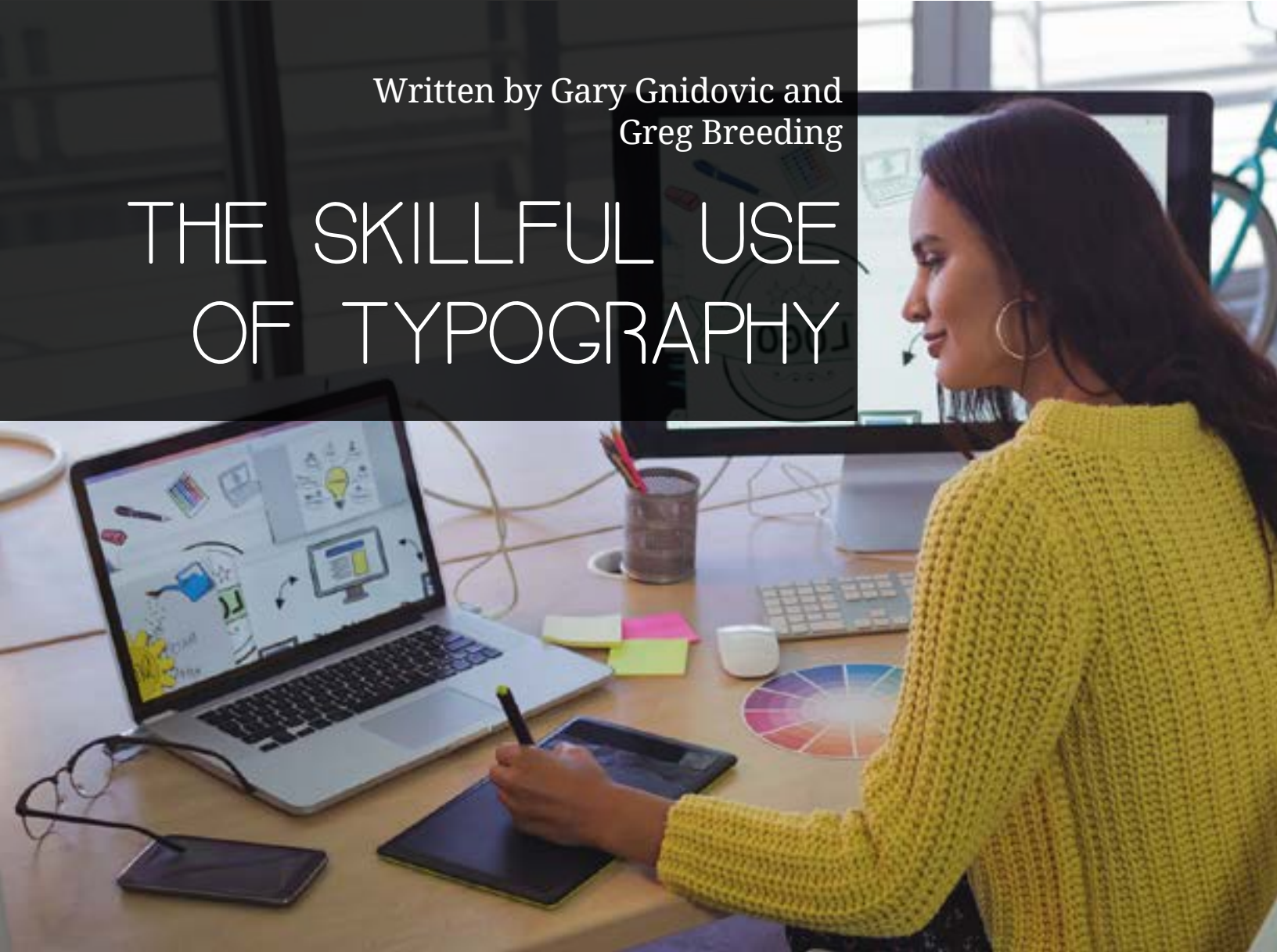


Written by Gary Gnidovic and
Greg Breeding

THE SKILLFUL USE OF TYPOGRAPHY



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Chapter 1

Why typography decisions are important



Aaron Burns, an influential designer and founder of the International Typeface Corporation (ITC), once said, “In typography, function is of major importance, form is secondary, and fashion [trend] is almost meaningless.”

Although this may sound like an extreme view, it holds a great deal of truth. If we choose to work well with our type, concentrating on its purpose, appropriateness, and legibility, our magazines will begin to take on an air of authenticity and integrity. Rather than blindly following stylistic trends in typography, intelligent, careful attention to detail will pave the way for a more expressive, creative approach.



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The skillful use of type in magazine design is an area where, even with limited resources, we can do a great deal to enhance the look and feel of our publications. The creative application of a couple of well-chosen font families is often preferable to a CD containing “600 Cool Fonts for Every Purpose.” This e-book will offer some principles that will help establish a firm foundation on which to build the visual approach to your magazine.

Chapter 2

Classifications of type



There are two major classifications of type: serif and sans-serif. Under these categories there are a number of subclassifications.

Serif

A typeface with serifs has short lines stemming from and at an angle to the upper and lower ends of the strokes of a letter. There are a few main subcategories:

Classical (Geralde)

Characteristics: Inclined axis, wedge-shaped serifs, transitions between strokes and serifs are smooth, and the contrast between the thin and thick letterform strokes are subtle.

Sample typeface: Garamond

Transitional

Characteristics: Less-inclined axis, flatter serifs with angular ends, transitions between strokes and serifs are also smooth, and the contrast between the thin and thick letterform strokes are more prominent.

Sample typeface: Caslon

Modern (Didone)

Characteristics: Axis is vertical, flat/squared serifs, and the contrast between the thin and thick letterform strokes is significant.

Sample typeface: Bodoni

Slab (Egyptian)

Characteristics: Squared letter shapes, vertical axis, thick rectangular serifs, and a consistent width for letterform strokes.

Sample typeface: URW Claredon Medium

Sans-Serif

A sans-serif typeface has no serifs.

Classical

Characteristics: The axis, and letterform strokes can vary. Generally, any variations tend to be more subtle.

Sample typeface: Helvetica

Other: a myriad of choices

There are a number of other typefaces which don't fit the two major classifications.

Script

Characteristics: Swooping, graceful letterforms. There are many scripts available, but few that are beautifully done, so be discerning as you choose a script.

Sample typeface: *Zapfino*

Deconstructivist

Characteristics: Letterforms where the traditional elements are distressed or deconstructed.

Sample typeface: Invacuo Valid

Handwriting

Characteristics: Letterforms that reflect the look and irregularity of handwriting. These are best when there are lots of alternate glyphs to allow for a more natural look.

Sample typeface: P22 Cezanne

Titling/Display

Characteristics: The proportions of these letterforms are formulated to be used in large formats: headlines, cover logos, etc.

Sample typeface: Birch



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Trendy

Characteristics: These typefaces reflect the changing trends of design, so their relevance is often short-lived. When selecting a trendy typeface, be sure that it is reflecting the era or trend you desire.

Sample typeface: BaseNine Bold

Chapter 3

Principles for good typography



Legibility

Readability of the text is the first priority in good typography. Magazines are about communication, and we don't want our type choices to impede that goal.

However, legibility is much more than simply the ability to discern words on a page. It has to do with ease of reading and the avoidance of reader fatigue. Our goal is to keep the readers in the magazine and to make their reading experience pleasant, so that they'll stay with the text and absorb the content.

Much of this has to do with fine-tuning the particulars of type specification, such as letterspacing, leading,

size, line length, and the way all of these aspects work together. Think of your labor to create an effortless reading experience as a way of serving your reader.

Hierarchy

It is important to lead the eye through the page in a logical way. Ask yourself what you want the reader to see first, where his eye should go next, and so on. Think of the page as having three basic levels of information: attention getter (title); explainer (subtitle); and text (body copy).

Contrast

To achieve visual dynamic and hierarchy in design, use visual contrast among typographic elements. This can be achieved through the following:

- **Size:** The eye always goes to the larger elements first.
- **Weight:** The eye is attracted to heavier, darker elements.

- **Color:** A color that stands apart will draw attention.
- **Stress:** If text is mostly roman, italic will stand out.
- **Character shape:** The shape is determined by serif versus sans serif characters.

Large areas of text on a page will display a certain texture created by the weight and other characteristics of the typeface. This typographic texture may contrast with other areas of text, such as a sidebar, which may have its own texture due to the use of a contrasting typeface.

Consistency

Once a typographic formula is established in a publication, it is important that you don't stray from its essentials. Some elements may change, but others should always remain the same from article to article and issue to issue. This will assure the important blend of familiarity and surprise and maintain a professional-looking publication.

Appropriateness to audience and content

Ask yourself if the chosen fonts are a good match to the nature of your publication and its audience.

Here are some examples:

- A news magazine should probably not employ a typeface that conveys too much character or personality, since it is usually assumed that reporting is done in a fairly objective manner. The font should reflect the straightforward, no-nonsense news approach.
- However, a magazine that is directed to youth on the cutting edge of culture might want to choose a display font that suggests an awareness of cultural trends and has a bit more “attitude.”

Sensitivity to letterspacing

One of the most important, but often overlooked, aspects of good, professional typography is close attention to letterspacing, especially in titles and

display typography. Visually fine-tune the spacing of letterforms to achieve the impression of equal space between all characters. This is not created simply through the precise measurement of the distance between letters, but has to do with the visual impression of that space.

Here are some helpful principles:

- Round letters should be spaced tighter.
- Straight letters should be a bit looser.
- Be aware of the negative space the combinations of letterforms create, especially in longer titles.

Know typographic history

Knowing where today's type comes from and how it developed will help you use it intelligently and appropriately. The origins of font designs are tied to particular points of history, both distant and recent. Knowledge of the origins and even the designers can help you understand the font in a deeper way. This may lead to a better and more honest application of typographic detail.

Chapter 4

Selecting and using a text font



Body copy selection

The selection of a text font is one of the most important early decisions a designer must make.

Here are some considerations in selecting a text font:

Neutrality

A text font should be neutral, not drawing attention to itself. This allows the designer to use a secondary font with more personality as accent. It also helps to reduce reader fatigue.

Readability

This is key. A font like Bodoni is a beautiful font for languages in the Latin script, but for a large amount of text it can be tiring. The characteristics that make it so beautiful—its elegant thick and thin strokes—are not suitable for magazine body text. Garamond, on the other hand, is a beautiful classic face that can be quite easy to read, even over long periods of time. Ask yourself: “Is it a struggle to keep reading, or does the eye flow effortlessly?”

Texture

Consider the texture that the typeface forms on an entire page or spread. This impression is part of the character/personality of the magazine.

Weight

This aspect is closely related to texture. Pay attention to the subtleties of weight. Sometimes a font family has multiple weights that allow you to fine-tune the look of your text. Be aware of how your publication’s

paper and the printing process affect the look of your chosen fonts. What looks good on your laser proofs might not hold up well on the press. For example, newsprint might allow ink to spread, adding too much weight to your typeface. For this reason, you might need to choose a lighter-weight font.

Appropriateness

If you apply the principle of neutrality to your text font, this will not be an issue. But even with the small size of the text font, certain characteristics, although subtle, may be revealed. These characteristics may or may not be a good match for your content. Is the overall impression masculine or feminine, strong or weak, serious or whimsical, classic or trendy?

Some suggestions for text type for languages using Latin script are: Garamond, Sabon, Goudy, Weiss, Bembo, Berkely, Minion, Caslon, Hoefler, and Dante.

If you see a font you might like to have, but you don't know its name, there is a useful website (www.identifont.com) which can help you identify it. This site takes you through a lengthy list of questions regarding the characteristics of the font you are trying to identify. All the while, it is narrowing down the choices (beginning with thousands) to the point where you are able to find the one you want. It rarely fails.

Fine-tune type selection

In order to determine the appropriate combination of size and leading for a publication's text font, the designer must run a series of tests. Here's how:

- Depending on the particular font, use 9.5/11 (type size/leading) as your average and set samples of text of several paragraphs each in various combinations at 1/4 point intervals. You may have eight to 10 different combinations from which to choose.

- Don't rely on how your tests look on a computer screen or a poor printer. Make your tests on the most reliable output device you can.
- All typefaces need special attention and fine-tuning. Each typeface has its own particular characteristics that need to be considered when making your final adjustments.
- Remember that bigger isn't always better. Sometimes enlarging type to make it easier to read actually has the opposite effect, because the eye is going back and forth too often.
- Your specifications for letterspacing should be based on readability, apparent density, space needs, and overall type texture. Take into consideration all of those aspects.
- Once you've arrived at a text face and proper specifications, use them in a consistent manner

throughout your publication. Don't be tempted when an article is short or long to adjust the size or the leading to accommodate the text. Adjust your design or size of art instead. Or, if the text is not extremely short or long, ask the editors to do some cutting or adding.

Body text: Line length

An important aspect of readability is how many times the eye has to jump from line to line. Once your type size is established, line length becomes the determining factor.

- Forty characters per line is optimum. This is long enough so that the eye doesn't jump too often, yet short enough to maintain the reader's pace.
- Three columns of type in a standard magazine format (assuming the type isn't too large) provides about the right line length for good legibility.

- Occasionally narrower columns may be used. However, this format is not recommended for large amounts of text because the reader may find it tiring. Keep narrow columns to a minimum. Or, in the case of a sidebar, you may use smaller text, or a slightly-condensed typeface that will allow more characters per line.
- When wider columns are used, it's often a good idea to increase the leading to allow the eye to jump more easily from line to line.

Body text: Column alignment

Should text be justified or unjustified? There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches.

Ragged right

Ragged right text may be perceived as less formal, more casual. Letterspacing is more consistent, since the text isn't stretched to create even line lengths. However, negative space is created around the right

edge of the column. This should be adjusted so there are no apparent bulges or gaps. Ragged right text is more difficult to wrap around images because of the uneven gaps on one side of the wrap compared to the evenness of the other.

Justified

Justified text tends to feel more formal and orderly. At this time, most Western magazines use justified text for the main body of type. It contrasts nicely when wrapped around irregularly-shaped art. But it can be a problem with shorter lines (less than 10 picas/4.2 cm) as type spacing becomes irregular. Watch for rivers or gaps in text and unevenly-spaced lines.

Use of hyphenation

- Keep hyphenation to a minimum—no more than two hyphenated words in a row if possible.
- The amount of hyphenation must be balanced with the potential for loose lines.

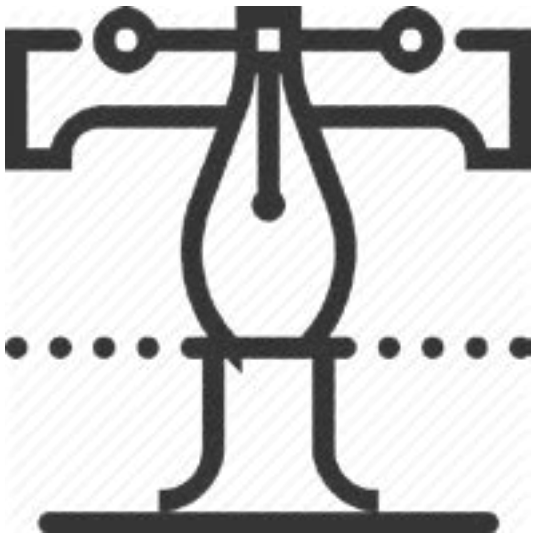
- Adjust the number of characters on a line with soft returns and subtle condensing of type, if necessary. (Condense type to a maximum of 97%. Anything more begins to be apparent.)

Opening paragraphs

In order to draw the reader into the article, you may wish to alter the text type on the opening page. Enlarge the type of the opening paragraphs or sentences, or increase the line spacing and possibly use an initial cap to attract the eye to the beginning sentences. Then, after the reader is hooked, move back into the normal text specifications.

Chapter 5

Other typographic elements



Titles

Titles are intended to persuade the reader to stop paging through the magazine and to enter the article. So they need to be:

Legible

Is the typeface difficult to read? Watch for spacing that is too tight or too loose, since this affects readability.

Appropriate in character

How well does the typeface reflect the feel and intent of the article? How compatible is it with the images on the page? Consider various aspects of a typeface's personality. Is a particular typeface masculine,

feminine, strong, bold, delicate, classical, neutral, serious and newslake, or whimsical? If you use a variety of fonts in your publication, you may be able to match typeface to message.

Polished

Since titles are the first thing a reader will often look at on a page, it's important that type choice and letterspacing are done carefully and with excellence.

Engaging

A good, strong title from your editor that is well-designed and integrated with the page creates an irresistible draw to the reader. Remember the importance of contrast to establish hierarchy. Is there adequate contrast in size and weight?

Decks (or subtitles)

These are to be read in conjunction with the title. Usually, they are placed after the title, but sometimes before it.

Decks should provide clear explanation of the title. A clear, straightforward deck can sometimes allow for a more creative, playful, or shorter title, as long as the deck is prominent enough to give clear explanation to the reader.

Bylines

Even the smallest elements may be used to direct the eye and complete the design.

- A byline may be used in a standard, consistent way throughout the publication. This will allow for efficiency and speed, since there is one less element to consider in each article.
- Alternately, a byline may be treated uniquely in each article as a small, but distinctive, design element.
- Sometimes choosing the treatment depends on how much emphasis your publication wants to give to the author's name. Obviously, unique

treatment of an element brings more attention to it. And that attention can be adjusted through size and placement of the element.

Captions

- Generally, captions are used in a subtle manner on a spread.
- A good caption explains the photo, but does not describe the obvious.
- It should adequately contrast with the text so that the reader doesn't mistake it for part of the body text. Consider the bold or italic version of your text font for these, or a nicely contrasting bold sans serif font for even more contrast with your text.
- Consider using the same style throughout your publication.

Subheads

- Subheads function as hooks to intrigue the reader and keep the eye moving along the page. They offer a little information as to what is to follow within the text.
- Subheads should contrast with the text. The style may be consistent throughout the publication, or may be different with each article, depending on your magazine's approach.

Pull-quotes

These function as verbal illustrations from the text. They provide intrigue and another entry point into the article. They often yield an emotional pull for the reader.

- Pull-quotes should be brief; otherwise the reader may skip them.
- They need to contrast adequately with the text through use of color, size, weight or style.

- There is often some flexibility with their positioning, so they provide a good opportunity to complete the composition of a page or spread and complement the other visual elements.

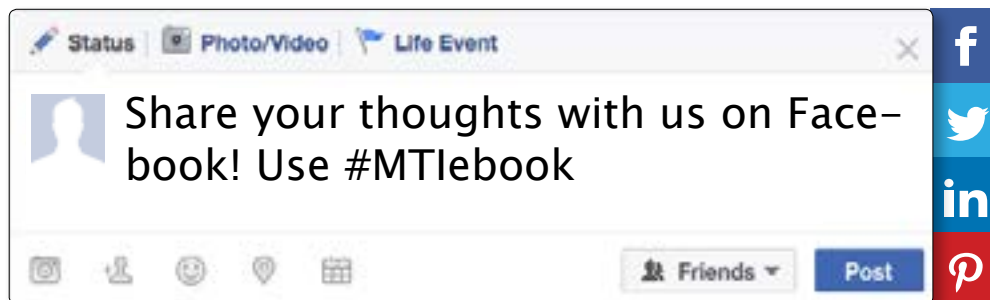
Sidebars

- A sidebar gives readers another entry point into the magazine.
- It is helpful to define the sidebar text style, and be consistent in using it.
- In order to create contrast with the body text, it is appropriate to choose a readable sans-serif font for the sidebar body text.

Beyond the book

Which typographic elements need to be changed in your publication?

“The Skillful Use of Typography” is an excerpt from the “Design for Magazines” training manual. To purchase the complete manual, visit: www.magazinetraining.com.



About the authors



Gary Gnidovic is the founder and creative director of Gx3 Creative, a visual communications firm that specializes in design, photography, and consulting. For 14 years he served as design director of *Christianity Today* magazine. Prior to that he had art directed *Books & Culture* and *Today's Christian Woman* magazines. Gary's designs have received awards from the Evangelical Press Association, *Print*, *HOW*, and *Communication Arts* magazines. He has a B.A. in photography from Southern Illinois University and an M.A. in fine arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Gary has taught design and/or photography courses for Magazine Training International in Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Croatia, India, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.



Greg Breeding serves as president and creative director for Journey Group, and puts his stamp on a body of work that cuts across the world of evangelical publishing. Some clients include The Salvation Army, Moody Bible Institute, Campus Crusade for Christ, Family Life Ministry, World Vision, the American Bible Society, and World Relief. Greg has consistently received awards from *Print* and *Folio* magazines, the Society of Publication Designers, Florida Magazine Association, and the Evangelical Press Association. He holds a B.A. in fine arts from Virginia Commonwealth University, where he studied under some of the nation's best-known academics in design and typography. Greg has taught design courses with Magazine Training International in Ukraine, Malaysia, and the Czech Republic.



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