How to plan a zine project

Introduction
A zine is an independently made publication that follows a do-it-yourself philosophy emphasizing expression and connection over exploitation and alienation. Zines have no strict rules or aesthetics, and can feature a variety of content, from radical political writings and personal stories to experimental art.

Sometimes it's hard to get a zine project started. The best way to make a zine is to simply start one! This zine guides you through what to consider when starting a zine by splitting it into eight manageable sections: concept, distribution, aesthetics, content, sources, format, materials, and budget.

Concept
Who are you making the zine for? What communities are important to you?

Style & Tone
How do you want to affect your audience? What jargon or colloquialisms do you want to use or avoid? What feelings do you want to express? Does it make sense to use your sense of humor to express yourself? What politics are important to you? Are you protesting something or someone?

Distribution
How many copies of your zine do you want to distribute? Zine print runs can start as low as 10 copies and go as high as 1000 copies. Pick a number that is sustainable for you. Save documents so you have the option to print more copies as needed.

Accessibility
How do you want to make your zine accessible to other people? Where can people find your zine? Do you want to make an analog zine, digital zine, or both?

Analog options: postal mail, book stores, distros, libraries, community centers, zine fairs, shows, etc.

Digital options: e-mail, PDF file, web zine, video zine, digital zine (formatted for platforms like Substack, Issuu or rich.io)

Aesthetics
While zines have no strict rules or aesthetics, they are still a visual medium that requires intentional thought and planning to make them artful and tasteful by your own standards.

Text
How do you want to generate text? Handwritten or illustrated, screen printed, letterpressed, stenciled, typewritten, cut-and-pasted, text generated from word editing software, or perhaps programmatically or procedurally generated… or maybe there's no text at all, only graphics.

Graphics
Original or found photography, artwork, drawings, illustrations, cartoons, collage, stencils, silhouettes, or other appropriated ephemera...

Layout
Do you want your zine to be well-organized with hierarchy or subversive and chaotic? Color schemes, fonts, lines, and spatial organization can help you achieve your goals.

Content
Zines can be about anything and feature a variety of content. Here's an expansive (not exhaustive) and chronological list of things to consider for zine content:

- Title
- Front and back cover
- Table of contents
- Introduction

Sources
Do you need to do research to make the content for your zine? Are you going to appropriate texts and images following a cut-and-paste method? Or are you going to follow copyright guidelines? Think especially critically about this decision. Appropriating texts and images from a commercial source with significant funding and support isn't the same as appropriating images from an underground or independent source.

Binding
Thread, staples, hole punch — almost anything can be used to bind paper together! How can you think creatively about binding? Alternative-