

Creative Process in Creating Letters Design

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ABSTRACT

Creating a letter requires a particular technique so that the final design has consistency, both in shape and size. Therefore, we need a method that guides the designer in creating letters. A designer must be sensitive to visual studies to create alternative letter designs with a sense and meaning that can still feel from these visual references. This process uses a letter creation method based on the author's experience. The test was conducted on first semester students of the Visual Communication Design study program, State University of Malang, who were studying Typography. The implementation of this creative process is aimed at all typographic designers and people who are learning to develop typography. The steps used are as follows: 1) Empathize: understand the problem; 2) defining analyze, interpret, plan. This process consists of several steps that must be taken, namely: brainstorming and writing concepts; 3) Ideate: visual exploration. In this creative process, there are several steps: visual study, making thumbnail sketches, redefining shapes, and finishing touches that make the draft into a final design; 4) Prototype: apply creativity to create. This process is a simulation process using the final letter design; and 5) test: review and revise. Each process has specific details and options that can be adapted to the typography project that is being worked on. The final result is a final design of letters that conforms to design principles and typography.

Keywords: *Creative process, Letters design.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Typography is an art technique of arranging letters and text in available space to create attractive visuals to be pleasing to the eye and read by people. In typography, designers usually will involve good fonts, appearance, and structure to obtain certain emotions to convey messages to readers. Simply put, typography is a technique that can bring the text to life. In today's digital era, typography is one of the techniques that must be mastered by graphic designers [1], [2]. Because at this time, many fonts have sprung up. This font makes it possible for designers to find the right font in making a particular design, such as pamphlets, logos, publication design. With typography, the visuals presented by the designer seem to speak to the viewer.

Creating a letter does have to use special techniques to have consistency, both in shape and size. Occurs between the instant typographical design process and the results of typographic designs that do not meet the rules and principles of typographic design. This is because the processes that have been used by students tend not to use the principles of typography and shape anatomy [3], [4]. Therefore we need a method that

guides designers in creating letters. A designer must be sensitive to visual studies to create alternative letter designs with a sense and meaning that still feels derived from the visual reference visual [5]. There are several ways to create letters. These methods have been tested and can create letters with a good level of readability and legibility, and still do not limit designers in exploring ideas, shapes, and creativity in creating letters [6].

2. METHOD

In creating letters creatively, it is necessary to use the right and tested methods. This creative method is a series of paths that designers must go through to produce artistic letters while still upholding design principles in general and typographic principles in particular [4]. The method of creating letters/fonts is as shown in figure 1 below:

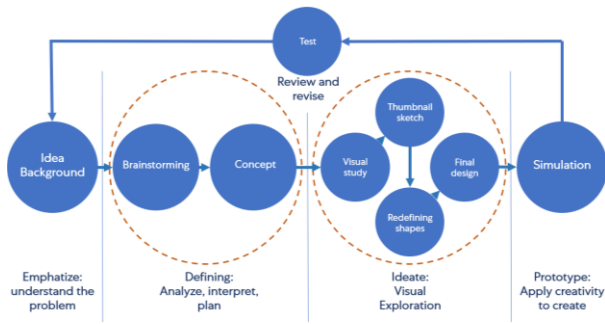


Figure 1 Typography Design Method

2.1. Empathize: Understand the Problem

Determine the idea or problem faced to create letters according to needs.

2.2. Defining: Analyze, Interpret, Plan

After finding a big idea, the next step to align the direction of the design to be addressed is to do brainstorming.

2.3. Ideate: Visual Exploration

The next step is to start studying the visual forms with the keywords obtained from the brainstorming results. Collect various pictures/photos of forms from existing keywords, from the internet, books, and stock photos. Learn what the elements make up, how they are shaped, their colors, or other visual properties. In this phase, the letters are designed, starting from the sketch to the final design.

2.4. Prototype: Apply Creativity to Create

This prototype is a step to try kerning, tracking, and letter spacing from the arrangement of letters that have been created. The Test can be formal, such as writing letters, news, sign systems, or in non-formal forms such as poster art or visual art.

2.5. Test: Review and Revise

The Test was carried out to review how well the readability and legibility of the letters were when used on certain media. Improvements still need to be made to use the final letter design in various media and audiences.

3. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Among the many ways to design fonts and typography, the methods and process of design in fig. 1 is a proven step. The design process in making typography according to the design method is as follows:

3.1. Idea Background

Design cannot be started without a more profound knowledge and understanding of the subject we are going to create. Gaining that knowledge and insight, designers as design thinkers need to empathize with the designer's subject so they can understand the needs, thoughts, emotions, and motivations for creating this design. The good news is that designers have various methods that can be used to learn more about the subject, in this case, the need for typography. With enough attention and experience, anyone can become an expert in empathizing with subject design.

3.2. Brainstorming

Write down all the possibilities and the words designers get like mind mapping using arrows that all come from a big idea. Write it all down, do not limit the exploration of the mind. Brainstorming will generate keywords. Choose one or more keywords to develop into a concept. This concept will be developed into a visual form with all the considerations.

3.3. Concept

Concepts can come from one or several predefined keywords. Once the designer has a good idea of the basic shapes, wireframes, and layout of the design, it is time to develop the concept.

3.4. Visual Study

Designers need a visual study as a guide to create a form that is identical to the concept. Visual studies should be prepared in advance before sketching thumbnails. This visual study aims to make a detailed picture of examples of subjects in the environment or that have been exposed to be caught well by the designer.

3.5. Thumbnail Sketch

The next step is to create a thumbnail sketch which is the key to the final shape of the letters that designers create. It would help if designers made a pattern first before sketching letters. This sketch is so that the shapes designers draw will always be in the same (consistent) design and visual style. There are many methods of making patterns for creating letters. Everything is made on paper using a pencil and possibly a ruler, compass, and protractor so that the patterns are precise and consistent. There are several ways to start a sketch for designing letters. Everyone must use a pattern so that the result of a typographic design is consistent and specific traits that designers want to expose become more pronounced. Here are a few things a designer can do:

3.5.1. Basic Shape

Designers must understand the primary form of the designed letters. This knowledge will be advantageous

because the human eye will always catch the basic shape first before identifying the details of the object being seen [7]. Dalam tipografi, bentuk dasar huruf dapat diidentifikasi menjadi beberapa bentuk, seperti pada gambar berikut:



Figure 2 Typography Basic Shape [8]

3.5.2. Letter Builder

Letter builder is a pattern outline tool to assist designers in designing letters. Designers must know the principles of typographic anatomy regarding thickness, slope, and design style. Letter builder that can be used to make letters like in figure 3 below:

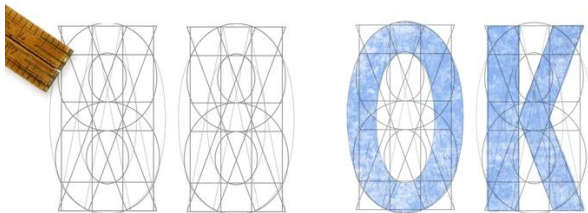


Figure 3 Example of Letter Builder [9]

3.5.3. Modular

A modular typeface is an alphabet made up of several shapes, usually basic shapes or finite modules. Modular describes any letter assembled from a finite palette of different elements, cut, rotated, repeated, flipped, and dropped but not scaled. Usually, these elements are geometric and straightforward—square and vector pixels on a digital display or circles, squares, triangles, or pentagons, and modernist and minimalist lines.

In simple terms, the letters made with the modular technique have responded to the media's shortcomings, limitations, and possibilities to create them. Today designers use more ornate, complex, or organic shapes (modular units) and even physical objects to create modular fonts. They have taken a broader approach to

modular letterforms, encouraging creating letters from more complex elements [10]. An example of using the modular technique is shown in figure 4 below:

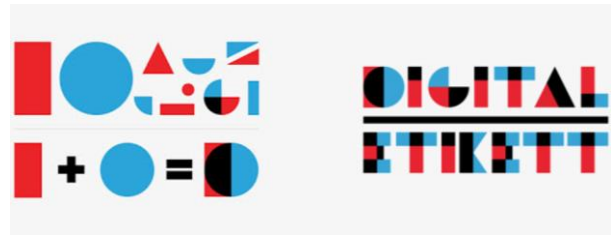


Figure 4 Examples of Application of Typographic Modular Techniques [11]

3.5.4. Lettering Guideline

Hand-lettering is an extraordinary creative skill that uses letters to create beautiful designs and art. Most people might think that hand-lettering is just a better version of handwriting, but that is not entirely true. Of course, both practices use written language, but the similarities end there. Handwriting requires some level of discipline and skill to develop to achieve the purpose of lettering. That means that people can actually learn handwriting and become experts at it no matter how neat or messy handwriting is. Figure 5 below is an example of the Lettering Guideline:

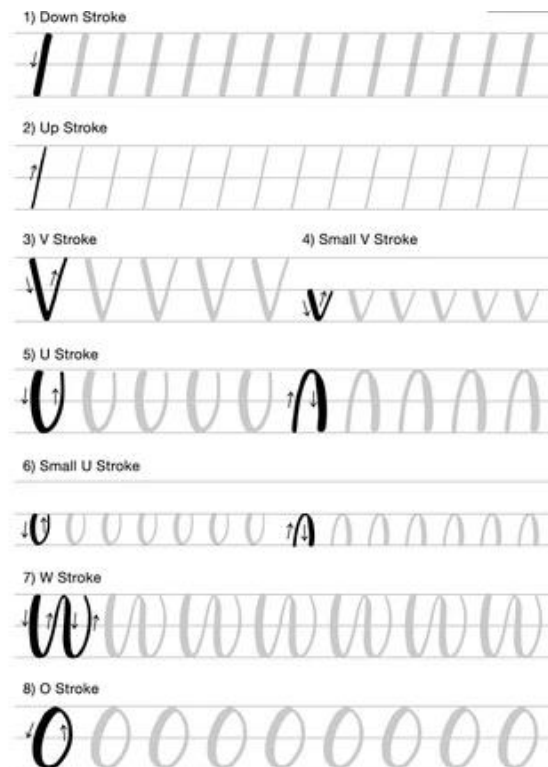


Figure 5 Example of Lettering Guideline [12]

3.6. Redefining Shape

This redefining shape is when the ready sketch form is then thickened with a more substantial and contrasting color. This redefining shape aims to make the shape of the letters clearer, which makes it easier to measure the distance between letters, between words, and between lines. An example of thickening the shape of the letters is as in figure 6 below:

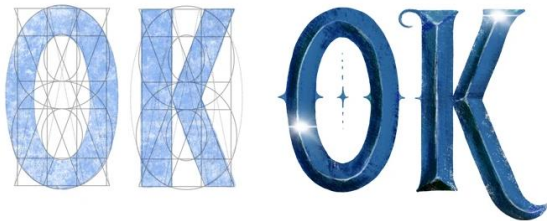


Figure 6 Lettering Guideline [9]

3.7. Final Design

The final design is a fixed letter and is ready to be tested. The final design already contains colors, strokes and fixed and final shapes, and specific effects that may be used in the letter design. The number of letters is complete in this phase, both in the alphabet, numerals, punctuations, diacritics, and currency symbols. The final design is a typeface that is ready to be reviewed and revised to get a perfect final form and be used in many conditions and needs.

THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG

Figure 7 Example of Final Design of letters that have been tested using all characters [13]

4. CONCLUSION

The process of designing letters ideally uses proven methods and steps. In addition, designers must also have knowledge and understanding of the anatomy of letters. These steps can help designers when making better letter designs because design principles and typography are used optimally. The artistic side can also be included in the letter design by not neglecting the font's primary function.

There are several ways that designers can do to make it easier for them to explore letter designs according to their needs. Steps to design using basic letter shapes, letter builder, Modular Typography, Lettering Guideline can be followed to make letter designs consistent in shape, thickness, slope, and distance between elements. The method of creating typography also does not limit designers to explore ideas and shapes and their imagination in making letters creatively.

It takes understanding and insight in every practice of creating letters. This insight includes general design principles, typographical anatomy principles, optical factors such as readability and legibility, and knowledge of the shapes to be made. Visual studies are also critical in enriching knowledge about the shapes of objects that may be developed into letter shapes with details following the object's essential nature. This makes the final design of the letter stronger in character and still valuable for artistically conveying messages.

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