

Enhancing The Future: Tomorrow's Web Type Today

by Elliot Jay Stocks

*elliotjaystocks.com
@elliotjaystocks*



ENHANCING THE FUTURE

There will be a quiz at the end

Umbrella term of 'designer', but by and large I'm a web designer.

However, chances are you know me from a little print project of mine called...

8 Faces

Limited edition. There will be a quiz at the end so win a copy of #4!



We've had 4 issues and several artwork prints, too.







8 Faces

If you haven't heard of our magazine, you might've heard of the people we've had in it:



8 Faces



8 Faces

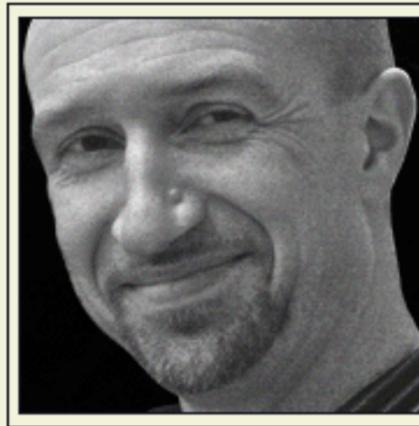
8
Fac



8
Fac

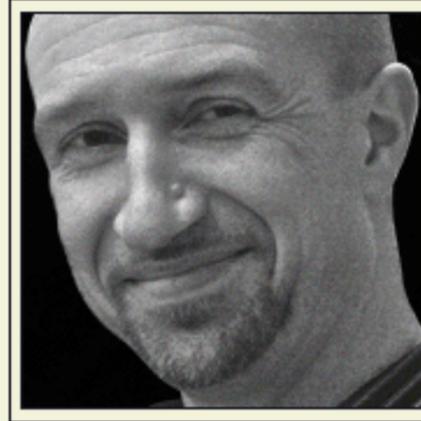


& Fac



... and we have our proofreading and fact-checking done by some guy... I'm not sure who he is; apparently he likes fonts or something. Anyway, he looks like this...

8 Fac



Know him? ;)

8 Faces

The reason I'm talking about 8 Faces is not to plug the issue — although did I mention that the new issue is out next month? — but to illustrate my own journey from web to print and back again.

Trent Walton



Hopefully you will have heard of this guy. Trent's been doing a lot of experimenting with beautifully typeset headings on his blog posts.



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Spurred me to start my own experiments. Wanted to do something similar to Trent, but examine a different area: specifically, what we can and can't do with OpenType. Only way to do this was to experiment myself. Sacrifice: my site can currently look awful to some visitors!

Before I show you some examples, let me explain a bit about...



Articles

Notes

Info

Search

FIT TO SCALE

trentwalton.com

While I was on stage in Berlin, this reminded me about Russ' experiment on the Typekit blog...

“WAY OUT WEST THERE WAS
THIS FELLA I WANNA TELL
YA ABOUT. GOES BY THE
NAME OF JEFF LEBOWSKI. AT
LEAST THAT WAS THE HANDLE
HIS LOVING PARENTS GAVE

strangenative.com/foldup/ & bit.ly/russtype by Russ Maschmeyer

LETTERING:JS

Dave Rupert

LETTERINGJS

letteringjs.com

FitText

FitText

fittextjs.com

Better background images for responsive web design

How headings look by default on my blog. lettering.js is activated, I'm just not styling any of the spans. fittext.js is there, which sizes the type as the browser window width changes.

- 1 The fine flourish
of the *ligature*
- 2 *Small caps & old style
numerals* via subsets
- 3 Say it with a *swash*
- 4 *Stylistic alternates*
via stylesets
- 5 Summary of *OpenType*
features in web type
- 6 Testing OpenType
with *Typecast*

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Tomorrow's web type
today: The fine flourish
of the *ligature*

Tomorrow's web type today: The fine flourish of the *ligature*

elliotjaystocks.com/blog/the-fine-flourish-of-the-ligature

Rendered on Chrome (Mac) using Adobe Caslon Pro (via Typekit)

Don't think I need to explain what ligatures are or why we need them to this crowd.

Latest versions of Chrome, Safari, and Firefox all support ligatures. That's on a Mac. On Windows, Chrome and Safari support is good, but in my tests via Browserstack, I couldn't see support from Firefox or IE, even though they're meant to be on board.

Weirdness with ligs in the title working in one browser, but not body; vice versa. Like when CSS started gaining browser support — basically a bit mental.

By and large, we're surprisingly well covered. Future-proof your work.

But how?

```
body {  
    text-rendering:optimizeLegibility;  
}
```

Not a fan of showing code examples

On by default on FF and Chrome



CSS Fonts Module Level 3

Editor's Draft 18 May 2012

This version:

<http://dev.w3.org/csswg/css3-fonts/>

Latest version:

<http://www.w3.org/TR/css3-fonts/>

Latest editor's draft:

<http://dev.w3.org/csswg/css3-fonts/>

Previous version:

<http://www.w3.org/TR/2011/WD-css3-fonts-20111004/>

Issues List:

[CSS3 Fonts issues in Tracker](#)

[CSS3 Fonts issues in Bugzilla](#)

Discussion:

www-style@w3.org with subject line "[css3-fonts] topic"

Editor:

[John Daggett \(Mozilla\)](#)

dev.w3.org/csswg/css3-fonts

Future plans! CSS3 fonts. Updated just before my TYPO Berlin talk! Sitting in a coffee shop, freaking out.

```
body {  
    font-variant-ligatures:  
        common-ligatures  
        discretionary-ligatures  
        additional-ligatures  
    ;  
}
```

Future plans! Unfortunately support is currently theoretical, but don't fret because we can achieve the same using the more widely supported `font-feature-settings` property.

```
body {
  -moz-font-feature-settings:"liga=1, dlig=1";
  /* New syntax for FF 15+: */
  -moz-font-feature-settings:"liga", "dlig";
  -ms-font-feature-settings:"liga", "dlig";
  -o-font-feature-settings:"liga", "dlig";
  -webkit-font-feature-settings:"liga", "dlig";
  font-feature-settings:"liga", "dlig";
}
```

`font-feature-settings` is a god-send. Conforms to standard OpenType conventions, but more importantly we can use it to turn on other OpenType features, which I'll get to.

The downside is that some browsers (such as Safari) currently still require `text-rendering:optimizeLegibility`; to turn on ligatures.

From Firefox 15 going forward — try saying that when you're drunk!

Tomorrow's web type today: *The fine flourish of the ligature*

elliottjaystocks.com/blog/the-fine-flourish-of-the-ligature

Rendered on Chrome (Mac) using Adobe Caslon Pro (via Typekit)

Not all fonts are created equal

Even if you enable ligatures for your site, their display is of course dependent on the font file containing ligatures.

With Typekit you'll need to export 'all characters' in your kit settings, and sadly that does mean your font files will be considerably bigger.

Typekit's version of Skolar doesn't contain ligatures, but Fontdeck's does, which is why I'm serving the body type for this site through Fontdeck.

Complaints from people on Linux — lots of rendering inconsistencies, even on the latest builds of Chromium.

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Tomorrow's web type

today: Expert

subsets

for CSS in I23

Tomorrow's web type
today: Expert
subsets
for CSS in 123

elliottjaystocks.com/blog/expert-subsets-for-css-in-123

Rendered on Chrome (Mac) using Magneta (via Fontdeck)

'CSS' and '123' set using Fontdeck's 'expert subset' of Magneta, not activate by OpenType.

Web designers have been attempting to replicate small caps online (as Yves showed). And what about old style numerals?

Activating new features via OpenType

Still depends on both browser support and the relevant glyphs being present in that particular font file. And yes, that can differ depending on where your fonts are being served from. The best rule of thumb is to check and check again. And then weep a little and then check again.

```
p { font-variant:small-caps; }
```

```
p { font-variant-caps:small-caps; }
```

Similar to css2.1

```
p { font-variant-numeric:oldstyle-nums; }
```

Proposed for CSS3 fonts module.

Tomorrow's web type
today: Expert
subsets
for CSS in 123

elliotjaystocks.com/blog/expert-subsets-for-css-in-123

Rendered on Chrome (Mac) using Magneta (via Fontdeck)

Polyfilling with subsets

However, as a mentioned at the beginning, the true small caps and true old style numerals in the heading above aren't using any of this OpenType-specific CSS. If Thursday's post on ligatures was about showing how to push the boundaries with bleeding-edge techniques still in the working draft, today's is about showing how to plug those holes and offer more universal support with a method that has actually been around since the days before OpenType: subsets.

```
h2#art-direction span.word8,  
h2#art-direction span.word10 {  
    font-family:  
        "Magneta Expert Subset Thin",  
        "Magneta Thin",  
        "Georgia",  
        "Times New Roman",  
        serif;  
}
```

Before the OpenType font format came along, foundries had to offer a small caps font in a separate file.

DON'T FORGET:

Trent and icon fonts. Principle can be applied to any sort of alternate.

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TOMORROW'S WEB TYPE TODAY:

Say it
with
a Swash

TOMORROW'S WEB TYPE TODAY:

Say it
with
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elliottjaystocks.com/blog/say-it-with-a-swash

Rendered on Chrome (Mac) using Acta Poster & Acta Poster Swashes (via Typekit)

I'd planned to show OpenType swashes activated via CSS, but as browser support is currently so poor (Firefox only... maybe Chrome?), I opted for a swash subset.

Typekit don't classify such fonts as 'Expert Subsets' (that's Fontdeck's terminology), but the principle is the same.

As with all OpenType features, there are a few challenges we face: Firstly, does the typeface contain swash glyphs? If so, does this particular version from this particular font delivery service? And — if it's an option — have we chosen to export all available characters?

Trilogy Fatface

★ Add to favorites

Sample Text: Why do pangolins dream of quiche ▼



★ Trilogy Fatface Regular

\$18.75 per year

+ Add to website

Why pangolins dream of quiche

★ Trilogy Fatface Wide

\$18.75 per year

+ Add to website

Why pangolins dream of quiche

★ Trilogy Fatface Expanded

\$18.75 per year

+ Add to website

Why pangolins dream of quiche

★ Trilogy Fatface ExtraExpanded

\$18.75 per year

+ Add to website

Why pangolins dream of quiche

fontdeck.com/typeface/trilogyfatface

★ Trilogy Fatface UltraExpanded

\$18.75 per year

+ Add to website

About this typeface

CLASSIFICATION

Serif » Didone

Display » Serif

Display » Fat Face

FOUNDRY

Jeremy Tankard

Typography

DESIGNER

Jeremy Tankard

OPENTYPE

c2sc, frac, liga, lnum,
onum, smcp, swsh

SUPERFAMILY

Trilogy, Trilogy Fatface

TAGS

decorative victorian

19th century

opentype american

super family fat face

The printed ephemera of the early to mid-nineteenth century is visually rich and mixes together a range of diverse type styles. In an article on 'Type mixtures' [Typography 3, Sherval Press, 1937], Jan Tschichold advocates the mixing of type styles as a means of enhancing typographic layout. I could see parallels with the printed ephemera of 100

Sadly, there aren't many web fonts out there right now that contain swashes and it's not even easy to find the ones that do.

Web font services starting to identify OT features.



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Yves Peters

Ampersand site — neat little JS trick. It's a polyfill: the hack slides out of the way when it's not needed



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ampersandconf.com

Yves Peters

```
h2 {
  -moz-font-feature-settings: "swsh=2";
  -moz-font-feature-settings: "swsh" 2; /* FF 15+ */
  -ms-font-feature-settings: "swsh" 2;
  -webkit-font-feature-settings: "swsh" 2;
  font-feature-settings: "swsh" 2;
}
```

Activating swashes using font-feature-settings

That '2' effectively says, 'use the second swash character'. Bear in mind that a font might not have a second swash option. You have to KNOW this beforehand.

All you can do is test and test and test, because every single scenario is different. And yes, it's bloody annoying!

With all this talk of secondary glyph options, it feels like we're wading into the waters of stylesets. More on that in a sec.

```
h2 span.word5 [etc.] {  
    -webkit-text-fill-color:#ff6875;  
    -webkit-text-stroke-width:1px;  
    -webkit-text-stroke-color:#333;  
}
```

A note on text-stroke

WebKit only. There's currently no way to specify the origin of the stroke — 'outside' would be preferable — and so it's currently inadvisable to use the property beyond a thickness of one pixel.

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Tomorrow's web type today: from
Qaegkuwyz to
Qaegkvwyz using
*stylesheet*s

Tomorrow's web type today: **from**
Qaegkuwyz **to**
Qaegkvwyz **using**
stylesets

elliotjaystocks.com/blog/stylesets

Rendered on Firefox (Mac) using Bree (via Fontdeck)

First post that didn't look best in WebKit, so I advised people to look in FF. However, people have since told me that it works in the latest Chrome on Windows and the latest Safari Beta on Mac, which should mean it'll be standard as soon as Mountain Lion is released.

Could've used subsets, but felt I couldn't do a hack two days in a row. Fontdeck even provide an Expert Subset for Bree, exclusively containing its stylistic alternates. I could've used this to get the heading above working in browsers other than Firefox, but I figured it's good to eat your own dog food every now and then.

FF calculates em squares oddly, though, so padding and line-height is a bit janky, and even varies between Mac / Windows, which is a pain the arse.

```
h2 span.word8 {
  -moz-font-feature-settings:"ss01=1";
  -moz-font-feature-settings:"ss01" 1; /* For FF 15+ */
  -ms-font-feature-settings:"ss01" 1;
  -o-font-feature-settings:"ss01" 1;
  -webkit-font-feature-settings:"ss01" 1;
  font-feature-settings:"ss01" 1;
}
```

Future-proof code

Follows OpenType table conventions

```
@font-feature-values Bree Web {  
  @styleset swashlike 1;  
}  
  
h2 {  
  font-family:"Bree Web", sans-serif;  
  font-variant-alternates:styleset(swashlike);  
}
```

Eventually, in the far-flung future when `font-variant-alternates` is implemented, we'll have more robust tools. There are even plans in the spec for rules that decide what to do when a `styleset` isn't available.

We're a long way off that, though, so let's not worry too much. For now, we can stick to `font-feature-settings` and hope for better browser support in the near future. And, as suggested by the pattern emerging in this series, you can add wider support today by using a subset.

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Consider the *typeface*

OpenType on the web today essentially comes down to these key considerations:

Consider the typeface: does the actual typeface contain swashes, ligatures, and the like?

Consider the *typeface*

Consider the *font file*

Consider the font file: is it actually an OpenType file being served? Even if it is, are the extra glyphs you need included in that particular font? Do you need to adjust any settings to export additional characters?

Consider the *typeface*

Consider the *font file*

Consider the *browser*

Consider the browser: which features does it support? Remember: support can differ massively between version numbers and operating systems. Do you need to 'polyfill' support by adding special characters via subsets?

Consider the *typeface*

Consider the *font file*

Consider the *browser*

Consider the *user*

Consider the user: will the design break if certain OpenType features are missing? Does the type actually look that good?

Even generous feature support is subject to poor type rendering on some operating systems. No names mentioned.

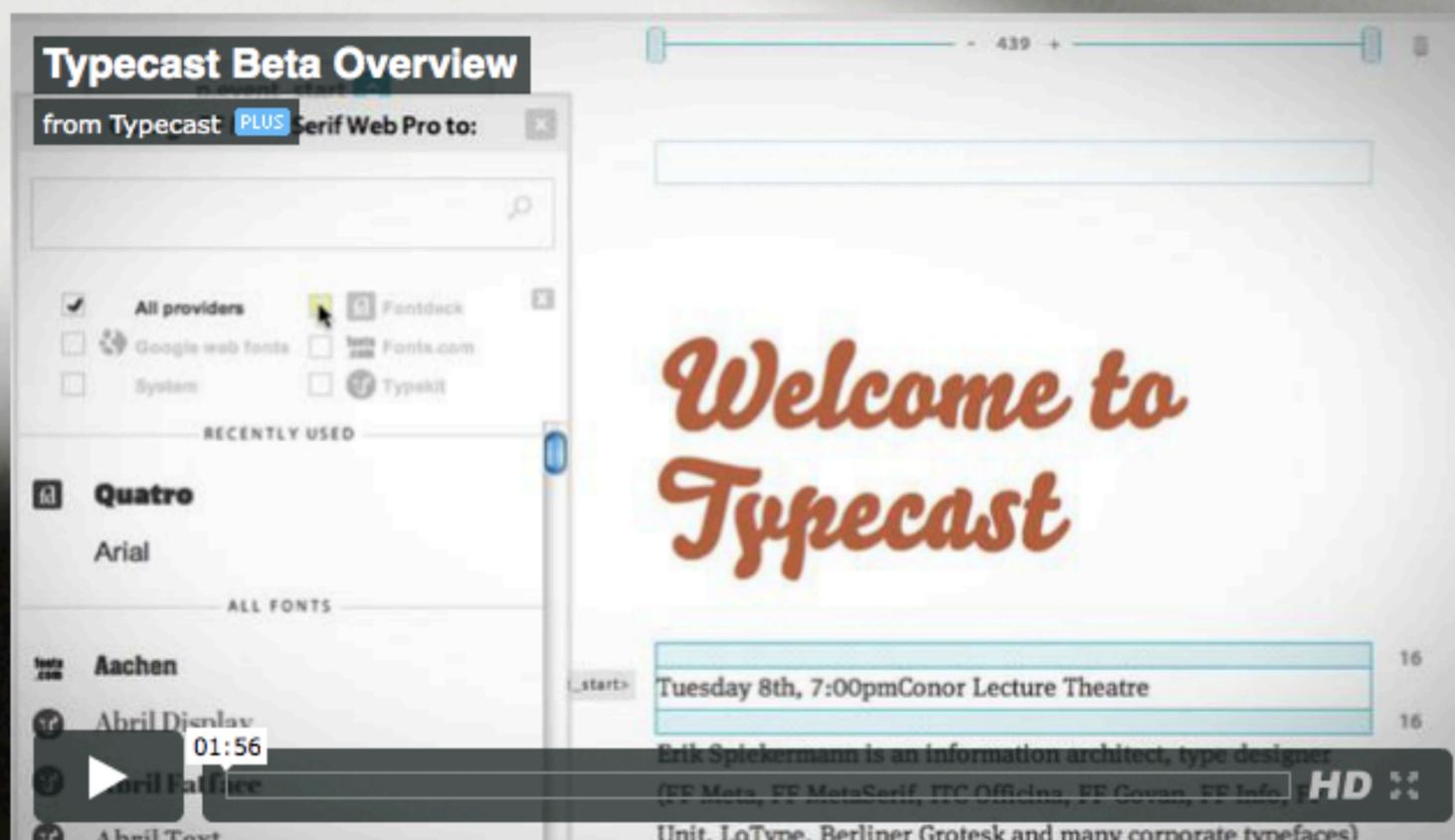
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with *Typecast***

typecast

Design with web fonts, in the browser

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This is the bit I'm really excited to show you! I've been talking about knowing certain things before you start designing, so we need a tool that tells us these things.

Very fortunate to be friends with the guys working on this app.

They've been getting my opinion on a few updates and when they showed me the new OpenType features, I asked if I could show their concept screens at TYPO.

Demonstration

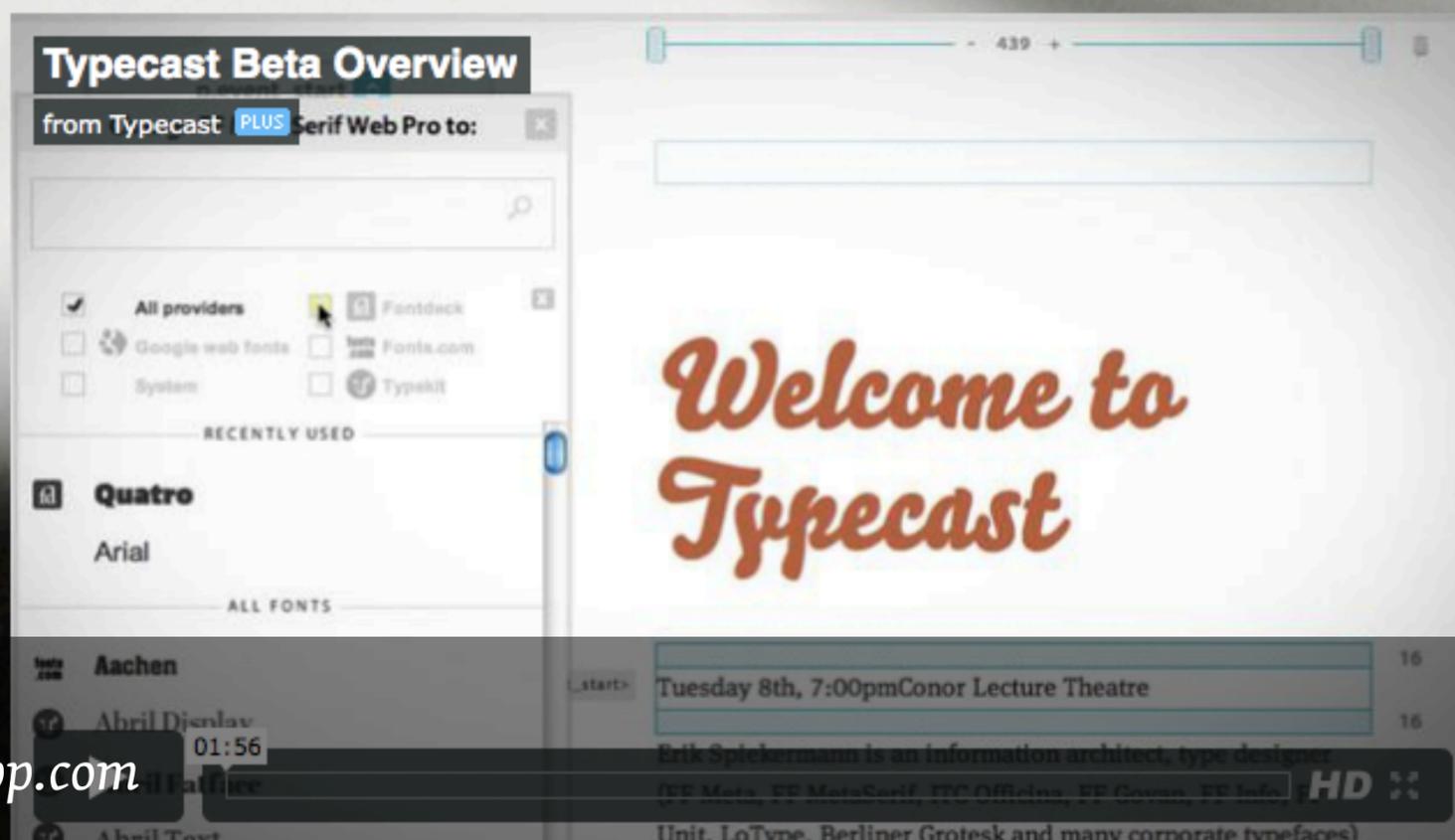
typecast

Design with web fonts, in the browser

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SUBMIT



body > features-style > h1

Chaparral Pro

Weight: Regular

Text Size: 2.67 em

Line Height: 23 px

Letter Spacing: 23 px

Indent/Exdent: 23 px

Text Align: [Left] [Center] [Right] [Justify]

Text Transform: [Ab] [AB] [ab] [None]

Inherit styles from parent

MARCH 27, 2012

h1.title

Artistic Distance

by [PAUL BURTON](#)

I'd prefer not to define "art." In fact, I'd prefer not to define "design" of any kind, web or otherwise. But I would like to share a few techniques I learned in art school that I use to this day to help improve my own website designs when I don't have an extra pair of eyes handy to tell me that my perspective is off or that I suck at designing for women.

First, a short background story...

I vividly remember the day my professor tapped me on the

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Clarendon URW

Chaparral Pro

Aachen

Abril Display

Abril Fatface

Abril Text

Adelle Web

Administer

Adobe Text Pro

Alternate Gothic 1

Arial

Atrament Web

Avenir Next

Bauer Bodoni

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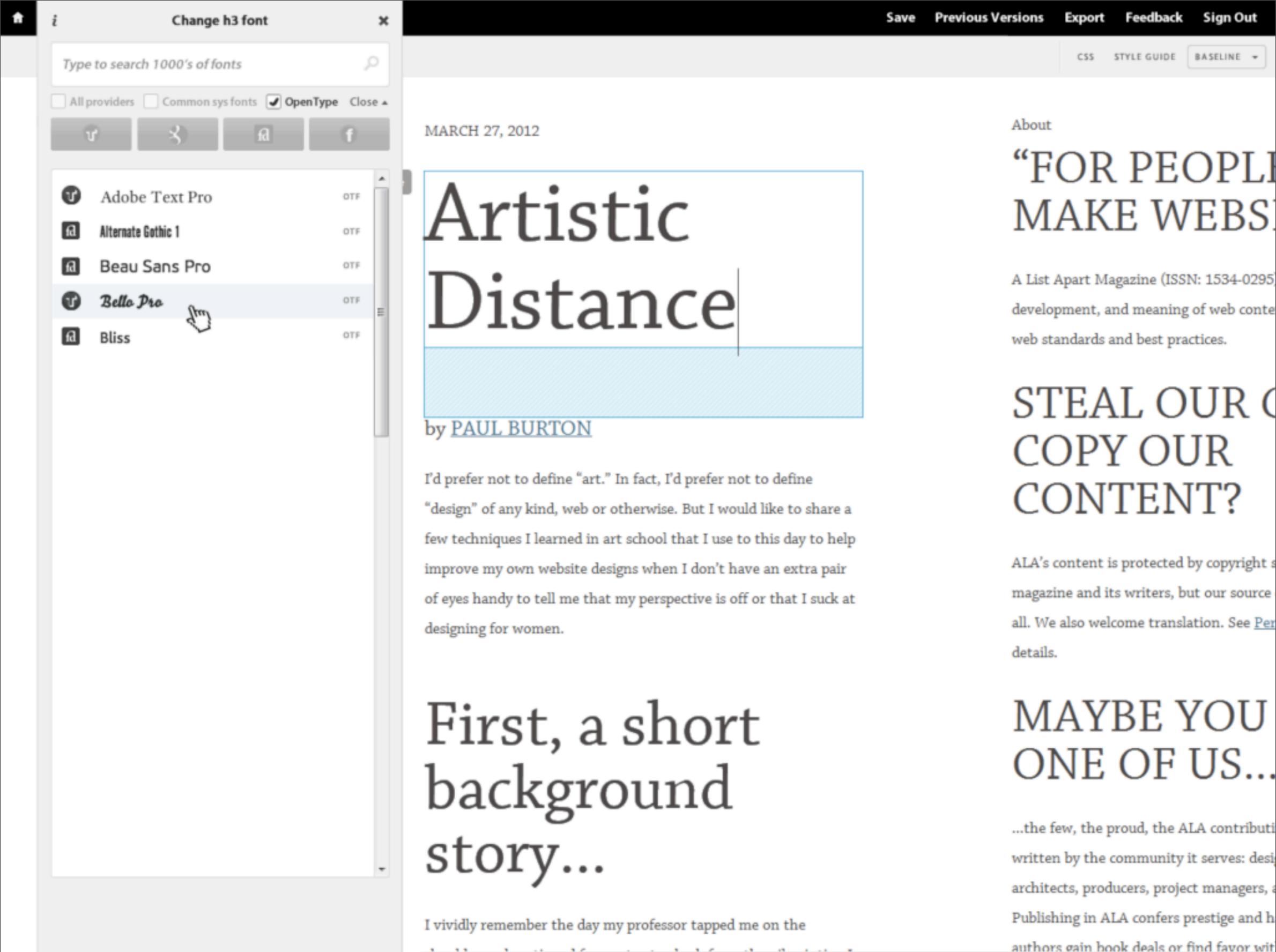
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That's an OTF, not WTF

body .features-style h1

Bello Pro

Weight: Regular

OpenType Features

ff st e AV Sc LA 1/2

69 69

Text Size 2.67 em

Line Height 23 px

Letter Spacing 23 px Indent/Exdent 23 px

Text Align

Text Transform Ab AB ab None

Inherit styles from parent

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Inherit styles from parent

Experimental Features

Many browsers don't fully support OpenType yet. That's ok though, just make sure your design still works without the following features:

- Common ligatures

MARCH 27, 2012

h1.title



by [PAUL BURTON](#)

I'd prefer not to define "art." In fact, I'd prefer not to define "design" of any kind, web or otherwise. But I would like to share a few techniques I learned in art school that I use to this day to help improve my own website designs when I don't have an extra pair of eyes handy to tell me that my perspective is off or that I suck at designing for women.

First, a short background story...

I vividly remember the day my professor tapped me on the

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body .features-style h1

Bello Pro

Weight: Regular

OpenType Features

ff st e AV SC LA 1/2

69 69

Text Size 2.67 em

Line Height 23 px

Letter Spacing 23 px Indent/Exdent 23 px

Text Align

Text Transform Ab AB ab None

Inherit styles from parent

h1.title

MARCH 27, 2012

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by [PAUL BURTON](#)

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body > .features-style > h1

Bello Pro

Weight: Regular

Discretionary Ligatures (not supported in your browser)

ff e AV SC LA 1/2

69 69

Text Size: 2.67 em

Line Height: 23 px

Letter Spacing: 23 px

Indent/Exdent: 23 px

Text Align: [Left] [Center] [Right] [Justify]

Text Transform: Ab AB ab None

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Use The Whole Font

These three interactive pages from [The Font Bureau](#), [Monotype Imaging](#) and [FontFont](#) demonstrate the use of OpenType features in modern

The New Web Typography



Small caps, ligatures, kerning and more will be revealed as your mouse hovers across this beautiful page.

Designed by Christopher Clark and Nick Sherman, [The Font Bureau](#)

Spice Your Type



Turn contextual alternates, stylistic sets and swashes on and off with one click.

Designed by [Monotype Imaging](#)

Best Dressed Fonts

ie.microsoft.com/testdrive/Graphics/opentype/

A scroll through OpenType with FF DIN Round, FF Mister K and friends.

Microsoft have put together a few test pages as well and they look beautiful, but a lot of stuff only works in IE10

Testpage for OpenType Features

On this page I use my webfont *Otfeat*. It's an icon font designed for testing OpenType features. For example:

 OFF – The box is empty/white. That's the initial situation and shows: The feature (here: *smcp*, small capitals) is either turned off or your browser isn't able to display this feature.

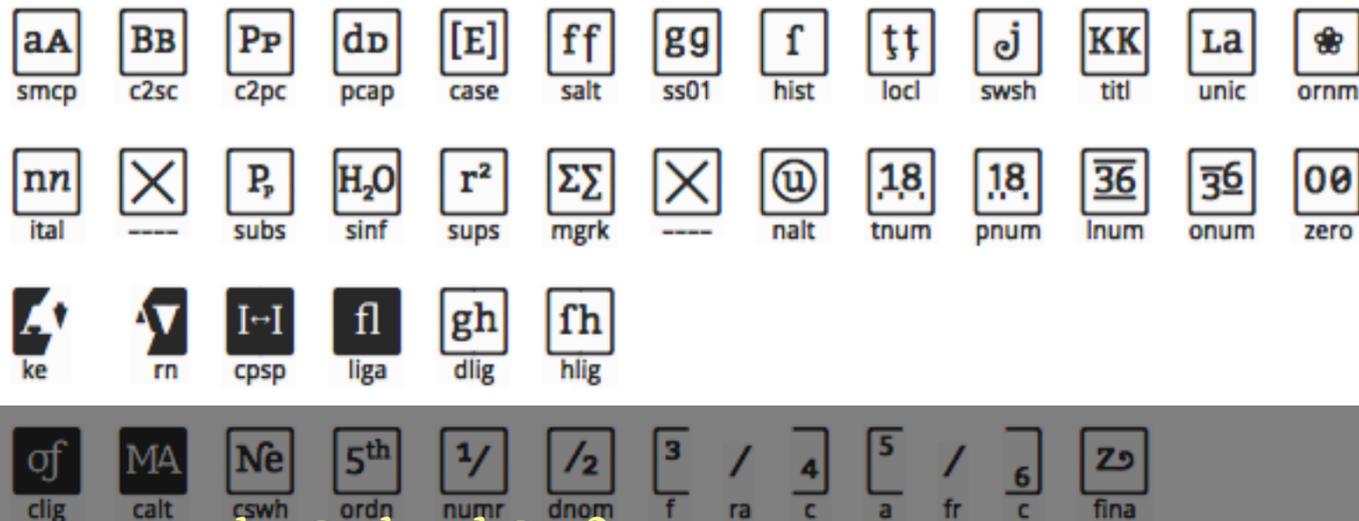
 ON – After activation the box becomes filled/black. The feature *smcp* (small capitals) is turned on and your browser is able to show it.

[In meinem Blog gibt's einen kurzen [Überblick zu Otfeat](#) auch in Deutsch.]

[↓ More about OpenType features.](#)

1) OpenType features switched on

Here you can see which OpenType features are supported by your browser. They are switched on by CSS (the two boxes with an X are not yet associated with a feature):



bit.ly/ot_feature_test by Gerhard Großmann

Here's an image how it should look like (colored green for better distinction between the real test and the screenshot):

And this is something Chris Armstrong from Typecast showed me earlier this week: might not look like much, but it's a site for testing OpenType feature support in your browser!

Thank you! Also, thanks to:

Rich Rutter @clagnut

Typecast @typecastapp

elliottjaystocks.com
@elliottjaystocks



Rich Rutter (for his AEA talk and continued guidance)

Typecast (for letting me exclusively show their WIP)

TYPO organisers (for having me here in the first place)

and you guys (for listening)

Quiz! Question: which typeface was used for the small caps / old style numerals example that was achieved via an Expert Subset? [Come and see me afterwards for the mag.]

Back up question: which issue did I interview both Jessica and Erik?