week::four
Web Typography: Fonts, Type Sizing, & Recommendations

Understanding Typeface Selection on the Web

Overview
- o Specific fonts and typefaces can be used on websites by using several methods:
  - ▪ Fonts installed on the end-user's computer. Note that different operating systems have different fonts installed by default.
  - ▪ Fonts embedded in the page using the @font-face CSS property.
  - ▪ Fonts provided by a font hosting service like Google Fonts or Adobe Fonts.

Font Lists
- o To ensure pages look similar on a variety of devices, a browser uses **font lists**.
- o Font lists help ensure that text will look similar to what the designer intended, even if the end-user lacks precisely the desired font.
- o Example standard system font lists:

Font Family	CSS Font List
Verdana	`Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif`
Georgia	`Georgia, "Times New Roman", Times, serif`
Helvetica	`Helvetica, Arial, sans-serif`
Arial	`Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif`
Times New Roman	`"Times New Roman", Times, serif`
Tahoma	`Tahoma, Geneva, sans-serif`

How They Work
- o The default font is *Times*, though users are able to alter this setting.
- o If a user's computer does not have the first font in the list installed*, then the browser will try the *next one*. It repeats this until it reaches the end of the list.
  - ▪ *For example, if a web font service is offline or is blocked by a browser's content blocker, then the browser tries to use the next font in the list.
- o If the browser finds none of the fonts in the list, the last item specifies the *font style* and applies the user's defaults for that style.
- o In the Verdana example above, if a user does not have Verdana and Arial but does have Helvetica, then the browser will display the text using Helvetica.

System Font Stack
- o Some developers take this to the extreme and create a font list that uses the *default system font* for a given OS or browser.
- o This has the benefits of speed (no fonts to load) and visual continuity.
- o Read more: https://css-tricks.com/snippets/css/system-font-stack/

## Modern Web Fonts

Overview

- o   Web fonts is the term used to describe the ability to embed fonts in an HTML/CSS page.
- o   Almost any font can be embedded, though licensing restrictions keep them from being used on real projects.
- o   There are also many technical issues that must be worked out or decided upon before you can host your own.

Online Web Font Services

Adobe Fonts	`https://fonts.adobe.com`
Google Web Fonts	`http://www.google.com/fonts`
Font Awesome	`https://fontawesome.com`

Web Font Recommendations

- o   If you have a budget, **Adobe Fonts** is a good font service. They have support for a wide array of devices and browsers, a solid administrative interface, and (most importantly) a large selection of well-crafted, professional typefaces.
- o   **Google Web Fonts** is a good option if you are OK with the selection of free, open-source typefaces they provide. You also must be fine with Google tracking your visitors (ok, Adobe tracks your visitors as well).
  - ▪ Figma fully support Google Fonts, making it very easy to use that service.
- o   Use icon fonts like **Font Awesome** to quickly add icons to your designs.
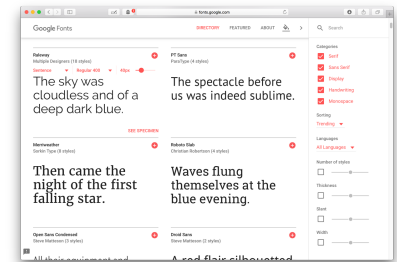
Type Design Recommendations

Typeface Variation

- o   From a design-perspective, try to pick one **Sans Serif** and one **Serif** typeface for your Web site, and use only those two typefaces.
  - ▪ Select typefaces with many different weights available (Light, Book, Extra Bold, etc.)
  - ▪ Keep two key things in mind: *Distinction* and *harmony* when pairing typefaces (cr. Jason Santa Maria)

Design for Flexibility

- o   Design your pages so that exact text sizes do not matter as much. Text boxes should allow text to flow freely around other objects.

Design with Type Scales

- o   Design with a **type scale** to give your pages good visual hierarchy.
- o   Use `http://type-scale.com` to play around with different ratios and typefaces.
- o   These in combinations with typeface selection and a defined hierarchy are the foundations of a good **Typographic System** for your projects.
- o   Sample values:

Tag	Value	
h1	`2.75em`	44px
h2	`2.25em`	36px
h3	`1.70em`	27px
p	`1.10em`	18px

Refactoring UI Key Type Recommendations

From the eBook *Refactoring UI* (https://www.refactoringui.com)

Establish a Type Scale
- o Choose a scale system, like Modular…
- o …but don't be afraid to deviate from the "true" scale, opting instead for a more practical approach to choosing sizes.
- o Links:
  - ▪ https://type-scale.com
  - ▪ https://www.modularscale.com

Use Good Fonts
- o Play it safe with a "generic" sans-serif
- o Ignore typefaces with less than five weights
- o Optimize for Legibility
  - ▪ Headlines should have tighter tracking and short x-heights
  - ▪ Body copy should have taller x-heights and slightly larger tracking
- o Trust the wisdom of the crowd
  - ▪ *Maybe — I'm not sure I agree with this as it can lead to a lot of same-ness on the Web, but they do have a point.*
- o Steal from people who care
  - ▪ Right-click to inspect the element
- o Developing your intuition

Keep your line length in check
- o For the best reading experience, make your paragraphs wide enough to fit between 45 and 75 characters per line.
- o Links:
  - ▪ https://css-tricks.com/equilateral-triangle-perfect-paragraph/
  - ▪ https://betterwebtype.com/triangle/ (An online game)
  - ▪ https://www.gridlover.net/try

Baseline, not center
- o Align mixed font sizes by their baseline

Line-height is proportional
- o Start with a line height of 1.5 (1.5em, or 150%), and adjust from there.
- o Be sure to account for line length and font size.

Not every link needs a color
- o Demonstrate click-ability using other design indicators.

Align with readability in mind
- o In general, text should be aligned to match the direction of the language it's written in. For English (and most other languages), that means that the vast majority of text should be left-aligned. (*Refactoring UI pg. 111*)

Use letter-spacing effectively
- o Tighten headlines
- o Improving all-caps legibility by increasing tracking

— Lecture Outline —