

The Trouble With Type

Problems and solutions in web typography

by Elliot Jay Stocks

elliottjaystocks.com | twitter.com/elliottjaystocks



A personal typographic journey

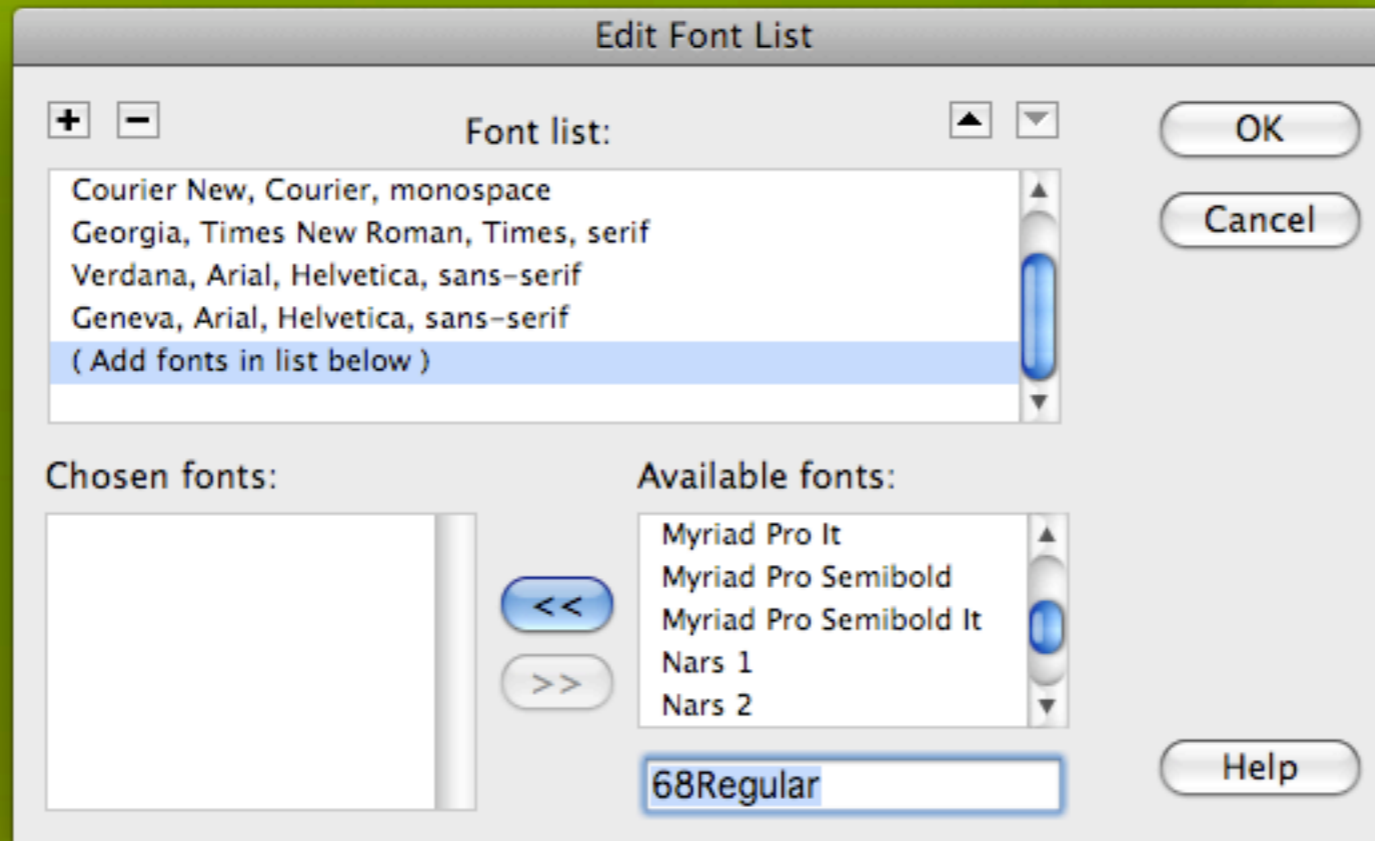
The early days...
... Dreamweaver...
... confusion!



The early days...
... Dreamweaver...
... confusion!

The choice of fonts appeared
to be system-wide





Note: CS3 panel shown

Dreamweaver

adobe.com/products/dreamweaver

The early days...
... Dreamweaver...
... confusion!

The choice of fonts appeared
to be system-wide



The early days...
... Dreamweaver...
... confusion!

The choice of fonts appeared
to be system-wide

It wasn't clear about web-safe fonts



The early days...
... Dreamweaver...
... confusion!

The choice of fonts appeared
to be system-wide

It wasn't clear about web-safe fonts

To an extent, Dreamweaver is still guilty



The allure of Flash



The allure of Flash

You can use any font you like



The allure of Flash

You can use any font you like

Layout freedom, a la print design
(vs. HTML inconsistency)



The allure of Flash

You can use any font you like

Layout freedom, a la print design
(vs. HTML inconsistency)

Hence type can be presented as intended



Back to basics: HTML

Back to basics: HTML

Accessible:
screenreader-friendly and allows for resizing.

Back to basics: HTML

Accessible:

screenreader-friendly and allows for resizing.

Updatable:

the source text dictates the final render.

Back to basics: HTML

Accessible:

screenreader-friendly and allows for resizing.

Updatable:

the source text dictates the final render.

Simple:

HTML and CSS — that's it!

Image replacement

Image replacement

PROS

It looks good

It gives control over other elements besides type

Image replacement

PROS

It looks good

It gives control over other elements besides type

CONS

Difficult to update

Inaccessible in some situations

Potentially it differs from the source code

sIFR



SIMPLE.

2009
Jan 19

COMMENTS
27

PUBLISHED IN
Design, Quotes

« PREV

“ Simplicity is not the goal. It is the by-product of a good idea and modest expectations. ”

—[Paul Rand](#)

COMMENTS
27

DESIGN TAGS
Gotham, Teal

« PREV

sIFR at work on JSM's site

jasonsantamaria.com

sIFR

sIFR

The best of both worlds: the accessibility and 'selectability' of HTML but with (some of)* the benefits of Flash-based rendering.

* = Layout is still determined by HTML

sIFR

The best of both worlds: the accessibility and 'selectability' of HTML but with (some of)* the benefits of Flash-based rendering.

Gracefully degrades for users without Flash / JS.

* = Layout is still determined by HTML

sIFR

The best of both worlds: the accessibility and ‘selectability’ of HTML but with (some of)* the benefits of Flash-based rendering.

Gracefully degrades for users without Flash / JS.

It’s brilliant, but essentially it’s a hack; not a solution.

* = Layout is still determined by HTML

“ While sIFR gives us better typography today, it is clearly not the solution for the next 20 years.

It is but a nice stopgap for people who value the importance of typography and don't want to wait 1, 5, or 10 years for browser makers, OS vendors, and type foundries to figure out a better solution.

The moment that happens however, sIFR will lift right out and give way to whatever other method is available. ”

~ *Mike Davidson*

“ While sIFR gives us better typography today, it is clearly not the solution for the next 20 years.

It is but a nice stopgap for people who value the importance of typography and don't want to wait 1, 5, or 10 years for browser makers, OS vendors, and type foundries to figure out a better solution.

The moment that happens however, sIFR will lift right out and give way to whatever other method is available. ”

~ *Mike Davidson*

“ While sIFR gives us better typography today, it is clearly not the solution for the next 20 years.

It is but a nice stopgap for people who value the importance of typography and don't want to wait 1, 5, or 10 years for browser makers, OS vendors, and type foundries to figure out a better solution.

The moment that happens however, sIFR will lift right out and give way to whatever other method is available. ”

~ *Mike Davidson*

Font embedding

Browser-supported font embedding is, I believe, the future of web typography.



The future of web typography

@font-face

@font-face

Originated in the CSS2 spec, despite its general association with CSS3.

@font-face

Originated in the CSS2 spec, despite its general association with CSS3.

Extremely simple to implement.

@font-face

Originated in the CSS2 spec, despite its general association with CSS3.

Extremely simple to implement.

Current support:

- Safari 3.1

- Firefox 3.1

- Opera 10

@font-face

Originated in the CSS2 spec, despite its general association with CSS3.

Extremely simple to implement.

Current support:

- Safari 3.1

- Firefox 3.1

- Opera 10

Has some piracy issues. (More on that in a sec!)



exljbris Font Foundry

[Home](#)

[Blog](#)

Free Fonts

[Anivers](#)

[Delicious](#)

[Diavlo](#)

[Fertigo Pro](#)

[Fontin](#)

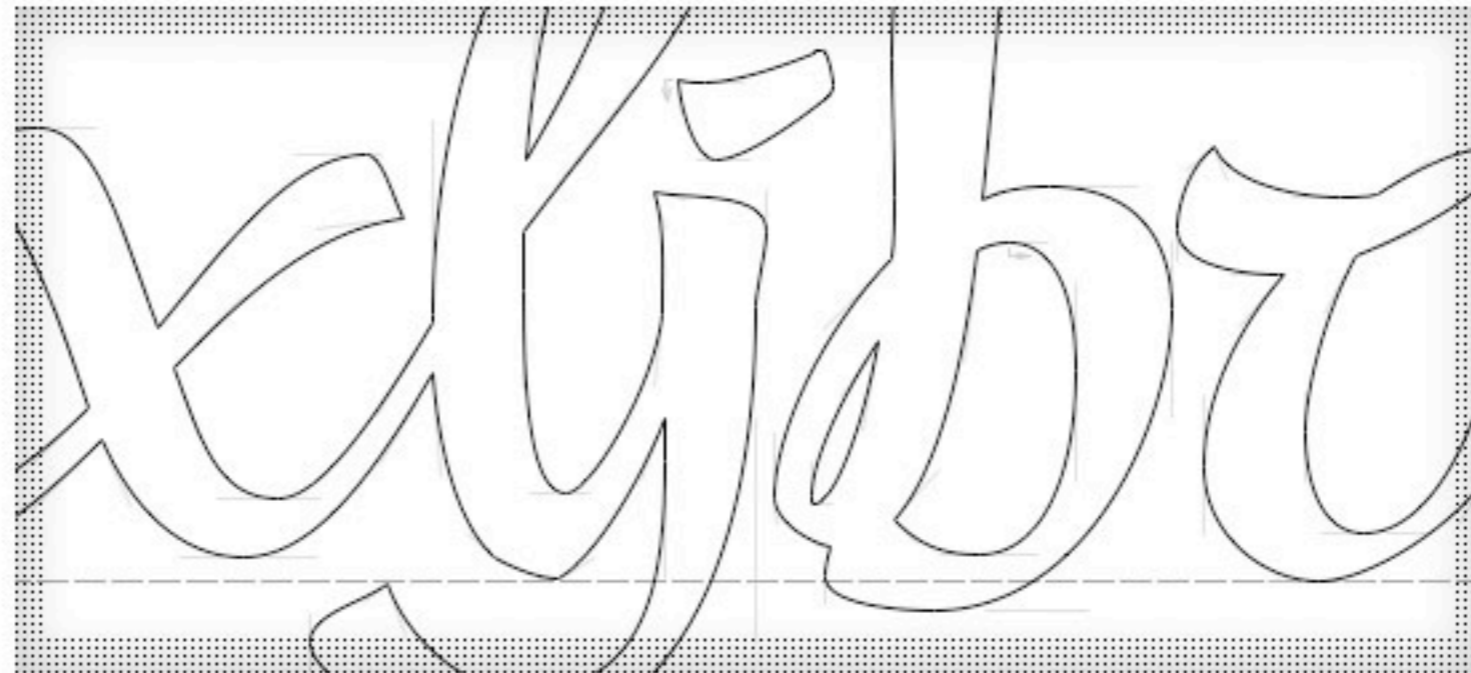
[Fontin Sans](#)

[Museo](#)

NEW [Museo Sans](#)

[Tallys](#)

NEW [Fonts in use](#)



Typography for free

Welcome to **exljbris**, the library of Jos Buivenga (LJB) where you can find my (9) free fonts: [Delicious](#), [Fontin](#), [Fontin Sans](#), [Tallys](#), [Fertigo Pro](#), [Diavlo](#), [Anivers](#), [Museo](#) and [Museo Sans](#).

[new release] Museo Sans font family



TROTZKOPF
Quadrillion
MUSEO
sans family
LEGION

Jos Buivenga's fonts

josbuivenga.demon.nl

Microsoft's EOT (Embedded Open Type)

Microsoft's EOT (Embedded Open Type)

Supported since IE4.

IE4!!!



Microsoft's EOT (Embedded Open Type)

Supported since IE4 (but not in IE8 yet).

Microsoft's EOT (Embedded Open Type)

Supported since IE4 (but not in IE8 yet).

Font encoding protects against piracy.

Microsoft's EOT (Embedded Open Type)

Supported since IE4 (but not in IE8 yet).

Font encoding protects against piracy.

Microsoft doing something... right?!?

Microsoft's EOT (Embedded Open Type)

Supported since IE4 (but not in IE8 yet).

Font encoding protects against piracy.

Microsoft doing something... right?!?

EOT has been submitted to the W3C for approval as a new standard. Adobe have also helped development.

Microsoft's EOT (Embedded Open Type)

Supported since IE4 (but not in IE8 yet).

Font encoding protects against piracy.

Microsoft doing something... right?!?

EOT has been submitted to the W3C for approval as a new standard. Adobe have also helped development.

WEFT: Web Embedding Fonts Tool for making *.eot* files.

The issues

The issues

Protection is needed for font foundries to counteract font piracy (as with EOT).

The issues

Protection is needed for font foundries to counteract font piracy (as with EOT).

How do we cope with licenses? Mozilla proposes including license data in HTTP headers.

The issues

Protection is needed for font foundries to counteract font piracy (as with EOT).

How do we cope with licenses? Mozilla proposes including license data in HTTP headers.

More fonts need to be made available so that the choice can improve. In its current state, the limited choice is turning into not much more than an alternative list of web-safe fonts.

```
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

    @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.otf') format('opentype');
    }

</style>
```

```
<!--[if IE]>
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

    @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.eot');
    }

</style>
<![endif]-->
```

```
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

  @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.otf') format('opentype');
  }

</style>
```

```
<!--[if IE]>
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

  @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.eot');
  }

</style>
<![endif]-->
```

```
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

  @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.otf') format('opentype');
  }

</style>
```

```
<!--[if IE]>
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

  @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.eot');
  }

</style>
<![endif]-->
```

```
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

  @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.eot');
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.otf') format('opentype');
  }

</style>
```

```
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

  @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.eot');
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.otf') format('opentype');
  }

</style>
```

```
<style type="text/css" media="screen">

  @font-face{
    font-family:'Fontin-Regular';
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.eot');
    src: url('Fontin-Regular.otf') format('opentype');
  }

</style>
```

What needs to happen?
(a sort of conclusion)

What needs to happen? (a sort of conclusion)

Font foundries need to be protected by the technology, as they are with EOT.

What needs to happen? (a sort of conclusion)

Font foundries need to be protected by the technology, as they are with EOT.

Font embedding *is* the path to typographic enlightenment on the web... when it eventually receives multiple browser support.

What needs to happen? (a sort of conclusion)

Font foundries need to be protected by the technology, as they are with EOT.

Font embedding *is* the path to typographic enlightenment on the web... when it eventually receives multiple browser support.

Start using font embedding *now!*

Further reading

Jon Allsopp: *The return of font embedding to the web?*

webdirections.org/blog/the-return-of-font-embedding-to-the-web

Jon Allsopp: *Ubiquitous web font embedding just got a step closer*

webdirections.org/blog/ubiquitous-web-font-embedding-just-got-a-step-closer

Jon Tan: *@font-face in IE: Making Web Fonts Work*

jontangerine.com/log/2008/10/font-face-in-ie-making-web-fonts-work

Microsoft: *Font embedding in IE4*

msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms533034.aspx

Microsoft: *WEFT 3*

microsoft.com/typography/web/embedding/weft3/default.htm

Richard Rutter: *The future of web font embedding*

clagnut.com/blog/2166

W3C: *CSS3 module: Web Fonts*

w3.org/TR/css3-webfonts

W3C: *For & against standardizing font embedding*

w3.org/Fonts/Misc/eot-report-2008

Web Fonts: *Fonts available for @font-face embedding*

webfonts.info/wiki/index.php?title=Fonts_available_for_%40font-face_embedding

Thank you!

elliottjaystocks.com | twitter.com/elliottjaystocks

Cover background image from ilovetypography.com/love