BYZANTIUM: KEEPER OF THE STORY

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Abstract

This is a report documenting the process of art directing *Byzantium*, an annual literary journal from Cal Poly’s English department. This procedure includes the research, ideation, design, and implementation of the book from concept all the way to the final printing and distribution of the book.
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Chapter I — Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The English department needs art direction for their annual publication, Byzantium.

Statement of Objective

I want to make a beautiful book that amazes people. This publication is meant to be put in my portfolio and to help me decide if book design could ever be in my future.

History

The history of the Byzantium spans the last nineteen years. Every year judges select a collection of short stories and poems from Cal Poly’s student body to be placed into this literary annual. This provides an opportunity to student writers to be both judged and be placed into a book of their own. The literary annual also has been giving graphic design students the opportunity to design the annual itself.

The audience of the Byzantium has changed over the years. Originally the Byzantium had a small output and was sold to a general public willing to pay. They were expensive and not well publicized. They ended up sitting on the shelves of the Cal Poly bookstore for months. Usually the English Department had problems selling all the books plus the annual was known only to an elite minority of buyers. This past year however, the editors wanted to create a broader audience to read students’ work, hence, the Byzantium had an increased output of books and they were given away for free. Before, only about 200-300 annuals were printed a year and ranged in price from five to twenty dollars. This year 1500 books were printed.

Not only has the audience of the book become broader, but also the design of the
books become more focused. In the beginning, graphic design students were given access to a large budget to create the book. This allowed them to add die-cuts, embosses, foil stamping, vellums, and a variety of other printing embellishments to the book. Every year was a competition to out-do the past designers. The more elaborate the design, the better it was. Really nothing was the same from year to year other than the name of the annual and what would be in it: short stories and poetry. Whether it was the binding, cutting, or dimensions, if the designers could afford the change to the publication, they would do it.

Today, the budget of Byzantium has been decreased severely. This year’s editors could only afford the most default of print choices, which included a 6” x 9” page format, black and white interior, low quality paper, and zero embellishments. This is sad because as the graphic designer, I cannot fully access all the capabilities of today’s printing technology. Instead, we are now given the challenge to design a book of equal value of past Byzantiums with only design and not technological printing advantages.

Limitations

Budget

The main limitation to the design of Byzantium is money. This year’s budget is $3500-4500. This provided for 1500 6” x 9” perfect bound book with a four color process cover and black and white pages. With a larger budget, more books could be made, more student writing could be printed, effects like foil stamping and die-cuts could be made, and dimensions could be enlarged.

Time
The second limitation to the annual is time. Three months for a book this size is plenty of time to design it however, it requires time management. As a student, the designer must juggle all their other classes, a senior project paper, the pre-press preparation for the printing of Byzantium, and, of course, a life.

Editorial
The third limitation to the annual is something that never came up this year. In past years, student and faculty advisors have not always seen eye-to-eye with the student art directors. Previous art directors have seen this annual as a way to show off their talents and create a beautiful piece of design, while the English majors, who are the editors of the annual, treat the work as a way to show off the English Department. Of course the editors are right because a book, in all actuality, is meant to be about the writing itself. This does not mean that the cover, nor inside layout, cannot be beautiful, but it should not over-power the writing inside.

Audience
The fourth limitation, which all designers should look into whether they’re designing a book, logo, or a poster, is the target audience. The target audience for this publication is Cal Poly students, faculty, the campus community, the San Luis Obispo community, and various friends and family.

Theme
The last and probably most important limitation to the book is the design theme. This year’s theme is “Treasure of the Byzantine Empire.” Once the theme was selected, it was the challenge to make sure that all of the design elements, including type, illustrations, and layouts, stayed in the parameters of that theme.
Glossary of Terms

*Book block:* unfinished stage of bookmaking when the pages are folded, gathered and stitched-in but not yet cover bound.

*Die-cut:* A process for cutting with specialized stamp-like tools to create custom holes in a page.

*Folios:* Page numbers and any other information in the headers and footers on individual pages.

*Humanistic:* Hand-made or made without using tools or machines.

*Perfect binding:* A common type of binding for paperback books where they take a stack of folded pages, with the folds on one end, and glue the stack together on the folds.

*Print overruns and overs:* Copies printed in excess or deficiency of the specified quantity. Printing trade terms allow for ±10% to represent a completed order.

*Rivers:* A space made in a body of text that resembles a “white” river that is created by justified text and decreases readability.

*Signatures:* A printed sheet that after being folded, will form a group of pages.

*Chapter II — Review of Research*

**Inspirations**

“Byzantium” Theme
The name of the annual, *Byzantium*, came from the poem by William Butler Yeats named *Sailing to Byzantium*. It is a poem about a man sailing to the great city of Byzantium that was suppose to be an ancient city of gold. It was the greatest city in the world at one time. It eventually was replaced by Constinople, which is now Istanbul. The poem is actually talking about creativity and its immortality. It is quite understandable why the English Department used that poem to name their annual. It is this idea of when winners of the writing contest pass on their stories and poems to the *Byzantium*, the stories will sail away to immortality.

“*Keeper of the Story*” Theme

This idea of a story lasting forever sparked this year’s theme, “The Keeper of the Story.” On top of *Sailing to Byzantium*, this year’s editor read the poem, *The Story Keeper* by Carmen Tafolla, which talks about how a story needs to be safe-guarded forever for its great value. The imagery of a story or poem being a treasure and needing to be protected then inspired my idea of the book being either a treasure box or a suit of armor protecting the work in between the covers.

This theme inspired ideas like a pirate’s treasure (*figure i*). The book could have similar elements to a treasure like wood boards, gold locks, and brackets. Luckily, those ideas were quickly pushed aside for their cliche attributes. A decision was made that if the treasure theme would be kept, it should arc back to the Yeats’ poem. So it was decided that a Byzantine art style would be used so that the book would look right at home in a museum of Byzantine treasures.

*Byzantine Empire*

My main research came from books and Google searches of the Byzantine empire
and its art. The empire rose with the fall of Rome and ended with the rise of Charlemagne. It lasted between 330 and 1453 BCE and spread westward to present day Spain and Portugal and all the way east to present day Iraq.

Most of the art is transitional, reflecting its Roman roots (figure 2) and its Northern European branches (figure 3) while also having an influence from Christianity (figure 4), which all worked together to create a beautiful blend between them (figure 5). Its artwork also has a slight Turkish presence with the empire being the birthplace of the East Orthodox Church (figure 6). The art uses a lot of gold and jewels and is full of colorful mosaics as seen in the this very ornate cross (figure 7). The majority of the work is very symmetrical and geometric (figure 8).

Byzantine artwork subject matter mainly consists of Christian symbols (figure 9) but is full of patterns (figure 10) and portraits of royal figures (figure 11). The portraits and figures are more abstract then the earlier Roman empire and the patterns are very ornate and massive with flowery swirls and fields of circles and squares. Typography is very simple with mainly straight, uniform lines reflecting Roman numerals (figure 12). Whether it is imagery, pattern, or typography, nothing has a sharp edge to it. Everything is very round and humanistic (figure 13).

Chapter III — Procedures and Results

Politics

Before any design got done, the first thing that had to happen after research was create strong relationships with those I was going to have to work with. This mainly meant to get to know my advisor, my editors, and my editor's advisor. My interaction with these individuals was varied but each very important in their own
way and the sooner I got to know them, the better.

Co-editors
This year Emily Anderson and Erin Santos were the co-editors of Byzantium. They understood that the Byzantium would be a lot of responsibility and a lot of work. The two of them started at the end of Fall quarter working on a calendar of events and organizing steps of completion. For their assistance was a how-to handbook, created by the last year's editors. Any future student art director can benefit greatly from looking at this document because it contains information for the estimating and specifications for printing, as well.

The editors and I wanted to start working immediately in November when we got the project, and we did. I suggest that future art directors should join their editors in this effort and encourage them to have this habit if they do not already have it. The project will work much smoother if this happens. Not only will time not be such a problem, but the group as a whole will start on the right page.

I also went to my advisors for help when I needed it. Mary LaPorte helped supply past Byzantiums, though the Kennedy Library also supplies them, and gave me a strong background of the art direction process. She also helped critique both the book and the senior project paper. For a detail-oriented description of the process, see Todd Pierce, the English Department advisor. He worked closely with the past editors as a group for the past three years. He was very relaxed and did not put that much effort into the project but his experience with Byzantium was valuable.

Estimating
The two co-editors and the art director split up tasks immediately. The co-editors
were in charge of raising money, setting up accounts, and arranging events. The art director was in charge of designing the book, designing small advertisements like Baja Fresh and Lover Speak ads, and estimating.

Ask for quotes immediately to judge your budget. The English department will want to know an estimate of how close the book will cost in the budget within the first couple of weeks of winter quarter so estimate quickly. I had a list of printers before the first week and had called them with my specifications by the end of the first week to be successful. The best way to estimate is go to printers’ web sites and fill out a form saying exactly what you want. A couple of printers that I got estimates from are:

- McNaughton & Gunn — http://www.bookprinters.com/index1.html
- Ventura Printing — http://www.venturaprint.com/
- Bookstand Publishing — http://www.bookstandpublishing.com/
- Book Masters, Inc. — http://www.bookmasters.com/
- Gorham Printing — http://www.gorhamprinting.com/

McNaughton & Gunn has printed quality Byzantiums for the past two years at a fairly cheap price. Ventura Printing has also printed Byzantium in past years. They have phenomenal customer service and great quality; however, they are very expensive.

Some web sites will let you go through an online form that will instantly generate a price. An example of this kind of web site is Gorham Printing or ADI Books. Other web sites will have you fill out a form that will be emailed to an estimating
representative that will in turn send you a more accurate price. These printers will usually give you a price within two days. If you do not get a price by then, call the printer. McNaughton & Gunn never sent a price until I called them a month later only to find out that they lost the request. Brenda Ceo, of McNaughton & Gunn, was very apologetic and gave the school a 5% discount because of the miscommunication. Printers want your business and with proper communication will help you out in any way possible.

Know what your book specification are before hand. They should include the book dimensions, page count, binding process, colors, paper stock, and extras. Ask for prices of different sized books and page counts because at this point that fact can be alterable depending on your budget. Also ask for cover stock and text paper samples to be more confident in what the book will feel like. If you are having any problems, refer back to past Byzantiums or your printers. You can also see your advisors, teachers, or paper representatives.

When you are looking for price quotes, you will see that your budget is very low for how much the printers are asking for. Most of the printers will have their defaults and sticking to them will be the cheapest. Their printers are very efficient with the default settings and make things very cheap. More elaborate designs with random dimensions or expensive paper can increase your total very quickly.

Your co-editors should be busy trying to find more funds but what you may have to do is start searching for funds yourself. Past art directors have gotten in trouble for this act, but it is not a problem any longer. Making auction events, writing letters to past editors for donations, asking different departments, and asking family
and friends to donate are among a few options you can take to raise money for the annual. Just remember that auctions do need a gambling license.

**Research**

*Goal*

When I began my research, I sat a goal for myself and my design. This way when I was working on my design, I could keep these thoughts in my head. This year’s goal was to get four responses out of the audience:

1) The first goal is to have the audience see an importance in the book. When people, especially students, see something important, they feel obligated to interact with it. Its like if someone was in the company of the president; they would be inclined to meet him based just on his position. Come across an important artifact and they will feel that they need to touch it. In the same way we want this year’s *Byzantium* to seem like it needs to be read.

2) The second goal is to have people see this book that they are experiencing as part of a bigger collection. They would appreciate knowing that this book is part of a history that dates back nineteen years. They might even be inspired to check out past *Byzantiums* at the library.

3) The third goal of the design is to make people think that the book would be fun to read. You are not supposed to judge a book by its cover but we want viewers to do just that: judge the cover and from that be excited to read the inside.

4) The last goal is to have people not be put off by yet another book. So many students are forced to read hundreds of pages for their classes. Why should they want to read two hundred more? This book should seem welcoming and relaxing. The feeling the audience should get from reading *Byzantium* is that it will
be a nice read on Dexter lawn while procrastinating Physics. These goals may be impossible but they were set before the project even began. The allure of the book’s design hopefully heartens the reader and then the stories inside would melt them.

Audience

After setting up the goals for the book, research on the audience would inform us as to figure out how to reach them. The audience was split up into three groups with the first one broken up into two sub-groups. The first group is Cal Poly students who walk around campus from class to class or hang out to hang out, looking for new things of interest. These students are two groups: English majors and non-English majors.

English majors: These people are getting handed the book for free so a friendly, welcoming book to lure them in is not necessary. They will want the text to be the primary focus because that is what they care about: the story and not the cover. These students and the book are part of a larger history that they are connected to and therefore care about the book’s importance.

Non-English majors: These students will be walking around minding their own business when they discover the book on a random table. The book needs to seem inviting draw them in. It needs to look “free” (which it is), but at the same time, valuable. These students already have books weighing down their backpacks so why should they pick up another? Byzantium needs to seem like an entertaining read rather then another assignment.

The next group is the San Luis Obispo community. They will be either given the
book or they will also randomly come across it at a coffee shop or someplace. This book represents Cal Poly’s contribution, where the community can say, “Hey, so this is the cool stuff they are doing over there.” The local community can associate Cal Poly’s goodwill towards them as a very positive gesture.

Finally the third group is family and friends of the editors who made the book. Of course, they will love anything the editors make!

**Themes**

The final step of research, and the most fun, is researching the theme that was come up with earlier. First research on the web was done, learning about the Byzantine empire as a whole and its books and treasures that have been found from that time period (figures 14 and 15). This was followed by searching through art history books and others from the library. My greatest source of inspiration was from the Royal Academy of the Arts, which was having an extensive art exhibition, Byzantium, 330-1453, of the Byzantine empire in London at the same time as my developing of Byzantium. These sources included mosaics (figure 16), jewelry (figure 17), paintings (figure 18), boxes (figure 19), and churches (figure 20) from the Empire. I also researched Korans that have similar patterns used during the Byzantine Empire (figures 21 and 22), and I took special notice of the typography (figure 23), armor (figure 24), patterns (figure 25), and non-religious symbolism (figure 26).

**Ideation**

*Typography*

Of course the first thing I had to do is come up with a typeface for the body of the book. Looking at my type samples (figures 28-33), you can see that I selected
only serif typefaces because they tend to be easier to read in print. They also have a more ancient, classical, Byzantine feel to them. I narrowed down my selection to six typefaces by excluding Garamond Pro (figure 28), Minion Pro (figure 30), and Hoefler Text (figure 29) because they were too mechanical. The descenders of the y’s and the dots of the i’s were circular and the letter forms seemed too perfect. I originally chose Kinesis (figure 31) and Origami (figure 33) for display text and when put into practice found they worked well (both were too hard to read as a body text). That meant that Arno Pro (figure 32) was left to be the body text; however, the numbers were unsatisfactory. Originally, I had wanted to use a typeface with descenders in the numbers. So Arno Pro was dropped and I went back to Hoefler Text. Hoefler Text is very mechanical but it has the right numbers and is probably the easiest to read out of all the typefaces.

Text Format
Right justification was then arranged to help readability of the body text. Justified text was not picked to prevent rivers in the body. 10 pt font size and 16 pt leading was then picked for easiest reading and a nice shade of gray on the page. Margins were selected to give breathing room around the blocks of text and the 1.25” margin on the inside was meant to give room for the gutter, or space for the book seem.

The line rule on top of each page (figure 34) separating the header and the body is meant to give weight to the top of the page. This weight makes the reader want to look up into the direction of heaven. Hopefully the reader will feel uncomfortable leaving their eyes at the bottom of the page. The folios (figure 34) were meant to reinforce this feeling by giving each page a feeling of uplifting energy. All the weight
of the page, including the top folios and page text balances on the small, centered bottom folios like a large circus elephant on a small ball.

The choice of header information was primarily meant for the reader’s navigation. For example, I prefer to read a specific story or poem at different times rather than the whole book at once. So each folio states the page number, author, and whether it is fiction or poetry. If a student had their friend in the book, they will want the easiest clues possible to find their friend’s poem.

The little decoration in the bottom folio (figure 34) is meant to give a little character to each page. Hand drawn symbols (figure 27) were first tried but soon built-in characters seemed to fit better with Hoefler Text. A “|” was tried, followed by a “/,” and then a “§” but I wanted something that did not actually mean anything. What was used was the “＋” from another typeface, Bodoni Ornaments ITC TT. It echoes the cover and the rest of the flowery elements in the book.

Cover

After selecting the typography, the next step was to create a visual identity to the book. So a logo was drawn up based off of the type already researched (figure 80). As the logo; however, a simple typeface selection would not be enough. So a custom typeface was created for the cover. The font, now called Byzantium was based on the typeface, Archeologicaps, and now consists of the 26 letters of the alphabet. A variety of display fonts were first used like Byzantine (figure 36), Dearest (figure 37), BD Renaissance (figure 38), Remember Reiner (figure 40), Kelly (figure 50), Blavicke Capitals (figure 53), and Cheshire Initials (figure 60). These were used in a variety of ways with each other or separately and altered. The problem with these
letters is that most of them are very decorative and ornate. The Byzantine empire was not ornate with its text because the artists thought that the meaning should speak for itself, so the more ornate fonts like “Dearest” were replaced by the new logo (figure 72). While editing the logo, the argument over how sharp the points were going to be occurred, with rounder corners (figure 76) being more historically accurate and sharper edges (figure 79) looking cooler. The argument ended with what looked good over what was more historically correct. The “t” was also transformed to look more like a cross to reflect the Christian culture of the Byzantines. Also the cross can symbolize another type of armor because of the safety that Jesus brings in his death.

The rest of the design of the cover was meant to show the decorative patterns (figure 8) of the empire while also making it strong looking. The art of the Byzantine empire was almost completely religious so it was hard to remove that from the imagery but it was possible. The lack of symmetry (figure 21 and 22) created almost a shield or lock that makes a reader just want to open up the book. After coming up with a lot of patterns, a pattern based on a suit of armor (figure 24) was used as the basis of the cover.

**Implementation**

Sketches were made for just about everything. Ideas were drawn for letters (figures 80-88), layouts (figures 90-121), and patterns (figure 89). Once a sketch seemed strong enough, it would be scanned in and traced with Adobe Illustrator. The actual construction of the book and its typography was created in Adobe InDesign. After having enough research and a strong concept from the start, implementation was quick to punch out.
For the majority of this process I was only using Lorem Ipsum body copy and the titles of past *Byzantium* winners to demonstrate typography. Not until a week and a half before our deadline to give the finished copy to the printer did I have the actual content. The judges had a hard time finding a date to judge the works so I was actually standing around not working on the book for about a month. But when the files were slowly getting emailed to me, I quickly pasted them into my InDesign template and started formatting.

Formatting included changing all the double returns to hard returns, giving words that meant to be bold or italic a character style, and ragging all the text. This is also where I had to remake my table of contents due to number of entries. Last year only had about ten stories and poems while this year had twenty-five. I was expecting to fit all the table of contents into one spread but found it easier to split the fiction and poetry into two.

After formatting the entire book, the editors and I got together and basically read through the entire book, checking for any more typos, grammatical errors, or formatting problems. The easiest way we found to do this was to make multiple mock-ups.

**Mock-ups**

Making a mock-up of your book is not required, but will help your editors visualize what you are doing much better. It also helps you see a better representation of the finished product. Making a mock-up book shows if your inside margin of typography is too small or if you do not have enough white space on each page. When looking at these rough drafts, picture yourself reading the book. Could
you read an entire short story in your book or does the layout make it look like a chore?

I made my mock-ups by printing out all of the pages of the book, except the front and back covers. I also made the pages centered on the page and with crop marks and bleeds. Do not use spreads; they are too complicated for a simple mock-up. Then have your printer (I used Kinko’s because they were the only printer in town I could find that had tape binding) cut only the side of your book that will be your spine. Have your printer then tape bind the book block. Once the block is cut and bound, measure the thickness of the block. This will be the measurement for your spine.

Here is when you make your cover. In one Illustrator file, have your front and back cover next to each other. Make sure the back is on the left side of the page and the front is on the right. Then create a spine between the two covers with the width you found earlier from the book block. Make sure you add bleeds to your cover and then print it out. Your book block can be printed on normal printer paper but be sure to have the cover be printed on thicker card stock.

Once you have printed the cover, do not cut it out! First use a bone folder to put creases into the folds of the cover. This will make it easier to go on the book block. Second you will need to put glue on the book block’s tape binding (I used Yes! glue which can be found at the book store) Third, put glue just on the cover’s spine. When that is all done, put the cover on the book block. Let dry and your book should be totally done except for having extra paper on the sides. Just take all of that to your printer and they will cut the sides off. The crop marks should let
them make two perfect cuts but then they will have to go blind with the third cut. You can draw a line for them but you may see the line after they cut it. More then likely it won’t be a perfect cut but that won’t matter too much because it is still a rough draft. These mock-ups ended up being about $10-40, depending on how the particular printer wanted to charge me. That is the biggest problem with Kinko’s: they really do not have a specific price guide.

**Printing**

By the time the editors and I had received the judged work and had formatted everything we needed to, it had been a couple of months since I had talked to the printer. Dealing with the printer means emailing one another on a daily basis. Be sure to check your email every day until you get a confirmation saying that the books have been shipped. Something always seemed to come up, from problems with sending files to getting invoices in time to the right people.

When working with McNaughton & Gunn, we sent the digital files, which included the inside content and cover in the form of two pdf’s, over a FTP site. They gave me a username, password, and link to the site; however, I could not access it without a certain program, called Cyberduck. It is a free program on the internet that is pretty easy to use. All you have to do is go to http://cyberduck.ch/ and download it. At first I did not know you needed this extra program so I was constantly emailing them about how to send the files. Luckily, one of their technicians were nice enough to help me over the phone.

When dealing with the printer, I only had two problems: figuring out how to use an FTP site and dealing with page count. For most printers, the page count of a
book must be divisible by eight or the spreads will not work properly. I ended up having 162 pages which is not divisible by eight. My two options were to add six blank pages to the end of the book or delete two pages. Blank pages is not that bad to have, but it is a waste of money, paper, and it is quite frankly, a little tacky. So instead of having six blank pages, I just moved some title pages around to give me two blank pages in the middle of the book to delete. The problem with that however is that I didn’t fix my table of contents after moving the pages around. That is why if you look at the final table of contents, all of the page numbers are a couple of pages off of what they should be.

Overall, the printing step of the Byzantium is not that hard, as long as you do your research and know exactly what you want. Also be sure to keep a good line of communication open. When I did this, I was able to finish the printing process on time and under budget. The goal the editors set was $4000 for 1500 books and the final price was $3259.38 for 1616 books. The way to create such an environment with your printer is to talk with them and ask as many questions as needed. No not be afraid of it. $3200 is too much money to just pretend that you are an expert. It seemed that I was constantly talking to Brenda or another representative of McNaughton & Gunn, making sure everything was prepared correctly. Printers will try very hard to not have to reprint anything, especially when it means having to reprint another 1500 copies.

**Distribution**

After the books have been printed, they are shipped to the Cal Poly English department, where they come in nineteen pound boxes of thirty books each. The English department is always thrilled to get the books and first offer the designer a
couple of boxes, which I took one of. They then give the books away for free at the book unveiling at the end of the year. Then they distribute the books among all of the English classes, especially in the creative writing classes. Once all the English majors get their own *Byzantium*, the books are placed on specific tables around campus to be picked up by walker-bys. They are also delivered to book stores and coffee shops around San Luis Obispo to be handed away for free. Of course they will be given out to other individuals throughout the state through gifts but this is a small percentage.

**Chapter IV — Summary and Recommendations**

**Conclusion**

The *Byzantium* is a great opportunity for any designer that wants to go into the world of print. Designers learn to design a book with a specific theme, work with writers, editors, and judges to obtain content, and work with printers to create an end product.

**Experience**

I am a strong believer that an experienced designer should be one of the most well-rounded, most intellectual people in the world because with each project they should dig deep into that project’s history and background and row from them. If a designer must make a package for chicken, they should by the end of the project be very well-educated on chicken. If they make a logo for an architect, they should understand a lot about architecture. In the same way, if you make a book based off the Byzantine empire, you should know a lot of its culture. This may have been my favorite part of the project: to research a culture and then translate its beautiful art into a contemporary literary annual.
Not only did this project teach me about another culture, but it also helped teach me see into the 3rd dimension. It seems like many designers in the Art and Design department do not think about what the final project will look and function like. So this project is a perfect opportunity to figure out how a screen rendering of a page will look like in a physical book. That is why I highly recommend making a mock-up book. Remember that you do not have to pay for the final versions so a couple rough drafts should not kill you financially. The mock-up is also more important if the book is more complicated than a simple perfect bound book.

I also learned a lot about how book printers work. I learned about how they structure their business with different estimating and customer service departments. I found that they are not these arrogant jerks who just want to steal your money. I learned about overruns and how they can be a great deal. I also learned about researching printers and what to look for.

Suggestions

My greatest piece of advice is plan ahead. Work on your theme, typography, dimensions, page count, and format before anything else. Explore books on your theme (I bought a $100 book from London all on Byzantium) and try out different book embellishments. Next year you may have enough money to try embossing, die-cutting, or foil stamping. Also double check everything. The editor before me said that there is no such thing as an end of editing. She accidently wrote “Second Place” on the third place title page and I wrote inaccurate page numbers. I would be confident in saying that every Byzantium has had at least one error in it. I would suggest to the next editor to quadruple check to make sure of no errors.
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