The treasure is split into two piles.

One is yours for the taking—just follow the Style Guide and apply the rich detailing of traditional typography to your work.

The other requires a small outlay, but what a return! The Expert Font Guide shows how to use expert fonts to access the accumulated wealth of typographic culture.

The typesetting trade has all but vanished. For five centuries its technology and tradespeople evolved within a clearly defined niche, with the result that any example of the craft, pre-1970, exhibits qualities of subtlety and sophistication, conforming to a shared canon of high aesthetic standards.

Let’s pick up the torch, it sheds a lot of light.

The traditional standards of typography are not remnants of a bygone era—they are no more obsolete than the letter A. Such standards represent the core discipline of graphic design, so dependent upon the visible word. Just as the pattern drafter’s skill is the basis of the fashion industry, making clothes that are comfortable to wear and that fit without ugly wrinkles, so the traditional standards of typography produce words that are comfortable to read, and type that smoothly fits ideas.

These standards represent a communal value, an aesthetic for the ages. They tap into a timeless quality of living tradition which brings a richness and beauty to the simplest of designs. That’s the partnership that best transmits the full power and nuance of meaning in the written word: simple design plus quality finish.

Of course, there are no standards, per se. It’s accepted that, like writing, there are various authorities on style. In the era of trade typesetting each type shop had a house style, much of which was common practice. Now it’s the responsibility of the designer or art director.

Good typography is 90% attitude and 10% know-how.

The attitude is stated clearly in item 1.1.1 of the definitive modern work on the subject, The Elements of Typographic Style, by Vancouver’s Robert Bringhurst:

“Typography exists to honour content.”

In other words, read the frigging copy. And care about it.

But don’t stop there. Make sure someone else proofreads it after typesetting. It’s that second set of eyes that has the objectivity to spot mistakes and suggest improvements. After all, the best writers employ the services of editors and proofreaders to check their prose before and after it’s typeset. Many firms don’t have literary specialists on staff. But the same care and attention that goes into making sure you don’t screw up the client’s 1-800 number in an ad, misspell the product name, or offer it to the public for $13 instead of $18, should be applied to the niceties of typography.

Why bother? Isn’t the trend—spearheaded by the roughshod text of e-mail—going in the other direction?

In some contexts, yes. But manners, grooming, and professionalism still count for something, and it’s not called a typeface: for nothing. Typography is the surface of your client’s textual message, and you want to make them look as good as possible. If that’s not reason enough, bear this in mind: quality is insidious.

Nick Shinn, RGD, is an art director and type designer: www.shinntype.com.
Style Guide

This is intended as a guide to typographic styling. Many typographers have their own guidelines that may differ slightly. Note: Don’t think you can shirk your responsibility to the noble art because you’re ‘only’ doing Web design!

Compiled by the Style Guide Committee of the Type Club of Toronto, with examples and comments by Nick Shinn.

**APPHROPHES**

Do not use to pluralize abbreviations or numerals (mfs, 1970s) except where ambiguity is likely to arise: e.g. the a’s in a font. (If using small caps a thin space may be inserted before the s). Use as: ’89, not ’89.

Never use (’) as an apostrophe.

**CAPITALS**

Words in full capitals should not appear within text settings, small caps are preferred. Full capitals may be used in headings or display. Words in capitals should always be visually letterspaced.

**STUPOMATRON 2** is here! New, warmer, friendlier and more responsive STUPOMATRON 2! Discover the incredible value of STUPOMATRON 2 with free matching STUPOMATRON vinyl cover!

**LAVA**

Most typefaces today have built-in kerning that produces nice letter spacing in all-caps settings. However, you can never afford to drop your guard. Georgia, for instance, is a lovely face designed for the Web, but it has no kerning (above right).

If you decide to use it in a bitmapped or print setting, manual kerning will be necessary to even out the spacing between capitals (above left).

Tip #1: Use the tab command, and soft return (Shift-Return) to position text next to the drop cap.

**COPY INTERPRETATION**

Underlined words or passages in the copy will be set in italics unless specified otherwise. Underlined words or passages within italic settings will be set in roman. Words with double underlines will be set in small caps, if available. Italic or semibold may be used for emphasis, but only when really necessary.

**DASHES**

Always use the em dash or the en dash, not a hyphen.

**SPACE, HYPHEN, SPACE: WRONG**

**SPACE, EN DASH, SPACE: RIGHT**

**EM DASH: RIGHT**

The width of the dashes varies from face to face; furthermore, some have built-in space on either side, others don’t. The Electra em dash (above right) is preferable to its en dash — it’s not too wide, and doesn’t need spacing. But the Futura em dash is a dangerous beast. So a good rule of thumb is to play it safe and always use the en dash with spaces either side.

**DIMENSION**

In serifed faces, use a multiply sign (Symbol font: Option y) not x, and, if you like, the Symbol inch mark (Option .) 9” x 12” not 9" x 12”.

The initial cap can be set in a different typeface from the text, or the same — but if it is a serifed typeface, a display version should be used, not just the text font at a larger size. Above: Castellar with Adobe Garamond. Below: the Adobe Garamond Titling font has been used for the drop cap.

Along investment “stop-one” effective, simple you give portfolios the, policies these by provided protection benefit death the with decision to important so is that.

Fitted drop caps are especially important when the first letter is A or I, because the font has been used for the drop cap.

When level comfort your and goals your assets of mix right the determining is investment any selecting to step first the questions fundamental answer to aked be.

Drop caps are a great opportunity for typographers to practise their craft. It’s fun to experiment with letters such as T, V, W, and Y, hanging the left arm into the margin — and this can give an edge to an otherwise rigid page layout.

**LAV**
ELLIPSIS
A character consisting of three dots (…) a mark of omission preceded and followed by a word space. Keystroke: (Option ;).

Now is the time ... to ... party.

FIGURES
Use old style, i.e. lowercase figures (123) in text settings and with small caps. Use lining, i.e. capital (125) figures in headlines and with full capitals.

In text, descriptive numbers of one hundred and under should be spelled out, except when they refer to specific sequences or references: e.g. The book had eighty pages and on page 65…

A hundred or a thousand should be spelled out. If a sentence begins with a number it should be spelled out.

Dates should be printed as: May 12, 1946. (exceptions may be made in descriptive matter, display settings, invitations or legal documents).

Times should be set without punctuation: 10:30 a.m., not 10:30 a.m.

Use the fewest possible figures, 1977–78. Where the word from precedes the first figure do not use a hyphen but spell out: e.g. from 1929 to 1932, not from 1929–1932.

Percent should be spelled out where it occurs singly in text matter. In all other cases % should be used.

When figures are preceded by a dollar sign and there are no cents, the decimal point and zeros may be omitted.


Typefaces with large families, such as Scala Sans, often include fonts with lowercase and cap figures. Notice how the capital figures are full cap height, and monowidth, for use in tables; and the lowercase figures are proportional width.

SINCE 1961  SINCE 1961

The standard typefaces, such as Century Schoolbook and Helvetica, usually have only one set of figures. The figures are short of the cap height and monowidth, and never look comfortable in all-cap settings.

SINCE 1961

Fonts designed for display use, such as Brown, usually have proportional width figures that are also kerned, providing a really even colour.

FOOTNOTES
References in the text to footnotes should be made using superior figures. Use full figures, not superior figures, for numbering of the footnotes themselves. Footnotes should normally be set one or two points smaller than the text depending on the typeface.

1. For only a few footnotes, use *, ** (Dagger: Option T), † (Double Dagger: Option-Shift 7), in that order.

2. The same applies for ©, ®, and ™. Use the trademark character (Option 2) in the text, but type out TM in the footnote if the symbol gets too tiny.

3. Legal footnotes may be set even smaller.

ITALIC
Used for references to book titles, magazines and periodicals, plays, operas, ballets, films, radio and television programs, works of art, and the names of ships. The definite or indefinite article: e.g. The, should be italicized if part of the title.
PARENTHESES AND BRACKETS
Parentheses ( ) are used to indicate author’s explanations, insertions and references. Square brackets [ ] should be used for references to other works, source material or editorial comments. If parentheses occur within parentheses, the inner pair should be square brackets and the outer pair should be curved.

PERIODS
Never use double spaces after the period or other punctuation, except when using mono-spaced fonts. Minimize the use of the period after the following abbreviations and contractions, Ave Co Dr Inc Messrs Mr Mrs No St 8vo am pm.

Visually equalize spacing around initials, if time permits.

Dr Jekyll  Mr. Hyde

Canada’s proximity to the U.S. and its British heritage pull in different directions. The Yank style is to put periods after all abbreviations, whereas the Brits omit them. However, the world’s foremost authority on matters typographic, Vancouver’s Robert Bringhurst, favours Blighty, arguing against “text full of birdshot and wormholes.”

PULL-OUT (BLOCK) QUOTATIONS AND EXTRACTS
If possible, extracts should be given the standard paragraph indent. Do not add further indentation for the first line of the opening paragraph. Spacing between the text and pull-out material should be either a full line space or a half line space. Pull-outs and extracts usually do not require quote marks. As Bringhurst notes,

Block quotations can be distinguished from the main text in many ways, for instance: by a change of face (usually from roman to italic); by a change in size (as from 11 pt down to 10 pt or 9 pt); or by indentation.

QUOTATIONS
Use double quotes outside and single quotes inside for quotations within quotations. Where long extracts are indented, or set in a smaller point size, quote marks are not used.

Punctuation marks used at the end of a quoted passage must be inside the quotation marks if they belong to the quotation, otherwise outside. When isolated words or an incomplete sentence are quoted, the punctuation mark is placed outside the quotes, with the exception of the question mark and the exclamation point, which are placed inside the quotes if they belong to the quotation.

Never use the primes, aka hash marks, (’”) as quotation marks.

SMALL CAPITALS
Small capitals are used to give more emphasis to a word or sentence than may be conveyed by using italics. They can also be used for chapter headings and running heads. Use small capitals, without periods, in text setting for degrees (BA LL.D MA PHD), abbreviations (BNA CBC RCMP USA), and for roman numerals, George V, Chapter X, Richard III. Small caps should be letter-spaced.

If available, use small caps and old style figures for Canadian and British postal codes: e.g. M2N 1K8, not M2N 1K8.

Lynn Lee, MD, FRCS(C)

Lynn Lee, M.D., F.R.C.S.(C)

Toronto, ON  M5R 2R6

Toronto, ON  M5R 2R6

SUPERSCRIPTS

Brand®  Brand®

The trademark, copyright, and registered symbols are legalese of absolutely no interest to the reader. Therefore, they should be as small as possible. Use the Superscript or Superior command (the little ‘2’ on the measurement palette) for this. In headquarters, apply both, and baseline shift, to get the desired result.

Abba.*  Abba.*

When a superscript character follows a comma or period, it can end up closer to the next word than the one it refers to. Kerning solves the problem.

TABLES
Treat tables as text to be read. Do not use unnecessary horizontal rules and avoid using vertical rules all together. All text should be set horizontally, avoid setting column heads vertically.

Use the correct tab settings. Align on the decimal if the figures are decimal, otherwise figures should align on the right.

WORD SPACING
All text composition should be as closely word-spaced as possible. Letter combinations that create unsightly gaps in words should be kerned to get a better fit. Text settings of roman and italic lowercase should not be letter-spaced or tracked open.

On ragged-right settings it is often better to break words than have overly uneven line endings. The space between words should never be greater than the space between lines.

Segregated funds are worth a look. Just keep in mind that there is a cost associated with the benefits seg funds offer. Before you invest, you should decide if the cost is appropriate for you.

Before

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After

The soft return (Shift Return) can be used to move words or syllables down to the next line. But beware: if further editing is done, or copy reflowed into reconfigured text boxes, or re-used in other documents, you’ll get boo-boos. For instance, short lines, or unwarranted hyphenations in the middle of lines.
How typeface families are organized

There are two principles at work here: style and proportion.

Figure 1, the style series, shows the different styles in which a character can be typeset.

Figure 2, the proportional series, shows how a single character can be set with varying degrees of weight and horizontal scaling.

The big difference between the two series is qualitative: each style is quite distinct from any other, whereas the proportional series is smoothly incremental.

Any style can have its proportions varied; similarly, any instance of the proportional series can be set in any of the styles (theoretically, at least).

The different meanings of the word style can be confusing. In the Style Guide it means the way type is set, which is all about the typographer’s know-how and personality. Here, style is a rather dull noun referring to the specific category of letterform in which a character exists.

What’s in a font

A font is comprised of alphabets in one, two or three styles from a horizontal row in the style series; also figures, punctuation, accents, and a few ligatures (æ, œ, fi, fl, &)—up to 256 characters. All in one instance of the proportional series.

Expert fonts contain styles from around the square in the middle of the style series.

Fonts are grouped in packages

The four styles in the centre of figure 1—upper and lowercase roman and italic—are the basic styles for the majority of typefaces; the two shaded instances in figure 2—regular and bold weight, with no horizontal scaling—are their usual proportions. Hence the members of a typical base font package, Palatino:

Roman, Italic

Bold, Bold Italic

The size of this family can be increased in two ways. Either by adding instances from the proportional series, with the Palatino 2 package:

Light, Light Italic, Medium, Medium Italic

Black, Black Italic

or with the expert package containing additional styles, Palatino Small Caps/Old-style Figures:

Small Caps OSF, Italic OSF

Bold OSF, Bold Italic OSF

There are as yet no expert styles for Palatino 2, and no fractions or swash characters in the expert package. However, a little research reveals that Zapf Renaissance is remarkably similar to Palatino, and would round out the family as a display face.

Some typeface families offer more variety in the proportional series, especially sans serifs; others focus on styles. Truly comprehensive families (see figure 3) contain several expert fonts at a number of weights.

Figure 1. The Style Series: Expert styles are around the outside of the square.
Ligatures

The 'f' ligatures are designed for discretion, to replace ungainly couplings with smooth, composite characters.

Conversely, there are ligatures which add noticeable affectation to text.

Another class of ligatures is for tight layouts—providing flexibility with letter combinations of alternate width, or minimizing the white space between characters.

The fi (Option-Shift 5) and fl (Option-Shift 6) are included on the majority of fonts (Mac, not PC), but the location of extra ligatures varies, being either:

- on the base fonts (replacing obscure math symbols)
- on an expert font
- nowhere; many faces have but one expert font—small caps/old-style figures, with no extra ligatures.

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Expert Font Guide

Display

A cure for clunkiness
Before desktop publishing, text and display type were ideally set on different equipment.

Often, the same master artwork would be good for both typpositor and text setting machines. However, serif types with sharp features required separate artwork—with the emphasis on finely drawn details for reproduction at display sizes.

This distinction is also present in the PostScript environment. Look for:

• Typeface families with expert titling fonts
• One-of-a-kind titling fonts
• Multiple Master fonts with an "optical size" axis
• Display or headline faces
• Typefaces containing size-specific fonts

A sharper impression
What works well in text will often lack subtlety at display size. For extreme finesses, consider Arepo, Artefact, HTF Didot, Eldorado, Nofret, Throhand, and in a less classic vein, Screen Matrix.

Icarus
B
B
All in the family
A few serif typefaces have several versions of the same weight, for use at different sizes, such as ITC Bodoni, HTF Requiem, Eldorado, Village, and Walburn. Also of note: Multiple Master fonts with an optical-size axis, e.g. Adobe Jenson.

Styling

Phatt

Playtime
Industria has two kinds of alternate font: one with alternate letterforms; and another, Inline, that can be used with the solid font to create a two-colour effect.

Fin

Threshold effects
Ultra Light faces that are dysfunctional at text size come into their own wrt large, as do certain Ultra Heavy faces, e.g. Giza.

Fake it good
No doubt it's ironic when two characters in a supposed scrawl are absolutely identical, but it's also illogical and lazy. To get a suitably irregular effect, use a typeface with alternate character font(s), e.g. Kosmik. Also consider doing your own artwork, or hiring a lettering artist.

You are sooo busted!

Congenial mavericks
Adapted to their specialized role, many titling faces don't look like any particular family, but will complement a variety of text faces. Often available only in caps, frequently as “hand-tooled”, “open” or “inline” designs, use for titles or as initials that won’t overpower text.
Small caps

Seasoning the mix
True small caps are not merely scaled down versions of full caps. They differ in weight, fit, and proportion, being designed to match the colour (tone) of the lower case.

Putting passages of text in small caps is pointless: no matter how artful the setting people will not be bothered to read it.

The real value of small caps lies in their ability to add a dash of variety to complex settings, while maintaining the aesthetic convenience of a single typeface family.

And of course, be sure to use small caps for very small cap settings, such as the smallest type on this page.

Pas de deux from Flower Festival in Genzano
Music E. Helsted
Choreography August Bournonville
Arranged by Erik Bruhn
A lovely example of the Bournonville style, and the last remaining fragment of a ballet created more than a century ago by the Danish master.

Categorical imperative
When many classes of information have to be made distinct, small caps are invaluable.

CONTENTS
The Mystical City ....... 2–17
The Gates of Dawn ......... 2

FAKE Setting

Pale imitation
The Small Cap command (“k”) in the QuarkXPress style menu scales down all non-uppercase characters by 75% (default). Unlike the italic (“I”) and bold (“B”) commands, it never changes fonts. Fake small caps are too narrow, too light in weight, improperly kerned, and the wrong height.

Who Wants To Know?
Fake small caps take their kerning from the lower case. True small caps have their own, which makes a huge improvement in colour.

FRENCH DRESSING

Put all ingredients in a screw-topped jar, adding salt and pepper to taste. Shake well to blend before serving.

MUSTARD DRESSING: Add 2 tablespoons Meaux mustard.
GARLIC DRESSING: Crush 4 cloves garlic and add to the ingredients.

Virgin soil
Before PostScript, there were no bold sans serif small caps. Now there are new options to explore.

HOW BIG IS A SMALL CAP?
Some faces are designed solely as cap with small cap faces.

Copperplate Gothic

PASS DE DEUX FROM FLOWER FESTIVAL IN GENZANO

Metropolitan Opera Company
Lyrical Opera Company

A fairly new example of the Parisian style, and the last remaining fragment of a ballet created more than a century ago by the French master.

Categorical imperative
When many classes of information have to be made distinct, small caps are invaluable.

Beaten by bold?
Since its introduction in the 19th century, the bold weight has taken over many of the functions previously performed by small caps, in particular sub-headings. Generally, the harshness of bold is more in keeping with modern sensibilities. But in the post-modern era...

Graphic Exchange 23

Panel, 12’7½” × 7’4”. Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Panel, 12’7½” × 7’4”. Uffizi Gallery, Florence.