

WIM CROUWEL published his designs for a "new alphabet," consisting of no diagonals or curves, in 1967. The Foundry (London) began releasing digital editions of Crouwel's typefaces in 1997.

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TYPE AS PROGRAM

Responding in 1967 to the rise of electronic communication, the Dutch designer Wim Crouwel published designs for a "new alphabet" constructed from straight lines. Rejecting centuries of typographic convention, he designed his letters for optimal display on a video screen (CRT), where curves and angles are rendered with horizontal scan lines. In a brochure promoting his new alphabet, subtitled "An Introduction for a Programmed Typography," he proposed a design methodology in which decisions are rule-based and systematic.

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WIM CROUWEL presented this "scanned" version of a Garamond a in contrast with his own new alphabet, whose forms accept the gridded structure of the screen. See Wim Crouwel, New Alphabet (Amsterdam: Total Design, 1967). In the mid-1980s, personal computers and low-resolution printers put the tools of typography in the hands of a broader public. In 1985 Zuzana Licko began designing typefaces that exploited the rough grain of early desktop systems. While other digital fonts imposed the coarse grid of screen displays and dot-matrix printers onto traditional typographic forms, Licko embraced the language of digital equipment. She and her husband, Rudy VanderLans, cofounders of Emigre Fonts and *Emigre* magazine, called themselves the "new primitives," pioneers of a technological dawn.

zuzana licko created coarse-resolution fonts for desktop screens and printers in 1985. These fonts have since been integrated into Emigre's extensive Lo-Res font family, designed for print and digital media.

tMperor Oakland Emigre

See Rudy VanderLans and Zuzana Licko, Emigre: Graphic Design into the Digital Realm (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993) and Emigre No. 70: The Look Back Issue, Selections from Emigre Magazine, 1984–2009 (Berkeley: Gingko Press, 2009). By the early 1990s, with the introduction of high-resolution laser printers and outline font technologies such as PostScript, type designers were less constrained by low-resolution outputs. While various signage systems and digital output devices still rely on bitmap fonts today, it is the fascination with programmed, geometric structures that has enabled bitmap forms to continue evolving as a visual ethos in print and digital media.

Living with computers gives funny ideas. — wim crouwer, 1967

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