

Guidelines for Brailleing Business Cards

Codes for producing literary, technical, and music braille are well established and have been approved by the Braille Authority of North America (BANA). However, the realities of transcribing materials can present particular challenges. To meet these challenges, aspects of the well-established codes listed above may need to be adapted.

When brailleing business cards, the challenge is that there is very little surface area on which to place the braille.

The typical business card stock used in the United States and Canada can accommodate 4 lines of braille with 13 or 14 cells each, depending on the equipment used to produce the cards. One strategy that can help is to use the fold-over style of business card stock that effectively doubles the writing surface of the card. In any event, there is usually far more print on the card than will fit in braille no matter how it is produced.

Selecting What to Braille

Typically, the information on a business card includes:

- name
- job title
- organization/company
- mailing address
- phone
- fax
- cell
- e-mail address
- website

There may be other elements as well, but those will almost certainly have to be omitted.

Very often, fitting the most crucial print information on a business card in braille will require flexibility from the client. Elements on a brailled business card can usually include:

- first line: name
- second line: organization/company
- third line: phone number
- fourth line: e-mail address

The format of these lines should be planned considering the entire card, not just one line at a time.

Since it is not possible to account for every situation one may encounter, here are some principles to follow when brailleing business cards:

- Follow *The Rules of Unified English Braille*.
- Work with a UEB-certified transcriber.
- Have a conversation with the owner of the business card so that they may decide which information is most important to convey.
- When information needs to be pared down to fit within the available space, offer the client suggestions so that they can make an informed decision.

Strategies to Accommodate the Elements on a Brailled Business Card

With only a few very short lines, it is often the transcriber's task to determine what will fit in the available space in order to help the client select which elements from the card will be brailled.

In most cases, the person's name is essential. If the name will not fit on a 13- or 14-cell line, one option is to remove the capital indicators. If it still does not fit, remove the middle initial, if there is one. If it still will not fit, use an initial for the person's first name. Another option, if space is available, is to continue the person's name onto a second braille line beginning in cell 1.

Some indication of the name of the organization or company is usually desirable on a business card. However, this may be omitted, especially if the e-mail or web address contains the name of the company or organization. Other strategies, such as removing capital indicators, may also be used as needed. In the case of an organization or company name, abbreviating words such as "lib" for "library," "amer" for "American," or "nat" for "National" can work well.

Strategies for Brailleing the Phone Number

If the telephone number has no extension, then it can be brailled as follows: #123.456.7890. Omit extra characters such as parentheses. Convert the hyphens to periods to retain the natural sub-units of the phone number. This will maintain the ease of readability, while eliminating the need to repeat numeric indicators. Do not remove the numeric indicator unless absolutely necessary.

Strategies for Brailleing the E-mail Address

An e-mail address should be brailled according to *The Rules of Unified English Braille*. When an e-mail address must be divided over two lines, divide it after punctuation (e.g., the "at" sign, a period, or a hyphen). An e-mail address may also be divided between syllables, or between alphabetic and numeric sub-units. The least desirable option is to divide an e-mail address between the letters of a syllable. Use the line continuation indicator (dot 5) at the end of the line to show that the e-mail address has been divided. As a last resort, omit the line continuation indicator. Begin the second line of the e-mail address in cell 1.

Strategies for Brailleing the Web Address

A web address should be brailled according to *The Rules of Unified English Braille*. When a web address must be divided over two lines, divide it after punctuation (e.g., a colon, a period, or a slash). A web address may also be divided between syllables, or between alphabetic and numeric sub-units. The least desirable option is to divide a web address between the letters of a syllable. Use the line continuation indicator (dot 5) at the end of the line to show that the web address has been divided. As a last resort, omit the line continuation indicator. Begin the second line of the web address in cell 1.

Examples

These guidelines not only apply to business cards but can also apply to brailleing other items with limited space, such as labels for packages, food items, medications, CD's, or file folders.

Below are several print examples followed by their braille transcription. Each example is preceded by a list of the strategies used during transcription to handle the limited space of the business card.

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Use of two lines for name; omission of organization name because it is included in the email address; division of e-mail address; omission of continuation indicator from e-mail address; omission of phone number:

Liesel A. Schimmelfennig
US Army Corps of Engineers
Southwest Division
l.schimmelfennig@usace.army
1-520-670-6277

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Omission of capitals from name; division of surname; omission of company name because it is included in the email address:

Rupert Wolfeschlegelsteinhausen
Galaxy Printing Co.
rupert@galaxyprinting.com

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Division of hyphenated name (client agreed to use a shortened version of their first name due to space limitations); omission of capitals from post-nominal letters/credentials; omission of organization name because it is included in the email address:

Jennifer Lynnzes-Sleightower, OD

Midwest Eye Center
sleightower@midwesteye.com

Midwest Eye Center
sleightower@midwesteye.com

Modification of name (client chose to use a short nickname instead of having the capital indicators removed from their full name);
modification of phone numbers:

Francine (Fran) Rikard
Albuquerque AC
505-312-4224 (cell)
505-312-4225 (fax)

Francine (Fran) Rikard
Albuquerque AC
505-312-4224 (cell)
505-312-4225 (fax)

Omission of title; division and modification of an international phone number:

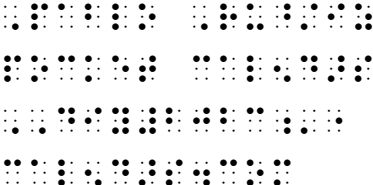
Timaru Brailleworks
Jody Day, Proprietor
cell: +64 3 027 864 536

Timaru Brailleworks
Jody Day, Proprietor
cell: +64 3 027 864 536

Omission of some capitals; division of web address between numeric

and alphabetic units; omission of phone number:

Pablo Ruíz Pocket Calendars
DIY2023calendars.com
1-800-423-9826



Resources

Braille Signage Guidelines: <https://www.brailleauthority.org/braille-signage-guidelines>

Size and Spacing of Braille Characters: <https://www.brailleauthority.org/size-and-spacing-braille-characters>

The Rules of Unified English Braille: <https://iceb.org/ueb.html>