

Typography in the Responsive Web

Putting Arial Out To Pasture



Do It With Drupal
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What We'll Cover

- ✿ Design & Typography: what & why
- ✿ Web Fonts:
 - ✦ How they work (& don't)
 - ✦ Where they work (... & don't)
 - ✦ Why developers hate them...
 - ✦ ...and why they don't have to
- ✿ How they can be a bit more **awesome**

I Will Not Bash Helvetica*

- ✿ But it's not always the best tool in our toolbox as designers
- ✿ Why? Because...

**or its low-rent cousin Arial*

This Type Sucks

(but yours doesn't have to)

Type is Important

The **typefaces** we use **become the physical embodiment of the information** we convey through the sites we design

Type is Important

- ❖ Companies (read: our clients & employers) spend lots of money developing their brand image
- ❖ Much of that image is conveyed through specific selection & design of their typefaces

Type & Its Importance

(in 120 seconds or less)

✿ Basic design tools to convey meaning, emotion & message:

1. image

2. color

3. composition

4. language (prose)...

5. *and the typeface itself*

Why Give One Up?

- ✦ The Swiss style dictates that type should convey only the meaning of the words it spells out
- ✦ *But that eliminates the **one tool that covers 90% of the page***

Josef Müller-Brockmann Was Livin' The Dream

- ✿ 17 years of the web & still no decent alternatives in sight
- ✿ Admit it: text-as-gif was a worse hack than the transparent spacer.gif

A Slow Boat To China

- ✿ Options have been few & flawed
 - ✦ Text-as-GIF
(hard to maintain)
 - ✦ Font tags in HTML & CSS
(constrained by availability)
 - ✦ Cufon & sIFR
(if you've used it, you understand)

So What's a Designer To Do?

Turns Out, Lots

- ✿ With adoption of @font-face and related font download specs in CSS3
- ✿ ...and the involvement of the type foundries themselves
- ✿ ...and even more persistence on the part of the web design community

Enter: Typekit

*ahem...Adobe

- ✦ Typekit launched in 2009, followed by Fontdeck, Fonts.com & more
- ✦ Enables easy embedding & broad support for thousands of fonts
- ✦ (Yes, you can also use free/open source options and host yourself. You should try it – it's fun.)
- ✦ Don't forget: it's new. There are rough edges. It pays to remember...



**Web Fonts Are
Still a Bit of a
Wild West Affair.**

Let Me Give You a Hint

- ✿ Fonts were made to be printed; screen appearance was secondary (in order to aid in that whole 'writing' part)
- ✿ Explosion of devices, OS's & resolutions requires adjusting screen appearance often at sub-pixel level
- ✿ That practice is known as 'hinting' (or 'dumping hundreds of man-hours & untold mounds of money into making type not suck on Windows')

Hinting is Tricky

- ✿ See: 'How to draw a line on the screen that falls between two pixels'
- ✿ or 'Things that are like painting a portrait while blindfolded with one color & no hands'
- ✿ See the blogs at Fonts.com & Typekit.com to learn more

Open Source Type

- ✿ We're all fans of Open Source –
- ✿ So why wouldn't we all use Google Web Fonts or just host ourselves?
- ✿ Google is a tech company – not a type one
- ✿ Commercial services are dedicated to bettering the web font experience and release updates & new features all the time

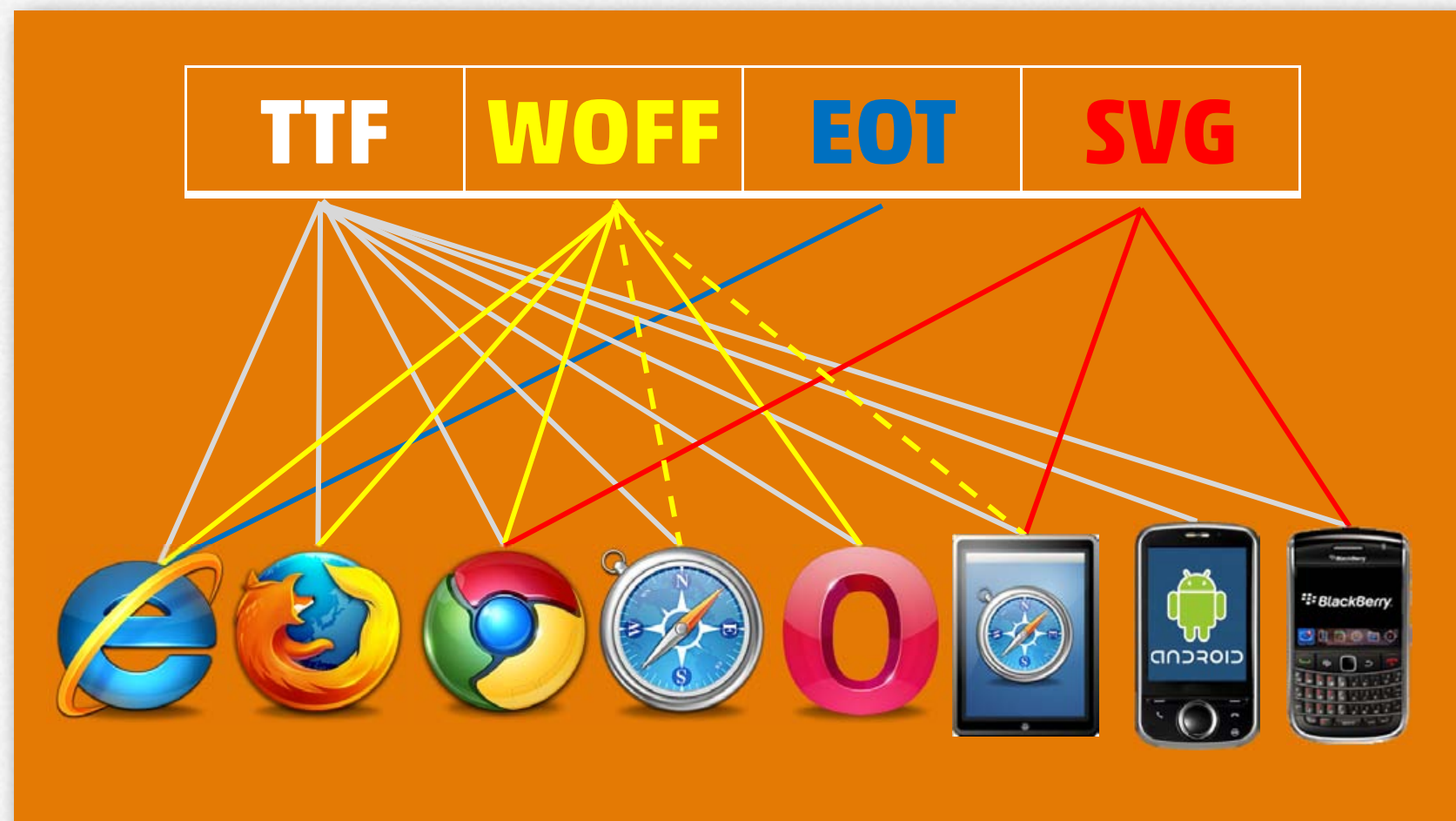
It's About The Type It's About Quality It's About Experience

- ✿ So what's the point, you ask?
- ✿ Over a dozen (& counting) web font services, all with slightly different syntax & features
- ✿ No one format works in all browsers or on all platforms

What the WOFF?

- ✦ Just in case you thought it should be easy...
- ✦ Some browsers support True Type
- ✦ Others EOT
- ✦ iPhone? SVG
- ✦ Target: WOFF
(but we're not there yet)

Web Fonts Can Be Complicated



Support, So Far

WOFF Support (07/2011)

fonts.com web fonts
by Monotype Imaging



Internet Explorer



Firefox



Chrome



Safari

Beta



Mobile Safari

Expected
soon



Opera (Mobile)



Android

limited¹

Current Version 9.0.	Current Version 5.0.1	Current Version 12.0	Current Version 5.0.5	Current Version iOS 4.3	Current Version 11.5	Current Version 2.3/3.0
Compatible 9.0 ->	Compatible 3.6 ->	Compatible 5.0 ->	Compatible 5.1 ->	Compatible iOS 5 (exptected)	Compatible 11.1 ->	Compatible -
Not compatible 5.5 6.0 7.0 8.0	Not compatible 2.0 3.0 3.5	Not compatible 4.0	Not compatible 3.1 3.2 4.0 5.0	Not compatible iOS 3.2 iOS 4.0 – 4.3	Not compatible 9.0 9.5, 9.6 10.0 – 10.6 11.1	Not compatible 2.1 2.2 2.3 3.0

¹ Firefox 5 Android (App) supports WOFF.

Hello, Web Standard

- ✿ Reached 'W3C Candidate Recommendation Status' Aug. 2011
- ✿ Final changes were due last week
read more here: <http://www.w3.org/TR/WOFF/>
- ✿ Still a ways to go: only 57% of browsers in use support WOFF
(all current browsers except Opera Mini & Android)
- ✿ BUT it is where the market is going

Why Are We Doing This Anyway?

- ✦ Branding consistency
- ✦ User experience: better readability
- ✦ Efficiency: real type is editable by admin users
- ✦ Accessibility: screen readers
- ✦ SEO: Google is the biggest blind user on the planet

So What Does It Take?

- ✦ Font selection & pairing: don't be shy about body text too
- ✦ Research & test: no substitute for actually seeing it yourself in IE (< 9)
- ✦ Note well: ClearType won't fix everything, and XP shipped with it off anyway
- ✦ Take it for a spin - it's easy to try (seriously - it's one line of code)

Now You Might Cry

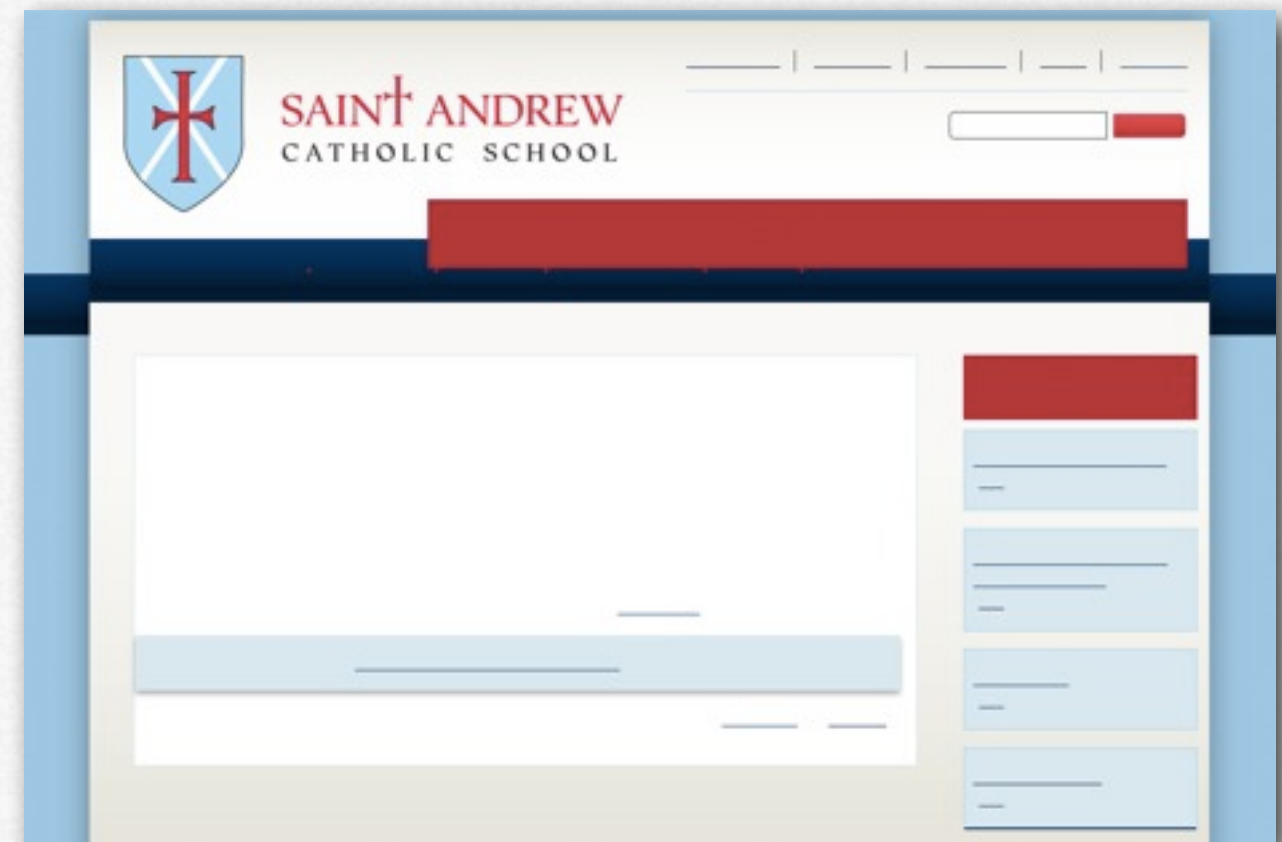
(maybe just a little bit)

- ✿ Ready? Fire up that new design for your client or your boss and...

Ugly or Nothing

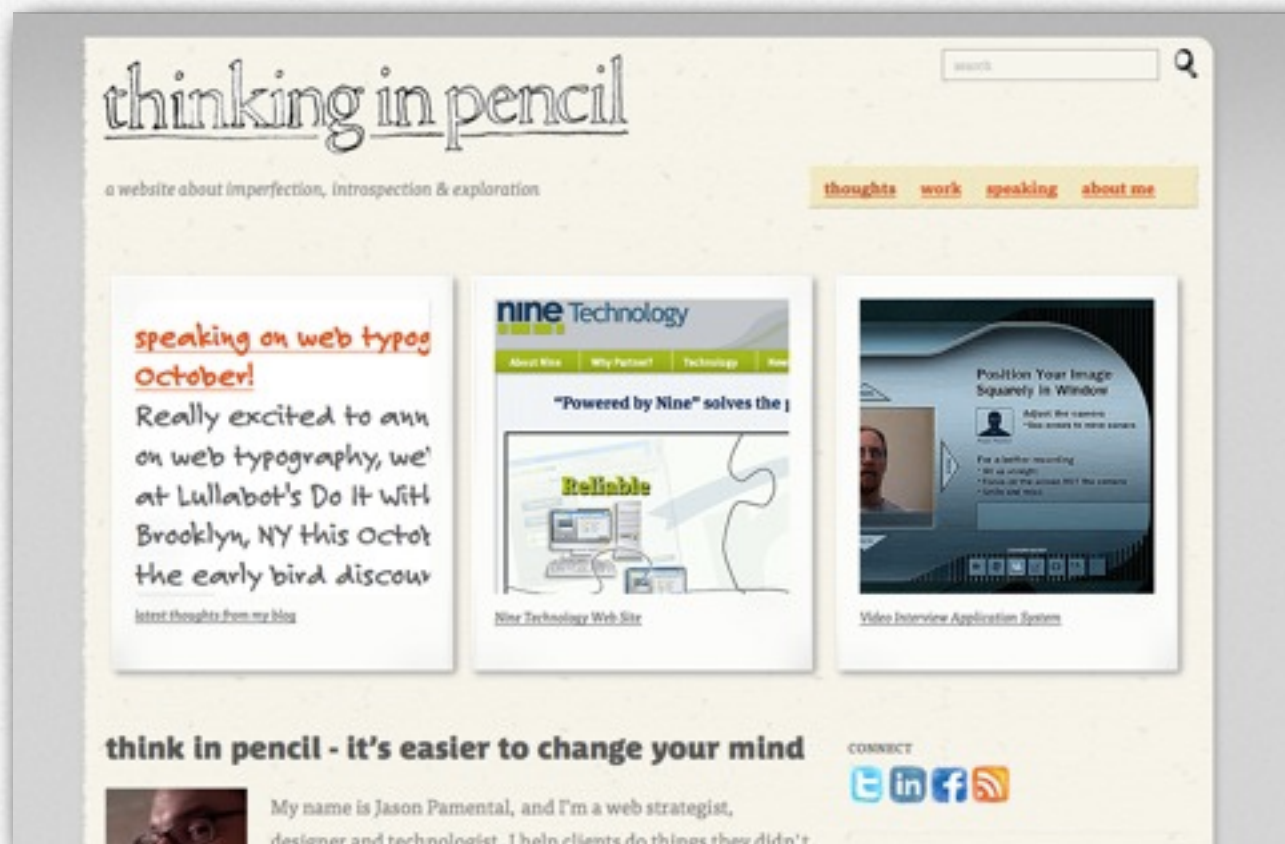


Firefox: displays page w/fallbacks first, then 'pops' into web font



Webkit: draws page without rendering any type until web font loads

Ugly or Nothing



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What's FOUT About

- ❖ FOUT (Flash Of Unstyled Text) is what happens before those lovely web fonts load
- ❖ Ugly or Nothing – **either can be a deal-breaker with clients**
- ❖ You can mitigate either with Google's WebFont Loader & some creative layering of your CSS

WebFont Loader

- ✿ Several services (Fonts.com, Typekit & Google Web Fonts) support it
- ✿ Injects classes into your HTML indicating status of web fonts in your page: loading, active, inactive
- ✿ Allows you to craft 'loading CSS' using web-safe fallbacks, adjusting size, line-height & letter-spacing

It's the Responsive Thing To Do

- ✦ Adjusting your CSS can eliminate jarring redraw/reflow of your text
- ✦ Makes sure your design holds up during loading & on older devices
- ✦ Can even have <noscript> CSS-only loading for further refinement (Fonts.com only I think)
- ✦ It's the web – things go wrong, and a professional will plan for that

What About 日本?

- ✿ File size for most weights of Western fonts is ~40-60k
- ✿ Could be ~200k+ for Arabic or...
- ✿ Over ~2MB for Japanese
- ✿ Embedding that would be... unwise
- ✿ Fonts.com can dynamically subset that font and deliver only the characters used on the page

Buy or Borrow

- ❖ Self-hosting: more complex to set up initially & on your own for updates
- ❖ BUT – provides better solution for large scale sites & areas of local service and poor connectivity
- ❖ Services: continually updating, CDN speed, huge selection
- ❖ Tied to recurring cost

What Needs to Happen

- ✦ Compatibility

- ✦ Quality

- ✦ Speed

- ✦ Education:

- ✦ Print designers know typography but not about the vagaries of the web

- ✦ Web designers know usability but not about typography

- ✦ Front-end dev's need to know how to configure/implement properly

Getting Better

- ✦ Conferences like Amersand focused entirely on web fonts
- ✦ Jason Santa Maria is writing *On Web Typography* for A Book Apart
- ✦ ...and
- ✦ I'm working on one also for O'Reilly (and you are all the first to know!)

That's a Lot of Work

- ✦ But the **user** wins: better design, enhanced readability, richer experience
- ✦ And the **client** wins: better branding, greater engagement
- ✦ And **we** win: by pushing the boundaries further, we take design to a higher level – and get more & better work because of it

Thank You!

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many thanks to Monotype & Schoolyard for their support

fonts.com web fonts
by Monotype Imaging



[thinking in pencil](http://thinkinginpencil.com).com



Resources

- ✿ Fonts.com & their blog
<http://blog.fonts.com>
- ✿ My Fonts.com articles w/demo,
sample code: <http://bit.ly/pF5qlr>
- ✿ Typekit & their blog
<http://blog.typekit.com>
- ✿ Google's Web Fonts
<http://www.google.com/webfonts>
- ✿ Ethan Marcotte's excellent book
Responsive Web Design