



# PREPRESS TWO CENTS: GUTTER JUMPS: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

**OR: What difference does it make what goes over the fold?**

Time now for a quick review. A gutter jump is any kind of element that continues from one page, across the gutter (or fold) to the opposite page. This can be text, line art, or a photo.

Gutter jumps can add a lot of interest to a publication if they're used properly. The trick is knowing how to maximize the impact and minimize the drawbacks. Ready?

To the right, **Figure A** simulates your original electronic page layout. **Figure B** is an approximation of the finished printed piece.

Previous articles have explained the minor variations that can occur with printing. These variations will often have an impact on how good a gutter jump looks after it's printed.

Creep is another factor that can potentially affect gutter jumps in a negative way. As more sheets of paper are stacked together for a magazine that will saddle stitch, the thickness results in a slight, but cumulative, extension of the innermost pages. This results in progressively smaller trim sizes for these inside pages. To prevent image on the outside edge from getting trimmed off, a creep value is applied to the job during imposition to counteract this page extension. Once creep is applied, small portions of the image along both sides of the gutter will actually be missing in the finished piece.

Keeping all of that in mind, the slight shifting that can happen will be much more obvious if you run an image across the gutter that has very defined edges, components, or patterns. For instance, even a small amount of misalignment in the book is noticeable in the striped border at the top of the page. Since creep had to be factored in, you can also see that the pattern isn't continuous across the fold.

To minimize the visual effect of any misalignment or creep, choose images that have a more random look, such as the squiggly star border at the bottom. Because this border doesn't have a defined top edge and the pattern is much more random, the misalignment is virtually unnoticeable. Even with creep applied, you have to look carefully to see the break in the elements of this border.

What about pictures? Will a photo gutter jump always end in disaster? Absolutely not. It just requires a little pre-planning.

Take a look at the top photo of the family on the bed. The fold goes right through the little girl's face. With faces, especially, the tiniest bit of shifting is going to create a very undesirable effect. If the first thing people notice is how strange a person looks because of distortions in the way the image was produced, your photo probably isn't having the impact you wanted. So if you must run a photo over the fold, position it so that the missing or misaligned portions of the image won't cause a distortion that's obvious or unpleasant.

The bottom picture of the fishing boat on the lake is just about ideal for a gutter jump. Nothing critical has been lost due to creep. In addition, the flow of the photo hasn't been significantly disrupted because of the minor misalignment. Because there's



nothing to grab someone's attention in a negative way, this photo will have the intended effect in the layout.

How about text? Again, as long as you plan ahead, a gutter jump made of text can be effective. If you must run a line of text across the gutter, such as a headline, here are a few things to keep in mind. Make the text as large as possible. Position the line of copy so that the gutter falls between words. Remember that some of that space may be missing if creep is necessary, and format the line accordingly. For example, in Figure B, the larger headline in the middle of the page looks nicer than the top headline since the fold falls between words. However, it would have looked even better with an extra space band or two to give more separation between the words that are straddling the fold line. As you can see from the odd look of the finished top headline, you should always avoid positioning text so that the fold goes through the middle of a letter.

There are more informational articles as well as instructional PDFs that can be downloaded from the "resources" page of our website at [www.crescentprinting.com](http://www.crescentprinting.com).

If you have questions about gutter jumps or need help with a specific project, please contact us!