

Typographical Detail

The Devil may be in the details, but that is also where you will find Divinity.

Table

Microsoft Word 2007, Wrong kerning for Ta letter pair [Adobe Garamond Pro]

Table

LaTeX, Proper kerning for Ta letter pair [Adobe Garamond Pro]

Kerning

Kerning is the process of adjusting the spacing between letters to improve the appearance of the overall text.

Digital typefaces are often adjusted based on the use of *kerning tables* that are created by the font designer. Many word processors either ignore these tables, or substitute their own.

AaA AB BC CD

Microsoft Word 2007, incorrect character set used for small caps [Adobe Garamond Pro]

AaA AB BC CD

LaTeX, correct use of small caps characters [Adobe Garamond Pro]

Character Sets and Small Caps

There are many ways to create typographical contrast. One of the more commonly used options is to set titles and heading text in small caps. Small caps are more than just adjusted full sized capitals. They also have a heavier stroke and are designed to be compatible with lowercase letters.

Common Ligatures

Ligatures were first created to prevent the simple running together of letters in a manuscript's text. In many Roman typefaces, for example, the letter f, would often overlap with letters to the right of it. The problem was even more pronounced when the text was set in italics, particularly when it preceded the letters b, f, i, j, k, l.

To improve the appearance of the typeset text, specially crafted letterforms were crafted to prevent collisions. The most common were ff, fi, fl, ffi, and ffl, which were used to typeset Roman texts.

fire flower fjörd

Microsoft Word 2007, No Ligatures [Hoefler Text]

fire flower fjörd

LaTeX, Common Latin Ligatures [Hoefler Text]

Aspice, astice, lactosio, Islam, asfissia

Aspice, astice, lactosio, Islam, asfissia

Microsoft Word 2007, No Ligatures [Minion Pro]

Aspice, astice, lactosio, Islam, asfissia

Aspice, astice, lactosio, Islam, asfissia

LaTeX, Old Style Ligatures [Minion Pro]

Rare Ligatures

As the craft of typography spread throughout Europe, new regional ligatures were added. In Norway and Denmark an fj and æ were found their way to the set of common glyphs. The French added œ while the Spanish created regional marks for commonly used double letters, like the *ll*.

Complete Type Families

The idea of organizing typefaces into matched families dates to the 16th century when printers began coordinating roman and italic faces. The concept was formalized at the beginning of the 20th century. A full family includes roman (regular), *italic*, and **bold-face** weights in addition to special fonts for smaller text. Taken together, they provide all of the components needed to typeset a complex piece of text such as a book or report. They may also have variant glyphs for in-line (123) and offset (123) numbers.

The roman font is the core of a type family.

Italic fonts, based on cursive writing, are distinct from the roman forms.

SMALL CAPS HAVE A HEIGHT SIMILAR TO LOWERCASE LETTERS AND MAY BE USED FOR HEADINGS OR TITLES.

Bold typefaces may be used for emphasis or providing contrast.

LaTeX, Uses Complete Type Families [Adobe Garamond Pro]