

Conditions for Engaging Typographic Use

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The Conditions d'utilisations typographiques engageantes (CUTE), written by the *Bye Bye Binary* collective, are a way of bringing together people who design, distribute and use post-binary fonts. These conditions are a kind of contract, a user guide, usable by anyone wishing to publish a post-binary font. Like a license, like a mussel on its rock, this text travels and spreads with the font files as they are downloaded. They stand out from most free licenses by integrating the question of economics and the material conditions of existence of designers.

The critical and political ideas that drive them thus pollinate graphic practices committed to a radically feminist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, queer and trans* perspective.


Bye Bye Binary


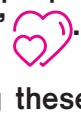



Why this text?

Since 2018, the *Bye Bye Binary* collective has been actively working on the design of post-binary fonts to enable the language to move beyond the debates around inclusive writing. In 2022, it published the first version of a type library. The typefaces distributed are under free licenses (OFL , OIFL  or CC-BY-NC-SA ). Their very permissive conditions and universalist heritage and approach do not take into account power dynamics and structural economic inequalities.




Example: A major institution uses typefaces without donations in line with their means, while often precarious students contribute financially to research.

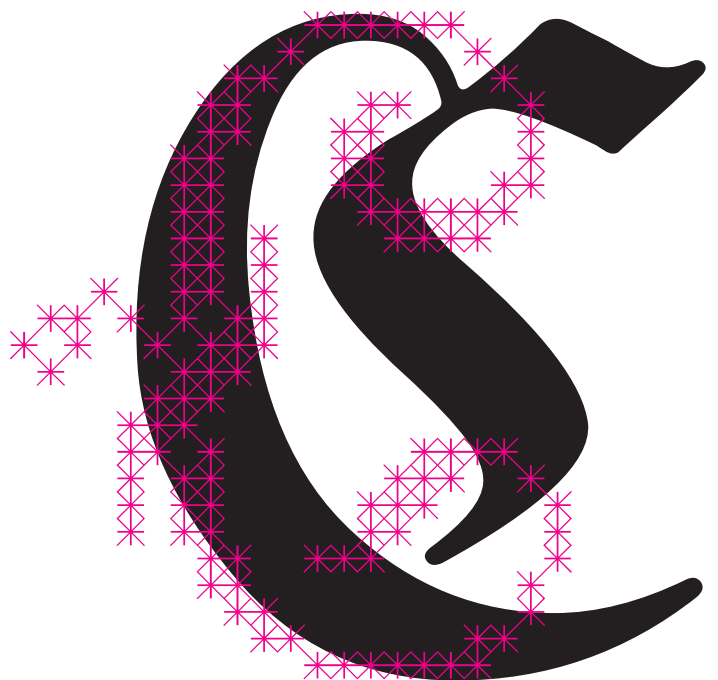
After rewriting the OFL in an inclusive language, the OIFL, the *Bye Bye Binary* collective felt it necessary to write specific conditions of use for post-binary fonts. Sharing practices and the invitation to modify free licenses  is, however, a dimension that is dear to the collective and is preserved in these CUTEs. As soon as it circulates, it moves.

These conditions of use seek to navigate between the "tensions and paradoxes of sharing policies"  and the critique of the notion of the author. Firstly, the figure of the original author is ambiguous; every production is infused with previous ones and is part of a continuum of references and thought. Secondly, the act of affixing a signature to a production is linked to a history of appropriations of practices that have not been canonized and neglected by the dominant history. So it's a question that needs to be taken care of, paying attention to references, genealogies and contexts. It's a matter of "avoiding abusive appropriation by insisting on inclusive attribution." .

By drafting these conditions as tools of resistance, *Bye Bye Binary* indicates an initial framework of use for users and enables designers to publish their fonts according to a less unbalanced balance of power in the face of proprietary logics and to collectively resist the dynamics of knowledge extraction and colonization .

These conditions of use are part of the field of typography and call for several points of attention:

- ✿ The fact that the production of typographic forms is part of a long history of copying [lexicon: copy].
- ✿ The circulation of typographic objects on digital platforms tends to break ties and make our ecosystem less sustainable. 
- ✿ The long history of invisibilization of minoritized people in the field of typography .
- ✿ The difficulty of keeping track of people within collective practices.
- ✿ Attention to sources, because referencing allows us not to lose existences. In this case, the *messy histories*  of LGBTQIA+ struggles.



Getting started

QBBB's Terms of Use invite you to use, copy, share, redistribute and modify fonts published under CUTE, and re-share modified versions, including for commercial use.

Conditions for use, copying and sharing

Any person or institution who has read these terms of use may download, install and use the fonts in any text-editing software.

These conditions of use are specific to fonts and not to the documents they are used to produce [lexicon: contamination].

Example: A book typeset in a CUTE font is not governed by the CUTE conditions of use.

✿ Credit, allocate

It is necessary to credit the designer(s) of the font as well as to provide a link to the original publication source (the *QBBB* type library, or other), thus making it possible to link to the context of the work.

✿ Share complete files

A font is a piece of software made up of vector drawing elements, as well as lines of code describing its behavior and documentation providing an understanding of the context in which it was created. [lexicon: package] For the purposes of sharing and passing on knowledge, these are all ingredients that should travel with the font file. In this sense, for each copy, sharing or redistribution, it is important to take good care of the whole.

✿ Finding your place on the donation scale

See the "Donations" section for the criteria for this important condition.

Conditions for redistribution


Fonts can be redistributed on websites, the cloud, peer-to-peer, and any other digital medium. In this case, the previous conditions Credit, Allocate and Share complete files apply.

Example: If you manage an online font catalog, please publish a complete zip file and not a single .otf file.

✿ Keep CUTE

If you redistribute or modify a font published under CUTE, it must remain under CUTE. It can also cohabit with other licenses, guides and conditions of use in the same spirit, such as CC4R, GenderFail, ACAB or Non Violent Licenses. This condition produces a virality that allows fonts to pollinate committed graphic practices. At the same time, it prevents anyone from appropriating the work and its authorship.

CUTE inherits the culture of Free, Libre and Open Source, but is not technically compatible with any FLOSS license to date. CUTE adopts a position that is radically and deliberately inconsistent with these in their current state.

Example: there are post-binary characters in my font so I use these conditions of use, but I'd like to close it to military practices, so I make it cohabit with the Non Violent Public License  and that's OK.

Conditions for modification

The fonts under CUTE have been programmed with QUNI (Queer Unicode Initiative) [lexicon], post-binary character activation features, a recipe, which you are invited to read before any modification or *fork* [lexicon]. The following modification conditions apply in addition to those above:

✿ Do not delete post-binary characters

Post-binary characters can be modified and augmented just like the rest of the file. But, because these characters are an integral part of the font, they cannot be deleted. This also applies to OpenType features that activate them. Any copy or modified version must retain the complete set.

✿ Rename but link

To assume filiations and make paths more legible, forks must change the font name by adding a complement to the original name. If you have any questions, please contact the original authors.

Example: Adelphe becomes Adelphe-Sylex.
And for a second fork, Adelphe-Sylex becomes Adelphe-Sylex-Galette.

For fonts with the *BBB* prefix, keep the name of the original font without the *BBB* and add a complement. The initials *BBB* are an identifier for fonts designed by the collective, but the idea is not to impose them as a signature. It's also an opportunity to mark the handover of maintenance and monitoring of the project, which then passes into the hands of the fork designers.

Example: BBB-Baskervvol becomes Baskervvol-Sylex.

Invitation to re-share modifications


In the event of glyphset expansion [lexicon: glyphset] without modification of the existing glyphs, the authors who published the font under these conditions would be happy to incorporate them into the basic version without changing the name. The designer of the augmentation would then be added to the list of designers of the font.


Example: Adding accents and diacritics to Vietnamese.

With each modification, new designers are added to the list of previous designers in the font info [lexicon]. The complete history is kept, ideally with dates and contexts, in a font log file [lexicon].

♥ Donations

The fonts distributed under these terms of use have been designed by and for people who stand in solidarity with the struggles against cis-hetero-patriarchy, white supremacy, validism and capitalism. The use of post-binary fonts is obviously not a substitute for other militant actions against these systems of oppression.

These conditions of use encompass the question of the virtuous economy of research and the adoption of a materialist feminist position . Receiving donations creates the material conditions of existence for researchers active in the field of post-binary typography. Indeed, financial support makes it possible for people who can't afford unpaid work to participate, encourages designers to publish more, and opens the door to greater aesthetic and political variety. This field of research is precarious, existing on a shoestring thanks to a few grants and one-off commissions. Integrating a scale of donations with the conditions of use of fonts allows us to insist on concrete needs at different points in the ecosystem. This text thus distances itself from the received idea that "free" equals "gratis".

The cases listed below are non-exhaustive examples, as this scale of monetary value is culturally situated in a Belgian-French context. It's up to you to project yourself and assess your own position within the power dynamics. The Green bottle sliding scale  can be a useful complementary tool for self-determination and empowerment.

As far as the donations received by *BBB* are concerned, they do not finance salaries. A portion is paid to external designers. The remainder is used mainly for train tickets.

In a precarious situation

You want to use post-binary fonts for a student project, a fanzine, a classified ad for your flat-mate, a TPBG leaflet or paint ligatures on protest banners. Go for it!

Participate according to the project's means — keep your money if it's a hindrance.

In support of the fight and research

You use post-binary fonts to write your own work (integrated into your own work, film subtitles, political writings, media files, university theses...), within collective practices (unfunded self-managed associations, precarious places, militant...). You want to support research and see post-binary fonts proliferate.

Donation between €10 and €50

In a commission situation

If you are a graphic designer and would like to use post-binary fonts as part of a graphic design commission, we encourage you to make your client aware of the virtuous economy. Please refer to the donation level corresponding to your client's status, to propose an amount in line with the project's scope and distribution framework.

Donation between €50 and €1,000

✿ For an association

You have a small budget allocated to the communication of your structure or an event you're organizing. You need the services of a graphic designer or printer. You're subsidized, so you don't benefit from any other kind of income (admission tickets or bar profits).

Donation between €50 and €150

✿ For a cultural organization

You are a theater, gallery, concert hall or festival. You have a budget dedicated to the production of your communications materials, or even a communications manager and/or graphic designer on staff. In addition to subsidies, you benefit from additional income (admission tickets or bar profits).

Donation between €50 and €500

✿ For a local commercial enterprise

You're a cooperative grocery store, a thrift shop, a bakery (that kneads bretz-iels), a feminist bookshop, the town's only lesbian bar, an independent publishing house, etc. that's struggling to cope with capitalist logic and is trying to change the world on its own scale.

Donation between €50 and €500

✿ For a cultural institution

You are a theater, gallery, concert hall or festival. You have a budget dedicated to the production of your communications materials, or even a communications manager and/or graphic designer on staff. In addition to subsidies, you benefit from additional income (admission tickets or bar profits).

Don entre 300€ et 1000€

✿ For a large company

You want to produce objects on a large scale using post-binary fonts, or you want to give yourself an inclusive image and pinkwash your structural shortcomings.

Look elsewhere



Lexicon



Exemption
In Open Font Licences such as the OFL you can find the following formulation: “The requirement for fonts to remain under this license does not apply to any document created using the fonts or their derivatives.” Open Font Licenses use this specific exception to prevent that a modified or distributed font “contaminates” websites, books, posters and other documents which are typeset in the font. Without this exception, all of these objects would need to be published under the same conditions.

Copy

Typographers never work from scratch. Here are a few examples:

— Stéphane Darricau, *De quoi Garamond est-il le nom ?*, 2023.

<https://bureaubrut.com/product/de-quoi-garamond-est-il-le-nom/>

— *10,000 Original Copies*, une conférence Kris Sowersby (TypeCon 2018 XX) autour des concepts européens d'originalité et de paternité

<https://klim.co.nz/blog/10000-original-copies>

— OSP, *Fluxisch-Else*, 2017

<http://osp.kitchen/foundry/fluxisch-else/>

— Généalogie du Baskervvol :

— [John Baskerville, Birmingham, c. 1750.]

— Claude Jacob, Strasbourg, 1784.

— ANRT (Alexis Faudot, Rémi Forte, Morgane Pierson, Rafael Ribas, Tanguy Vanlaeys, Rosalie Wagner), Nancy, 2017-2018.

— BBB Baskervvol (Eugénie Bidaut, Julie Colas, Camille Circlode, Louis Garrido, Enzo Le Garrec, Ludi Loiseau, Édouard Nazé, Julie Patard, Marouchka Payen, Mathilde Quentin), Bruxelles 2018-2022. Ajout de glyphes non-binaires.

— BBB Baskervvol medium, semibold et bold (Rosalie Wagner et Thomas Huot-Marchand), Nancy 2024.

Font info

The Font Info window is ubiquitous in font editors. It's a dialog box that lets you specify and complete font meta-data defining, for example, the name of the font, its type of curve or the name of its various masters. This dialog box also includes an entry entitled copyright.

Font refers to all the files published by the carrier(s) of the typeface project. This includes all visual representations of the typeface (glyphs), source files, documentation, the FONTLOG and these terms of use. The term font refers to all visual representations of characters (glyphs), including letters, numbers, punctuation marks and symbols, used to compose text. Its etymology derives from the lead characters that were cast in typographic foundries. The term “font” is preferred to “typeface” to avoid repetition of the polysyllabic word “police” (another word for “font” in French). > see ACAB <https://genderfluid.space/lexiquni.html>

Fork or « *Modified version* » refers to any derivative made by adding, deleting or replacing - in part or in full - one of the components of the published version. A fork is a derivative of an existing font that shares the same initial design, augmented, for example, by new glyphs, OpenType features, design variations or additional scripts. The term has its origins in computing, where it designates software whose source code is derived from previous software.

FontLog is a text document designed to archive and list versions, details of successive additions to a typeface over time. The FONTLOG also contains a summary of the files contained in the folder.

The **glyphset** is the set of characters covered by a given font. It is often defined in terms of Unicode ranges (for example: “Latin extended A” or “Greek and Coptic”).

Police > see **Font**

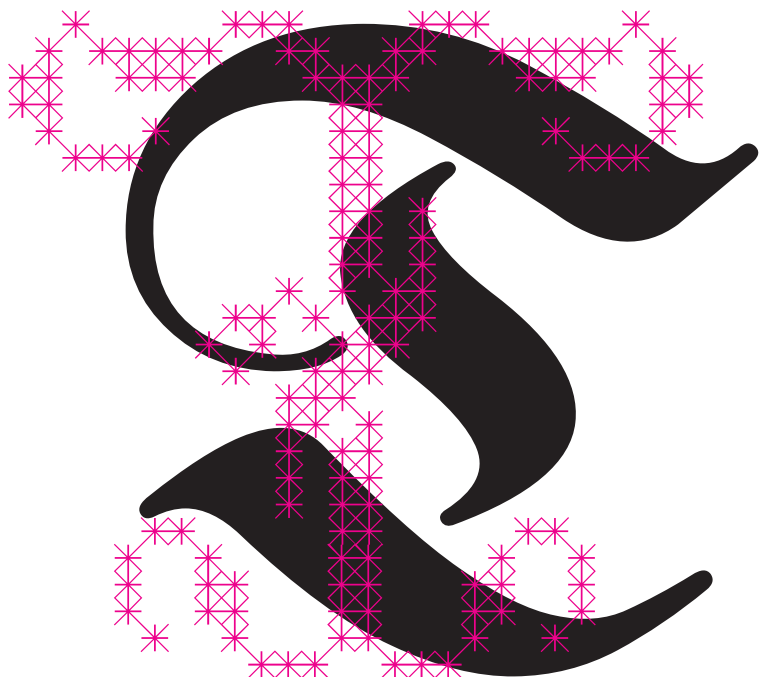
Paquet

For the sake of readability, this text describes the conditions for sharing fonts as folders rather than as a simple .otf or .ttf file. We've added an entry here for the word “package” because we want to keep a link with the practice of packaging, which corresponds to our concern to encourage ecosystems to flourish. Packaging is a fundamental method of free software, which consists of carefully preparing software or a digital font before publishing it. By ensuring that all necessary resources are included or referenced, developers prepare an environment in which the software can be deployed. In the case of a digital font, this means taking care to include license or conditions text, documentation, FONTLOG, source files and font info.

Quni makes post-binary fonts usable. Common practices, soft standards, rage and onions, together form the Queer Unicode Initiative (QUNI). QUNI brings together fonts, with all the diversity they contain, around a single encoding system for use by a wide audience.

> See <https://typotheque.genderfluid.space/quni.html>

Unicode is a computer standard that enables texts in different languages to be exchanged worldwide. Developed by the Unicode Consortium, which brings together the major private interests in the global digital sector, it aims to encode written text by giving any character in any writing system a name and a numerical identifier, and to do so in a unified way, whatever the computer platform or software used.



Notes



The SIL Open Font License (OFL) is both a free software license and an open-source license designed by the American evangelical organization SIL International to distribute many of its Unicode fonts, including Gentium Plus, Charis SIL and Andika. The Open Font License was first published in November 2005.

<https://openfontlicense.org/open-font-license-official-text/>



The OIFL was drafted by *♡B♡B♡B* in 2021 as a first attempt to debinarize the text language that accompanied most fonts forked by the collective.

<https://typotheque.genderfluid.space/licences.html>



CC-BY-NC-SA: Creative Commons licenses are a set of licenses governing the conditions of reuse and distribution of works. Developed by the Creative Commons organization, they were first published on December 16, 2002. CC-BY-NC-SA stands for Creative Commons - Attribution - Noncommercial - Share Alike.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/be/deed.fr>



We're referring here to practices that are sometimes also called Open Source, FLOSS, Copyleft, free culture



CC4r – Collective Conditions for Reuse, which nourished and inspired the *♡B♡B♡B* collective to write the present conditions. CC4r was developed during the Constant Unbound Libraries work session (spring 2020) and followed on from discussions and contributions at the Authors of the Future study day (autumn 2019). It is based on the Free Art License and inspired by other licensing projects such as the (Cooperative) Non-Violent Public License and the Decolonial Media license.

<https://constantvzw.org/wefts/cc4r.fr.html>



Quote from “My Letters”, Femke Snelting’s lecture during the Post \$cript seminar. Licensed schools. Typographie: usages, économie, fichiers, licences at the école de recherche graphique, Brussels, March 2023.



— Scotford, Martha, “Toward an Expanded view of Women in Graphic Design. Messy History vs Neat History”, *Visible Language*, no 28, 1994, p. 368-388.

In her text, Martha Scotford develops the notion of *messy history* as opposed to *neat history*: “*Neat history* is conventional history: it focuses on the traditional activities and work of individuals, often male designers. *Messy history* seeks to discover, study and include the variety of alternative approaches and activities, which are often part of the professional lives of women designers.”

— Canlı, Ece, “Design History Interrupted. A Queer-Feminist Perspective”, *The Responsible Object. A History of Design Ideology for the Future*, Amsterdam, Valiz, Melbourne, Überschwartz, 2016, p. 187-198.

In her text, Ece Canlı updates this notion from a queer-feminist perspective, “targeting greater power structure”, going beyond the “modernist historiography” of aligning women’s achievements with those of men.



“In the governance of typography we have a very long history of prioritizing white men as cult heroes. We establish his legacy, worship and emulate him, award prizes, and evolve entire industries in and around his power.”

Soulellis, Paul. *What Is Queer Typography?* Queer.Archive.Work, 2021.



Nonviolent Public Licenses aim to provide basic protection against the forms of violence, coercion and discrimination to which creations are often subjected in the modern world. These licenses cover many formats of creative works, but include additional conditions for software, given the power it has as a tool outside its creative dimensions.

<https://thufie.lain.haus/NPL.html>



The *Green bottle sliding scale* is a sliding scale model that takes into account different financial experiences. Developed by community healing practitioner Alexis J. Cunningsfolk, the green bottle sliding scale is an economic justice tool that allows participants to adjust payment based on access to resources.

<https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/54a1bf90e-4b07c077787ed68/1440108759301-1YFJ9LY0JNVAKR-JZOAI/image-asset.png?format=2500w>



Materialist feminism is a branch of feminism characterized by the use of conceptual tools and a reading grid derived from Marxism. It therefore pays particular attention to the material conditions of existence of social groups induced within patriarchal society.



Knowledge extraction: epistemological extractivism?
Combining these different notions invites us to question the conditions for producing situated, queer, decolonial, trans*feminist or intersectional knowledge in a capitalist, sexist, bourgeois and racist system that invisibilises and disqualifies the existence of these counter-narratives. It is also a question of questioning and remaining critical of colonial and extractivist gestures (and our own gestures), when these same counter-hegemonic discourses and knowledges are displaced and propelled into logics of capitalisation that sever genealogies without any possible ethic of care for the communities that work on these knowledges.



The digital nature of typographic practices generates specific modes of circulation. Free software culture has been trying for decades to take care of and facilitate the modes of circulation of digital objects. Platforms, on the other hand, have based their massive profits on this freedom of circulation, without supporting the cultural conditions of knowledge production.

Material conditions for writing this text

In 2022, the BBB collective published the first version of the *typothèque* thanks to a grant from the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Commission des Arts Plastiques session Arts Numériques.

In 2022 and 2023, a series of work sessions around the question of licenses was supported by the Vocatio grant, through Clara Sambot.

In 2023 and 2024, two portions of the grant, the first from the Digital Arts Commission of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and the second from the FRArt (FNRS), enabled the collective writing of this text.

These conditions were written by several hands, inviting others to join in. This first version of January 2023 will evolve with practice, feedback and contributions. By publishing the text of these conditions under a CC4r license, we are further encouraging its deployment in other versions.

The editing of these CUTES was made possible through a partnership with Femke Snelting and Eva Weinmayr as part of the Revisiting of CC4r cross-readings.

The RISO print was made possible thanks to the invitation by Julien Bidoret to Bye Bye Binary for the group exhibition *Lettres d'Amour* at the Bel Ordinaire in Pau from 10 April to 29 June 2024.

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Licence : CC4r

Layout:
Camille Cirolude

Printing : XXXXXX

Fonts:
BBB Karrik, Crozet, Dreamhearts, Homoneta, UnormativeFraktur.

Icons:
Noun Project CC BY 3.0 License (Pixel Bazaar, Royyan Wijaya, Kemal Moe, Oliver Gomez, Visual Glow, Adriwidodo, Liberus, Angel Yuta, Vectors Market, Sunisih, Yohwan Kim, dDara, Euclalypt)

