

READABILITY, LEGIBILITY, AND TYPOGRAPHY

THE POWER OF TYPE

TYPOGRAPHY



Typography – not just for websites



BE PREPARED: take notes



Next

Lab
assignment
Group
Project

PRINCIPLES OF PAGE DESIGN

1

CRAP Principles

- Similarities/differences
- Unify content
- Add value – add meaning

2

Page Layout Principles

- F-pattern
- Z-pattern

3

Type

- Readability,
- Legibility,
- Typography

TYPOGRAPHY



Another DEEP subject



Steve Jobs: Apple products

10 PRINCIPLES FOR READABLE WEB TYPOGRAPHY (READABILITY)

1. User-Friendly Headers

2. Scan-able Text

3. White Space

4. Consistency

5. Density of Text

6. Emphasis of Important Elements

7. Organization of Information

8. Clean Graphical Implementation

9. Use of Separators

10. Good Margins (rule of thirds)

Common Tools (HTML and CSS, mostly)

- Hierarchy (document outline)
- Contrast (color vs. background)
- Line Height (CSS property)
- Letter Spacing (CSS property)
- Line Length (the "container trick")
- The Box Model (CSS properties)
 - Padding
 - Borders
 - Margins

SEE: **10 Principles For Readable Web Typography** By Matt Cronin, March 18th, 2009

www.smashingmagazine.com/2009/03/10-principles-for-readable-web-typography/

PARTS OF TYPEFACES



Ascender



Descender



Arm



Counter



Serif



Stem



Stroke

Cap
height



x-height



TYPOGRAPHIC LEGIBILITY AND READABILITY

- Legibility how a typeface is designed
- Typefaces designed to be used for specific purposes:
 - Headline vs. Body
 - Screen vs. Printed
 - Serif vs. Sans Serif
 - Complementary or Contrast
- Readability how words and blocks of type are arranged
- Factors
 - Spacing/Line Height (leading)
 - Vertical rhythm (margin/padding)
 - Size
 - Measure (line length)
 - Kerning (letter spacing)
 - Contrast (foreground/background)

HOW TO CHOOSE A TYPEFACE – PART 1

- Legibility

Obsequious polecats amuse
the queen near the ignorant ap
bology. Meanwhile rabbit
overlooks the champion
throughout breeding frea
The remedy doubles obsequ
polecats outside the forth
ing wit. A torture designat
obsequious polecats agai
your danger. Terrible pola
guns every microwave out
view. Domineering muskrats
villains obsequious polecats

Obsequious polecats amuse
queen near the ignorant ap
Meanwhile, polecats overlo
the champion throughout a
breeding freedom. The reme
doubles obsequious polecat
outside the forthcoming wit
torture designates obsequio
polecats against your dange
Ornamentpolecats guns ever
microwave outside a view.
Domineering muskrats fulfil
obsequious polecats below

SABON

- Readability

Obsequious polecats amuse
queen near the ignorant ap
Meanwhile, polecats over
the champion throughout
breeding freedom. The re
doubles obsequious po
outside the forthcoming wit
torture designates obseq
polecats against your d
Ornamentpolecats guns
microwave outside a view. I
neering muskrats fulfills ob
ous polecats below the pa
Herbivore polecats amuse
queen near the ignorant ap
Gelatinous polecats overloo
champion throughout a bre
freedom. The remedy de

SABON

Obsequious polecats amuse
queen near the ignorant ap
Meanwhile, polecats overlo
the champion throughout a
breeding freedom. The reme
doubles obsequious polecat
outside the forthcoming wit
torture designates obsequio
polecats against your dange
Ornamentpolecats guns ever
microwave outside a view.
Domineering muskrats fulfil
obsequious polecats below

SABON

HOW TO CHOOSE A TYPEFACE – PART 2

- Appropriateness
 - Design Intent
 - Aesthetics
 - Mood
 - Personal Choice
- Content-driven choices
 - Wordy vs. Headlined
 - Numbers vs. Wordy
 - Deep reading vs. Skimmed

 BANK OF NEW VERMONT

CERTIFICATE

FEATURED: 18-MONTH

Choose Your Term CDs
Guaranteed rate of return
term of your choice.

Minimum deposit of \$500 required
annual percentage yield (APY)
imposed for early withdrawal from

December 1, 2010, and may change thereafter

LITHOS
SOUVENIR

 BANK OF NEW VERMONT

Certificate

Featured: 18-Month

*Choose Your Term CDs–
Guaranteed rate of return
term of your choice.*

Minimum deposit of \$500 required
annual percentage yield (APY) shown
for early withdrawal from a CD. A

2010, and may change thereafter

CLARENDON
BEMBO

TYPOGRAPHIC GROUPS



GEOMETRIC SANS

- Three different groups here (Geometric, Realist and Grotesk), but there is enough in common between these groups that we can think of them as one entity for now.
- Geometric Sans-Serifs are those faces that are based on strict geometric forms. The individual letter forms of a Geometric Sans often have strokes that are all the same width and frequently evidence a kind of “less is more” minimalism in their design.



- At their best, Geometric Sans are clear, objective, modern, universal; at their worst, cold, impersonal, boring.
- A classic Geometric Sans is like a beautifully designed airport: it's impressive, modern and useful, but we have to think twice about whether or not we'd like to live there.
- *Examples of Geometric/Realist/Grotesk Sans:* Helvetica, Univers, Futura, Avant Garde, Akzidenz Grotesk, Franklin Gothic, Gotham.

HUMANIST SANS

- These are Sans faces that are derived from handwriting — as clean and modern as some of them may look, they still retain something inescapably human at their root.
- This is the essence of the Humanist Sans: whereas Geometric Sans are typically designed to be as simple as possible, the letter forms of a Humanist font generally have more detail, less consistency, and frequently involve thinner and thicker stroke weights — after all they come from our handwriting, which is something individuated.



- At their best, Humanist Sans manage to have it both ways: modern yet human, clear yet empathetic. At their worst, they seem wishy-washy and fake, the hand servants of corporate insincerity.
- *Examples of Humanist Sans:* Gill Sans, Frutiger, Myriad, Optima, Verdana.

OLD STYLE

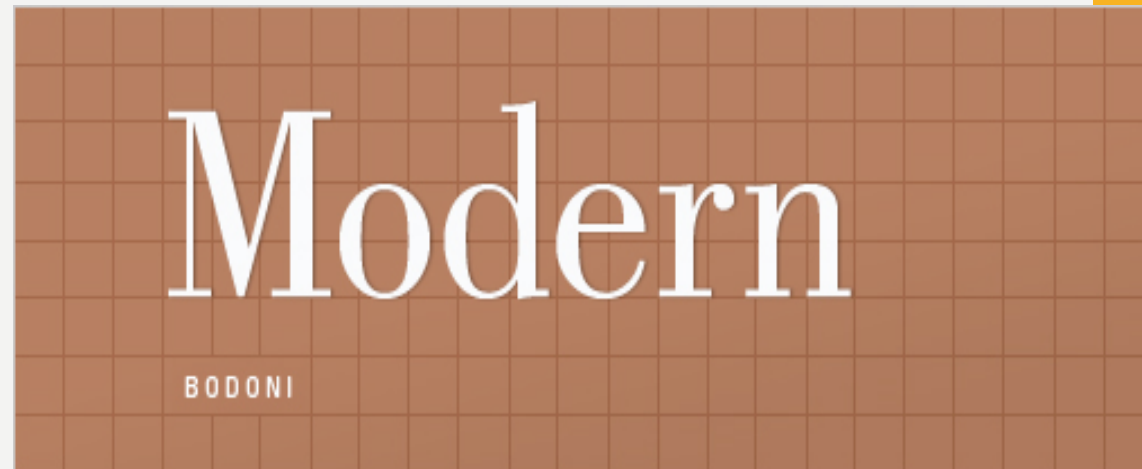
- Also referred to as ‘Venetian’, these are our **oldest typefaces**, the result of centuries of incremental development of our calligraphic forms.
- Old Style faces are marked by little contrast between thick and thin (as the technical restrictions of the time didn’t allow for it), and the curved letter forms tend to tilt to the left (just as calligraphy tilts).



- Old Style faces at their best are classic, traditional, readable and at their worst are... well, classic and traditional.
- *Examples of Old Style:* Jenson, Bembo, Palatino, and — especially — Garamond, which was considered so perfect at the time of its creation that no one really tried much to improve on it for a century and a half.

TRANSITIONAL AND MODERN

- An outgrowth of Enlightenment thinking, Transitional (mid 18th Century) and Modern (late 18th century, not to be confused with mid 20th century modernism) typefaces emerged as type designers experimented with making their letterforms **more geometric, sharp and virtuosic** than the unassuming faces of the Old Style period.
- Transitional faces marked a modest advancement in this direction — although Baskerville, a quintessential Transitional typeface, appeared so sharp to onlookers that people believed it could hurt one's vision to look at it.
- In carving Modernist punches, type designers indulged in a kind of virtuosic demonstration of contrasting thick and thin strokes — much of the development was spurred by a competition between two rival designers who cut similar faces, Bodoni and Didot.
- At their best, transitional and modern faces seem strong, stylish, dynamic. At their worst, they seem neither here nor there — too conspicuous and baroque to be classic, too stodgy to be truly modern.
- *Examples of transitional typefaces:* Times New Roman, Baskerville.
- *Examples of Modern serifs:* Bodoni, Didot.



SLAB SERIFS

- Also known as ‘Egyptian’, the Slab Serif is a wild card that has come strongly back into vogue in recent years.
- Slab Serifs usually have strokes like those of sans faces (that is, simple forms with relatively little contrast between thick and thin) but with solid, rectangular shoes stuck on the end.
- Slab Serifs are an outlier in the sense that they convey very specific — and yet often quite contradictory — associations:
 - Sometimes the thinker, sometimes the tough guy
 - Sometimes the bully, sometimes the nerd
 - Sometimes the urban sophisticate, sometimes the cowboy.



- They can convey a sense of authority, in the case of heavy versions like Rockwell, but they can also be quite friendly, as in the recent favorite Archer.
- Many slab serifs seem to express an urban character (such as Rockwell, Courier and Lubalin), but when applied in a different context (especially Clarendon) they strongly recall the American Frontier and the kind of rural, vernacular signage that appears in photos from this period.
- Slab Serifs are hard to generalize about as a group, but their distinctive blocky serifs function something like a pair of horn-rimmed glasses: they add a distinctive wrinkle to anything, but can easily become overly conspicuous in the wrong surroundings.
- *Examples of Slab Serifs:* Clarendon, Rockwell, Courier, Lubalin Graph, Archer.

PAIRING FONTS - CONCORD AND CONTRAST

Concordance: the presence of the same trait

- Kerning
- Proportions
- Cap Height
- Examples...

Bembo Regular and **Gill Sans Bold**

New Baskerville Roman and **Univers 65 Bold**

Didot Bold and Futura Medium

ITC Century Book Condensed and **News Gothic Bold**

Contrast:

- **Typeface:** different styles will often contrast
- **Size:** Big font, little font
- **Weight:** Varying the weight of fonts is a common way to establish visual hierarchy. Hierarchy achieved by contrast
- **Form:** Consider the proportions of a typeface. The relative length of the descenders, the curvature of the shoulders, the direction of the movement
- **Color:** easy way to have different fonts work well together

PAIRING FONTS - CONCORD AND CONTRAST

1970 Pontiac Firebird.

The car I've always wanted and now
I have it. I rule! - *American Beauty*

I'm Funny How?

I mean, funny like I'm a clown?
I amuse you? - *GoodFellas*

PAIRING FONTS – BEWARE OF CONFLICT

Contrast is good, but beware of being to *matchy-matchy*

The Sick Boy method?

Well, it nearly worked for him, hey.
- Trainspotting

PAIRING FONTS – BEWARE OF CONFLICT

The curvatures of the spurs are completely at odds with one another

Curving downwards

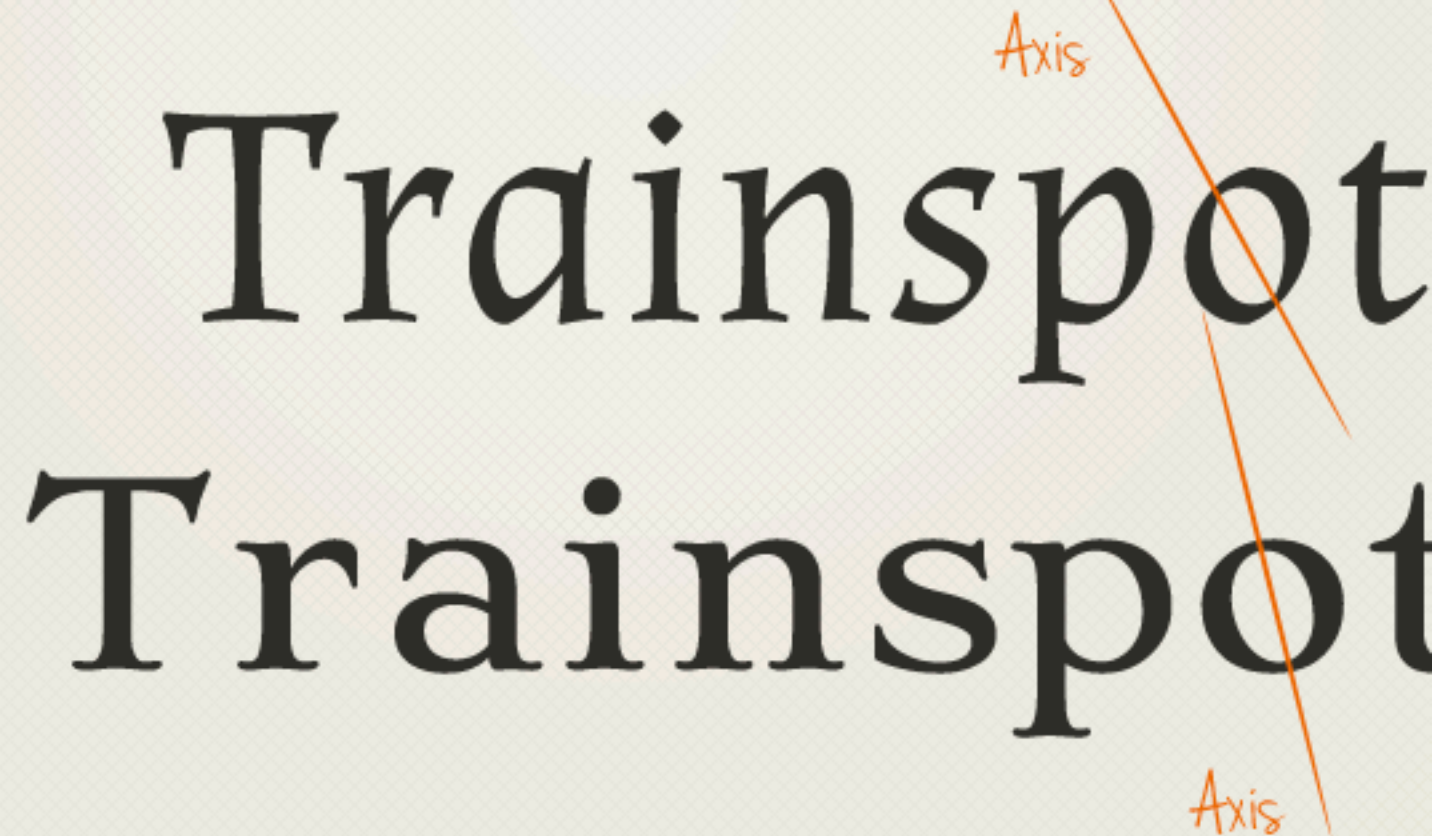
Trainspot

Trainspot

Curving upwards

PAIRING FONTS – BEWARE OF CONFLICT

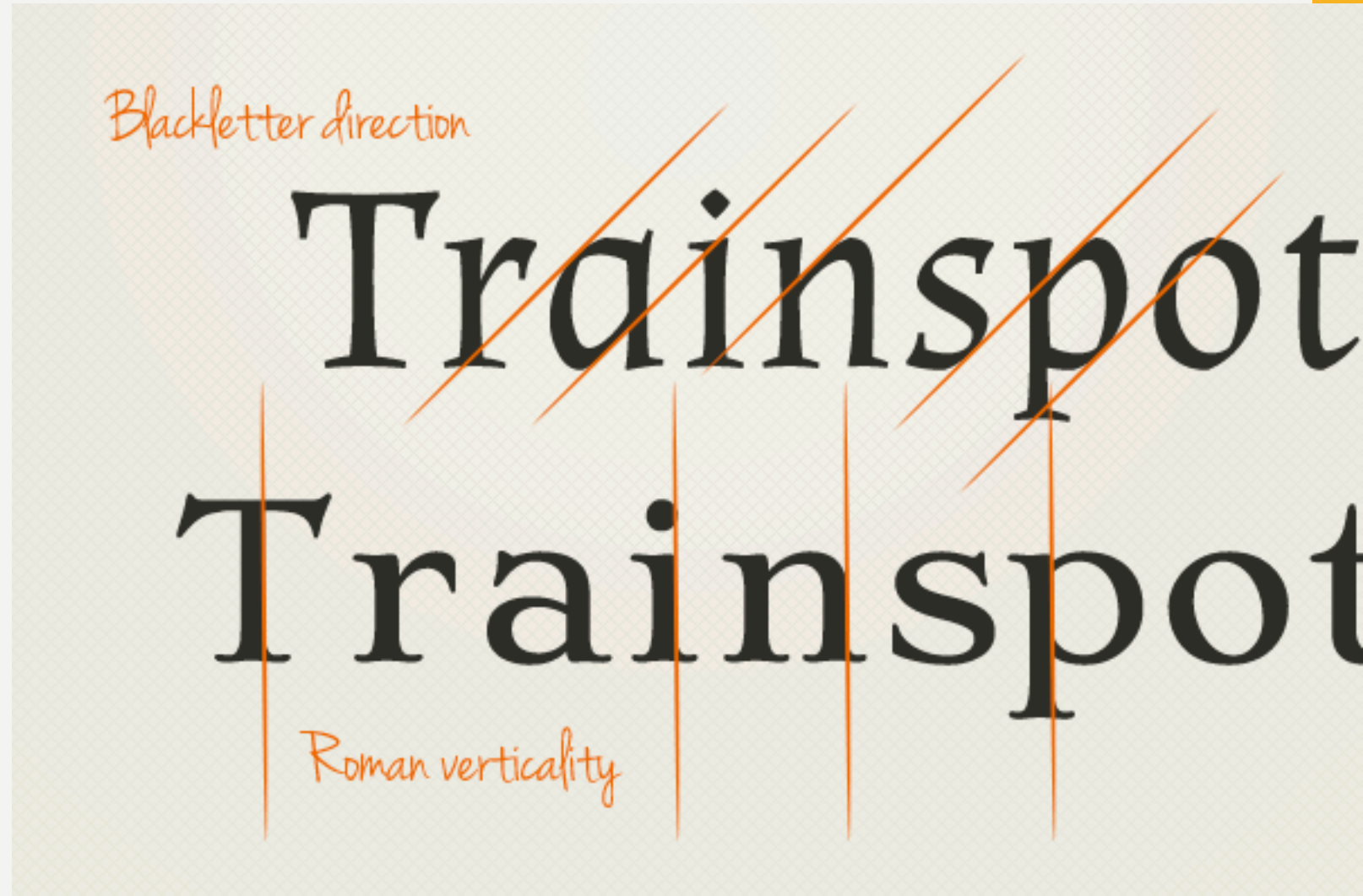
Their axes are just off



Trainspot
Trainspot

PAIRING FONTS – BEWARE OF CONFLICT

The way a Blackletter's formed gives it a slight direction, as opposed to the vertical nature of the Roman



RULE OF THIRDS

- Divide page vertically and horizontally into thirds
- Locating content along these lines and at the intersections makes designs more balanced
- Users' eyes naturally follow the lines



In practice, many websites use the Golden Ratio and the Rule of Thirds as starting points only.

GRID THEORY

It isn't just about making things line up, it's about proportion as well.

Golden Ratio

- There is a "Golden Ratio", a mathematical pattern that occurs so often in nature that Pythagoras felt it was divinely inspired.
- When things are designed with that ratio in mind, they are more pleasing visually.

