

Why You Should Only Use ONE Space After a Period

“But we were always told to use *two* spaces after a period...”

When that convention began, we were all using typewriters with fixed-width characters. In those ancient times, the realm of variable width fonts (like what became popular with those bygone machines the ‘Word Processors’ and now are ubiquitous on the computer) were the province of the professional Typesetter. Their trade taught them that when using variable-width fonts, only a *single* space should be used after a period... it looks more natural and makes the page more readable that way.

Alas, along came the personal computer, and behold! Typesetters went out of business all over the place, since you could now get a reasonable equivalent with your own personal computer. Secretaries became designers, designers became typesetters, the list goes on. Everyone’s life was changed. And many design conventions got passed down to the the ‘new designers’ (i.e., the every-day person) through software training manuals and books on basic design.

Well, most of the conventions. The single space after the period seems to have gotten lost in the translation. Suffice it to say, in professional circles, the typesetters standard still rules. And since the realm of ‘professional circles’ now encompasses everyone, you need to adapt your practices to the established norm. It’ll seem weird at first (new things always do), but pretty soon you’ll start looking at paragraphs with two spaces after the periods and find yourself saying what designers have said for years – “You could drive a *truck* through all that space!”