
When we were a teenager putting together our first design portfolio, back in the days of rubber cement and X-Acto knives, we were obsessed with Times New Roman. We knew it was prissy and joyless, but we didn't mind. We were prissy and joyless ourselves. We loved its air of strict, unbending neutrality, and we bought sheet upon Letraset sheet of it and used it for everything we could. But as we grew older and learned a bit about letters, we realised that it actually wasn't very well made. This is not surprising, since TNR was art directed by Stanley Morison, a man who never pretended he could draw, and drawn by nobody in particular. A lettering artist named Victor Lardent did the initial concept art. This was then turned over to the 1930s hive mind—the Monotype Drawing Office—and expanded into a range of weights and widths with no one, apparently, talking to anyone else throughout the process. TNR did its job as a modern newspaper type brilliantly without ever actually being any good. It subsequently became numbingly ubiquitous because it was less trouble to use than not, and at last was shunned by right-thinking designers everywhere. But in recent years typographers have come to find something heroic about TNR's reticence, its dowdy elegance, its calm, inflexible unwillingness to please, and reconsiderations of TNR have become a genre unto themselves, and why shouldn't Signal have a go? So we've redrawn it from scratch as a natively digital typeface for what we still like to think of as the 21st century, with unlumpy curves and some vague notion of organic unity and an italic that isn't quite so Microsoft Executives Dancing. When we drew the bold weights, we found a bit of 70s funk creeping in, a bit of ITC Grouch, and we left it there. The X-Light style came out a bit Olive Oyl, and we left that in there, too. In honor of the old days of kerning with an X-Acto knife, we've named our face Exact.

Exact X-Light

Exact Light

Exact Regular

Exact Italic

Exact Medium

Exact Bold

Exact Black

18pt

DIAZ WAS TWENTY-SIX THAT YEAR; HE HAD JUST RETURNED from a tour round the world; he was filled full of triumph, renown, and adoration. As I have said, he was already legendary. He had become so great and so marvellous that those who had never seen him were in danger of forgetting that he was a living human being, obliged to eat and drink, and practise scales, and visit his tailor's. Thus it had happened to me. During the first moments I found myself thinking, 'This cannot be Diaz. It is not true that at last I see him. There must be some mistake.'

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Oldstyle Figures

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Tabular Figures

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Tabular Oldstyle Figures

1234567890 → 1234567890

Arbitrary Fractions

1/9 3/8 25/32 → ⅐ ⅜ ⅔

Superiors & Inferiors

Estuarial³ H₂O → Estuarial³ H₂O

Ordinals

23^a 65^o → 23^a 65^o

Case-sensitive Forms

«OBOE» → «OBOE»

Ligatures

Define flee office afflict ruff Kafka surfboard fjord hofhaus
→ Define flee office afflict ruff Kafka surfboard fjord hofhaus

Small caps

Hamburg Frankfurt → HAMBURG FRANKFURT

Alternate Euro

€23.75 → £23.75

Designed by Max Phillips.

Thanks to Sebastian Carewe for
font engineering and design support.

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