

Variable Fonts

and the future of typography

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Designer, Writer, Tinkerer, Typographer

SmashingTV | Online
18 September, 2018





in labiis tuis propter
quia benedixit te deus
in eternum. **Et** dicit
Domi-
nus nobis

celorum rex de virgi-
ne na- sci di- gna-
tus est ut homines
perditum ad regna
celestia a reuo-

King & Queen

at

Brighton



46.0
35

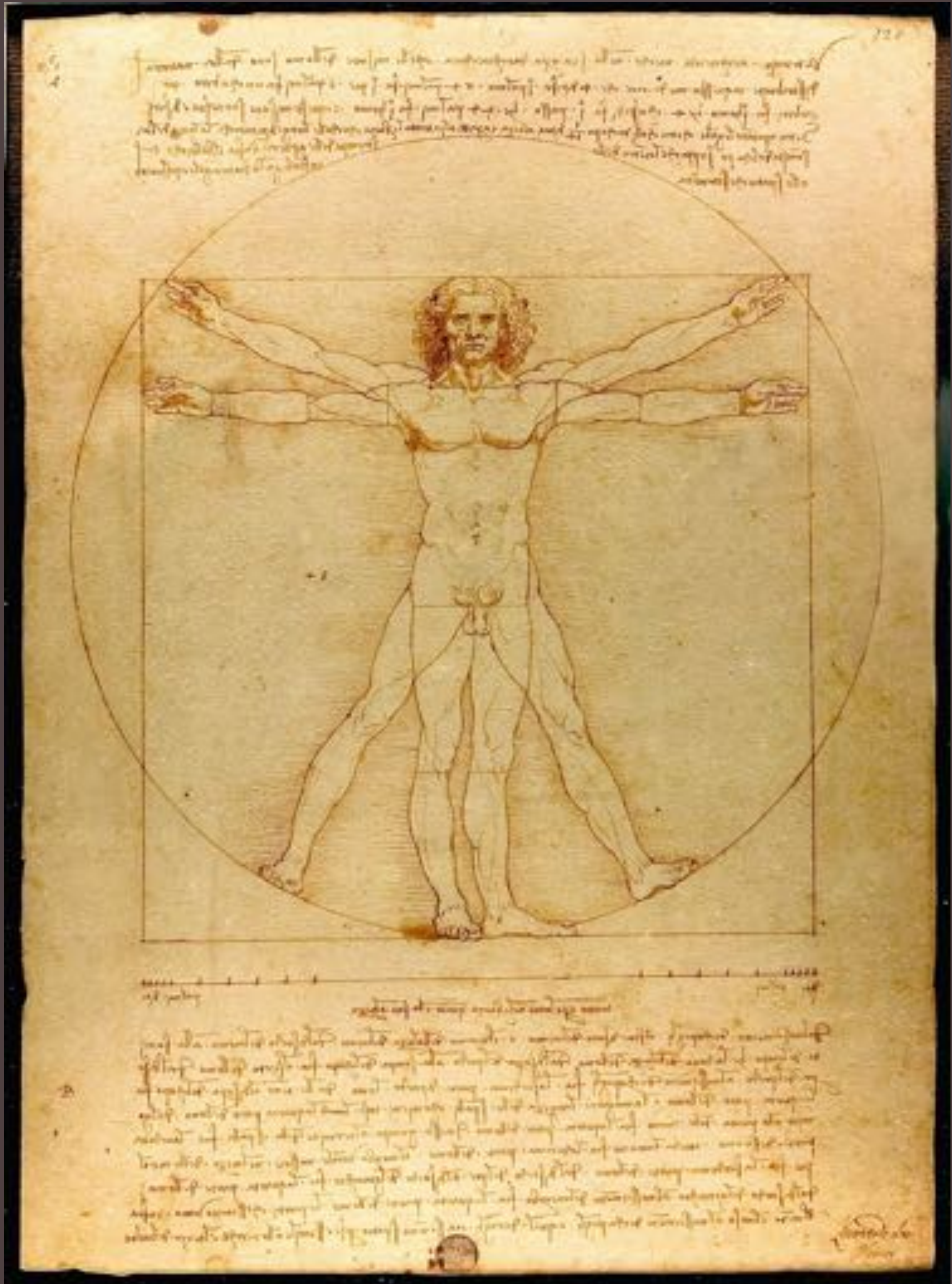
17



9.2

69.2

3.18

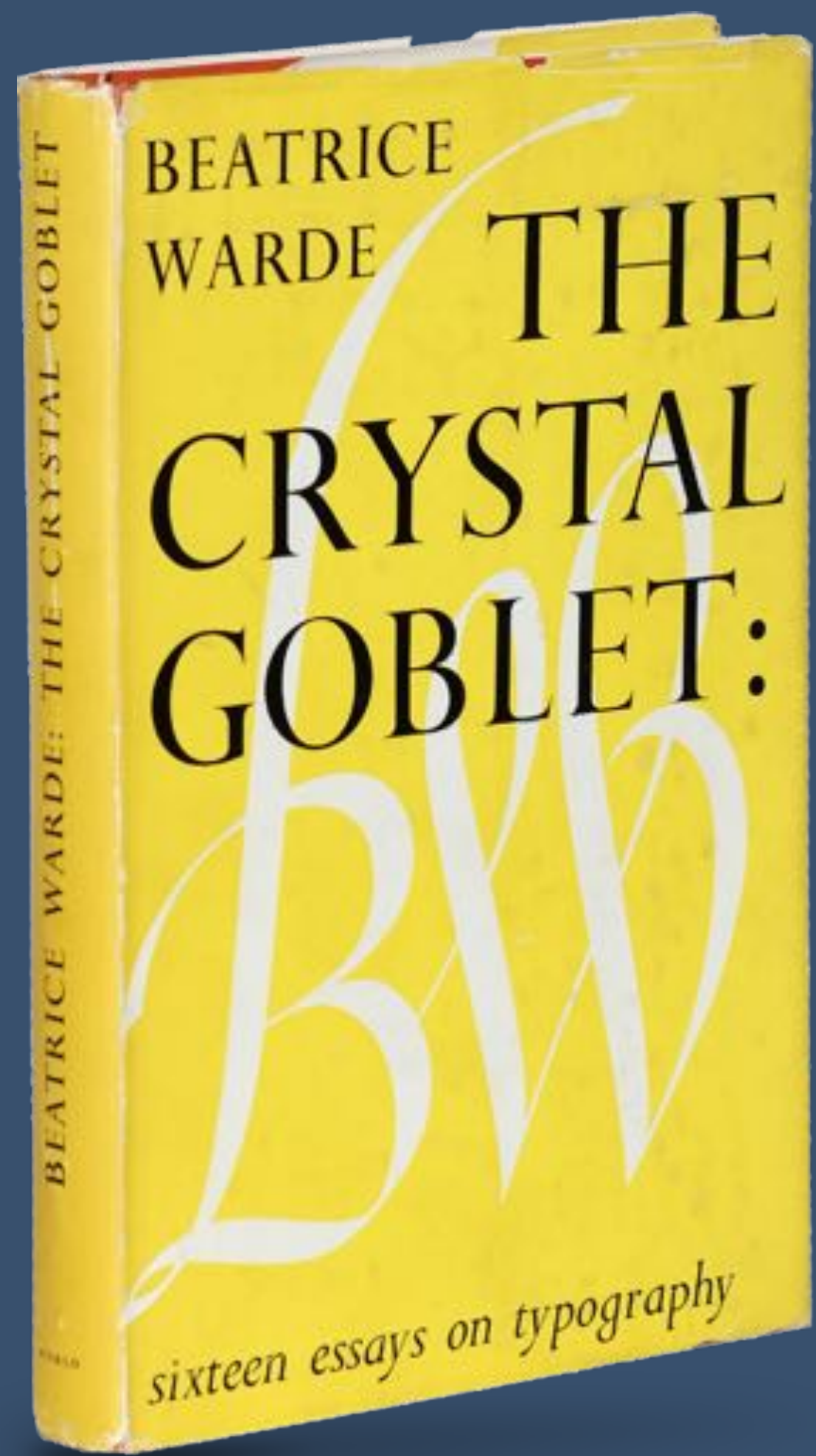


“cosmografia del
minor mondo”

The Elements
of *Typographic Style*

Fourth edition (version 4.0)

Robert Bringhurst



“Type well used is invisible as type”

—Beatrice Warde

“The Crystal Goblet”, 1932

Type is never neutral

I love you

I love you

I love you ♡

Type is how we ‘hear’ what we read

A SIGN IN THE SHAPE of an artist's palette announcing the establishment from which Alfred Bartlett sold his inspirational Motto cards and also published *The Cornhill Booklet* hung over the sidewalk on the northeast side of Cornhill. Bartlett's office was on the second floor; Dwiggins rented space on the third and, as a part of his tenant's agreement, minded the shop when Alfred was out. The illustrator and lettering artist Theodore B. Haggood also occupied space on the third floor. The printing historian Ray Nash once described 69 Cornhill as "an ancient brick building with fireplaces, small-lighted windows and many steps, the tread and riser of each being unlike any other." Carl Purington Rollins wrote:

Cornhill was a short up-hill street in the North End (not wholly unlike its progenitor in London) where artisans in the graphic arts, dealers in second-hand books, and other commercial small fry found congenial lodging. No. 69 [was] a rendezvous for young enthusiasts in arts and letters. It was the kind of rookery which is always congenial to men and women brimming full of life.

The Hingham Centre years had been mostly literary in nature — calligraphic cards for Bartlett, book spines and ornament drawings for Merrymount, and a few book covers for other publishers. Dwiggins would continue work of this character over the next few years, but now, from his little room on the third floor, he began to produce a flood of brochures, placards, newspaper ads, and general commercial illustration and lettering. The jobs didn't just bring financial stability: They also sharpened his skills as he operated under urgent deadlines. This commercial work dominated the period from 1910 until the mid-1920s and made Dwiggins a master of its skills, bringing him considerable fame (even as he still dreamed of making books).

Updike continued to use Dwiggins as a principal resource for design and sent him commissions for book covers, title-page ornaments, spine labels, and endleaves; sheet-music decorations for Schirmer and Boston Music; bookplates; seals for the Tavern Club, St. Mark's School, and Trinity College; and the lettering of

The Crystal Goblet, or Printing Should Be Invisible

by Beatrice Warde (1900–1969)

Imagine that you have before you a flagon of wine. You may choose your own favourite vintage for this imaginary demonstration, so that it be a deep shimmering crimson in colour. You have two goblets before you. One is of solid gold, wrought in the most exquisite patterns. The other is of crystal-clear glass, thin as a bubble, and as transparent. Pour and drink; and according to your choice of goblet, I shall know whether or not you are a connoisseur of wine. For if you have no feelings about wine one way or the other, you will want the sensation of drinking the stuff out of a vessel that may have



but tension!

The Crystal Goblet, or Printing Should I Invisible

Change to "Type
should be seen
and not heard"

Stop asking for fonts. You
can't have them. We have
to load more javascript
- engineering

Can we set this
in Helvetica?

**“the idea of using three different font files
to represent one word would be dismissed
as quickly as the thought appeared”**

—Rich Rutter, author of ‘Web Typography’

StyleGuides.io



Carbon Design System
By IBM

Carbon is the design system for IBM Cloud products. It is a series of individual styles, components, and guidelines used for creating unified UI.

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Data for Everyone

[VIEW](#) [EDIT](#) [SHARE](#) [DELETE](#)



Design Patterns

Collection of design patterns

The design patterns used in the design

[VIEW](#)



css (guide lines)

High-level advice and guidelines for writing semi-transparent, readable CSS

By Henry Roberts

High-level advice and guidelines for writing semi-transparent, readable CSS

[VIEW](#)



Complex Design System

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Pattern Library

Collection of design patterns

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Voice & Tone

Guidelines for writing content

By [Author]

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Design System

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Being a Web Developer

How to become a web developer

By Mark Brown

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Design System

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Lightning Design System

Collection of design patterns

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CSS-Tricks

Web Style Guide

By Chris Taylor

[VIEW](#) [EDIT](#) [SHARE](#) [DELETE](#)



COLORS



TYPOGRAPHY

Type scale

Additional emphasis

Display styles

Emphasis styles

Font stack

Resources



ILLUSTRATIONS



ICONS



DATA VISUALIZATIONS

Platform v1.12.0

[Submit feedback or feature requests](#)

Typography

Shopify admin provides a constrained, purposeful set of typographic styles. These styles map as much as possible to functional roles so you know when each can be used.

By consistently tying typographic styles to appropriate functions in the interface, we create a clear visual pattern for merchants to follow while they're interacting with our product.

Type scale

The typographic scale is designed to keep the number of separate styles to the minimum that works for the Shopify admin.

LARGE SCREENS

SMALL SCREENS

Make commerce better for everyone.

Text - large: 42px

Line-height: 44px

Text-weight: 700

Display - x-large

7 Aug 2017

Updates

Typography

This guideline explains how to use typography on the BBC website. It covers initial guidelines for BBC Reith, as well as legal requirements.

Contributors



[View the Code](#)

	Example Usage	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Canon	Hero or blog post title	28/32	32/36	52/56	44/48
Trafalgar	Article title or section header	20/24	24/28	36/40	32/36
Paragon	Primary headline on indexes	20/24	22/26	28/32	28/32
Double Pica	Sub header	20/24	20/24	26/30	24/28
Great Primer	Headline title or subtitle	18/22	18/22	21/24	20/24
Body Copy	Article body copy only	15/20	16/22	18/24	16/22
Pica	Index links, titles & headlines	15/20	16/20	18/22	16/20
Long Primer	Index body copy & image captions	15/18	15/18	15/20	14/18
Brevier	Time stamps and bylines	14/16	14/18	14/18	13/16
Minion	Small header capitals	12/16	12/16	13/16	12/16



SEARCH 



STORE 

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On Average



<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/on-average/>



SEARCH 🔍



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EPISODE 226
On Average
marketo

“by designing something for an average pilot, it was literally designed to fit nobody”

<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/on-average/>

OUR FEARLESS
CREATORS

Out of the Doghouse, Into the Bed

By JEN A. MILLER MARCH 13, 2018



iStock

For most Americans, dogs are no longer relegated to the doghouse. According to the American Pet Products Association, an industry trade

RELATED COVERAGE



The Empathetic Dog JUNE 4, 2017



WELL
Committing to a Dog After Cancer
MAY 28, 2018



Quantifying the Benefits of Owning a Dog
JULY 26, 2017

RECENT COMMENTS

Earl Richards 4 hours ago

I had friends visit. They slept with their dog. When they left, I stripped the bed and found a tick. We are in an area with Lyme Disease. ...

Refugee from East Euro communism 4 hours ago

The topic and comments are just another telling indicator how "far" this civilization went. Now we need some environmental activists (pr...

Gretchen 4 hours ago

Depends on the dog (or cat). I've had some that were easier to have in the bed than my children or spouse, and others whose sleeping I'd find



Out of the Doghouse, Into the Bed



iStock

By Jen A. Miller March 13, 2018

For most Americans, dogs are no longer relegated to the doghouse. According to the American Pet Products Association, an industry trade group, almost 60 percent of dog owners say they regard their pet as a child or member of the family. And many let their dogs snuggle up to sleep right in their human owners' beds, often alongside their owners.

But is sleeping in the same bed with your dog

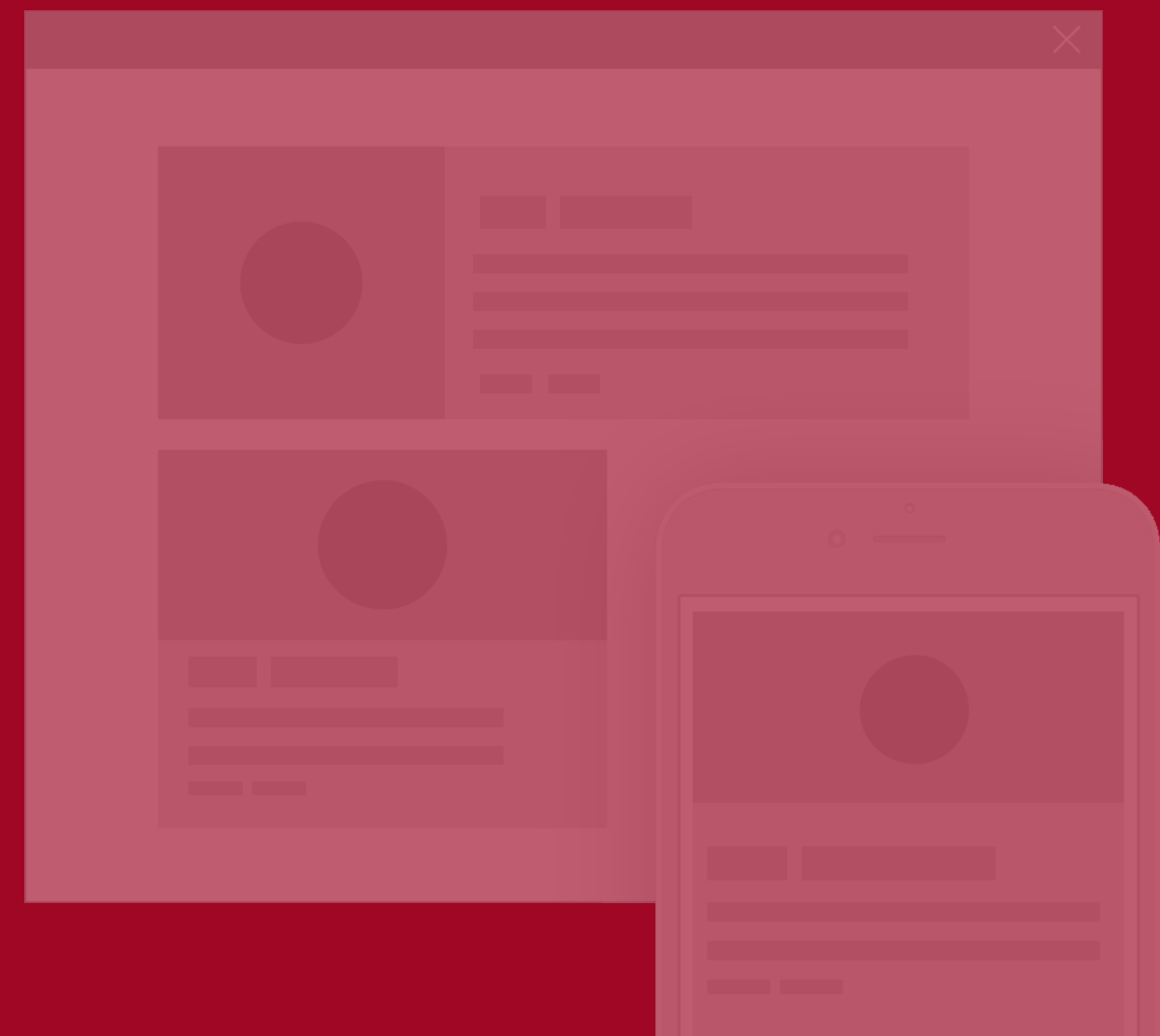
“ **Currently**
the web
— is — **ALL**
SYSTEM
no soul ”

FONTS

ormant typography

Begin expedition ▾

We've created a new Crystal Goblet

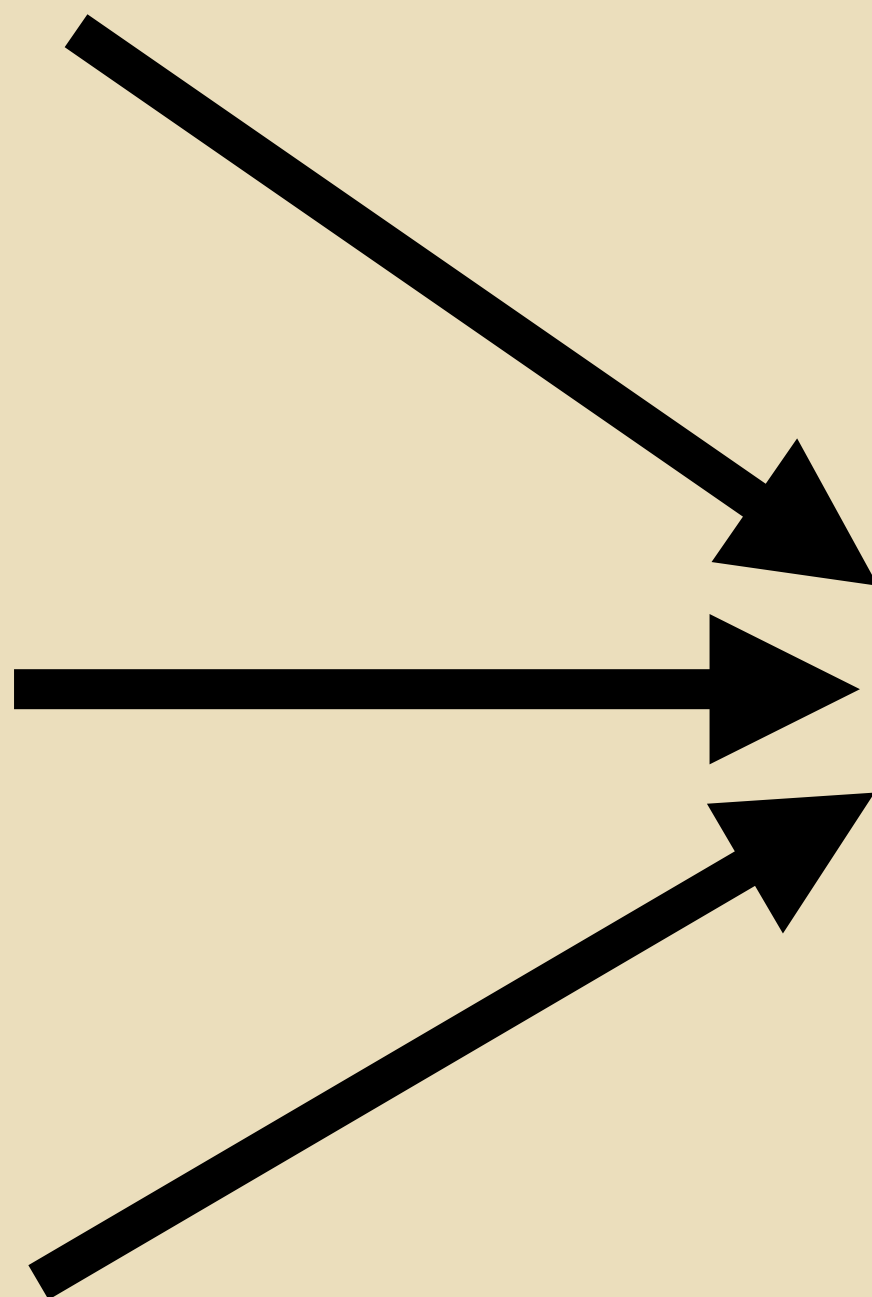


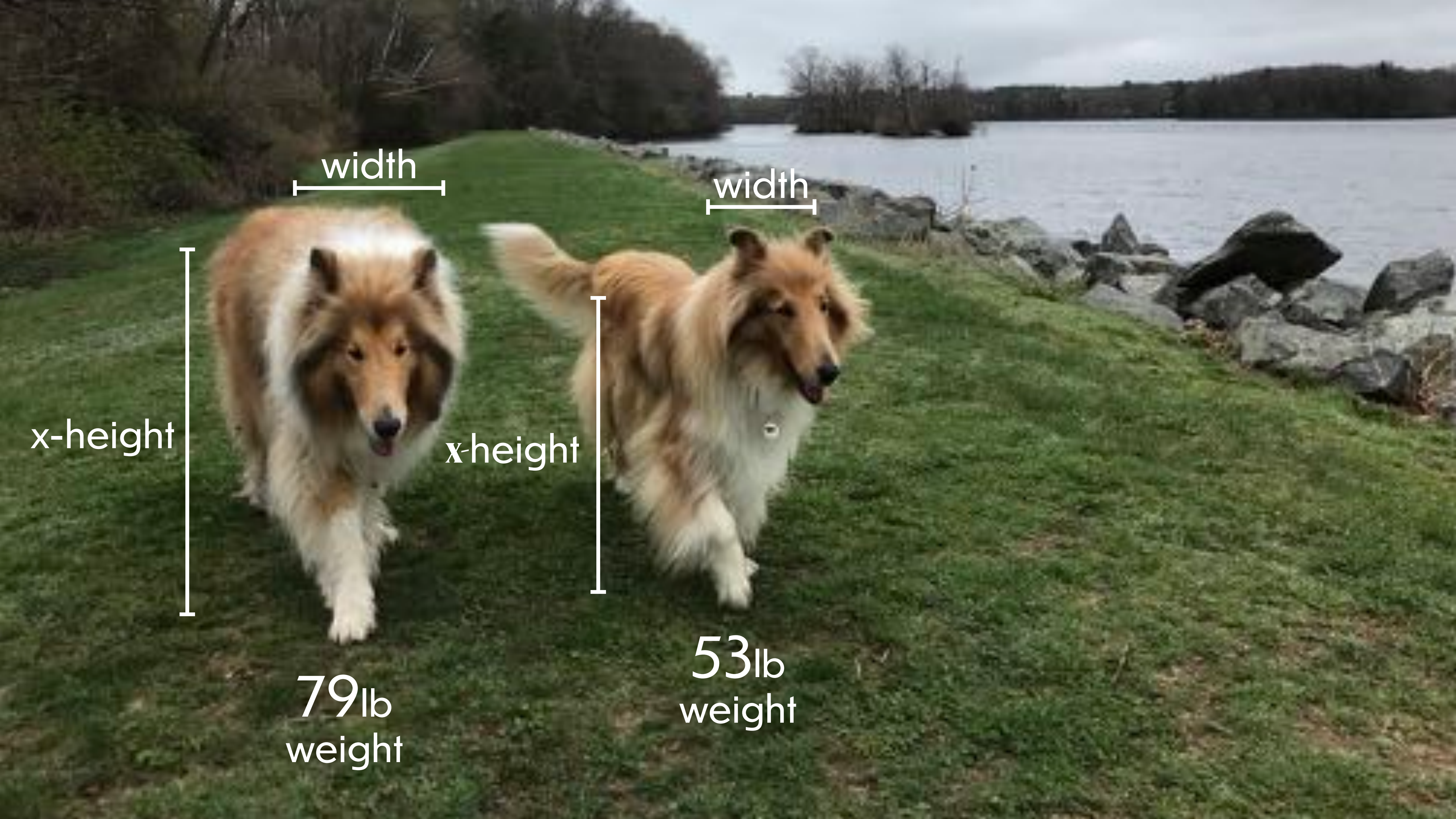




then came

Variable Fonts





width

width

x-height

x-height

79lb
weight

53lb
weight



slant

Registered Axes

Weight

'wght'

Handglove

```
font-weight: 88;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'wght' 88;
```

Weight

'wght'

Handglove

```
font-weight: 264;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'wght' 264;
```

Width

'wdth'

Handglove

```
font-stretch: 80%;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'wdth' 80;
```

Width

'wdth'

Handglove

```
font-stretch: 100%;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'wdth' 100;
```

Slant

'slnt'

Handglove

```
font-style: normal;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'slnt' 0;
```

Slant

'slnt'

Handglove

```
font-style: oblique 20deg;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'slnt' 1000;
```

Italic

'ital'

Handglove

```
font-style: normal;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'ital' 0;
```

Italic

'ital'

Handglove

```
font-style: italic;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'ital' 1;
```


Optical Size

'opsz'

Handglove

```
font-optical-sizing: auto;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'opsz' 12;
```

Optical Size

'opsz'

Handglove

```
font-optical-sizing: auto;
```

```
font-variation-settings: 'opsz' 80;
```

But wait, there's more

Grade

'GRAD'

Handglove

```
font-variation-settings: 'GRAD' 88;
```

Grade

'GRAD'

Handglove

```
font-variation-settings: 'GRAD' 150;
```

Ascenders & Descenders

'YTAS' & 'YTDE'

Handglove

```
font-variation-settings: 'YTAS' 750, 'YTDE' 250;
```

Ascenders & Descenders

'YTAS' & 'YTDE'

Handglove

```
font-variation-settings: 'YTAS' 680, 'YTDE' 190;
```

Mayhem

um—all of them

HANDGLOVE

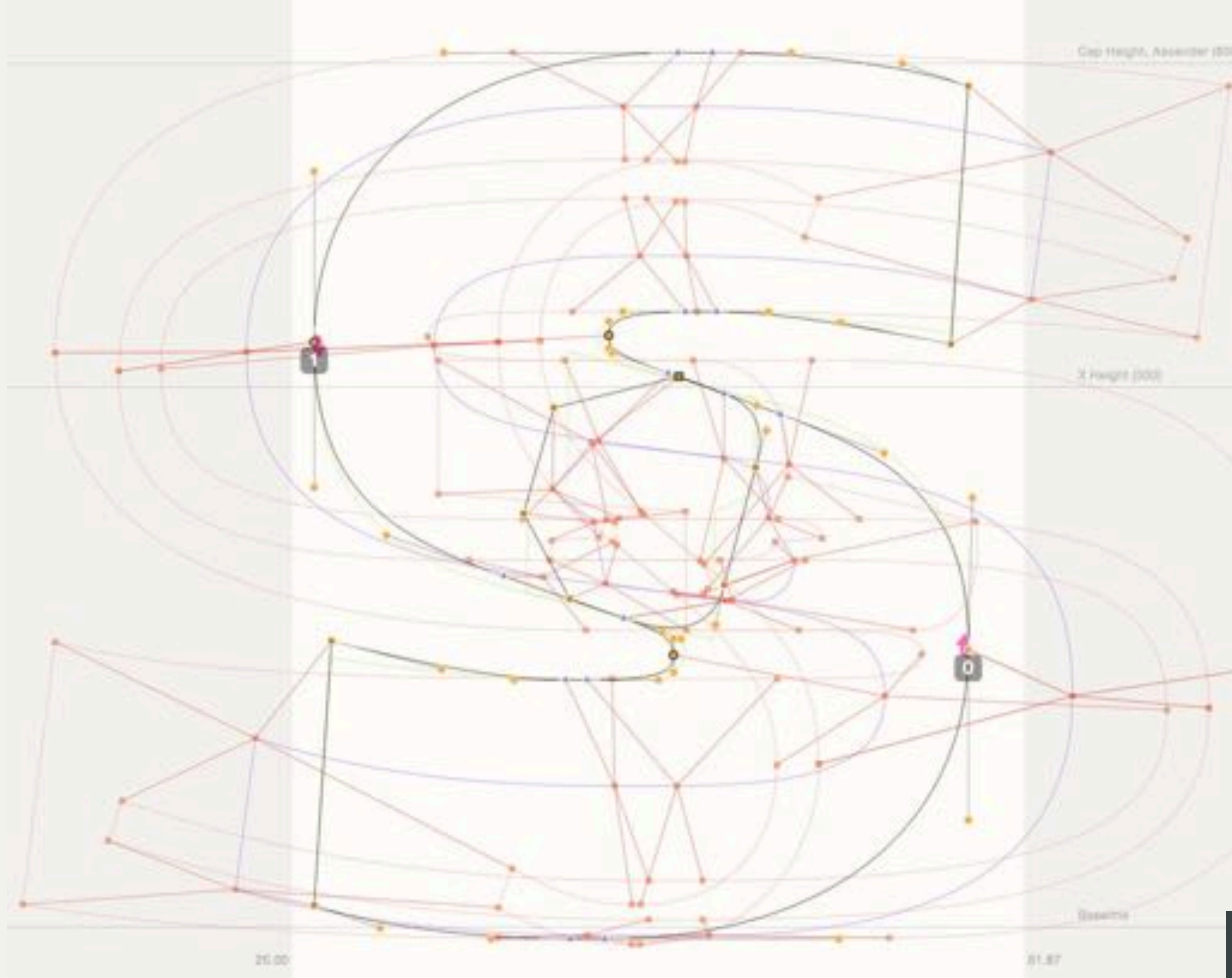
```
font-variation-settings: 'BLDA' 0, 'TRMD' 0, 'TRMC' 0, 'SKLD' 0,  
'TRML' 0, 'SKLA' 0, 'TRMF' 0, 'TRMK' 0, 'BLDB' 0, 'WMX2' 900, 'TRMB'  
0, 'TRMA' 0, 'SKLB' 0, 'TRMG' 0, 'TRME' 0;
```


Mayhem

um—all of them



```
font-variation-settings: 'BLDA' 0, 'TRMD' 0, 'TRMC' 750, 'SKLD' 0,  
'TRML' 250, 'SKLA' 1000, 'TRMF' 250, 'TRMK' 250, 'BLDB' 1000, 'WMX2'  
750, 'TRMB' 500, 'TRMA' 500, 'SKLB' 1000, 'TRMG' 750, 'TRME' 500;
```



So, you want to see code then

```
@font-face {  
  font-family: 'Amstelvar';  
  src: url('amstelvar.woff2') format('woff2-variations');  
  font-weight: 100 900;  
  font-stretch: 75% 125%;  
  font-style: oblique 0deg 12deg;  
}
```

```
.myvariablefontclass {  
    font-weight: 563; /* 1-999 */  
    font-stretch: 95%; /* 50-200(ish) */  
    font-style: italic; /* binary */  
    font-optical-sizing: auto; /* matches font-size */  
}
```

```
.myvariablefontclass {  
    font-variation-settings:  
        'wght' 563, 'wdth' 95, 'ital' 1, 'opsz' 16;  
}
```

```
.myvariablefontclass {  
    font-variation-settings:  
        'wght' 563,  
        'wdth' 95,  
        'ital' 1,  
        'opsz' 16,  
        'GRAD' 88,  
        'YTAS' 680,  
        'YTDE' 190  
};
```

```
.myvariablefontclass {  
  font-variation-settings:  
    'wght' 563,  
    'wdth' 95,  
    'ital' 1,  
    'opsz' 16,  
    'GRAD' 88,  
    'YTAS' 680,  
    'YTDE' 190;  
}
```



Custom axes must be uppercase

ios



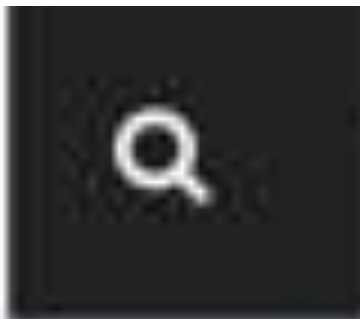
Windows 10



PSA: you can help

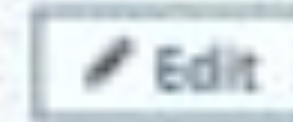
[W3C](#) [Github](#) [CSS](#) [Fonts](#) [Level 3](#)

[W3C](#) [Github](#) [CSS](#) [Fonts](#) [Level 4](#)



Variable fonts guide

🌐 Languages



Jump to: [Variable Fonts: what they are, and how they differ](#) [Introducing the 'variation axis'](#) [Working with older browsers](#)

[Sample pages](#) [Resources](#)

[Web technology for developers](#) ▸
[CSS: Cascading Style Sheets](#) ▸
[CSS Fonts](#) ▸ [Variable fonts guide](#)

This article needs these reviews:

- Technical - code samples, APIs, or technologies. Can you help?

Save

Variable fonts are an evolution of the OpenType font specification that enables many different variations of a typeface to be incorporated into a single file, rather than having a separate font file for every width, weight, or style. They let you access all the variations contained in a given font file via CSS and a single `@font-face` reference. This article will give you all you need to know to get you started using variable fonts.

⚠ Warning: In order to use variable fonts on your operating system, you need to make sure that it is up to date. For example Linux OSes need the latest Linux

Introduction

MY SPECIMENS

Old Default

SPECIMENS

- new Protipo Variable
- 文鼎晶熙黑
- 晶熙ゴシック体
- Amstelvar
- Avenir Next
- BitCount
- Buffalo Gal
- Compressa
- Decovar
- DIN 2014
- Dunbar
- Fit
- Gingham
- Grade
- new T. Jakob

Axis-Praxis is a website for playing with OpenType Variable Fonts

Discover 30+ variable fonts. Experiment with the typographic controls in the right panel on this default layout, or choose a typeface specimen from the left column. Every textbox is fully editable: change font, font size, alignment, line-spacing as well as the variation sliders. And type your own text, of course.



Font makers can try out their own variable fonts. Just drag any variable TTF to the right panel, the current textbox gets set to that font, and its axes show up right away in the Font Variation section.

The Font Variation controls adapt according to

TEXTBOX

Textbox

Font ⓘ

Drop & drop fonts here

Font size

Line-height

Alignment left center right justify

⌵ ⌶ ⌷ ⌸ ⌹ ⌺ ⌻ ⌼ ⌽ ⌾ ⌿

FONT VARIATIONS ⌵ ⌶

Instance

Weight

Optical Size

FONT FEATURES

- c2sc
- c2s
- case
- dnom
- frac
- liga
- lnum
- locl
- numr
- onum
- pnum
- sfin
- smcp
- ss01
- subs
- sups
- tnum
- zero

COLOUR

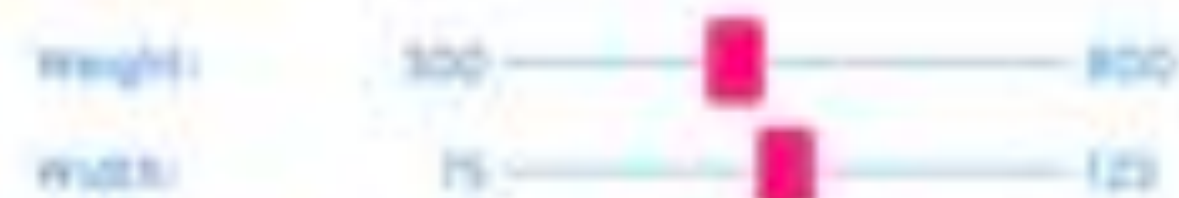
#333
_JOC

Variable Fonts ³swel



A simple resource for finding and trying variable fonts

Venn VF



Venn VF is the first family from Dalton Maag to be distributed as a variable font. It's offered for free as a technology preview for use in commercial and non-commercial work until March 1, 2019.

Design: Dalton Maag Ltd.
Publisher: Dalton Maag Ltd.
License: Free for personal and commercial use
Info/Font: daltonmaag.com

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdef
ghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Protipo Variable



A typeface designed for use in informational design. Production of the variable fonts was handled by Irene Vlachou.

Design: Joel Scagone, Yannis Bureau

Protipo Variable Compact

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdef
ghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789

Protipo Variable

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz



Drop a font!
Fonts aren't updated,
they stay on your computer.

Family: AvenirNext LT Pro Regular
Subfamily: Regular
Instances: 8
Axes: 2
Current: Weight: 850.3, Width: 80

Text Size (200px):

Named
Instances

400
75

900 Weight
100 Width

Handglove

VARIABLE FONTS

An exploration of expressive, performant typography

Begin expedition 🗺️


```
HTML
<main class="content-area clearfix">
  <div class="section-content">
    <article class="article-detail
initial">
  <headers>
```

```
CSS
/* FF Meta Variable Demo font */
/* Report FF Meta VF using this link in
your HTML */
/*
```

```
JS
var container =
document.getElementById('example-
onpersonid');
var controls =
document.getElementById('play-pause');
```

The evolution of typography with variable fonts

Words have power, and typography is their voice
by Jason Pamental



Click to Play

For centuries, type has been how we "hear" what we read. It's also generally understood that typefaces and typography are a core element of branding, of expression, of vocal range. Great typography influences understanding, mood, and meaning in countless ways and is an essential part of design. Unfortunately, for many years after the advent of the web, we were unable

IT'S TIME FOR

variable web

TYPOGRAPHY

BY OLIVER SCHÖNDORFER

Variable fonts will shape the future of web typography as they offer plenty of possibilities for fine graded control over the display of type on screens. And that all at a relatively low file size. Time to say goodbye to endless debates about the number of font files you have to load to give your content a proper typographic voice.

This page uses the typeface Output Sans Variable by David Jonathan Ross. It's a variable font that can be adjusted on two axes to change its weight and its obliqueness. So I only have load **one single font file** of 57 KB to create the 18 different styles you can see on this site. It opens up new possibilities for designing with text on the web with a great number of typographic expressions for an incredibly small font file. So clearly, variable fonts are the new hot thing for every type nerd since the introduction of web fonts. The technology shift is happening right now—2018 is the year variable fonts will be supported by major browsers. I expect by 2019, they will be used as an alternative

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered.

2. Next, gather the relevant information and data needed to solve the problem.



3. Finally, analyze the information and provide a clear, concise answer to the question.

Let's talk about

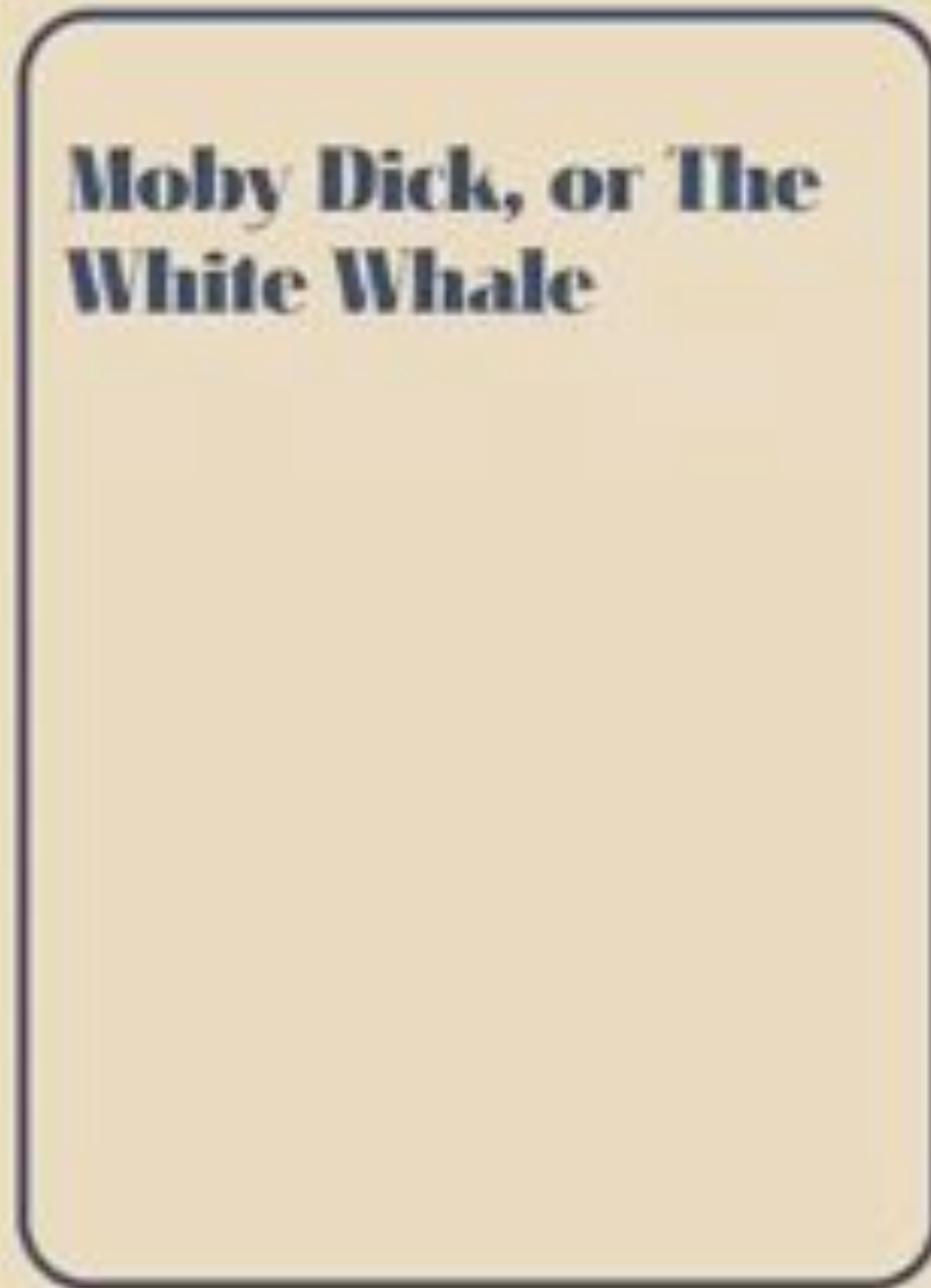
Typography for reading



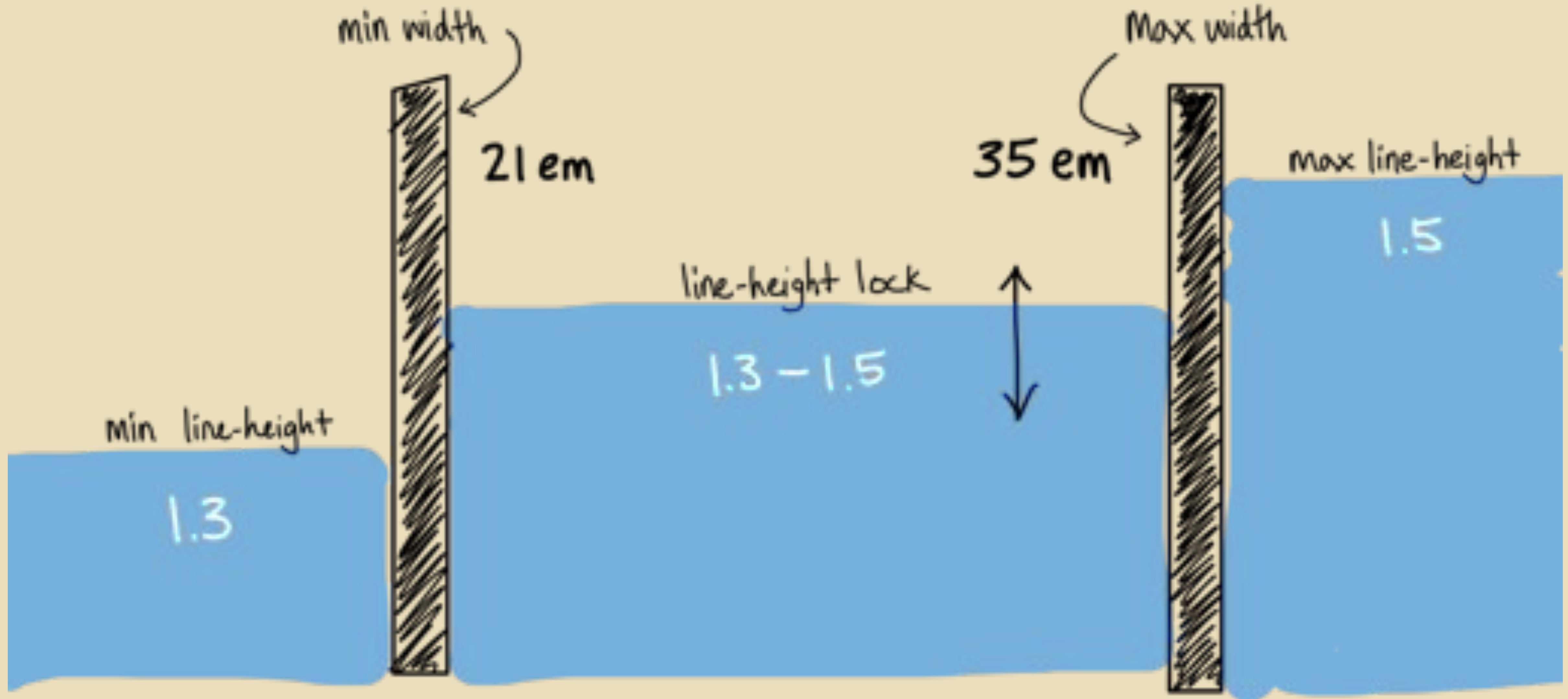
An even more modular scale

	1	1.25						
DESKTOP	H_1		H_2		H_3		H_4	
	3	1.05	2.25	1.25	1.75	1.25	1.75	1.25
MOBILE	H_1		H_2		H_3		H_4	
	2	1.25	1.625	1.15384615	1.375	1.13636364	1.125	

An even more modular scale



Locks, stock, & many scaling barrels



```
:root {  
  /* breakpoint variables */  
  --bp-small: 24.15;  
  --bp-medium: 43.75;  
  --bp-large: 60.25;  
  --bp-xlarge: 75;  
  
  /* h1 variables */  
  --h1-font-size-min: 5;  
  --h1-font-size-max: 10;  
}
```

```
h1 {
  font-size: calc( var(--h1-font-size-min) * 1em );
}

@media screen and (min-width: 24.15em) {
  h1 {
    font-size: calc(( var(--h1-font-size-min) * 1em ) +
      ( var(--h1-font-size-max) - var(--h1-font-size-min) ) *
      ((100vw - ( var(--bp-small) * 1em )) / ( var(--bp-
xlarge) - var(--bp-small) ))));
  }}

@media screen and (min-width: 75em) {
  h1 {
    font-size: calc( var(--h1-font-size-max) * 1em );
  }}
}
```

Moby Dick; or The White Whale

CHAPTER 1. Loomings.

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as

Moby Dick; or The White Whale

font-size
font-stretch
font-optical-sizing
line-height
asc/desc

CHAPTER 1. Loomings.

font-size
font-stretch
font-optical-sizing
line-height

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having a little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as

Moby Dick; or The White Whale

CHAPTER I. Loomings.

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for gun and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.

There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs; commerce surrounds it with her surf. Right and left, the streets take you waterward. Its extreme downtown is the battery, where that noble mole is washed by waves, and cooled by breezes, which a few hours previous were out of sight of land. Look at the crowds of water-gazers there.

Circumnavigate the city of a dreary Sabbath afternoon. Go from Carleton Hook to Coenties Slip, and

☞ Sidebar

Optical sizing
one shape is not for all sizes

A S P E C I M E N

By WILLIAM CASLON, Letter-Founder, in Chifwell-Street, LONDON.



Caslon, 72pt



Caslon, 6pt

HTML CSS Result EDIT ON CODEPEN

FRANK SPRUNG
Collectible Soups

NANCY TO PARIS
Fished Mercurically

FANCY MINCE MAKER
Mechining numerations

OPTICAL FORMATTED SALAD Illumination
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A S P E C I M E N

By WILLIAM CASLON, Letter-Founder, in Chifwell-Street, LONDON.



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***Meanwhile, back in your
reading experience...***

Moby Dick, or the White Whale

CHAPTER 1. Loomings.

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take

Moby Dick oder Der weiße Wal

Erstes Kapitel

Als ich vor einigen Jahren – wie lange es genau her ist, tut wenig zur Sache – so gut wie nichts in der Tasche hatte und von einem weiteren Aufenthalt auf dem Lande nichts mehr wissen wollte, kam ich auf den Gedanken, ein wenig zur See zu fahren, um die Welt des Meeres kennenzulernen. Man verliert auf diese Weise seinen verrückten Spleen, und dann ist es auch gut für die Blutzirkulation. Wenn man den scheußlichen Geschmack auf der Zunge nicht loswerden kann; wenn man das Frostgefühl eines feuchten und kalten Novembers auf der Seele hat; wenn man unwillkürlich vor jedem Sargmagazin stehenbleibt und jedem Leichenzug nachsieht, wenn man sich der Schwermut nicht mehr erwehren kann, daß man auf die Straße stürzen und vorsätzlich den Leuten den Hut vom Kopfe schlagen müßte, dann ist es allerhöchste Zeit, auf See zu gehen. Das ist für mich Ersatz für

Moby Dick; or The White Whale

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Warm heart & cold fingers

handglove

Warm heart & cold fingers

handglove

GRASS

Lets. Go. Coding :)

Jason Pamental | @jpamental
<http://rwt.io>
<http://codepen.io/jpamental>

typefaces:

Roslindale, Gimlet, Output
Sans (DJR)
Dunbar, Louvette (CJ Dunn)
Amstelvar, Decovar
(Type Network)

photography:

unless otherwise noted,
photos by @jpamental

Thank you

