



Replica

Family Overview

Styles

Replica Light
Replica Light Italic
Replica Regular
Replica Italic
Replica Bold
Replica Bold Italic
Replica Heavy
Replica Heavy Italic

About the Font

LL Replica is a bold sans-serif design conceived for both text setting and use at large point sizes – e.g. for headlines, graphic applications, sign-writing, etc.

The font was constructed on a strict grid which was rigorously referred to in order to shape the individual characters. In place of the 700 units for standard caps height in Fontlab, the grid was reduced to just 70 units. This arbitrary simplification and self-induced restriction strongly influences the shape of each individual glyph.

For example, the bevels on the inner and outer corners function as a sort of negative ink trap. The vertical cuts of diagonals enable users to set LL Replica very tightly, especially in the bold and the heavy weights. The result is a typeface that has all the features of a classic sans-serif font of Middle-European descent, but with slightly altered DNA.

LL Replica is currently available in four weights with matching italics. A monospaced cut in the regular weight was released independently.

Separate PDF

Replica Mono

Supported Scripts

Latin Extended

File Formats

Opentype CFF, Truetype, WOFF, WOFF2

Design

NORM (Dimitri Bruni, Manuel Krebs) (2008)

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Glyph Overview

Uppercase	A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Lowercase	a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s ß t u v w x y z
Proportional, Tabular Figures	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Ligatures	f f fi fl ffi ffi
Std Accented Characters - Standard Western	À à Á á Â â Ã ã Ä ä Å å Æ æ Ç ç È è É é Ê ê Ě ě Ì ì Í í Î î Ï ï Đ đ Ł ł Ń ń Œ œ Ò ò Ó ó Ô ô Ö ö Ø ø Š š Ù ú Ú ú Û û Ü ü Ý ý Ž ž Þ þ
Pro Accented Characters - Latin Extension	Ā ā Ă ă Ả ả Ấ ấ Æ æ Б б Ї ї Ĉ ĉ Č č Č č Ď ď Ð ď Ḑ ḑ Ḕ ḕ Đ đ Ê ê Ė ė Ę ę Ě ě Ĥ ĥ Ħ ħ Ĩ ĩ Į į Ĵ ĵ Ķ ķ Ļ ļ Ľ ľ Ŀ ŀ Ł ł Ĺ ĺ Ḡ ḡ Ḣ ḣ Ḥ ḥ Ḧ ḷ Ī ī Ĭ ĭ İ i Ł ł Ṃ ṃ Ṅ ṅ Ṇ ṇ Ṋ ṋ Ṍ ṍ Ṏ ṏ

N n N n N n N n N Ō ō Ö ö Ó ó Ô ô Õ
 õ Ö ö Ø ø P p R r R r R r R Š š
 š Š š Ś ś Ş ş Ș ș Ş ş Ţ ţ Ţ ţ Ť ě Ț ț Ț ț
 Ŧ Ƨ Ũ ũ Ū ū Ŭ ŭ Ů ů Ű ű Ų ų Ŵ ŵ
 Ẃ ẃ Ẅ ẅ Ẇ ẇ Ẉ ẉ Ẑ ẑ Ẓ ẓ Ẕ ẕ ẖ ẗ

Punctuation (.,,:;?!¿¡...)[&@#]{- - —}«»‹›
 „“”‚‘’_/\' " † ‡ * • ¶ § © ® º ™

Case Sensitive Forms () [] { } - - — ‹ › « » ¡ ¿ @ •

Currency,
Mathematical
Operators € \$ £ ¥ ¤ ₣ ₧ ₨ ₪ € ₮ ₯ ₰ ₱ ₲ ₳ % ‰ + − ×
 ÷ = ≠ ≈ < > ≤ ≥ ± ~ ¬ ∅ Δ ∏ Σ Ω μ † ‡
 ∞ √ ^ | ! ℓ °

Superscripts,
Subscripts,
Fractions,
Ordinals H 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 H 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 1 1/2 1/3 1/4 1/5 1/6 1/7 1/8 1/9 1/10
 2/3 2/5 3/4 3/5 3/8 4/5 5/6 5/8 7/8
 1 0 a

Glyph Overview

Numerators,
Denominators

1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Roman
Numerals

I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XI XII L C D M

i ii iii iv v vi vii viii ix x xi xii l c d m

Arrows

← → ↑ ↓ ↖ ↗ ↘ ↙

Symbols

□ ■ □ ▣ □ ■ □ ▣ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ □ ■

□ ▣ ▲ ► ▼ ◀

Layout Features

Case Sensitive
Forms

[Discret]
May–July
«Hello»

[DISCRET]
MAY–JULY
«HELLO»

Standard
Ligatures

flat office

flat office

Tabular
Lining
Numbers

4.9.1984
1.1.2011

4.9.1984
1.1.2011

Oldstyle
Figures

8.5.2009
2.6.1974

8.5.2009
2.6.1974

Tabular
Oldstyle
Figures

9.2.1976
8.3.2005

9.2.1976
8.3.2005

Arbitrary
Fractions

6 2/5 × 9 4/5
34 1/6 ÷ 7 1/7

6 ⅔ × 9 ⅔
34 ⅙ ÷ 7 ⅙

Superscript

North¹, East²

North¹, East²

Subscript

H₂O

H₂O

Ordinals

1^a
1^o

1^a
1^o

Sharp S

Nebenstrasse

Nebenstraße

Layout Features

Stylistic Set 1:
Thin Set

(Parentheses)
[Brackets]
{Braces}
Em—Dash
Em–Dash
_Underscore
/Slash
\Backslash
Vertical | bar
“Quotes”
«Quotes»
←Arrows→

(Parentheses)
[Brackets]
{Braces}
Em—Dash
Em–Dash
_Underscore
/Slash
\Backslash
Vertical | bar
“Quotes”
«Quotes»
←Arrows→

Stylistic Set 2:
Single-Storey a

Decimals

Decimals

Stylistic Set 3:
Cap Height
parenthesis,
brackets,
braces, bar

(Width)
{Weight}
[Spacing]
Side | Bearing

(Width)
{Weight}
[Spacing]
Side | Bearing

Stylistic Set 4:
Thin Cap Height
parenthesis,
brackets,
braces, bar

(Width)
{Weight}
[Spacing]
Side | Bearing

(Width)
{Weight}
[Spacing]
Side | Bearing

Stylistic Set 5:
Alternate Slash

Grid/Grid
Grid\Grid

Grid/Grid
Grid\Grid

Stylistic Set 6:
Thin Alternate
Slash

Grid/Grid
Grid\Grid

Grid/Grid
Grid\Grid

Stylistic Set 7:
Alternate
Em Dash

Em—Dash

Em—Dash

Stylistic Set 8:
Thin Alternate
Em Dash

Em—Dash

Em—Dash

Stylistic Set 9:
Alternate
Ampersand

Nodes & Points

Nodes & Points

Stylistic Set 10:
Alternate One

01.04.1991

01.04.1991

Stylistic Set 11:
Alternate
long s

long s
stylistic set

long f
ftyliftic fet

75 Points

Attempt
Bézier
CONTROL

52 Points

Decision Based
Evidencias
Formal
7,000 GRID

45 Points

Hundred Dots
I see the
PROBLEM

32 Points

Larger Grid
Mathematical
Neutral
NO POINTED ENDS

25 Points
- SS10
Alternate 1

Only 0.1 point wide
Pro Version
Regular Monospace
Software
VERTICAL CUTS

16 Points

□ MK Work on Replica took several years, which was longer than we expected, since we actually intended to be finished in 2007. Previously, we had worked on other typefaces, that can be considered precursors, especially Standard, but we didn't really make headway. Do you remember the beginnings and the problems WE FACED?

■ DB THE FIRST IDEA EMERGED AFTER WE FINISHED NORMETICA. NORMETICA

13 Points

was closely connected to the era in which it was created, the late 1990s. So we wanted our next typeface to be neutral, whatever that means, as timeless as possible. Standard was such an attempt, taking up the linear roman typefaces of the 1950s and 1960s. Perhaps we were expecting too much. In any case we were not satisfied with the first attempts.

M When I look at the designs today, I find STANDARD'S WEAKNESSES STRIKING. THE DRAWING WAS REALLY NOT GOOD. AND WE ACTUALLY NEVER USED THE TYPEFACE.
D YES WE DID, WE USED IT FOR VERY SMALL

10.5 Points

things, such as the sign on the door to our office and a few flyers. But you're right: Standard was not very successful, apart from its name. The ambition and intention expressed by the name were good. I think the problem was that we tried to make something that "looks like" something else. It was a typeface based on clear models, but meanwhile it lacked a concept, a methodological approach. When you try to copy something, there are many ways TO DO IT.

► ANOTHER PROBLEM, IN MY VIEW, WAS THAT IT WASN'T CLEAR TO US HOW MUCH TIME WE SHOULD INVEST.

8.5 Points

Normetica and also Simple, the successor to Normetica, were developed quickly. They were constructed typefaces. Standard, by contrast, was already moving in a less graphic direction, and at the time we had had little experience with drawing.

[DB] I see the problem as not so much THE DETAILS OF THE DRAWING BUT AS THE LACK OF A CONCEPT. THAT WAS THE BIG DIFFERENCE FROM REPLICA. IN THE LATTER

case, there was an idea, a method, from the outset. After our failure with Standard, we had dropped the project of a more neutral typeface for a while, and when we took it up again in 2004–5, we soon noticed that we had to start with formal, almost mathematical decisions, which WOULD THEN AFFECT THE DRAWING AND THE FORM. WE DID NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THE EFFECTS WOULD LOOK LIKE,

6.5 Points

but we began by defining formal principles. The most important of these definitions was to enlarge the grid that the FontLab software provides for designing fonts. We multiplied this grid ten times, so that we were working not with a 700 grid (700 units is the standard Caps height in FontLab), as the SOFTWARE INTENDS, BUT JUST A 70 GRID. CONSEQUENTLY WE HAD MANY FEWER POSSIBILITIES TO PLACE NODES AND BÉZIER CONTROL

points, which extremely limited the freedom of drawing. On a plane that would normally have a hundred dots available, we only had four from which to choose. That was a somewhat anachronistic decision, since the trend today is in the opposite direction. You mentioned once that some typography blog called for the GRID IN FONTLAB TO BE MADE MUCH SMALLER. SOMEBODY CALLED FOR A 7,000 GRID IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO DRAW MORE ACCURATELY. BUT IT

seems to me that, in addition to your deliberately anachronistic attitude, there was also a pragmatic reason for your decision: you wanted to be able to see in the program's preview mode what the drawing would look like, and because the preview used a larger grid than was available when drawing, you took this one AS THE STANDARD. D—B RIGHT. THAT WAS, ADMITTEDLY, AN IMPORTANT REASON. IT PROVOKED ME THAT THE PREVIEW MODE OF THE

75 Points

Ambition
Cap
HEIGHT

52 Points

Formal
Expectations
Failure
OF STANDARD

45 Points

Heavy & Laser
Inner
STRUCTURE

32 Points

Manuel Krebs
More Identifiable
New aspect
ONE TYPE SIZE

25 Points
- SS09
Alternate
Ampersand

Question of impatience
Relatively Wide
Sign & Stationnary
Talking Replica with Norm
70 UNITS

LL Replica Light Italic

16 Points

software can only render a tenth of the actual grid, and I said to myself: “What you see is what you get.” So I only drew the letters as sharply as I could see them. But the discussion you mention in the typography blog also provoked us. We said to ourselves, if you demand a grid which would have ten times as many DOTS AS ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE, NOW WE’LL SHOW YOU THAT WE CAN EVEN WORK WITH TEN TIMES LESS.

13 Points

Naturally the possibilities are very limited, if you arrange all nodes and Bézier control points on such a coarse grid. But by doing so we found what we had been looking for: a predefined concept that had an inevitable effect on the drawing. D → Yes, I see it that way as well. The bevels of Replica serve to make the grid visible, since the cut-off corners are exactly the same width as a unit in our new, larger grid. This function of making the GRID VISIBLE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR LETTERS WHERE THE GRID WOULD NOT OTHERWISE BE SEEN, LIKE THE UPPERCASE I, FOR EXAMPLE. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS STRIKING THAT

10.5 Points

we have had rounded corners on all our typefaces so far, and the reason is perhaps that it is a way to make a typeface more specific.

MK It makes the typeface more identifiable. But in a sense it is also a tricky decision, perhaps not so much with the outer bevels but with the inner ones. If you compare it with Unica, say, then you see that there the inner corners have so-called INK TRAPS: INCISIONS INWARD. BECAUSE THE EXPOSURE IN PHOTOCOMPOSITION, FOR WHICH UNICA WAS DESIGNED, OFTEN MAKES THE CORNERS BLURRY, THERE IS A

8.5 Points
– SS10
Alternate 1

risk that too much ink will collect in the corners when printing, and ink traps are supposed to prevent this. For Replica, we not only dispensed with these ink traps but also filled out the inner corners even more by giving them bevels.

D → Seen in that way, the inner bevels ARE PERHAPS A REACTION TO TODAY’S TECHNICAL TOOLS. IN THE CASE OF UNICA, THE BLURRINESS THAT RESULTS IN

photocomposition required that the letters be modified so that they would have their proper form when printed. Today such precautions are no longer necessary, since digital rendering on a computer screen corresponds almost 100% with the printed result. Another argument, of course, IS THAT WE DELIBERATELY MADE REPLICA A LITTLE DIRTY. WE CONSCIOUSLY PLACED TOO MUCH COLOR IN THE INNER

6.5 Points
– SS07
Alternate
Em Dash

corners to make the triumph of technology visible. M–K ► The third formal decision from which we set out with Replica was cut diagonals. All of the diagonals are cut vertically in the corners so that there are no pointed ends — on the A, K, or R, for example. We did that to save space so that the letters COULD BE SET VERY CLOSELY. LIKE THE BEVEL, THAT IS A VERY STRIKING INTERVENTION, AND IT IS ONE OF THE MAIN IDENTIFYING FEAT-

tures of the typeface. D–B ► Yes, the cut diagonals are extremely evident. That was one of the reasons for the crisis we had last year when working on Replica. We asked ourselves what the effect of the striking bevels and the cut diagonals would be over the long term. Would we have enough of it at some point? I AM SURE THAT THE DIAGONAL CUTS, BECAUSE THEY ARE SO EXTREMELY EVIDENT, WILL BE CRUCIAL TO HOW

Replica is perceived over the long term. M–K ► I have no ambitions for Replica to be the typeface of the next twenty years. It is of the present, and it is important that it has that character. In general, I find our former ambition to want to design a neutral, timeless typeface was misguided. I believe THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP A NEUTRAL TYPEFACE AT ALL. IF A TYPEFACE LIKE, SAY, HELVETICA SEEMS

75 Points

Another
new
ASPECT

52 Points
- SS02
Single-
Storey a

Cutoff
Diagonal cuts
Failure with
STANDARD

45 Points
- SS03
Cap Height
Parenthesis

Hundred
Dots Available
(IDEAL)

32 Points

Normetica
Photocomposition
Qualities no
LONGER STRIKE US

25 Points
- SS01
Thin Set

Preview mode
«Replique»
Striking intervention
Summer 2008
UNCONSCIOUSLY

16 Points
– SS03
Cap Height
Brackets

neutral to us today, it is because its qualities no longer strike us, no longer surprise us. A typeface can thus lose its qualities over time, but it is impossible to design it without qualities. [DB] In that sense, the special thing about Replica is that it has two faces. From a distance — that is, when used IN SMALL SIZES — YOU HARDLY SEE THE BEVELS AND CUT DIAGONALS AT ALL. YOU PERCEIVE THEM

13 Points

unconsciously, perhaps, but it looks very fluid and normal. As soon as the type is large, however, its unmistakable qualities stand out strongly. I see it as a big positive that Replica has these two sides.

M↔D At the moment, we are using Replica exclusively. What do you think about that?

D↔M We actually developed Replica for the third Norm book. But we are late with that, UNFORTUNATELY, SO THAT THE TYPEFACE IS NOW BEING RELEASED FIRST. IT WAS DIFFERENT WITH NORMETICA AND SIMPLE, WHICH WE HAD MADE FOR THE FIRST TWO NORM BOOKS,

10.5 Points

and also presented for the first time in those books. By contrast, we began using Replica two years ago, not only for our own works but for commissioned works as well. On the one hand, it is a question of impatience: when you design a typeface, you want to see it in use, for as long as it is not being used, it does not really exist. On the other hand, it was ideal that we began to introduce it slowly, first in smaller works LIKE THE LITTLE BRUCE LEE BOOK, WHICH NEEDED ONLY A FEW WORDS, THEN ON OUR STATIONERY, WHICH WAS ANOTHER SMALL APPLICATION, AND FINALLY FOR

8.5 Points
– SS08
Thin Alternate
Em Dash

larger things as well. That was a very important process. It was ideal to be able to return to the drawing after those first uses, and we modified many aspects in the process. Now we have reached the point where the typeface is finished, and if at the moment we are using it exclusively, I think that's the best thing we can do. MK — ANOTHER NEW ASPECT OF REPLICA IS THAT WE CONSIDERED SELLING IT VERY EARLY ON. WE HAD CREATED NORMETICA

and Simple primarily for us, first for the Norm books and then for other uses, and only very recently have we begun to sell them. Replica, by contrast, was planned from the outset to be sold as a proper font family. How did that influence work on it? DB — I suspect Replica would not look very different if we had developed it only for our needs. BY CONTRAST, WE WOULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN LIKELY TO CREATE SO MANY CHARACTERS AND THE

6.5 Points

various cuts. Because we wanted to make a Pro version available, in keeping with the market standard, Replica now has many more characters than Normetica and Simple. ■ M The various cuts are another topic that always raises questions. What exactly can be considered a font FAMILY? HOW MANY CUTS DO YOU NEED? THERE ARE TYPEFACES LIKE THESIS OR EVEN UNIVERS THAT HAVE ENORMOUS FAMILIES.

For Replica, we now have three cuts: Light, Regular, Bold, all of them available in italic as well, and also a Regular Monospace version, since Monospace is the field we know best, where we originated. Do you foresee developing other cuts, for example, if you consider that the stem of OUR REGULAR CUT IS RELATIVELY WIDE — 10% WIDER THAN HELVETICA? ■ D IN MY VIEW, A GIANT FONT FAMILY MAKES NO

sense. That would be another case of too much choice. In fact, you can really do everything with just one type size, even complex uses are possible. The number of cuts we have now created for Replica is, in my view, just within the limits of what makes sense. I cannot imagine MAKING AN EXTENDED VERSION WITH ADDITIONAL INTERMEDIATE STEPS. ■ M WHEN CHOOSING A TYPEFACE, IT ALWAYS

75 Points

*Affect
the
DRAWING*

52 Points

*Coarse Grid
Giant font
family makes
NO SENSE*

45 Points

*Looks familiar
when seen from
A DISTANCE*

32 Points

*No right angles
at all
predefined concept
PROGRAM*

25 Points

*Rounding Effect
Serif Roman
This field does not belong
to us at all
UNMISTAKABLE QUALITIES*

16 Points

becomes clear just how much you are at the mercy of the typeface, because every typeface already entails a kind of program for its use, for the design. That is why it is very unpleasant when uncertainty reigns about the typeface for a particular project, and you begin to try out countless typefaces. And when THERE ARE LOTS OF TYPEFACES, IT ONLY GETS WORSE... NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE NOW CREATED TWO ADDI-

13 Points

tional special cuts for Replica: a Heavy and a Laser, and now we are working on a third special cut: Serif.
M The Laser cut is even more problematic. It has such slender strokes that it can hardly be used at all. For example, even at forty-eight points, the stroke is only 0.1 point wide. Moreover, the width of the strokes is much smaller than the coarse grid on which we DESIGNED THE TYPEFACE. THAT PRESENTS NEW PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY WITH THE DIAGONALS, WHERE IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE A REGULAR THICKNESS.

10.5 Points

- SS04
Thin Cap
Height
Brackets

We had to make new corrections, which altered the form of the drawing, and that is why I believe with the Laser cut we have created a new point of departure for developing a typeface. We could start out from here to define the inner structure of a new typeface.

[DB] I don't agree entirely with that. In my view, the Laser cut is related to the rest of the family insofar it has the same HANDICAP AS THE OTHER CUTS: NAMELY, VERY LIMITED POSSIBILITIES TO PLACE THE DOTS ON THE GRID. ACTUALLY THIS PROBLEM IS EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED

8.5 Points

- SS01
Thin Set

with the Laser cut because it is so thin. But to me it makes little sense to derive a new inner structure for a typeface from it, because there are only three diagonals that are regular in width, and that would be too great a limitation on the drawing. → M We had a similar problem with the italic cuts as well. They would only fit ON THE GRID AT A 45° ANGLE. HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THAT? → D THAT IS A TOUCHY POINT, BUT WE HAVE TO MENTION IT,

even if we would rather not: it is simply impossible to fit them on the grid with an angle other than 45°, and so the italic cuts do not lie on the grid. That is not nice, of course. But these cuts are just supplements; they are very rarely used, usually just for single words; and they serve to make the text intelligible. → M THE THIRD SPECIAL CUT THAT WE OFFER FOR REPLICA IS A ROMAN TYPE WITH EMPHATIC SERIFS. THE CRITERIA AND PRINCIPLES OF

6.5 Points

construction are the same: grid, height of the letters, bevels, and so on, but with serifs. How did you justify that decision? D That's a very difficult question. For about three years now, we have been rejecting all the roman typefaces with emphatic serifs, and so it is something of a paradox, OF COURSE, TO DEVELOP SUCH A TYPEFACE OURSELVES. AND WE HAVE TO SAY IT CLEARLY: THIS FIELD DOES NOT BELONG TO US

at all. I suspect we only made this cut to show that something like that can be done even with a grid as coarse as this. M In conclusion, we should talk about the name, for it plays a big role in the perception of the typeface. Somebody once said that Helvetica WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL IF IT HAD BEEN CALLED GERMANIA. I THINK WE SHOULD NOT MENTION THE OTHER NAMES WE

discussed, since that would be revealing too much. But what does Replica mean? D The name has two important aspects. First, there is the aspect of copying, almost counterfeiting. That is not meant negative, more like a remake. It is interesting that the typeface LOOKS FAMILIAR WHEN SEEN FROM A DISTANCE, AND FROM UP CLOSE YOU SEE WHAT IS NEW ABOUT IT. THE SECOND ASPECT IS

75 Points

**45° Angle
Bevels
CORNER**

52 Points

**Effect
on the Drawing
Formal
PRINCIPLES**

45 Points

**First, there
is the aspect of
COPYING**

32 Points

**Identifying
Features
Market Standard
PROPER FORM**

25 Points

**Sharp Response
to Helvetica, Univers
and Unica
Too much ink will collect
IN THE CORNERS**

16 Points
– SS02
Alternate a

the replique, the response to something — almost an attack, or at least a sharp response. That is a crucial point for me. MK→ Replica is a sharp response to Helvetica, Univers, and Unica. And therein lies, perhaps, the third important aspect of the name: THAT IT ENDS WITH -ICA.

DB→ WORK ON REPLICA TOOK SEVERAL YEARS, WHICH WAS LONGER THAN WE EXPECTED, SINCE WE

13 Points

actually intended to be finished in 2007. Previously, we had worked on other typefaces, that can be considered precursors, especially Standard, but we didn't really make headway. Do you remember the beginnings and the problems we faced?

MK The first idea emerged after we finished Normetica. Normetica was closely connected to the era in which it was created, the late 1990s. SO WE WANTED OUR NEXT TYPEFACE TO BE NEUTRAL, WHATEVER THAT MEANS, AS TIMELESS AS POSSIBLE. STANDARD WAS SUCH AN ATTEMPT, TAKING

10.5 Points

up the linear roman typefaces of the 1950s and 1960s. Perhaps we were expecting too much. In any case we were not satisfied with the first attempts.

►D When I look at the designs today, I find Standard's weaknesses striking. The drawing was really not good. And we actually never used the typeface.

►M Another problem, in my view, was that it wasn't CLEAR TO US HOW MUCH TIME WE SHOULD INVEST. NORMETICA AND ALSO SIMPLE, THE SUCCESSOR TO NORMETICA, WERE DEVELOPED QUICKLY. THEY WERE

8.5 Points

constructed typefaces. Standard, by contrast, was already moving in a less graphic direction, and at the time we had had little experience with drawing.

[DB] I see the problem as not so much the details of the drawing but as the lack of a concept. That was the big difference from REPLICA. IN THE LATTER CASE, THERE WAS AN IDEA, A METHOD, FROM THE OUTSET. AFTER OUR FAILURE WITH STANDARD,

we had dropped the project of a more neutral typeface for a while, and when we took it up again in 2004–5, we soon noticed that we had to start with formal, almost mathematical decisions, which would then affect the drawing and the form. We did not know exactly what the effects would look like, BUT WE BEGAN BY DEFINING FORMAL PRINCIPLES. THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE DEFINITIONS WAS TO ENLARGE THE

6.5 Points

grid that the FontLab software provides for designing fonts. We multiplied this grid ten times, so that we were working not with a 700 grid (700 units is the standard Caps height in FontLab), as the software intends, but just a 70 grid. Consequently we had many fewer possibilities to place nodes and Bézier control points, which extremely limited the freedom of drawing. ON A PLANE THAT WOULD

normally have a hundred dots available, we only had four from which to choose. MK: That was a somewhat anachronistic decision, since the trend today is in the opposite direction. You men- graphy blog called for the grid in FontLab to be made much smaller. Somebody CALLED FOR A 7,000 GRID IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO DRAW MORE ACCURATELY. BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT, IN ADDITION TO YOUR DELI-

berately anachronistic attitude, there was also a pragmatic reason for your decision: you wanted to be able to see in the program's preview mode what the drawing would look like, and because the preview used a larger grid than was available when drawing, you took this one as the STANDARD. DB: RIGHT. THAT WAS, ADMITTEDLY, AN IMPORTANT REASON. IT PROVOKED ME THAT THE PREVIEW VIEW

75 Points

***Counter-
feiting
CRUCIAL***

52 Points

***Developed
it only
for our needs
FONTLAB***

45 Points

***How many
cuts do
YOU NEED?***

32 Points

***Make
the triumph
of technology
VISIBLE***

25 Points
- SS05
Alternate
Dash

***Raises questions
Standard/Pro
Work with ten times less
Within the limits
OF WHAT MAKES SENSE***

16 Points

mode of the software can only render a tenth of the actual grid, and I said to myself: “What you see is what you get.” So I only drew the letters as sharply as I could see them. But the discussion you mention in the typography blog also provoked us. We said to ourselves, if you demand A GRID WHICH WOULD HAVE TEN TIMES AS MANY DOTS AS ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE, NOW WE’LL

13 Points

show you that we can even work with ten times less. Naturally the possibilities are very limited, if you arrange all nodes and Bézier control points on such a coarse grid. But by doing so we found what we had been looking for: a pre-defined concept that had an inevitable effect on the drawing.

■M A second, formal definition we made early on for Replica concerned the so-called bevel. ALL OF THE CHARACTERS ARE CUT OFF IN THE CORNERS, SO THAT THERE ARE NO RIGHT ANGLES AT ALL. THIS RESULTS IN A KIND OF ROUNDING EFFECT, AND WHEN

10.5 Points

the type is small, it looks slightly damaged, as if it hadn’t been drawn clearly. We had rounded off the corners before, for Normetica and Simple. But in my view the difference is that it wasn’t necessary then, whereas with Replica it was about making the grid visible.

DB Yes, I see it that way as well. The bevels of Replica serve to make the grid visible, since the cutoff corners ARE EXACTLY THE SAME WIDTH AS A UNIT IN OUR NEW, LARGER GRID. THIS FUNCTION OF MAKING THE GRID VISIBLE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR

8.5 Points

letters where the grid would not otherwise be seen, like the upper-case I, for example. Nevertheless, it is striking that we have had rounded corners on all our typefaces so far, and the reason is perhaps that it is a way to make a typeface more specific.

M→ Seen in that way, the inner BEVELS ARE PERHAPS A REACTION TO TODAY’S TECHNICAL TOOLS. IN THE CASE OF UNICA, THE BLURRINESS THAT RESULTS

in photocomposition required that the letters be modified so that they would have their proper form when printed. Today such precautions are no longer necessary, since digital rendering on a computer screen corresponds almost 100% with the printed result.

Another argument, of course, IS THAT WE DELIBERATELY MADE REPLICA A LITTLE DIRTY. WE CONSCIOUSLY PLACED TOO MUCH COLOR IN THE INNER

6.5 Points

corners to make the triumph of technology visible.

M* The third formal decision from which we set out with Replica was cut diagonals. All of the diagonals are cut vertically in the corners so that there are no pointed ends—on the A, K, or R, for example. We did that to SAVE SPACE SO THAT THE LETTERS COULD BE SET VERY CLOSELY. LIKE THE BEVEL, THAT IS A VERY STRIKING INTERVENTION,

and it is one of the main identifying features of the typeface.

D* Yes, the cut diagonals are extremely evident. That was one of the reasons for the crisis we had last year when working on Replica. We asked ourselves what the effect of the striking bevels and the CUT DIAGONALS WOULD BE OVER THE LONG TERM. WOULD WE HAVE ENOUGH OF IT AT SOME POINT? I AM SURE THAT THE DIAGONAL

cuts, because they are so extremely evident, will be crucial to how Replica is perceived over the long term. M* I have no ambitions for Replica to be the typeface of the next twenty years. It is of the present, and it is important that it has that character. In general, I find OUR FORMER AMBITION TO WANT TO DESIGN A NEUTRAL, TIMELESS TYPEFACE WAS MISGUIDED. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS TO DEVELOP A

75 Points

**Control
Points
DIGITAL**

52 Points

**Evident
Forty-eight
Points
GENERATED**

45 Points

**Headway
Inner
STRUCTURE**

32 Points

**Limitation
on the Drawing
Methodological
APPROACH**

25 Points

**Only render a tenth
Slender Strokes
Very limited possibilities
to place the
DOTS ON THE GRID**

16 Points

neutral typeface at all. If a typeface like, say, Helvetica seems neutral to us today, it is because its qualities no longer strike us, no longer surprise us. A typeface can thus lose its qualities over time, but it is impossible to design it without qualities. D-B In that sense, the special THING ABOUT REPLICA IS THAT IT HAS TWO FACES. FROM A DISTANCE — THAT IS, WHEN USED

13 Points

in small sizes — you hardly see the bevels and cut diagonals at all. You perceive them unconsciously, perhaps, but it looks very fluid and normal. As soon as the type is large, however, its unmistakable qualities stand out strongly. I see it as a big positive that Replica has these two sides. At the moment, we are using Replica exclusively. What do you think about that? M WE ACTUALLY DEVELOPED REPLICA FOR THE THIRD NORM BOOK. BUT WE ARE LATE WITH THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, SO THAT THE TYPEFACE IS NOW BEING RELEASED FIRST. IT WAS DIFFERENT WITH

10.5 Points

Normetica and Simple, which we had made for the first two Norm books, and also presented for the first time in those books. By contrast, we began using Replica two years ago, not only for our own works but for commissioned works as well. On the one hand, it is a question of impatience: when you design a typeface, you want to see it in use, for as long as it is not being used, it does not REALLY EXIST. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WAS IDEAL THAT WE BEGAN TO INTRODUCE IT SLOWLY, FIRST IN SMALLER WORKS LIKE THE LITTLE BRUCE LEE BOOK,

8.5 Points

which needed only a few words, then on our stationery, which was another small application, and finally for larger things as well. That was a very important process. It was ideal to be able to return to the drawing after those first uses, and we modified MANY ASPECTS IN THE PROCESS. NOW WE HAVE REACHED THE POINT WHERE THE TYPEFACE IS FINISHED, AND IF AT

the moment we are using it exclusively, I think that's the best thing we can do. D ► Another new aspect of Replica is that we considered selling it very early on. We had created Normetica and Simple primarily for us, first for the Norm books AND THEN FOR OTHER USES, AND ONLY VERY RECENTLY HAVE WE BEGUN TO SELL THEM. REPLICA, BY CONTRAST, WAS

6.5 Points

planned from the outset to be sold as a proper font family. How did that influence work on it? [MK] I suspect Replica would not look very different if we had developed it only for our needs. By contrast, we would hardly have been likely to create so many characters AND THE VARIOUS CUTS. BECAUSE WE WANTED TO MAKE A PRO VERSION AVAILABLE, IN KEEPING WITH THE MARKET

standard, Replica now has many more characters than Normetica and Simple. [DB] The various cuts are another topic that always raises questions. What exactly can be considered a font family? How many cuts do you need? There are typefaces like Thesis or EVEN UNIVERS THAT HAVE ENORMOUS FAMILIES. FOR REPLICA, WE NOW HAVE THREE CUTS: LIGHT, REGULAR, BOLD, ALL OF

them available in italic as well, and also a Regular Monospace version, since Monospace is the field we know best, where we originated. Do you foresee developing other cuts, for example, if you consider that the stem of our Regular cut is relatively wide—10% WIDER THAN HELVETICA? [DB] IN MY VIEW, A GIANT FONT FAMILY MAKES NO SENSE. THAT WOULD BE ANOTHER CASE OF

75 Points

***Bruce
Lee Book
CAPS***

52 Points

***Emphatic
Serifs
Intermediate
STEPS***

45 Points

***Letters could
be set
VERY CLOSELY***

32 Points

***Possibilities are
very limited
Qualities stand out
STRONGLY***

25 Points

***Relatively Wide Stem
Strokes
This field does not belong
to us at all
TYPEFACE'S ESSENCE***

16 Points

too much choice. In fact, you can really do everything with just one type size, even complex uses are possible. The number of cuts we have now created for Replica is, in my view, just within the limits of what makes sense. I cannot imagine making an extended version with ADDITIONAL INTERMEDIATE STEPS. M WHEN CHOOSING A TYPE-FACE, IT ALWAYS BECOMES CLEAR

13 Points

just how much you are at the mercy of the typeface, because every typeface already entails a kind of program for its use, for the design. That is why it is very unpleasant when uncertainty reigns about the typeface for a particular project, and you begin to try out countless typefaces. And when there are lots of typefaces, it only gets worse... Nevertheless, we have now created two additional special cuts for Replica: A HEAVY AND A LASER, AND NOW WE ARE WORKING ON A THIRD SPECIAL CUT: SERIF. D→ THESE THREE ADDITIONAL CUTS ARE

10.5 Points

outsiders: they do not really belong to the family. At most, perhaps, the Heavy cut still does, since it is always nice to have a very bold typeface. But in the process the typeface loses a lot of its character. A typeface used in bold looks first and foremost bold, and only secondarily you'll recognize the specific typeface. A lot of the typeface's essence, its inner STRUCTURE, IS LOST.
► MK THE LASER CUT IS EVEN MORE PROBLEMATIC. IT HAS SUCH SLENDER STROKES THAT IT CAN

8.5 Points

hardly be used at all. For example, even at forty-eight points, the stroke is only 0.1 point wide. Moreover, the width of the strokes is much smaller than the coarse grid on which we designed the typeface. That presents new problems, especially with THE DIAGONALS, WHERE IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE A REGULAR THICKNESS. WE HAD TO MAKE NEW CORRECTIONS,

which altered the form of the drawing, and that is why I believe with the Laser cut we have created a new point of departure for developing a typeface. We could start out from here to define the inner structure of a new typeface. DB I don't agree entirely with THAT. IN MY VIEW, THE LASER CUT IS RELATED TO THE REST OF THE FAMILY INsofar IT HAS THE SAME HANDICAP AS THE

6.5 Points

other cuts: namely, very limited possibilities to place the dots on the grid. Actually this problem is even more pronounced with the Laser cut because it is so thin. But to me it makes little sense to derive a new inner structure for a typeface from it, because there are ONLY THREE DIAGONALS THAT ARE REGULAR IN WIDTH, AND THAT WOULD BE TOO GREAT A LIMITATION ON THE DRAWING.

MK* We had a similar problem with the italic cuts as well. They would only fit on the grid at a 45° angle. How do you deal with that? DB* That is a touchy point, but we have to mention it, even if we would rather not: it is simply impossible to fit them on the grid with an ANGLE OTHER THAN 45°, AND SO THE ITALIC CUTS DO NOT LIE ON THE GRID. THAT IS NOT NICE, OF COURSE. BUT THESE CUTS ARE JUST

supplements; they are very rarely used, usually just for single words; and they serve to make the text intelligible. MK* The third special cut that we offer for Replica is a roman type with emphatic serifs. The criteria and principles of construction are the same: grid, height of the LETTERS, BEVELS, AND SO ON, BUT WITH SERIFS. HOW DID YOU JUSTIFY THAT DECISION? DB* THAT'S A VERY DIFFI-

128 Points
Bold

**WHAT YOU
SEE IS WHAT
YOU GET!**

90 Points
Bold, Light

A conversation *about* **REPLICA**

90 Points
Italic, Heavy

40 Points
Default

Control Points
Formal approach
Norm–etica
Rational/Sensible
Side Bearings
[570,330][180,400]

40 Points
All Alternates

Control Points
Formal approach
Norm—etica
Rational/Sensible
Side Bearings
[570,330][180,400]

135 Points
Replica

Univers

135 Points
Replica Mono

Univers

Technical Information

Latin	Afrikaans	Songhai	Spanish
	Albanian	Kölsch	Swahili
	Asturian	Langi	(macrolanguage)
	Asu (Tanzania)	Latvian	Swedish
	Basque	Lithuanian	Swiss German
	Bemba (Zambia)	Lower Sorbian	Tachelhit
	Bena (Tanzania)	Luo (Kenya and	Taita
	Breton	Tanzania)	Tasawaq
	Catalan	Luxembourgish	Teso
	Chiga	Luyia	Turkish
	Cornish	Machame	Upper Sorbian
	Croatian	Makhuwa-Meetto	Uzbek
	Czech	Makonde	Volapük
	Danish	Malagasy	Vunjo
	Dutch	Maltese	Walser
	Embu	Manx	Welsh
	English	Meru	Western Frisian
	Esperanto	Morisyen	Yoruba
	Estonian	North Ndebele	Zarba
	Faroese	Northern Sami	Zulu
	Filipino	Norwegian Bokmål	
	Finnish	Norwegian Nynorsk	
	French	Nyankole	
	Friulian	Oromo	
	Galician	Polish	
	Ganda	Portuguese	
	German	Prussian	
	Gusii	Quechua	
	Hungarian	Romanian	
	Icelandic	Romansh	
	Igbo	Rombo	
	Inari Sami	Rundi	
	Indonesian	Rwa	
	Irish	Samburu	
	Italian	Sango	
	Jola-Fonyi	Sangu (Tanzania)	
	Kabuverdianu	Scottish Gaelic	
	Kabyle	Sena	
	Kalaallisut	Serbian	
	Kalenjin	Shambala	
	Kamba (Kenya)	Shona	
	Kikuyu	Slovak	
	Kinyarwanda	Slovenian	
	Koyra Chiini Songhay	Soga	
	Koyraboro Senni	Somali	

Open Type Features	aalt	Access All Alternates	sinf	Scientific Inferiors
	case	Case-Sensitive Forms	ss01	Stylistic Set 1
	ccmp	Glyph Composition / Decomposition	ss02	Stylistic Set 2
	dnom	Denominators	ss03	Stylistic Set 3
	frac	Fractions	ss04	Stylistic Set 4
	hist	Historical Forms	ss05	Stylistic Set 5
	liga	Standard Ligatures	ss06	Stylistic Set 6
	Inum	Lining Figures	ss07	Stylistic Set 7
	locl	Localized Forms	ss08	Stylistic Set 8
	numr	Numerators	ss09	Stylistic Set 9
	onum	Oldstyle Figures	ss10	Stylistic Set 10
	ordn	Ordinals	ss11	Stylistic Set 11
	ornm	Ornaments	subs	Subscript
	pnum	Proportional Figures	supr	Superscript
	salt	Stylistic Alternates	tnum	Tabular Figures
			zero	Slashed Zero

Codepage Please refer to the Technical Document

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