Adobe Typekit: Speeding Up Working With Fonts

Adobe Typekit significantly increases productivity for font-related creative workflow operations

About this research

This report presents the findings of a market-specific benchmarking project conducted by Pfeiffer Consulting for Adobe. The main aim of the research was **to document the efficiency and productivity gains linked to Adobe Typekit,** compared to using standard fonts and web-based font resources.

Benchmarks were executed using *Pfeiffer Consulting's Methodology for Productivity Benchmarking*, which has been fine-tuned over more than a decade, and measures the time experienced operators take to execute specific tasks. Please refer to the Methodology section on the last page of this document for more information.

About Adobe Typekit

Typekit is a subscription font service that is included with Creative Cloud, and is also available separately. Unlike other type resources, Typekit offers tight integration with Creative Cloud applications. We benchmarked Adobe Typekit in three distinct type-related workflow situations: **discovering and installing/syncing a new font** for a creative project, **sharing a font** used in a creative project with co-workers, and **matching a font** in a picture to a similar typeface. Benchmarks compared using Typekit's font discovery and font syncing functionality to working with resources provided by a variety of font-vendors to discover, install and share fonts. Benchmarks included projects created in Adobe InDesign CC, Adobe Illustrator CC and Adobe Photoshop CC. In addition, font licensing terms from several vendors were analyzed in detail.

Executive Summary

▷ Typekit streamlines and accelerates font discovery, font sharing and font matching significantly: In our benchmarks, **Typekit was on average over four times faster than working with standard fonts.** (See chart below.)

▷ Sharing Photoshop files using multiple fonts, **Typekit was over five times faster** then with commonly used procedures. (See chart page 3.)

▷ **Typekit significantly simplifies font licensing** over the complex incremental licensing schemes most font vendors apply. (See table page 4.)

Key Benchmark Results: Average of Three Workflow Benchmarks

With Adobe Typekit (24.55 %)

Without Adobe Typekit (100 %)
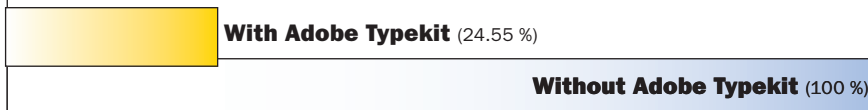
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Chart based on the average of three different font workflow scenarios per solution.
A total of 170 individual benchmark measures were taken.
Reference value: Average time when working with conventional font resources. **Shorter is better.**

How Typekit Impacts Font Discovery, Sharing and Font Licensing

How Adobe Typekit improves productivity in design workflows

An essential resource

Type is one of the most basic, essential ingredients for the overwhelming majority of creative projects. While casual creatives barely ever think about type, a feature that comes pre-installed with your computer or device, for creative professionals finding, acquiring and managing type has remained a complex, and at times confusing, topic.
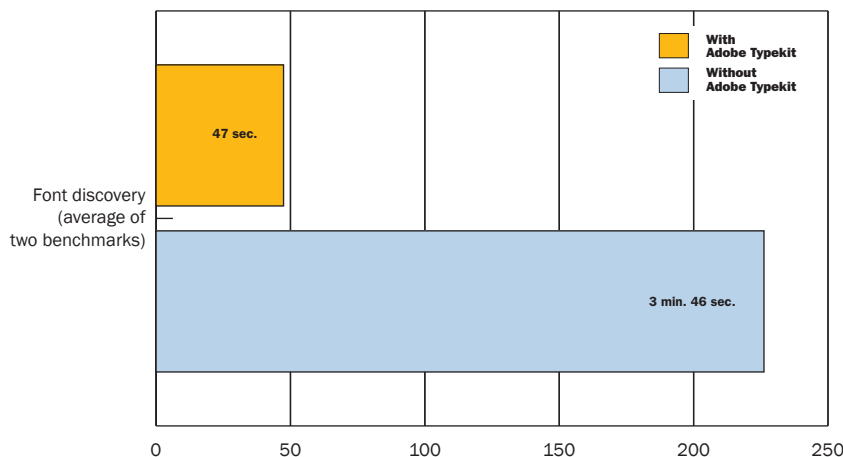
There are tens of thousands of fonts available from a wide variety of sources, ranging from individual type designers to international font providers such as Monotype or Fontspring. Adobe has been selling a comprehensive collection of fonts for decades.

What Typekit brings to the table

Typekit has been part of Creative Cloud since 2014. It takes a different approach from most type resources on the web: It provides access to thousands of fonts that Creative Cloud users can sync to their computer, or use in web-designs, as well as in non-Adobe apps. Files containing Typekit fonts can be shared with other users of Adobe's platform, who can sync missing fonts when they open a document. Typekit also provides a visual interface for browsing fonts that considerably simplifies font discovery.

Font Discovery Benchmark: Average of all Benchmarks
Time-scale in seconds. **Shorter is better.**

With Adobe Typekit

Without Adobe Typekit

Font discovery (average of two benchmarks)

47 sec.

3 min. 46 sec.

0   50   100   150   200   250

Font discovery can be time consuming:
In our benchmarks, we measured the minimum time necessary to find a font based on stylistic descriptions ("old–style serif font with low x–height and old–style numerals" for instance,) using three different font providers on the internet, compared to the time it took to locate the appropriate font using Typekit's font discovery functions. Benchmarks included the time to acquire, download and install the font. Typekit was almost five times faster in these benchmarks.

The complexities of type

Working with type is complex on several levels. To start, discovering the right font for a job can be complex and time-consuming, and can imply visiting several web-sites, each with a different set of discovery tools and a different user interface. But discovery is only the beginning; purchasing and installing fonts can also be complex. Fonts are available in a variety of formats and options; in addition, each foundry has its own licensing terms; choosing the right one, and understanding the terms and options can be quite time-consuming. (See also the sidebar on page 4.) Sharing a font with a co-worker, finally, not only implies owning a license that permits this, but also means locating the file on the computer and transmitting it to the other person, who then has to install it on the computer to make it available.

About the benchmarks

The benchmarks conducted for this project looked at three different aspects of working with type. **Type discovery benchmarks** consisted in creating precise descriptions of the font that needed to be found ("old-style serif font with low x-height and old-style numerals" for instance.) This search was then executed in the swiftest way possible with three different type providers. (See chart on page 2.)
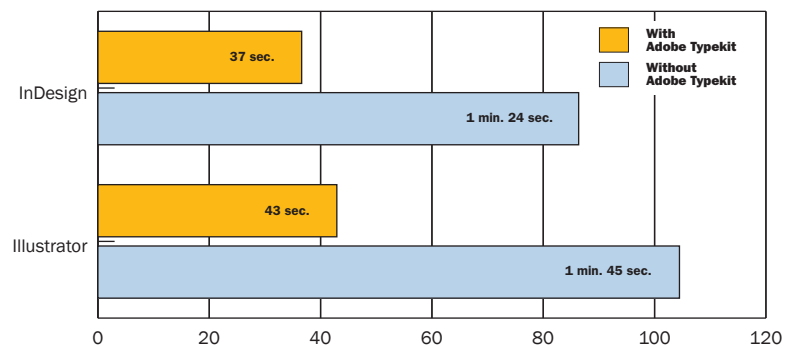
Adobe Typekit Productivity: Sharing Fonts and Font Matching

▶ **Font sharing (InDesign/Illustrator):**
Both InDesign and Illustrator allow packaging a project, including the fonts. The benchmarks covered the time to package the file, share the corresponding folder using a local server, and, in the case of Illustrator, installing the font. (InDesign doesn't require the installation of the font if it is present in the package folder). Typekit simply allows users to sync missing fonts from the web when opening a document, resulting in significant productivity gains.

Font Sharing Benchmark: InDesign/Illustrator (Average of All Benchmarks)
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

- InDesign — With Adobe Typekit: 37 sec.; Without Adobe Typekit: 1 min. 24 sec.
- Illustrator — With Adobe Typekit: 43 sec.; Without Adobe Typekit: 1 min. 45 sec.
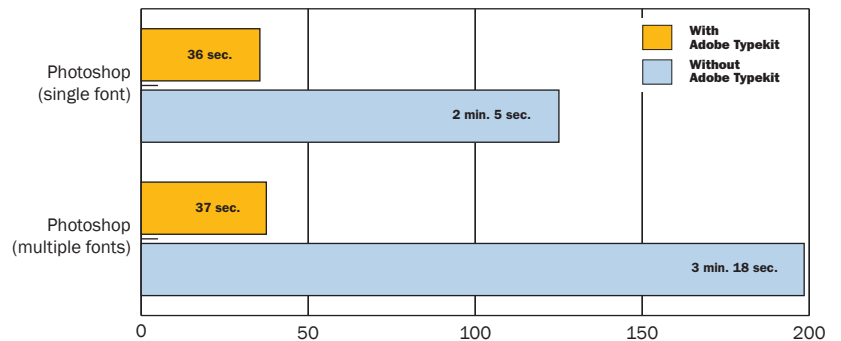
▶ **Font sharing (Photoshop):**
In order to share fonts, Photoshop users need to find which fonts are used in the document, locate them on the computer, and share them alongside the file, which can be time-consuming.
In the case of Typekit, Photoshop detects missing fonts in the opening dialog, and can sync them directly. Not surprisingly, this considerably speeds up the process of sharing a Photoshop file that uses fonts.

Font Sharing Benchmark: Photoshop
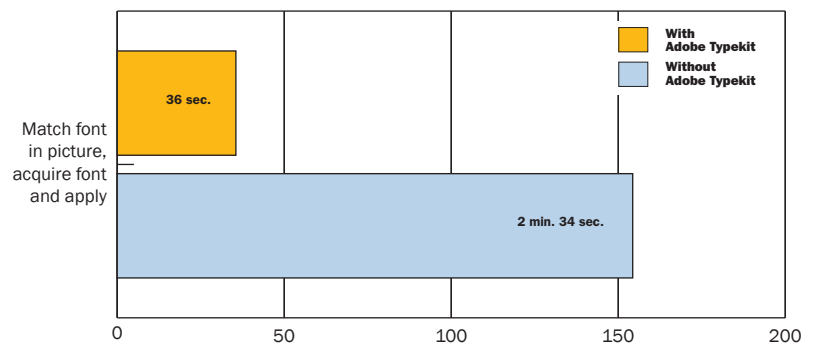Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

- Photoshop (single font) — With Adobe Typekit: 36 sec.; Without Adobe Typekit: 2 min. 5 sec.
- Photoshop (multiple fonts) — With Adobe Typekit: 37 sec.; Without Adobe Typekit: 3 min. 18 sec.

▶ **Speeding up font matching:**
Photoshop's *Match Font…* feature can recognize fonts contained in an image selection; however, without Typekit, the feature only compares to fonts installed on the system.
This means that in order to match a font not installed locally, one needs to use an online font matching service. With Typekit, users can find any available font on the Typekit server, and sync it without leaving Photoshop. (See also page 4.)

Font Matching Benchmark
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

- Match font in picture, acquire font and apply — With Adobe Typekit: 36 sec.; Without Adobe Typekit: 2 min. 34 sec.

Font sharing benchmarks looked at the time it takes for a creative professional to package a file, in some cases to locate the missing font on the computer, and to share the file and font on a local server. The benchmarks also included the time for the co-worker to get the file and the fonts from the server, and to install them on the target machine.

Benchmarks were conducted with Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, and Adobe Photoshop; for each program we created one project where only one new font was used, and a second one with three different unavailable fonts. (See charts on page 3.)

Font matching benchmarks: Finding a font one has seen as part of a poster, a brochure or on a piece of packaging can be challenging. To solve that problem, Photoshop recently introduced a feature that allows users to find a font similar to one present in a picture. The problem, however, is that the feature compares the typeface in the picture to the fonts available on the computer.

If no similar font is available, it means finding one of several on-line font matching services, load the picture, attribute letters, and, once one has discovered the name of a similar font, to purchase it from a font vendor.

The integration of Typekit, on the other hand, streamlines this process considerably, since users can look for the appropriate font on Typekit without even leaving Photoshop, and sync the right font and apply it immediately.

Our benchmarks measured finding, acquiring and using a font using two different web services that offer font matching, compared with achieving the same result using Typekit from within Photoshop. (See chart on page 3.)

Note: All results presented are the average of three individual benchmark measures for each operation.

Font Licensing: It's Complicated

	Without Typekit	With Typekit
Desktop Applications	Basic license usually allows 1-5 users	included
	Cost increases with number of users	
Sharing	Only within limits of desktop license	All Creative Cloud users
Web	Usually requires subscription	included
	Cost may increase depending on traffic	Limited to 500K impressions with Typekit subscription included with Creative Cloud
Digital Ad	May require separate license of the font	included
	Cost may increase depending on traffic	
eBook	May require separate license of the font	included*
	May require individual license per title produced	
Broadcast	May require separate license of the font	included

*For more details, please see https://helpx.adobe.com/typekit/using/font-licensing.html#web-banner

The arrival of digital type in the late eighties has created an extremely complex market–place that can make managing fonts difficult — and costly, since most foundries rely on complex incremental licensing schemes. To make matters worse, even when you purchase fonts from the same vendor, licensing can differ from one typeface to the next: The majority of type providers on the web sell fonts from a large number of small foundries, which all have their specific terms that one needs to understand when purchasing a font. This is difficult even on a small scale; for larger companies it can become a nightmare.

Methodology

This benchmark project was commissioned by Adobe and independently executed by Pfeiffer Consulting.

All the productivity measures presented in this document are based on real-world workflow examples, designed and executed by professionals with many years of experience with the programs and workflows involved.

▷ How We Design the Benchmarks

The basic approach is simple: in order to assess productivity gains that a program or solution may (or may not) bring, we start by analyzing the minimum number of steps necessary to achieve a given result in each of the applications that have to be compared.

Once this list of actions has been clearly established, we start to execute the operation or workflow in each solution, with the help of seasoned professionals who have long-standing experience in the field and with the solutions that are tested.

Every set of steps is executed three times, the average of the three measures used.

▷ About Pfeiffer Consulting

Pfeiffer Consulting is an independent technology research institute and benchmarking operation focused on the needs of publishing, digital content production, and new media professionals.

For more information, please contact

research@pfeifferreport.com

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01001011