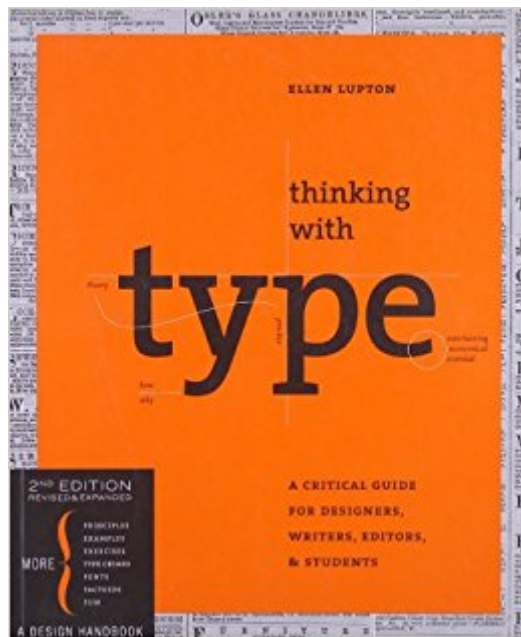


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Thinking With Type, 2nd Revised And Expanded Edition: A Critical Guide For Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students



Synopsis

Our all time best selling book is now available in a revised and expanded second edition. Thinking with Type is the definitive guide to using typography in visual communication, from the printed page to the computer screen. This revised edition includes forty-eight pages of new content, including the latest information on style sheets for print and the web, the use of ornaments and captions, lining and non-lining numerals, the use of small caps and enlarged capitals, as well as information on captions, font licensing, mixing typefaces, and hand lettering. Throughout the book, visual examples show how to be inventive within systems of typographic form—what the rules are and how to break them. Thinking with Type is a type book for everyone: designers, writers, editors, students, and anyone else who works with words. The popular online companion to Thinking with Type (www.thinkingwithtype.com) has been revised to reflect the new material in the second edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book had an initial very strong appeal to me, that quickly wore off. While the title of the book seems to suggest that the principle topic of the book is typography, it is not. Rather, it is a manual of modern design ideas. Ellen suggests that her goal is not to encourage readability, but to encourage the reader not to read. I quote "Although many books define the purpose of typography as enhancing the readability of the written word, one of design's most humane functions is, in actuality, to help readers avoid reading." This thinking is quite consistent with the deconstructionist philosophical school that she tends to often quote, especially with Jacques Derrida. That is fine and dandy, except that the fact that Ellen is writing something suggests that she hopes that somebody

will read what she writes. She is correct about one thing, that this book was not easy on the eyes to read. Her efforts to be different or unconventional made it very tense to get through her book. The book is laden with illustrations and the first impression of the plethora of examples of design that she provides is that they are cute. Subsequent impressions of her examples are less complementary, in that they are a tremendous strain on the reader (user, if you wish) to interpret the message being conveyed. Unfortunately, as she has received many favorable comments on .com, there will be many budding young graphic designers out there trying to establish their position in the world of graphic design, and are spurred by this book to be bizarre rather than effective in communicating an idea. If one has no ideas or thoughts to communicate, then this book is excellent for you.

“Thinking with Type” (2010) is a nicely presented physical offering comfortably proportioned, with robust softcover and semi-gloss hardwearing paper stock. And that’s pretty much where its marketability ends. When first published in 2004 I don’t doubt that it may have been a “thinking person’s” choice when evaluating the realm of type, but today it has been eclipsed by some broader and better organized competitors—and for that matter, some older classic texts—whose helpfulness offers superior relevancy. Broken into four sections: Letter, Text, Grid, and Appendix the book starts promisingly. “Letter” provides a short history of type peppering throughout a number of useful hints both grammatical and mechanical: the latter with software such as InDesign in mind. This section lends itself to note taking and introduces the concept of the “Type Crime” where typographical faux pas are revealed. It’s with the following section “Text”, that things begin to fall off the practicality rails not to righten till near end, on page 199 (of 224), with the introduction of the baseline grid. Starting with the “Text” section, the author drifts away in a transcendental theoretical exploration of contextual incoherence. Its aim seems to be the assertion that since 2004, the author has become aware of the Internet and web-based styling—and that it’s “really important”. So much so, the author quotes typographical-philosophical thinkers who proclaim the advent of the “user” rather than the “reader”, and that it’s the designer’s role to assist the user getting away from reading through application of the typographical art—just help users navigate to the little information they seek. It’s just that the book isn’t structured in this way.

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