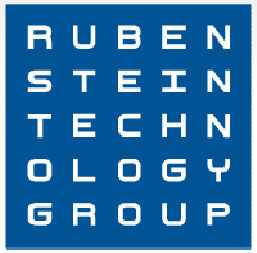

Web Type:
The Next Big Thing

NYC Web Design Meetup
July 19, 2010

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Overview

- Technology
- Licensing
- Foundries and Distributors
- Code
- Results
- Issues
- Conclusion
- References

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Evolution of Web Type

- Web Fonts
  - Arial, Times New Roman, etc.
  - Verdana, Georgia, Tahoma, Trebuchet MS, etc.
- Scalable Inman Flash Replacement (sIFR)
  - JavaScript/Flash text replacement
  - Requires Flash plugin
  - Limitations for animation, dynamic text,
- Cufón
  - Replaces text with VML (MSIE) or SVG (everything else)
  - Rather slow, complex, has some issues with text selection and screen rendering
- CSS and @font-face
  - Method of specifying and downloading fonts
  - Not "HTML5" , introduced in CSS2 in 1998, standardized in CSS3
  - Works with MSIE4+, Firefox 3.5+, Safari 3.1+, Opera 10+ and Chrome 4.0+
  - Specification: http://www.w3.org/TR/css3-fonts/#font-resources

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@font-face Font Formats

- TrueType (TTF)
  - Firefox 3.5+ , Opera 10+, Safari 3.1+, Chrome 4.0.249.4+
- Embedded OpenType (EOT)
  - Microsoft Internet Explorer 4+
- Web Open Font Format (WOFF)
  - Firefox 3.6+, Internet Explorer 9+, Chrome 5+
- Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG)
  - iPad and iPhone
- Scalable Vector Graphics, gzipped (SVGZ)
  - Compressed SVG files (via gzip compression)
  - iPad only

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Format Browser Compatibility

Browser	TrueType	WOFF	EOT	SVG	SVGZ
MSIE 4 - 8			Yes		
MSIE 9		Soon	Yes		
Firefox 3.5+	Yes				
Firefox 3.6+	Yes	Yes			
Safari 3.1+	Yes			Yes	Yes
Chrome 4+	Yes	Soon		Yes	Yes
Opera 10+	Yes	Soon		Yes	Yes
iPhone				Yes	
iPad				Yes	Yes

Source: http://www.fontspring.com/fontface

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Licensing

- Font Licensing Overview
- Digital Rights Management (DRM)
  - Proprietary JavaScript embed
  - Encoded/obfuscated CSS
  - Restrictions
    - By Website
    - By Font
    - By hits/month/year
- DRM-free
  - @font-face kits
  - Roll your own from original fonts
  - Unrestricted use (but must comply with original license)

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Foundries and Distributors

Name	Method	Delivery	Pricing Model
TypeKit	Proprietary JavaScript	Hosted	Recurring annual fee for library access
Font Shop	WOFF/EOT files or TypeKit Delivery	Hosted or Download	One-time license fee, based on bandwidth
Fonts.com Web Fonts (Monotype)	Proprietary JavaScript	Hosted	Currently Beta only, pricing unknown
Typotheque	Proprietary CSS	Hosted	One-time license fee, based on bandwidth
FontSpring	@font-face kit	Download	One-time license fee, by domain name
Font Squirrel	@font-face kit	Download	Free fonts, licenses vary
Google Font Directory	@font-face kit or JavaScript	Hosted or Download	Free fonts, licenses vary
Open Font Library	@font-face kit	Hosted or Download	Free fonts, licenses vary, Open Font License (GPLv3)

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Code: Overview

- The process:
  - Obtain proper Font format files
  - Use `@font-face` rule to define the font
  - Use `font-family` descriptor to use it
- Two methods:
  - CSS Stylesheet
  - JavaScript + CSS (online only)

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Code: CSS @font-face Usage

- CSS Stylesheet:

```
@font-face {
  font-family: Unobtanium;
  src: url('WebFont.woff') format('woff'),
       url('WebFont.ttf') format('truetype');
}

p {
  font-family: Unobtanium, sans-serif;
}
```

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Code: TypeKit Usage

- JavaScript embed:

```
<script type="text/javascript"
  src="http://use.typekit.com/abcdef.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript">
  try{Typekit.load();}catch(e){}
</script>
```

- CSS stylesheet:

```
p {
  font-family: "unobtanium-1","unobtanium-2",sans-serif;
}
```

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Results: Examples

- TypeKit
  - Steinway & Sons
    - http://steinway.com
  - Ballot Bucks:
    - http://ballotbucks.org
  - Twitter Media:
    - http://media.twitter.com
- Font Squirrel Font Examples
  - Flux Architect
  - 3Dumb & 2Dumb

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The Issues

- Increased page assets, increased download time
- Font quality varies
- Cross-platform/browser rendering differences
- Display at small sizes
- Display fonts vs. Print fonts
- Flash of Un-styled Text (FOUT)
  - http://paulirish.com/2009/fighting-the-font-face-fout/
- Kerning, leading, and tweaking type:
  - `text-rendering: optimizeLegibility;`
  - `line-height: 1.4em;`
  - `letter-spacing: -1px;`
  - `font-variant: small-caps;`
- Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) support required for e-commerce
- Some clients/servers required MIME type configuration
- Control use of locally-installed vs. downloaded fonts
  - http://paulirish.com/2010/font-face-gotchas/#smiley
- Email support varies by method and application

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Conclusion

- With great power comes great responsibility
  - Honor font licenses
  - Just because you can, doesn't mean you should
  - Select typefaces and fonts carefully
  - Test everywhere that matters
  - *Caveat developer* – let the developer beware

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- http://snook.ca/archives/html_and_css/becoming-a-font-embedding-master
- http://www.richinstyle.com/guides/fontface2.html
- http://www.fontspring.com/fontface
- http://www.fontshop.com/blog/?p=1661
- http://typesites.com/
- https://developer.mozilla.org/en/CSS/text-rendering
- http://nicewebtype.com/

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