

Amazon Type Library Usage Guidelines

Overview

Amazon has created a limited library of typefaces for use across all products, interfaces, and websites. These fonts are fully owned by Amazon, making their usage free to all internal product teams. Fonts other than those listed below, such as Palatino, Baskerville, Caecillia, and others are licensed from their respective rights holders (generally Monotype Corporation). To use these other fonts with your product you must secure a license that covers the distribution and display of the desired fonts.

Here is a list of the designs fully owned by Amazon and their intended usage:

Bookerly (eInk, LDC, 3 weights and italic) Reading and Display
Bookerly Display (2 weights and italic) UX and Display
Amazon Ember (7 weights and italic) UX and reading
Amazon Ember Condensed (6 weights and italics) - UX
Amazon Ember Display (6 weights and italic) - Display and Branding

All of these fonts were developed under contract for Amazon - as a result Amazon owns them fully outright. To include these designs in your work there are no license payments, no royalties, no copyright or attribution notices required. The font itself carries the proper ownership and copyright information in the header metadata of the font and Amazon does not require any additional attribution or protections when using the font.

Special Cases

Always reflect proper names of the fonts, (ie, Bookerly and Amazon Ember), do not abbreviate or shorten. The company name of Amazon must always precede it if it is displayed in a menu or text option dialog box.

Contact Personnel

Various groups within Amazon have been involved with the creation of the Amazon Type Library, and while there are guidelines that help direct the usage of the fonts, Scott Boggan, the Creative Director for Amazon products has the deepest and most well informed understanding of the collection.

User Experience, Products and Interfaces: Scott Boggan

Reading Products: Joe King

Web display and loading: Sriram Subramanian

Branding and Display usage: Dan Forbes

Design Intent

Each face in the Amazon Type Library was designed for a specific use. This does not imply that its usage is limited to only these parameters - but understanding the intent can help guide appropriate usage.

Bookerly

The first font designed exclusively for use in Amazon reading products is the serified face named Bookerly. The family consists of 3 weights (Light, Regular, and Bold) and has a very elegantly designed italic companion face. Also, unlike any other Amazon font - it is available in both an LCD version and a slightly heavier eInk version for lower contrast displays. Bookerly was designed and highly tested for exceptional readability and each font contains the entire KCS1.2 character set (see below for more details). This font also includes embedded computer code, referred to as hinting, that properly aligns the pixels on low resolution displays for excellent legibility even at small screen sizes.

The Bookerly family also includes the Amazon Publishing Extension to the character set. This means that there are additional numeral forms, alternate character designs, swash capitals, and small caps glyphs available in the Regular and Bold weights.

Bookerly Display

This font is a companion extension of the Bookerly family. Its distinctive high contrast design brings an air of high fashion to any page that incorporates its design. It was designed for larger use on screen and in print as a headline font or for pull quotes and rich design work. It is suitably paired with either Bookerly text blocks or Amazon Ember paragraphs - each providing a rich mixture.

The italic counter part has a refined calligraphic appearance that is excellent for engaging the reader with emphasis. This font also includes a small collection of alternate characters and numerals.

Amazon Ember

Amazon Ember is the sans serif, or gothic family in the Amazon Type Library. It was the most variants in weight and style. Originally designed as the font for use in the Fire Tablet operating system (all of the menus, screen text, lists, etc) this font's design provides a stylistic 'cousin' to Bookerly. Amazon Ember has 8 weights: Thin, Light, Book, Regular, Medium, Semi-bold, Bold, and Heavy. These fonts are only available in the W1G character set with the exception of Regular and Bold that have been extended to include the full KCS1.2 character complement for use as a reading font in reader products. Only the Medium weight has had hinting instructions applied to it for its role in the user experience for Fire TV.

Each weight of Amazon Ember has an associated italic (or oblique) version available. Where as most of these fonts are suitable in a wide range of applications and presentations, care must be taken to not use the Thin (and sometimes even the Light) weights at small sizes on low resolution displays.

Amazon Ember Display

Similar to the companion face for Bookerly, Amazon Ember has a face that is intended to bring additional flavor to the typographic experience at larger sizes. Amazon Ember Display was designed with slightly more refined weights and a subtle softness to its edges and corners that

make the appearance of the font very comfortable and friendly in headlines and display copy. This font is not hinted and contains only a few alternate characters at time.

Character Sets

The number of characters contained in a font can vary widely. Amazon has 3 standards that it generally adheres to for its fonts. Additionally, there are several styles of numerals that can be included in Amazon's fonts.

The Kindle Character Set (currently version 1.2)

This is the collection of characters that Amazon defined for giving the broadest reading experience for Latin text. This collection includes not only the characters needed for all western and European languages but also for Slavic languages - like Russian, Greek, and Hebrew. It even contains the special characters for creating phonetic text (often seen in dictionaries) and for reading ancient historical Cyrillic and Greek texts. Fonts that adhere to the KCS1.2 have just over 1700 characters per style and weight.

The W1G Character Set

This character set contains a little less than half as many characters as the KCS 1.2. The easiest way to this about what is covered and what is not is that the historic Cyrillic and Greek are missing as are some accented characters used in African and Vietnamese languages. These fonts are completely adequate for User Experience applications and promotional work - but cannot be used in reading products.

The Amazon Publishing Extensions

There are a number of tricks that can be done with fonts that have additional characters for small caps, flourishing line endings, dropped initial caps, and high typographic design work. In order to achieve these tricks - additional characters are needed. The Amazon Publishing Extensions include a wider variety of alternate letter designs, swash (decorative) capitals, ligatures (combined characters), and small caps (lower case that has upper case forms). At this time only Bookerly has been built with these additional capabilities - although Amazon Ember Display has a small collection of alternate designs for use in branding design work.

Numerals

There are generally 4 numeral styles included in each Amazon Type Library font. They are based on 2 principles.

Tabular: The characters all have the same width, so they line up when making tables.

Old Style: This design uses an older Arabic numeral design, still fully recognizable to western readers, where some of the characters dip below the baseline. This gives a more formal and elegant impression.

The four variants are then: Regular Proportional, Regular Tabular, Old Style Proportional, Old Style Tabular (rarely used).