the Pointer uses a triangular shape that echoes the logo. It is always used with text, acting much like an asterisk to draw attention to key information. You may use it to set off a single word, a headline or an entire paragraph. The Pointer should always point to the right towards text.

AOL 

DOLOR

ERAT

NIBH

▶ LOREM

MAGNA

IPSUM

AMET

ELITES

SIT UT

AOL 

▶ *Lorem ipsum dolor
sit amet nonummy
lorem site.*

Graphic Elements

The Pointer: Usage

Correct Usage

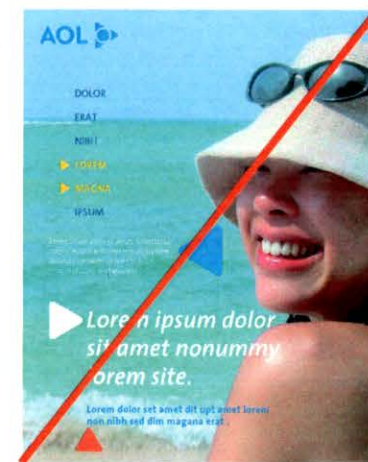


The Pointer highlights one word, drawing attention to key information



The Pointer can be used with a paragraph of text

Incorrect Usage



Do not use multiple Pointers of varying sizes in one layout.

Do not rotate the Pointer.

Running Man

60 Introduction



Running Man Introduction

More than any other graphic element, the Running Man instantly communicates the AOL brand. He brings our brand positioning to life, lending the friendly, human warmth you'd expect from a service that's on your side. With a variety of fun and informal animations, he also contributes a sense of playfulness that the AOL logo mark can't alone.

As our most recognizable brand icon, the Running Man is an integral part of our new identity system. That's why we've undertaken a comprehensive review of his role and usage, which will be unveiled—along with the new and improved Running Man himself—in Q1 2005. These guidelines will standardize his poses and animation style to protect and leverage his status within the identity system.

Application Prototypes

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Application Prototypes Introduction

The best way to understand our guidelines is to see them in action. Over the following pages, you will see our new identity system put to work over dozens of applications across the company. Here you will get a sense of how powerful our brand image will be with this level of continuity.

Please keep in mind: the applications in the following section were developed specifically for these guidelines and are **intended for illustration only**. As real applications are developed, they will be included in these guidelines and shared across the organization.

While many feature the AOL Service Logo, any of the Multi-band Logo Lock-ups or the America Online Service Logo could be used in its place. Please see page 14 for more information on choosing which logo to use.

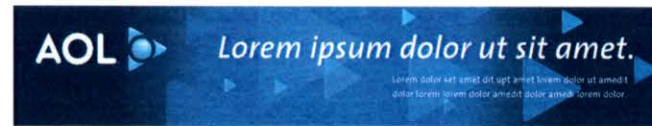
Print



Here the Angle is used to create an equal balance between imagery and text.

Application Prototypes
Advertising

Online Banner



Because of the limited space, the Motion Triangles are used to subtly signal the brand.

Out-of-Home

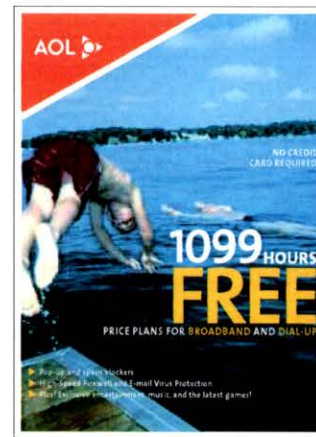
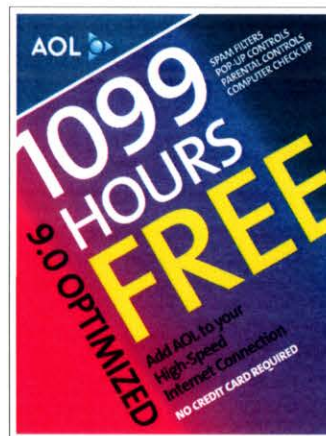


This dynamic imagery takes prominence, while Angles are used to section off areas for text.



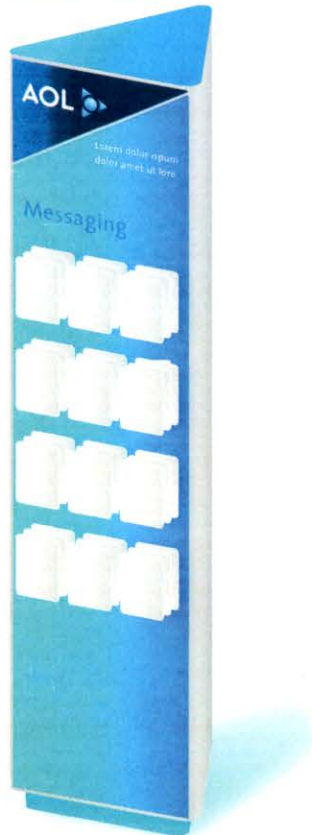
Another example of how a graphic element—here, the Intersection—can compartmentalize text and imagery.

Packaging

Application Prototypes
Direct Marketing

Color, typography and imagery from our Visual System can be used to support a clear, bold message.

Point-of-Purchase



The familiar triangle shape has been expanded into a three-dimensional kiosk.

Application Prototypes
Retail

Bag



Note how the Motion Triangles have been screened back to play a secondary role to the Intersection and imagery.

Use of transparent color over image aids in legibility when placing text over the image.

Application Prototypes Retail Packaging

All information (including graphics and text) on packaging should have a clear sense of visual hierarchy

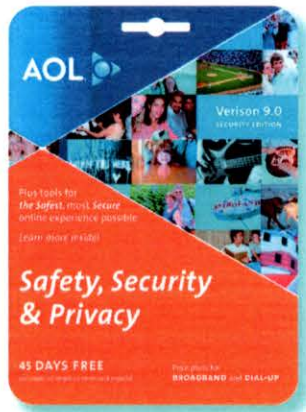
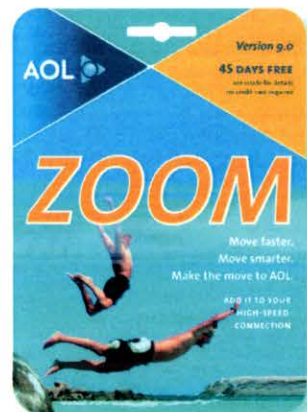
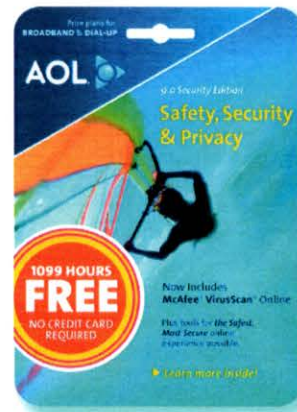


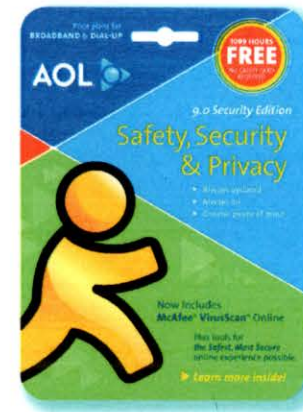
Image dominant



Headline dominant

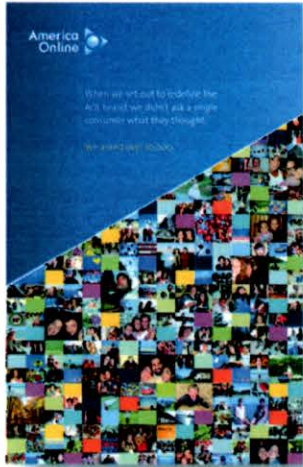


Free offer dominant



Running Man dominant

Brand Brochure



Application Prototypes Internal Communications

Screen Saver



This screensaver uses animated Motion Triangles to suggest perpetual forward motion.

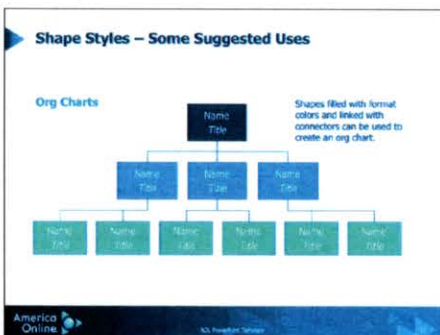
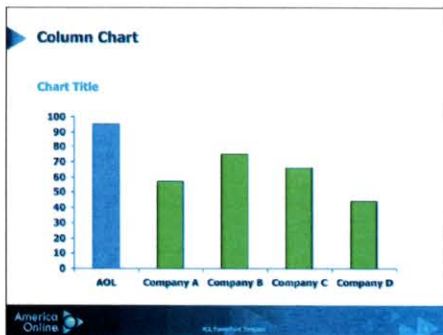
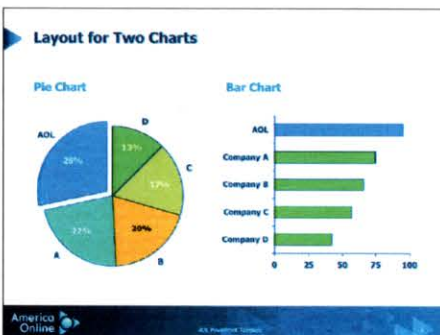
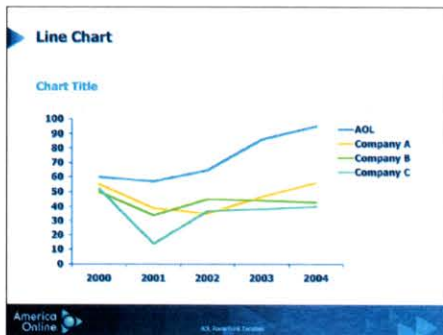
AOL PowerPoint Template
Version 3.0

Subtitle
Date

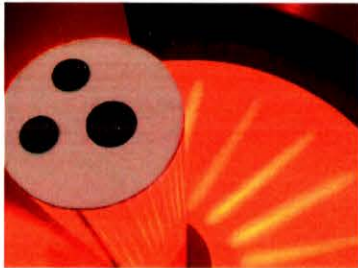
This is the Headline

- **This is the first level text**
 - Second level text
 - Third level text
 - Fourth level text
 - Fifth level text

Application Prototypes
PowerPoint® Template



The AOL LabStore located within CompUSA in New York City.



Application Prototypes Environments

The AOL LabStore in New York is a great example of how a 3-dimensional environment can communicate our brand's attributes. With a unique mix of natural materials like wood and glass and modern materials like chrome and plastic, the space feels like AOL is welcoming you to the leading edge of technology. The bold use of lighting—both natural and artificial—highlights the colors of our color palette across all materials.

The LabStore is not a museum, and it's not your average Internet café. It's a showcase of our most exciting features, and LabStore visitors are invited to interact with the technology in ways that are fun, useful, and surprising, never cold or confusing. Whether checking their e-mail, chatting online, or taking a picture and adding it to the photo wall, visitors experience AOL as a brand that is fun, relevant, and increasingly ubiquitous.

Brand Architecture

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Brand Architecture Introduction

Our brand architecture—that is, the way the different parts of our brand relate to each other from the consumer’s point of view—is an important part of our communications strategy.

By determining how we name and visually represent our offerings, we can help consumers intuitively understand who we are and what we offer, particularly as we add new products and services. A clear brand architecture will also highlight our key offerings and help them to stand out.

We have developed a structure that simplifies and organizes our programming, functionality, and partnerships. This structure will help us decide how each new offering should be identified with names, logos and/or icons. Since these decisions are still under review, look for a set of dedicated brand architecture guidelines to be posted to the Intranet in the coming months (see page 80 for contact information).

Brand Architecture

Naming

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Appendix

Brand Checklist

The more you use our new visual identity system, the more intuitive it will become. As you begin reviewing applications under this system, you can use the following checklist to make sure you've covered all the bases.

- Does the piece support our brand positioning of being a “service that is on my side?”
- Does the piece reflect the personality defined by our attributes?
- Does the tone and manner of the piece reflect our brand voice?
- Does it include the proper logos, using the correct artwork and respecting all rules for clear space, minimum size, and background control?
- Does it include the correct fonts, icons, and colors from our approved color palettes?
- Does the photography—if any—follow the guidelines, and have all usage rights and royalties been negotiated and paid?
- Does it use our graphic elements correctly, in a way that creates a clear hierarchy of information?
- Has the piece been submitted to the Brand Strategy and Legal departments and received their approval?

Appendix

Legal

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Electronic artwork file naming conventions

The file naming conventions are used to describe the variables of the electronic logo artwork.

















logo:	version:	symbol treatment:	color:	color mode:	file format:
America Online or AOL	positive or reverse	gradient or flat	blue, black or white	cmyk, rgb or pms	jpeg, eps, or tif

example

file name: **amon_pos_grad_blue_rgb.jpg**

Appendix

File Naming Conventions: Service Logos

	Logos with gradient		Logos with flat color	
file name:	amon_pos_grad_blue	aol_pos_grad_blue	amon_pos_flat_blue	aol_pos_flat_blue
positive for use on white or light backgrounds				
	amon_rev_grad_blue	aol_rev_grad_blue	amon_rev_flat_blue	aol_rev_flat_blue
reverse for use on dark backgrounds				
	amon_pos_grad_black	aol_pos_grad_black	amon_pos_flat_black	aol_pos_flat_black
positive for use on white or light backgrounds				
	amon_rev_grad_black	aol_rev_grad_black	amon_rev_flat_white	aol_rev_flat_white
reverse for use on dark backgrounds				

Logos are available in RGB and CMYK and have been saved as .jpg, .eps, and .tif file formats. All EPS files are vector art (unrasterized and scalable).

Incompatible color modes and file formats have been omitted (i.e., CMYK JPEGs).

Electronic artwork file naming conventions









The file naming conventions are used to describe the variables of the electronic logo artwork.

logo:	tagline:	version:	symbol treatment:	color:	color mode:	file format:
America Online	Multi-band	positive or reverse	gradient or flat	blue, black or white	cmyp, rgb or pms	jpeg, eps, or tif

example
file name: **amon_mb_pos_grad_blue_rgb.jpg**

Appendix

File Naming Conventions: America Online Multi-band Logo Lock-ups

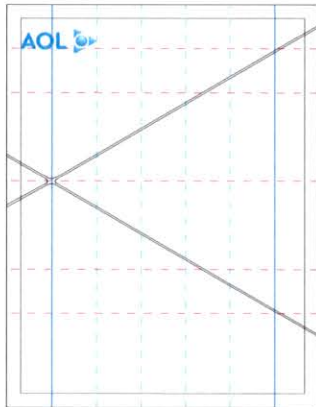
	Logos with gradient	Logos with flat color
file name:	amon_mb_pos_grad_blue	amon_mb_pos_flat_blue
positive for use on white or light backgrounds		
reverse for use on dark backgrounds		
positive for use on white or light backgrounds		
reverse for use on dark backgrounds		

Logos are available in RGB and CMYK and have been saved as .jpg, .eps, and .tif file formats. All EPS files are vector art (unrasterized and scalable).

Incompatible color modes and file formats have been omitted (i.e., CMYK JPEGs).

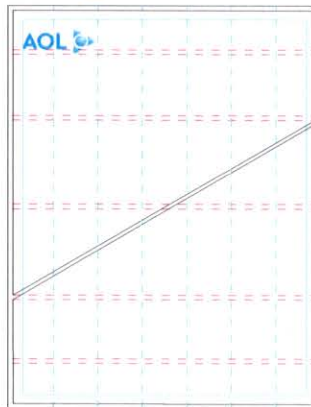
Multi-band Vertical Versions to be added

The Intersection



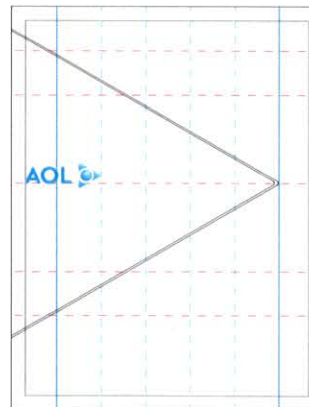
file name: intersection.ai

The Angle



file name: angle.ai

The Arrow



file name: arrow.ai

Motion Triangles



file name: motion_triangles.ai

The Pointer



file name: pointer.ai

Appendix

File Naming Conventions:
Graphic Elements

Graphic elements are available as native Illustrator files in the .ai format. They are vector art (unrasterized and scalable).

Appendix

Contact Information

NEW COPY TO COME FROM CLIENT

ADD INTEGRATED MARKETING CALENDAR

In the early weeks of the new logo rollout, Brand Strategy is strictly managing the distribution of art files to ensure our new brand is coordinated and consistent. To get a logo request form for the new Service logos or Multi-band logo lock-ups, please go to KW: style guide, enter the user name and password (both are "aol") and click through to the new logo area.

Or please contact:

Donna Sellers, Senior Brand Manager

SN: sellersdonna

Phone: 703.265.8011

Although these guidelines are legally approved, all messaging and creative must also go through Legal for approval.