

Why Kerning?

Good kerning is a hallmark of good typography. It is always desirable to gain control of character spacing because the benefits in terms of both aesthetics and readability are subtle and powerful. Well spaced type gives an even color on the page; it fills the reader with confidence in what he or she is seeing; the eye quickly learns the characteristics of a typeface and glides easily and undistracted over printed material; the natural beauty of a face can be realized and the vision of its designer fulfilled.

Why Kerning Tables?

In QuarkXPress there are two ways to kern; manually and automatically. Automatic kerning is generally preferable for the following reasons:

Ease of Use Text is input by the user and spaced automatically and transparently by Quark. If the typeface gets changed for some reason, text which has been adjusted manually must be worked on again with no benefit from earlier efforts; with automatic kerning, Quark simply looks to a different table for the new face.

Speed Manually kerned text requires several keystrokes per pair at a minimum; first to identify and then to adjust the pair. In addition, and most significantly, each instance of a pair has to be adjusted individually. Change your mind? You have to do them all over again.

Accuracy Once the desired spacing for a given pair has been established, each occurrence is adjusted by precisely the same amount.

Accumulation Work which is done to solve specific problems in a job or document, once it is placed in a kerning table, can from then on benefit every document and every application which uses the table.

Can there be any doubt that use of kerning tables, supplemented by manual kerning where appropriate, is the superior alternative? Ever since the technology has been available, typographers have devoted significant resources to developing their kerning tables. They know that this is an investment which increases the value of their product. The biggest obstacle to taking advantage of automatic kerning on the Mac has been the sheer awkwardness involved in editing the kerning tables of different fonts. But no more.

Why a Kerning Palette?

QuarkXPress is already the leading page layout application on the Macintosh for achieving superior typography. Version 3.1 introduces an innovative new architecture for storing kerning tables, XPress/Document Preferences. The new features bring some distinct benefits but also leave some areas unaddressed, particularly as regards how this will all fit in to your system of workflow and job management. The Kerning Palette addresses these areas by filling in some of the holes, and supplying tools to make the task of creating and maintaining extended kerning tables as fast, easy and intuitive as it possibly can be.