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Signature Honors Project

*Creative Endeavor*

## **Type IQ: A Typographic Research & Design Project**

### **Introduction**

While there are many facets to this creative endeavor, the core of this project is the creation of a unique typeface design, as a result of indepth research and creative experimentation. Strong use of typography serves as the foundation of any successful piece of graphic design. It is the responsibility of the designer to have a complete understanding of the messages, meanings, and underlying contexts that an individual typeface can display. The most efficient way to gain this understanding is through experimentation, research, and application. This cyclical process was the guiding force of this creative endeavor. While the end goal of this endeavor was to have a final product in the form of a completed typeface design, the true value of the project came from the knowledge gained through the process of reaching that goal.

### **Background**

Typography expresses meaning not only through the formation of words and phrases, but also through the visual components of how the typeface is designed and how each individual character has unique qualities. The design and characteristics of a typeface determine its application, meaning how it will be used and on what platform, such as print, digital, letterpress, or a combination of platforms. The design characteristics of a typeface are what define it and allow it to be sorted into one of many type classifications. These classifications include but are not limited to the following; serif, sans serif, script, decorative, etc. Each of these

classifications have subcategories and have specific uses where they are most successful, depending on the intended message and platform being used. Understanding type characteristics, classifications, and how that affects how a typeface is used is vital to the success of any designer. Understanding type anatomy, characteristics, and classifications is vital when designing a typeface, as all of these elements working in unison is what determines the voice of a typeface and how it can be used. For the purpose of this creative endeavor, it is important to note another, less common, classification of type known as “modular type”. Modular type is an alphabet constructed entirely out of a limited selection of shapes or “modules”. The term “module” describes any character assembled from limited options of distinct elements that can be repeated, reflected, or rotated to produce each character.

### **Project Description**

The modular typeface design resulting from this creative endeavor is entitled, *Flow*. This typeface is constructed entirely out of four organic, linear modules, and a single circle module shape (Appendix A). By utilizing organic shapes to build this typeface, there is a sense of movement that guides the eye through each character. This movement is reminiscent of water, and how the element naturally ebbs and flows. This concept is the reasoning for the typeface title, *Flow*. This typeface includes only the lowercase alphabet, as lowercase characters feature more curved and rounded elements that connect to the overall concept of “flow”, whereas capital characters contradict this theme, as they are more static and rigid. To construct each character, with the exception of the “l”, a portion or a full circle module is combined with one or more of the organic, linear modules that were rotated and reflected to create the most successful solution.

As not all lowercase characters are completely rounded or curved, characters that feature harsh, linear angles, such as the “k”, “t”, “w”, and “z”, were particularly challenging to create solutions for using the round and organic modules. Each of these characters required a unique visual solution, resulting from meticulous experimentation and iterations to reach a successful end product. Another challenge was keeping the overall design of the typeface consistent across all characters. This challenge was overcome by using the modules in a consistent manner in characters that possess similar characteristics. For example, characters that feature a vertical stroke of any kind use one of the linear, organic modules as the stem, ascender, or descender. Characters that do not feature a vertical stroke require a unique solution, but maintaining this usage pattern when possible creates a consistent design throughout the entire typeface.

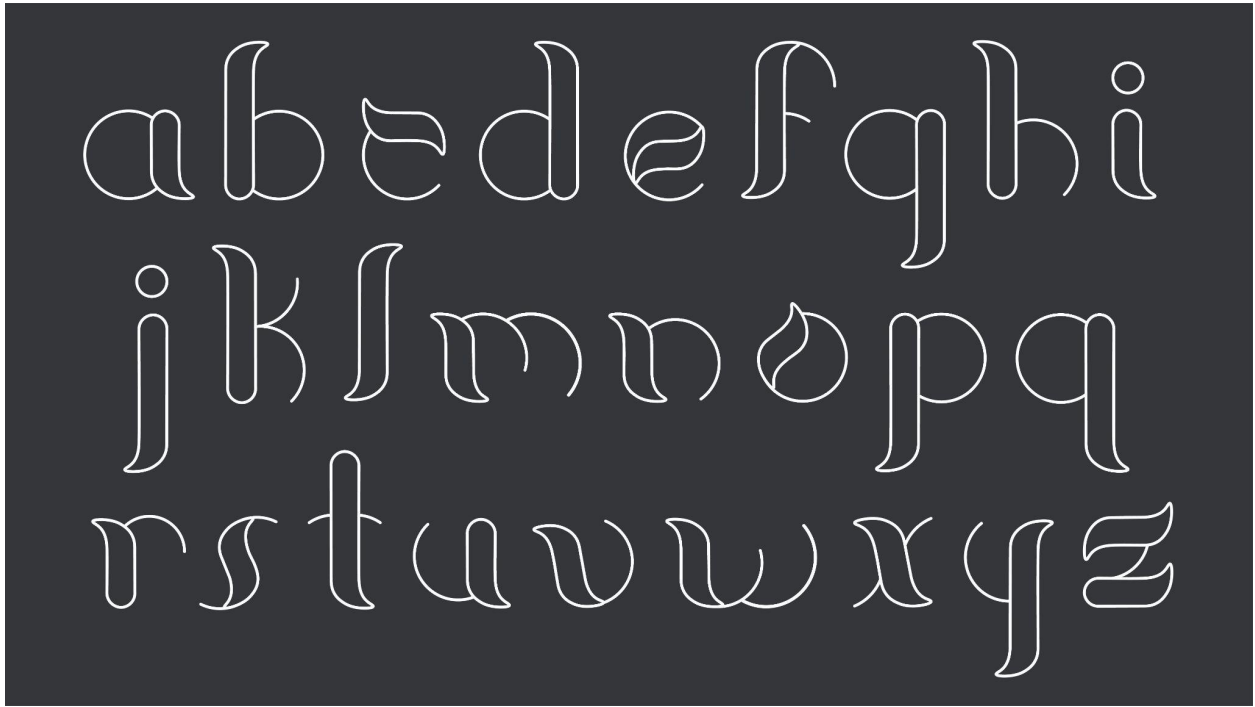
This typeface has been designed in two weights, a light weight (Appendix A) and a bold weight (Appendix B). The light weight is constructed of organic modules that are outlined in a thin stroke, that is the same stroke weight as the circular module to maintain consistency. This light weight design is airy, yet still structured and organized while drawing the attention of the audience. The bold weight design is constructed of organic modules that have been completely filled in, and the stroke weight of the circle module has been increased to add more visual weight. This bold weight design carries more visual presence compared to the light weight, and while its heavier weight causes the design to be more grounded, the organic modules still embody the idea of movement and flowing water.

This creative endeavor would not be complete without showing the practical applications of this type design. To demonstrate how this typeface can be used in a “real world”

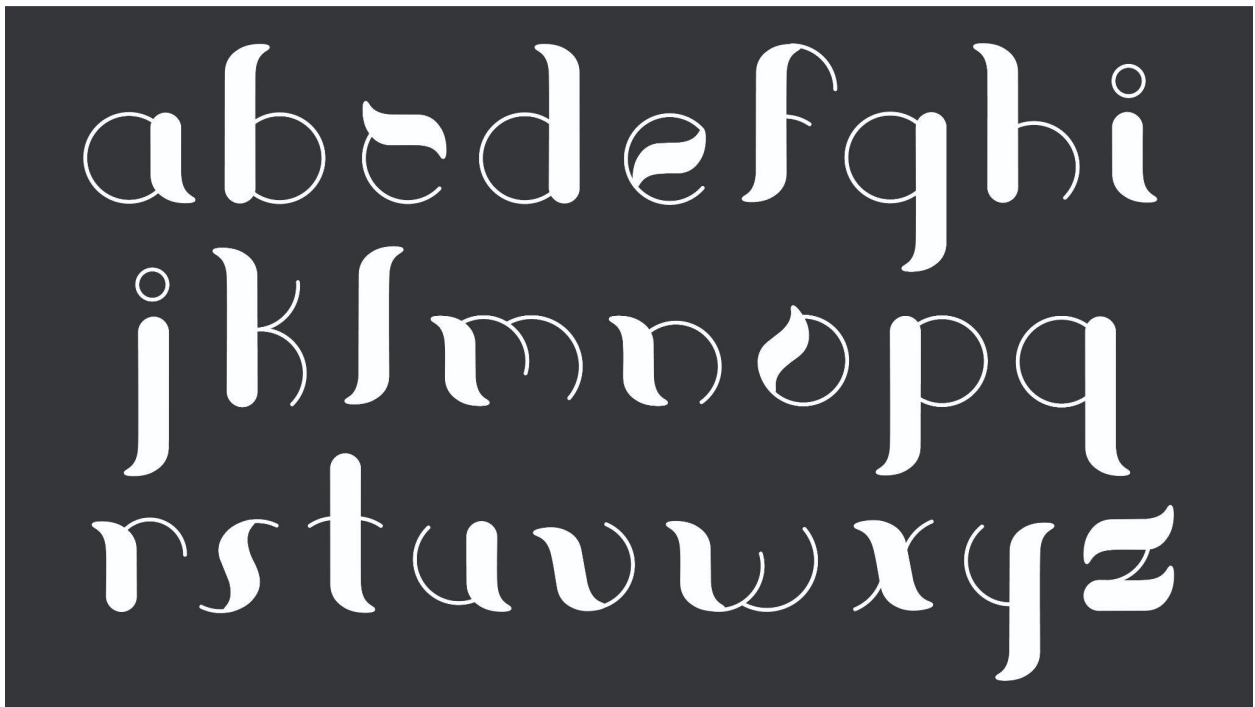
design scenario, the typeface has been used to create the branding for a theoretical sparkling water company, entitled "Joy". The light weight design of this typeface was used to create the logo for this brand, featured on the package design (Appendix C). The brand "Joy" is energetic, playful, and fresh, and using *Flow* as the brand typeface helps convey these ideas through the flowing, energetic movement of the type design. The modules in the type design were also used as branding elements in the package design, creating a clear brand identity for this theoretical sparkling water company. Overall, the success of this type design, both formally and practically, has been demonstrated through the display of the alphabet and each character, as well as the application of the type design in a real world scenario, making the completion of this creative endeavor a success.

## Appendices

### Appendix A



### Appendix B



Appendix C

