LETTERSPACING

Letterspacing is also called tracking, and is measured in units. It should be set for comfortable reading in body copy, and can be used for effect or style in heads. This copy has 5 units of tracking.

Kerning is the space in between two individual letters. It usually needs to be adjusted between specific letter combinations, like the cap and the first letter for example, in large header type.

heaven sent, hell bent
• -30 illegible

heaven sent, hell bent
• -20 touching

heaven sent, hell bent
• -10 tight

heaven sent, hell bent
• 0 normal

heaven sent, hell bent
• 10 open

heaven sent, hell bent
• 20 loose

heaven sent, hell bent
• 30 very loose

COMPING DISPLAY TYPE

When type is set professionally, the letters align properly, and the letterspacing and word spacing are consistent. When you comp display type (18 pt or larger) these decisions are up to you. Here are some points to remember: if the rounded letters such as O, C and G were the same height as the straight letters such as I, L and T, they would appear smaller to the eye. The tops and bottoms of rounded letters should fall slightly above and below the guildlines to appear optically correct.

heaven
(Garamond Regular typeface)

• Letterspacing

Letterspacing large display type is not a mechanical exercise, but an **optical** and **intuitive** one. A trick to discern whether the letters in a word are set evenly or not, is to turn the comp upside-down. Now because you can no longer read the word you're more able to focus on the negative and positve spaces.

• Overall letterspacing

Letterspacing or tracking can also be used as a decorative element that can conceptually relate a bigger message:

squeeze squeeze

• Legibility in Letterspacing

There are letter combinations to be aware of, that when set too tight may begin to look like other letters:

rn   rn   m

• Kerning

Kerning is the selective elimination of excess white space between pairs or combinations of letters. This is more effective in display type than in text.

Wo   Wo   Te   Te

WORD-SPACING

A rule of thumb for setting headline type is to leave a space between words just wide enough to fit a lower case i. For comfortable reading of long lines, the space between words should be wider. The default settings in computer design programs vary these values. Note that QuarkXpress is specifically for setting type and therefore the normal 100% word space will work will for most typefaces, whereas the Illustrator and Photoshop programs are both intended for image work and although you are able to create type in them, the spacing defaults are poor.

Iibetiyouiareiheavenisentibutihellibent.

Depending on the typeface, a lower case i makes a good word space for headlines.

LINESPACING / LEADING

When setting type, it is possible to vary the amount of space between the line of type by leading (pronounced ledding). It is important to note that adding leading between the lines does not affect the type size, or the length of the line, it merely moves the lines farther apart.

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• 19 point type over 16 point leading (touching, uncomfortable, difficult to read)

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• 19 point type over 21 point leading (normal)

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• 19/29 (open)

LEADING & LETTERSPACING

When setting type it is important to note that there is a correlation between leading and letterspacing. If the letter-spacing is too open and the leading too tight, the type will be very difficult if not impossible to read. The paragraph below demonstrates what is referred to as 'rivers' in the text: your eye follows the wells and connects the lines above and below, instead of reading left to right. Remember that this much letterspacing is only recommended for use in a head or sub-head levels of text.

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• 19 point type, with 30 units tracting over 16 point leading (touching, uncomfortable, difficult to read)

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moves the lines apart.

• 19 point type, with 30 units tracting over 39 point leading (much more legible)

TYPE CONTRAST

This phrase is an example of 4 kinds of contrast: **size; weight; structure; form;**

heaven sent, **hell** *bent*

• Garamond Regular Italic and Franklin Gothic Extended Heavy

SIZE

An easy and effect way to achieve contrast with type is by combining different type sizes. Although to use this success-fully remember an important element: make the difference immediately noticeable. In other words, do not combine 12 pt type with 14 pt type or it will look like an error. Instead, combine 12 pt type with 22 pt type so the contrast between the two is easily seen.

heaven sent, hell bent

• Franklin Gothic Extended Heavy: 24 pt and 43 pt

WEIGHT

The weight of a typeface refers to the thickness of the strokes. Traditionally, typefaces used for setting books had no bold weights, let alone extra-bold or condensed versions. Those more eye-catching additions came about at the beginning of the 19th century, when the Industrial Revolution created the need to ADVERTISE goods.

Properly applied, a complete family of type gives you enough scope to solve all typographic tasks in the setting of text. A typeface can have as few as one weight or an many as 20 or more. The following is an example of the various weights available in the Franklin Gothic family.

Contemporary
• Franklin Gothic Condensed Book

Contemporary
• Franklin Gothic Condensed Medium

Contemporary
• Franklin Gothic Condensed Demi

Contemporary
• Franklin Gothic Book

Contemporary
• Franklin Gothic Demi

Contemporary
• Franklin Gothic Heavy

WEIGHT

Distinctive weight changes in typography, are used to establish definition. The terms RHYTHM and CONTRAST are used when talking about good typographic design. They are the concepts which apply to the spoken language — if all the visuals are the same volume, tone and speed, they won't get noticed. If you've been whispering to your audience, then yell once in a while to make sure they're paying attention. Or if your design feels like a constant scream, whisper to your audience so they don't tune you out!

Remember that contrast relies on extremes: make the difference immediately noticeable. Don't try to contrast regular weight type with medium or semibold, chances are it will look like an error. Try a regular or light weight combined with a bold, extra-bold or heavy.

heaven sent, hell **bent**

• Franklin Gothic Extended Book, and Franklin Gothic Extended Heavy

STRUCTURE

Structure refers to how a typeface is built. For example, Sans-Serif typefaces have almost no shift in the stroke, while the Modern category of typefaces is built with great emphasis on the thick/thin transitions. If you want to contrast type from two different families, use two families with different structures and make the difference immediately noticeable. Try an Old Style face (Garamond regular weight) contrasted with a Sans-Serif face (Franklin Gothic Extended Heavy).

Incestuous typography will only solve so many design problems. Inevitably combinations of fonts will be necessary in order to provide the contrast necessary for impact. One thing to note, the best designers rely on a library of approximately 20 or so typefaces to design with. Contrary to popular belief, there is such a thing as bad type!

heaven **sent, hell bent**

• Garamond Regular, and Franklin Gothic Extended Heavy

FORM

The form of a letter refers to its shape. Characters may have the same structure but different forms. An easy way to think of contrast in form is capitals versus lowercase, or roman versus italic.

heaven sent, hell bent

• Garamond Regular italic, Garamond Regular

heaven sent, HELL bent

• Garamond Regular upper and lower case, Garamond Regular caps

BASIC TYPOGRAPHY: A Beginner's Glossary

- **Ascender** — the part of the lowercase letter that rises above the meanline, as in b, d, f, h, k, and t;
- **Baseline** — invisible horizontal line upon which all the characters in a line stand;
- **Body** — the wood or metal block that carries the printing surface;
- **Body Copy** — regular reading text (usually 6 pt to 14 pt, as contrasted with display lines);
- **Body Size** — the depth of the body of a piece of type measured in points;
- **Boldface** — a heavier version of a regular typeface;
- **Calligraphy** — elegant handwriting or the art of producing such handwriting;
- **Capitals** — also known as caps or uppercase;
- **Comprehensive** — referred to as a comp. An accurate layout showing type and illustrations in position;
- **Counter** — space enclosed by the strokes of a letter, such as the bowl of the b, d, p, etc;
- **Cursives** — typefaces that resemble handwriting, but with the letters disconnected;
- **Deadline** — time beyond which completion of a job cannot be accepted;
- **Descender** — that part of a lowercase letter that falls below the body of the letter, as in g, j, p, q, and y;
- **Display Type** — dramatic, emotional, expressive type which is used to attract attention, usually larger the 18 pt;
- **Extended** — a wide version of a regular typeface;
- **Face** — the part of the wood or metal type that prints; also the style of cut of the type (typeface);
- **Family of Type** — all the types sizes and type styles of a particular typeface (roman, italic, body, condensed, etc.);
- **Font** — complete assemble of all characters (upper and lowercase letter, numerals, etc) of one size of one typeface;
- **Headline** — the most important line of type in a page layout, inviting further reading or summarizing the content;
- **Initial** — the first letter of a body of copy, often set in display type which contrasts with the body text;
- **Italic** — letter-form that slants to the right;
- **Kerning** — adjusting the space between individual letter pairs;
- **Layout** — a hand-drawn preliminary plan of the basic elements of design shown in their proper proportions;
- **Leading** — pronounced 'ledding', the space between lines of type;
- **Legibility** — the quality in type that affects the speed of perception; the faster and more accurate the perception, the more legible;
- **Lightface** — a lighter version of a regular typeface;
- **Lowercase** — small letters the opposite of capitals;
- **Meanline** — invisible horizontal line crossing above the top of the characters x-height;
- **Modern** — term used to describe the type style developed in the late 18th century;
- **Oblique** — Roman characters that slant to the right;
- **Old Style** — a style of type developed in the early 17th century;
- **Pica** — a typographic unit of measurement. 12 points = 1 picas, 6 picas = 1 inch;
- **Point** — smallest typographical unit of measurement;
- **Point Size** — type is measured in points. standard type size are 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, 60 and 72;
- **Reverse type** — type that drops out of the background in which or the colour of the paper;
- **Roman** — letterform that is upright, also, more specifically, an upright letter-form with serifs derived from Roman stone-cut letters;
- **Rough** — a sketch or thumbnail, usually done on tracing paper, giving a general idea of the size and position of various elements;
- **Script** — a typeface based on handwritten letter-forms. Scripts come in formal and informal styles, and a variety of weights;
- **Serifs** — the opening and closing stokes in the letter-forms of some typefaces;
- **Sans Serifs** — 'sans' is French for 'without'. Sans serif typefaces do not have serifs;
- **Slab Serifs** — also known as Square Serif or Egyptian. Originating in the 19th century;
- **Text** — the body copy in a book or on a page, as opposed to the headings;
- **Thumbnails** — see rough sketches;
- **Transitional** — a type style that combines features of both Old Style and Modern;
- **Type** — the letters of the alphabet and all the other characters used singly or collectively to create words, sentences, etc;
- **Type Family** — a range of typeface designs that are all basic variations of one style of alphabet;
- **Typography** — the art and process of working with an printing from type;
- **Uppercase** — the capital letters of a type font;
- **X-Height** — the height of the body of lowercase letters;