Georgia

An Analogous Typeface

Georgia is a serif typeface designed in *1993* by *Matthew Carter* and hinted by *Tom Rickner* for the Microsoft Corporation. It was intended as a serif typeface that would appear elegant but legible when printed small or on low-resolution screens. The typeface is inspired by Scotch Roman designs of the 19th century and was based on designs for a print typeface Zon which Carter was working when contacted by Microsoft; this would be released under the name Miller the following year. The typeface's name referred to a tabloid headline, "*Alien heads found in Georgia.*"

Georgia is a "Scotch Roman", a style that originated in types sold by Scottish type foundries of *Alexander Wilson* and *William Miller* in the period of *1810–1820*. Microsoft publicly released the initial version of the font on *1 November 1996* as part of the core fonts for the Web collection, and later bundled it with the Internet Explorer 4.0 supplemental font pack: these releases made it available for installation on both Windows and Macintosh computers. This made it a popular choice for web designers, as pages specifying Georgia as a font choice would display identically on both types if users installed the core fonts package (or later Internet Explorer), simplifying development and testing. Its creators also produced *Verdana* at the same time, the first Microsoft sans-serif screen font, for the same purposes.
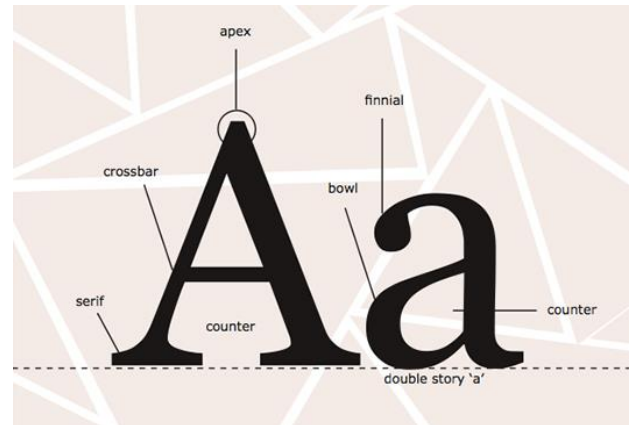
As a transitional serif design, Georgia shows a number of traditional features of "rational" serif typefaces from around the early 19th century, such as alternating thick and thin strokes, ball terminals and a vertical axis. Its figure (numeral) designs are lower-case, or text figures, designed to blend into continuous text; this was at the time a rare feature in computer fonts. Georgia was designed for clarity on a computer monitor even at small sizes. It features a large x-height (tall lower-case letters), and its thin strokes are thicker than would be common on a typeface designed for display use or the greater sharpness possible in print. Its reduced contrast and thickened serifs make it somewhat resemble Clarendon designs from the 19th century. The glyphs were manually hinted. Georgia's bold is also unusually bold, almost black. The Georgia typeface is similar to Times New Roman, another reimagination of transitional serif designs, but as a design for screen display it has a larger x-height and fewer fine details. The *New York Times* changed its standard font from *Times New Roman* to *Georgia* in *2007*.

Although inspired by the need for - and providing - clarity at low resolutions on the screen, Georgia is a typeface resonant with typographic personality. Even at small sizes the face exudes a sense of friendliness; a feeling of intimacy many would argue has been eroded from Times New Roman through overuse. This is as much testament to the skill of the typeface's designer, Matthew Carter, as it is to any intrinsic quality of the face's design, since the small pixel spaces of the screen can be a harrowing canvas for any type designer. In Georgia, Carter has successfully managed to create a typeface family which combines high legibility with character and charm.

Sources:

1. https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/typography/font-list/georgia
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_(typeface)
3. http://luc.devroye.org/fonts-25264.html