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Formatting Your Ezine and Email Messages with TextPad

By Pamela Heywood

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One of the questions I am most often asked is how to format ezines. I always use TextPad for these, to format articles and a multitude of other email offerings. This software *fixes* hard line breaks so that everything comes out looking neat. It's a tool I would be lost without.

(You can get a free download of the evaluation version here: <http://www.textpad.com/> This is fully working.)

I found it a little confusing to configure at first and had to ask for instructions, so here they are for you in case you haven't found the *secret* yet ...

1. From the top menubar pick Configure, then Preferences
2. A box will have popped up. In there, choose Document Classes (Click the little + to the left of that category to expand it.)
3. Next click on the word "Text" within the list of choices in that section.
4. The right hand part of the box should now have changed. You should see a place at the bottom right there where it says "Word break at column number"
5. Click to put a tick in the box to the left of that statement.

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6. Type 60, 65 or however many characters per line you wish in the little box to the right of the statement. 65 is probably "industry standard". I like 60.

7. Click OK

You should now be set up correctly.

In use, there are a couple of other things you need to be aware of:

1. To make the formatting work in each individual document,

you need to depress (to the IN position) the little button that is along the second to top row of the menubars. It looks like a "squiggle" or an S backwards.

If, for instance, you have pasted in some text that was previously formatted at more than your set number of characters, it will then instantly show up the "funny" breaks, which you can manually correct, or it will automatically format the new text you type.

2. Also, and this may seem obvious, but you **MUST** save the document in TextPad first to **fix** in the breaks, before you copy and paste the text to either your email program or your online message posting box for your ezine distribution.

Saving adds necessary, but invisible to you, code for the hard line breaks. If you do not save your work first, it will look right to you in TextPad, but will not be right when it is sent by email.

Happy Formatting!

Ezine Assistant is a program you can use as an alternative, if you really cant get along with TextPad. That also has facilities for setting the line breaks. You can grab a copy from: http://ucats.virtualave.net/eza2_0.exe

There is also an online formatting facility:
FormatIt: <http://www.jbmckee.com/formatit/index.html>

For a great online tutorial on formatting, which also has screenshots on how to use TextPad:
<http://www.marketing-seek.com/hop/format.shtml>

Pamela Heywood publishes TuCats Mewsletter (online business)mailto:tucats@sendfree.com and Ezine Advertising ClassifiedsZine mailto:eacz@sendfree.com (free ads). She is one of the successful publishers featured in "50 E-zine Publishers Interviewed" <http://www.tucats-design.com/interviews>

Email . . . Lookin' Good!

By Todd N. Thompson

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An often overlooked aspect of online marketing is the importance of how your sales message is delivered. To say this in a more direct way would be to say, "does your email message arrive to the reader in a format that is easy to read, easy to understand, and does it let the reader know you are serious about your business?"

Formatting your email for success is critical. Here is the golden rule to follow. Never format your emails to be greater than 60 characters per line. If you go greater than 60 characters, some of your readers will have trouble reading your email due to how their email software renders the message.

Let me illustrate my point with two sample emails.

Email Message # 1 Hello Jim,
Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah
blah blah blah
blah blah, blah blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah
blah, blah blah blah
.... Thanks, John Doe

(Line width in this example is greater than 60 characters)

Email Message # 2 Hello Jim,

Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah
blah blah blah, blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah blah. Blah blah blah blah blah blah
blah, blah blah blah.

Thanks,

John Doe

(Line width in this example is set at 60 characters to guarantee a nice presentation in your customer's email programs.)

I know you will agree that example # 2 is a much better looking email message than message #1. In fact, I bet you have deleted email that looked like #1, because of the way it looked. Right?

Don't let your email messages suffer this tragic fate because you did not take the time to make them look Good.

Steps to Writing Good Looking Emails

Limit Character width to 60. Use a hard return (that means hit the 'enter' key when you get to 60 characters, or before 60 if the next word is long). I create my messages using Textpad. TextPad ® is a powerful, general purpose editor for plain text files. Easy to use, with all the features a power user requires. (Go to: TextPad.Com and download the trial copy.)

Avoid using ALL CAPITAL letters. This is viewed as 'screaming' in the cyber world.

If writing your messages in HTML, use font color 'black' for the text of your messages and use color fonts to 'accent' specific words.

Always use blank lines between paragraphs and between your signature file and the cordial exit (Thanks, Sincerely.. etc).

A good looking email is a short message with impact . . . not a 'book'!

Todd N. Thompson is an Internet marketing consultant, speaker and marketing expert. You can view his latest project, the "Royal Responder", the best follow-up autoresponder service available on the internet today, at <http://www.royal-responder.com/good>



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