

Don't leave blackletter to the outdated and reactionary people, appropriate it + Don't leave blackletter to the outdated & reactionary people, appropriate it +

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by Gerrit Ansmann



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by Corentin Brule

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UNIFRAKTURMAGUNTIA

UnifrakturMaguntia

a Unicode Fraktur Font

by J. 'mach' Wust and Gerit Ansmann

Unifraktur Maguntia is a digitalisation of the 1901 typeface Berthold's Mainzer Fraktur by Carl Albert Fahrenwaldt. While the first versions of this font were based on a digitalisation by Peter Wiegel, with the main differences:

- I OpenType for font's ligatures & variants.
- II Suitable for @font-face embedding on web.
- III Permissive license OFL that explicitly allows font embedding.
- IV All glyphs has carefully redrawn and the font was significantly expanded.

This font has been edited with FontForge , the free outline font editor.

All the characters variants are usable with the CSS properties `(font-feature-settings)`

Glyph Coverage

A B C D E F G
 H I J K L M N
 O P Q R S T U
 V W X Y Z a b c
 d e f g h i j k l m n o
 p q r s t u v w x y z
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 Æ æ Œ œ ff ch æ ð
 . , ; : = ? ! () [] { }
 — § † ‡ • “ ” € & » «
 ♦ † * * ° % μ € \$ ¢
 £ ¥ @ & ¢ ^ ˇ ~ • e

Old Umlauts

Today's umlaut dots originate from a small <e> that was placed above the respective basic letter up to the 19th century (<ä>). Capital umlauts, emerged only at the beginning of the 20th century. Before, the basic <capital letter plus e> was used, there are only few examples of a small <e> over a capital letter. "cv15" $\text{L}\ddot{\text{o}}\ddot{\text{a}} \rightarrow \text{L}\ddot{\text{o}}\text{ä}$

The long S <ſ>

"cv11"

"ss11"

after before	a c t	e i o u y ä ö ü p and other lowercase vowels	k r	b d f g h j l m n q v w x z ß and other lowercase consonants	ſ	other
g	ſ	s	s	s	s	s
vowels except u	ſ	ſ	s	s	ſ	s
b d f h k l r t u	ſ	ſ	s	s	s	s
c j m n p q v w	ſ	ſ	ſ	s	s	s
other	ſ	ſ	ſ	ſ	ſ	s

While the swash of the round <s> hardly poses a problem in texts using the long <ſ> (as the <s> mostly occurs at the end of words), it one may regard it as diminishing readability and aesthetics in texts without it. "cv20" $\text{soſs} \rightarrow \text{sos}$

Before Fraktur

i-j merger

Until the early 20th century, there was no distinction between the capital letters <i> and <j> and both were written as <j>. ("cv13" II → JJ) In some early fraktur texts, <j> was used at the beginning of a word for both, while everywhere else <i> was used for both. ("ss03" iji → jii)

u-v merger

Today's distinction between <u> and <v> emerged in the 17th century. Until then, <v> was used for both, <u> and <v> at the beginning of words, while <u> was used elsewhere. As a capital letter, <V> was used for both. ("ss02" Uu Vv → Vv Vv)

round r

In early fraktur texts, <ʀ> replaced the regular <r> after certain letters that were round to the right (B, D, G, O, P, b, d, h, o, p) and after <r> (there are counterexamples) ("cv12" r → ʀ)

It was also used in the abbreviation "etc." ("hlig" etc. → ʀc.) This usage originated from <ʀ>'s similarity to the "tironian et" <7> and survived until 1900 and hence, ironically, the <ʀ> in its original use.

Modern variants

Another difficulty of fraktur for today's readers are letters whose fraktur form is unfamiliar or can be confused with another letter.

variants from Gerit Ansmann

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"cv01" f → k

"cv02" r → x, x

"cv03" y → y

"cv04" A → A, A

"cv05" G → G

"cv06" R → R

"cv07" N → N

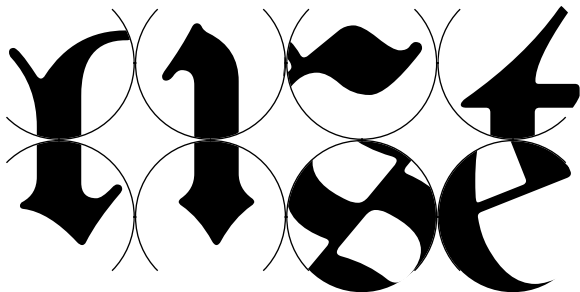
"cv08" S → S

"cv09" B → B

"cv10" Z → Z

experimental variants used here

experimental variants used here		"cv29" = → -
"cv30" d → d	"cv31" v → v	"cv32" m → m, m
"cv33" T → T	"cv34"	"cv35"
"cv36"	"cv37"	"cv38" f f → ff



Fraktur Letterspacing

In proper fraktur typography, the markup for emphatic text is not “*italic*” or “**bold**”, but “letterspacing”.

There is a catch to fraktur letterspacing: the ligatures <ch>, <ck>, <st>, <h> are treated as single letters with regard to letterspacing.

ſiſen – ſi h e n ſiſen – ſi h e n

↑ This image is really a screenshot from Firefox (since the release of 4.0, it is capable of correct fraktur letterspacing).

↑ Test for web browser: this text should really look exactly like the above image (except for differences in font rasterization)

In OpenType, the required ligatures that do not get letterspacing have to be defined in the feature “ccmp” (“Glyph Composition/Decomposition”), while the other ligatures that do get letterspacing have to be defined in the feature “liga” (“Standard Ligatures”). Both features ought to be activated by default in all scripts.

“ The goal of the UniFraktur project is providing free resources to blackletter font developers can add smart features to their fonts. It focuses especially on covering a wide range of smart font technologies. Since there is no single standard for smart font technologies, compability will benefit when a font includes different technologies.

Blackletter fonts may seem outdated or even reactionary. That's precisely why I find a tongue-in-cheek pleasure at combining them with the most advanced smart font technologies available.

Don't leave blackletter
to the outdated and
reactionary people
reappropriate it! ”

Gerit Ansmann

