Introduction to Typography

Why is Typography Important?

It helps clarify a message and emphasize its emotional impact

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Important Definitions

Typeface

- Refers to the upper and lowercase letters of a specific design/font
- Examples: Helvetica, Times New Roman

Characters

- The individual letters, numbers, and punctuation used when setting type

Serif

- Letters with finished strokes or brackets
- Gives letters a finished appearance
- Easy to Read
- Used in Books, Magazines, Newspapers

S

Sans Serif

- Type with no serif
- No variation in width of stroke
- Useful for seeing text from a distance
- Harder to read in blocks of text

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Script Fonts

- Decorative Fonts that suggest a handwritten appearance
- Difficult to read in large bodies of text, better as headers

Roman

- Upright letterforms representing the majority of copy

Italic

- Slanted typeface used for emphasis
- Specifically designed to have a more calligraphic look

Oblique

- Slanted typeface (slanted 8-12 degrees)

Light

- A thinner/lighter version of the regular typeface (also called "thin")

Regular

- The standard weight of a typeface (also called "normal")

Bold

- A thicker/heavier version of the regular typeface

ROBOTO

BOLD
MEDIUM
REGULAR
LIGHT
THIN

Condensed

- A narrower version of the regular typeface to fit letters into a smaller space

Extended

- A wider version of the regular typeface

Type Families

- The combination of all typesets (variations) of a font

Helvetica Neue 25 Ultra Light
Helvetica Neue 35 Thin
Helvetica Neue 45 Light
Helvetica Neue 55 Roman
Helvetica Neue 65 Medium
Helvetica Neue 75 Bold
Helvetica Neue 85 Heavy
Helvetica Neue 95 Black

Anatomy of Typography

Typography for the Web

Web Safe Fonts

- There used to be a universally accepted group of fonts that were "safe" across all browsers

Arial

Arial Black

Comic Sans MS

Courier New

Georgia

Impact

Times New Roman

Trebuchet MS

Verdana

@font-face

- "allows custom fonts to be loaded on a webpage. Once added to a stylesheet, the rule instructs the browser to download the font from where it is hosted, then display it as specified in the CSS."

woff

- Web Web Open Font Format

    - Developed by Mozilla

    - WOFF fonts often load faster than other formats because they use a compressed version of the structure used by OpenType (OTF) and TrueType (TTF) fonts.

SVG

- Scalable Vector Graphic

- SVG is a vector re-creation of the font, which makes it much lighter in file size, and also makes it ideal for mobile use. This format is the only one allowed by version 4.1 and below of Safari for iOS.

- SVG fonts are not currently supported by Firefox, IE or IE Mobile. Firefox has postponed implementation indefinitely to focus on WOFF.

EOT

- Embedded Open Type

- This format was created by Microsoft (the original innovators of @font-face) and is a proprietary file standard supported only by IE. In fact, it's the only format that IE8 and below will recognize when using @font-face.

OTF/TTF

- Open Type Font/True Type Font

- The WOFF format was initially created as a reaction to OTF and TTF, in part, because these formats could easily (and illegally) be copied, However, OpenType has capabilities that many designers might be interested in (ligatures and such).

Picking and Pairing Fonts

"Using a typeface because it looks interesting might yield acceptable results, but really practicing the art of typography involves understanding typefaces and what they mean."

Jason Santa Maria, On Web Typography

Picking

- Pick body fonts with multiple weights
- Limit the number of typefaces to no more than 2
- Experiment with decorative headers
- Should be appropriate to the purpose
- Avoid overused fonts
- Make sure to include font fallbacks:
    - font-family: Didot, Garamond, "Times New Roman", Serif
    - font-family: ideal, alternative, common, generic

Typography Commandments

- Make sure to include font fallbacks:
    - font-family: Didot, Garamond, "Times New Roman", Serif
    - font-family: ideal, alternative, common, generic
- Minimum size of 16px for body copy
- 1.4 - 1.6 line height for body copy
- 1.2 - 1.4 line height for headers
- 45 - 75 characters max for line length
- Only center short text
- Only make short text all caps
- Never justify text
- Typefaces with high contrast and small x-heights shouldn't be body copy
- Strong hierarchy leads to happy readers.

Resources

- [The Ten Commandments of Typography](#)
- [Open Dyslexic](#)
- [Typekit](#)
- [Font Deck](#)
- [Web Type](#)
- [Fontspring](#)
- [MyFont](#)
- [Typotheque](#)
- [Fonts.com](#)
- [Google Fonts](#)
- [Font Squirrel](#)
- [Type Tester](#)
- [Type Fight](#)
- http://fontflame.com/