

## TUG Libre Font Fund, Google Web Fonts, and Kickstarter

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Google Web Fonts provides a catalog containing hundreds of libre-licensed fonts (<http://www.google.com/webfonts>). The team recently began supporting a funding experiment for libre-licensed fonts, in which TUG plays a key part, using Kickstarter.

Kickstarter.com is a popular service for funding all kinds of creative projects. It works by setting out a vision for a project and a target amount of money to raise within a set time period. As the clock counts down, people who want to see the project succeed can pledge donations. Their money is only spent if enough other people also contribute and the target amount is reached by the end of the campaign period. Successfully funded projects often raise more than their target.

Each month there are many typeface designs proposed to the Google Web Fonts team for publication, and financial support. The team has a budget and can't support everything; even with the best quality proposals, it can be hard to decide about those that are quite similar to ones already published. Perhaps the best judge of which web fonts the public wants to use is the public. So I invited the designers of three recent proposals to try out Kickstarter, so we could see how it might work for font projects.

First is Marcello Magalhaes's Folk, which transforms the vernacular lettering of Sao Paulo into a font. Already popular as a web font, it has been used by The Independent Film Channel and Mozilla — but it only included an uppercase set of glyphs, and not all the symbols and accents that Google Web Fonts requires. For this project, Marcello is completing the font to the Basic Latin character set used by Google Web Fonts, and has designed a poster to go with the new release that was offered as a reward.

Next is Fast Brush Script. This is the working name for a font by Pablo Impallari. Pablo's first font, Lobster, is one of the most popular Google Web Fonts, having been served over 2 billion times. Pablo is offering a very unusual reward — choosing the name. Normally the name of a font is sacred to the designer, but Pablo is opening up the opportunity for corporate patronage of his work. The development name of 'Fast Brush Script' reflects the core concept of the typeface. This font was in a very early development stage when it was announced on Kickstarter, with only the lowercase letters fully

prototyped. Pablo offered the current development version on his Kickstarter project page.

Finally there is Montserrat, an extremely high quality sans serif text typeface by Julieta Ulanovsky. Advanced substantially during her studies at the prestigious University of Buenos Aires' Masters degree in Typeface Design, the design revives the historical type of the Montserrat neighbourhood where Julieta lives and works. This genre of type has been a popular trend in recent years and this typeface in particular stands out with its excellent quality. Setting it apart are the set of alternative caps, which add a little fun to a very functional text typeface.

Folk and Fast Brush Script just made their funding targets with a lot of help from the Google Web Fonts team. But in the final few days of the funding drive, Montserrat was chosen for highlighting in Kickstarter's weekly email newsletter to its users, and placed on the Kickstarter home page. It went on to raise nearly double the target amount!



Kickstarter uses Amazon Payments to handle the financial transactions involved in its projects. This service will only pay out to bank accounts held in the USA. Since all the designers (so far) live in South America, the TUG Libre Font Fund enabled them to make use of the service. In return, I hope you will be able to make use of these fonts.

This approach to funding is ongoing; please feel free to peruse and/or contribute to the past and current projects at <http://fundwebfonts.appspot.com>. At this writing, highlighted projects seeking funding include Euphoria Script (self-explanatory), Exo Sans (a contemporary geometric design), and Open Educational Resources for Typography (a free typography/font learning resource, à la Wikipedia).

(Disclaimer: I am currently working as consultant for Google on their Web Fonts project. This article is entirely my personal opinion and does not represent the views of Google, Inc., in any way.)

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