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What's In a Font: The Hidden Secrets of Society in Fonts

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What's in a Font: the Hidden Secrets of Society in Fonts

By Angie Kaufmann Faculty Sponsor Dr. Bovaird-Abbo

Black Letter

- Originally used in hand written manuscripts.
- First used in print in the Gutenberg Bible (one of the first printed books)
- Went out of use in the 1500's with the exception of German speaking countries.

Research Question:

What do font choices tell us about societal values?

My Findings:

- Clarity is a main influencer in the use and invention of fonts
- Helvetica is the most widely used font in the present time.
- Modern fonts are recognizable by their thin, long horizontal serifs and clear-cut transitions on the strokes
- Newspaper headlines and product advertising resulted in more attention grabbing styles in the 19th century.
- The invention of the printing press de-personalized fonts and made the shift from pretty to productive.

Helvetica:

- Used in print in the 1900s
- Still used in most signs and texts today.

Frutiger

Dramatic difference between thick and thin strokes

Diagonal, thin serifs on lower case letters, thick and thin strokes

Bodoni

Flat, thin, horizontal serifs on lower case letters.

Conclusion:

Fonts create meaning and build connections, however, they have become more and more adapted to modern printing needs, which strips them of their personality. This may be a reflection of our modern need for productivity, control, and perfectionism

Further Questions

Is it Society's obsession with minimalism and aesthetic cleanliness that makes desire to use Helvetica?

Serif Fonts

- Have little feet
- The stress is vertical
- No handwritten characteristics