

About the New Typography

One of the biggest ingredients to the *Chronicle's* new look is a brand new typeface drawn by designer Christian Schwartz to the exacting specs of design consultant Roger Black. While this typeface gives the paper a distinctive new look in headlines, its most important advantages are technical.

Newspapers are printed on absorbent paper using high-speed presses. The inking level is optimized to ensure the best image quality, and the type is dragged along for the ride. In the *Chronicle's* case, the ink is very heavy, adding a significant amount of weight.

CORONA, a classic newspaper face from the 1940s, is fine for many papers but plugs up on this newspaper's presses. HOUSTON, drawn to the *Chronicle's* specs, takes these presses into account. The shapes were drawn to be heavily inked, and were fine-tuned through press tests under real-life conditions.

A. Reading
B. Reading

This comparison shows how the old and new typefaces hold up on press. A is CORONA, the old text typeface. B is HOUSTON, the new one. While both seem equally readable when their digital outlines are enlarged 400%, Houston's cleaner forms and simplified details keep it open and easy to read once ink bleed has increased its visual weight, while its narrower proportions allow it to be set a little bit bigger — and in a newspaper, every little bit counts.

A. Reading
B. Reading

grade

Here, the digital outlines are compared with how they appear on press.

HOUSTON is a contemporary update of 20th century British and American typefaces which had been inspired by an Italian typeface from around 1470.

Typefaces with these roots haven't been popular for headlines since the 1920s, and have never (to our knowledge) been adapted for news text before.

- A. *Big worker hazards*
- B. *Big worker hazards*
- C. **Tragedy Averted**
- D. **Business, Local & Sports**

Houston includes two flavors of italic: A more newsy and B more fun. C is BENTON GOTHIC, by Font Bureau, which is based on a handful of American "work-horse" sans serifs. D is ANTIQUE CONDENSED, another Font Bureau font, which adds its flavor to section fronts.