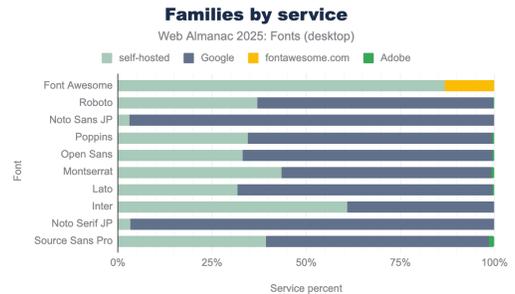


week::seven

Ten Things to Know About Web Typography

01 Use Good Fonts

- Ignore typefaces with less than five weights
- Optimize for Legibility
 - Headlines should have tighter tracking and short x-heights
 - Body copy should have taller x-heights and slightly larger tracking
- Trust the wisdom of the crowd
- Steal from people who care (Inspect Element)
- Check out the chapter on fonts from the Web Almanac (2025):
 - <https://almanac.httparchive.org/en/2025/fonts>



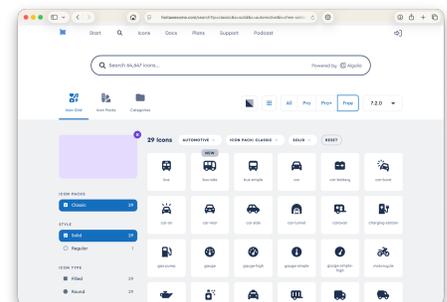
02 Establish a Type Scale

- Design with a **type scale** to give your pages good, uniform visual hierarchy.
- Use site like TypeScale.com to play around with different ratios and typefaces.
- These in combinations with typeface selection and a defined hierarchy are the foundations of a good *typographic system* for your projects (see Tip 10).
- Sample values:

Tag	Value	
h1	2 . 75em	44px
h2	2 . 25em	36px
h3	1 . 70em	27px
p	1 . 10em	18px

03 Using a Font Service is Fine

- If you have a budget, **Adobe Fonts** is a good font service. They have a solid administrative interface, a large selection of well-crafted, professionally designed typefaces. You do have to pay for their use, however.
- **Google Web Fonts** is a good option if you are OK with the selection of free 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 select and use typefaces from that service.
- Use icon fonts like **Font Awesome** to quickly add icons to your designs.
 - Font Awesome has fallen in-line with subscription addiction, but there are still ways to self-host a good number of their icons.
- However, if you have the technical know-how, **self-hosting** is just fine. Better yet, use a **Web-safe** or **system font** (see tip 9).

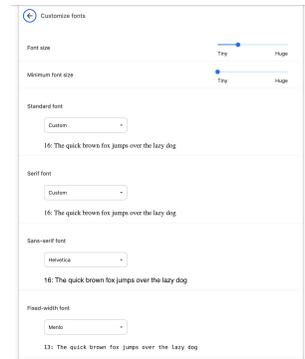


04 Balance Size, Leading, and Line Length

- For the best reading experience, make your paragraphs wide enough to fit between **45 and 75 characters** per line.
- Don't allow paragraphs of text to span the full width of the page.
- Additional reading:
 - <https://css-tricks.com/equilateral-triangle-perfect-paragraph/>
 - <https://betterwebtype.com/triangle/> (online game)
 - <https://www.gridlover.net/try>

05 Be Flexible

- Design your pages so that exact text sizes do not matter as much.
- Maintaining **hierarchy** is much more important than exact font size.
- Text boxes should allow text to flow freely around other objects.
- Browser allow for a wide degree of customization of the appearance of type.
 - See preferences for Google Chrome pictured to the right.
- Designing for flexible height is a great match for designing for mobile devices.



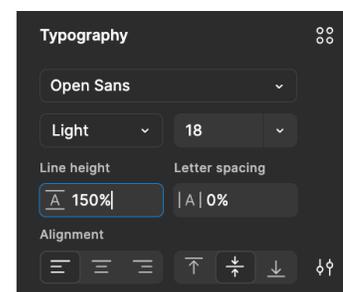
06 Use Leading & Letter Spacing Effectively

- Tighten headlines to improve grouping and readability.
- Improving all-caps legibility by increasing tracking (letter-spacing in CSS).

<p>Get Active on the Beach this Spring with your own Beach Cruiser Bicycle</p> <p>ALL CRUISERS ARE ON SALE NOW</p> <p><small>SOME EXCEPTIONS APPLY</small></p> <p>VIEW SALE ITEMS</p>	<p>Get Active on the Beach this Spring with your own Beach Cruiser Bicycle</p> <p>ALL CRUISERS ARE ON SALE NOW</p> <p><small>SOME EXCEPTIONS APPLY</small></p> <p>VIEW SALE ITEMS</p>
<p>Default leading (too much room) applied to the headline, and default letter spacing in all-caps subhead (hard to read)</p>	<p>Tighter leading in the headline (better grouping) and additional letter spacing applied to all-caps subhead (easier to read)</p>

07 Make Line-height Proportional; not a Fixed Value

- Use percentages to specify line-height, allowing it to proportionally scale with the size of type (see tip 5).
- Figma allows for direct entry of percentages in the Line Height field.
- The default is rarely the right choice, just like in print.
 - InDesign's default leading is 120% (10/12, for example)
- Setting line height is a balance of it, font size, and line length (see tip 4).



07 All You Need is Five Fonts

- Matej Latin of BetterWebType.com says to follow a variation of Massimo Vignelli’s “Five Fonts” maxim (see his, pictured right).
- He suggests selecting your preferred typefaces in these categories:
 - A geometric sans serif
 - A high-quality serif for long text
 - A workhorse font
 - A web safe font
 - A variable font
- My version of this is as follows:
 - Proxima Nova
 - Libre Baskerville
 - Open Sans
 - Verdana / Georgia (OK, I cheat a bit)
 - Noto Sans
- Read more at <https://betterwebtype.com/all-you-need-is-5-fonts/>



09 Don't Be Afraid of Using a Classic Web Safe Typeface

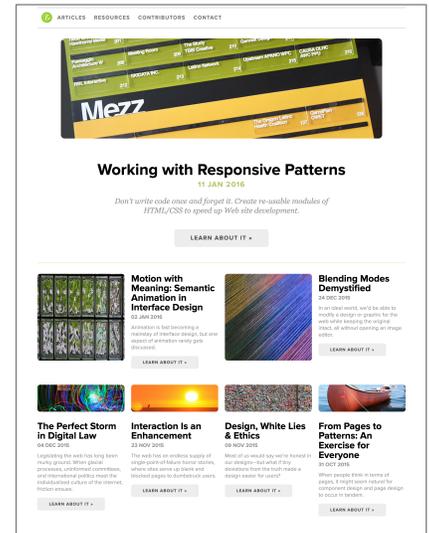
- While not cutting edge, many of these are still very good typefaces for web use.
- You can generally assume that most (if not all) devices will have these typefaces installed.
- They also do not require the use of a font service, speeding up load times and reducing the amount of tracking done to your users (by just a bit).
- The classic list:

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

- Also consider using a **System Font Stack**, which uses the *default system font* for a given OS or browser.
- This has the benefits of speed (no fonts to load) and visual continuity.
- Read more: <https://css-tricks.com/snippets/css/system-font-stack/>
- One possible CSS system font stack font-family value:
 - -apple-system, Segoe UI, Roboto, Noto Sans, Ubuntu, Cantarell, Helvetica Neue;
 - Learn more at <https://css-tricks.com/snippets/css/system-font-stack/>

10 Design Typographic Systems

- o Remember that you are creating a system of typography, not one-off styling.
- o Every typography decision you make will be repeated many, many times across the entire website.
- o Since we are essentially writing CSS rules, those rules will be applied to every instance of that type of content.
 - <h1>, <h2>, <p>, , etc.
- o Some much of the web is just typography—taking time to craft good type is critical to a good design.
- o Sometimes adjustments will be made for context, but the core visual typographic language will remain the same.



CATEGORY

Text Color: rgb(232, 28, 35)

Font Size: 1em

Weight: 600

All uppercase letters

Letter Tracking: .105em

Line Spacing: 1.1em

Padding top: 1em

Padding bottom: .625em

ARTICLE TITLE

Font Size: 1.75em

Weight: 600

Bottom Margin: .5em

ARTICLE BYLINE

Weight: 400;

Letter Tracking: 0.0875em

Font Size: .9em

All uppercase letters

Text Color: rgb(72, 72, 72)

Margin Bottom: 1em

LEAD-IN PARAGRAPH

Weight: 400

Font Size: 1.25em

Line Spacing: 1.625em

READ MORE LINKS

Text Color: black

Weight: 600

Font Size: .75em

Change display to inline-block

Padding Top: 2em

HOVER CHANGE

Text Color: rgb(232, 28, 35)

LIGHT PAINTING

Capturing Light with Long Exposure

BY ROBIN JEFFERIES

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BY BRUNO MARS

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OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

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BY BERNIE SANDERS

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Some tips from the eBook *Refactoring UI* (<https://www.refactoringui.com>) & *BetterWebType.com* by Matej Latin