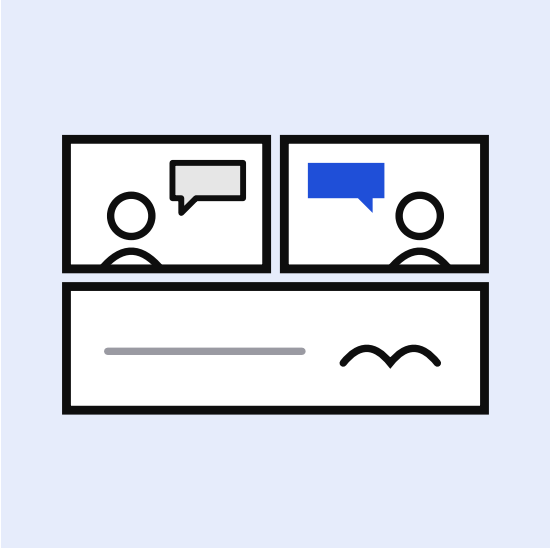
Specialty

Comic contracts

Contracts in which the clauses are told with panels, characters, and speech balloons, so that the comic is the agreement itself and not a summary.



In Spanish

Contratos en cómic

Origin

Robert de Rooy, South Africa (2016); developed in Australia by Camilla Andersen and Adrian Keating (University of Western Australia)

What problem it addresses

A contract written only in text leaves out people who struggle to read or don't master the document's language. Design takes from comics a way to explain obligations with characters and scenes that people remember.

Principles

People, not "the parties."

Each party to the agreement is a recognizable character.

One scene per obligation

Each panel shows what someone has to do and when.

The comic is the contract

It doesn't accompany a separate legal text; it is the agreement that gets signed.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Start with the obligations that are most often breached or misunderstood, and test the panels with the people who will sign.

✗ Avoid

Characters that reinforce stereotypes or that represent only some of the people who sign.

👁 Don't fall for it

A drawing can be as ambiguous as a sentence: work with lawyers so that each panel says exactly what was agreed.

Connections

Builds on

- Text/image interaction
- Contract visualization

Related to

- Illustration

Authors and works

2016	**Robert de Rooy**	South African lawyer; made the first comic contract, an employment contract for fruit pickers in the Western Cape, many of them with low literacy.
2020	**Camilla Baasch Andersen and Adrian Keating**	Brought comic contracts to Australia, starting with a non-disclosure agreement for a program at their School of Engineering, and explained how to turn clauses into scenes.
2018	**Aurecon and the University of Western Australia**	Launched Australia's first visual employment contract for all new staff at an engineering consultancy.

Sources

Original sources

- Andersen, C. B., & Keating, A. (2020). Engineering visual contracts: Using if-then thinking to develop behavioral drivers for imaging. Journal of Open Access to Law, 8(1). View source (https://ojs.law.cornell.edu/index.php/joal/article/view/101)

Secondary sources

- Hutchison, A. (2018, August 10). Comic strip solution to complex contracts. UCT News, Universidad de Ciudad del Cabo. View source (https://news.uct.ac.za/article/-2018-08-10-comic-strip-solution-to-complex-contracts)
- University of Western Australia. (2020). Comic book contracts. Research Impact at UWA. View source (https://researchimpact.uwa.edu.au/?p=3171)

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