

Johnston100
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by Monotype
Designed for TfL

Johnston100 by Monotype, designed for TfL.
A typeface remastered from the Johnston typeface,
originally designed by Edward Johnston in 1916.

Commissioned by Transport for London to
celebrate 100 years of TfL's Johnston Typeface.

Monotype Revives One Of London's Most Iconic Typefaces

Introducing Johnston100: A contemporary update to Transport for London's Johnston typeface, to mark the centennial of its use across the bus, rail and Underground systems.

Marking the centennial of Johnston, the London transport network's iconic typeface, Monotype and Transport for London (TfL) today unveiled the forthcoming release of the newly designed Johnston100 typeface. Remastered by Monotype to bring back the original flavour of the Johnston design developed 100 years ago, Johnston100 expands the palette of the original typeface to embrace both contemporary typographic trends and new digital requirements. Johnston100 includes five weights of the design, including two brand new contemporary weights: hairline and thin, and will start to appearing across the TfL network later this year. Johnston was originally designed by Edward Johnston in 1916 and is instantly recognisable as the graphic language of London. Used across all trains and buses, station signage and wayfinding, Johnston is ingrained in the fabric of the city.

Johnston100 Medium

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Johnston100: Why now?

2016 marks the 100th year anniversary of the Johnston typeface, first designed by Edward Johnston in 1916.

As TfL's presence expanded beyond physical locations/ uses like train stations and uniforms to digital mediums like apps, signage and social media, the need for a modern spin on the classic typeface became apparent. Monotype expanded the design to allow for better usability across various branding platforms, and has added new weights in order to expand the voice of the typeface. This allows for a more nuanced palette and wider versatility in the design.

"The Johnston typeface speaks of London like no other. It has been around 100 years. It will be around 100 more years if not longer. We just want to make sure it's used consistently across all our branding touchpoints and across all future branding platforms we may have, so we asked Monotype to go back to the original principles of Johnston, and create a digital typeface using the DNA of its truly iconic predecessor" said Jon Hunter, Head of Design at TfL. With social media becoming more prevalent, essential even, certain characters – such as the "hashtag" and the "at" symbol have become ingrained into the very fabric of modern life. I like to think that if Johnston was posed the challenge today of creating a digital version of the font, he would have arrived at a very similar conclusion."

The announcement of Johnston100 supports TfL's celebrations to mark the centenary of the iconic Johnston typeface and forms part of TfL's Transported by Design programme, which showcases the impact of good design on the London transport network.

New Johnston
Johnston100

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Mind
the gap

Monotype

1916 – 2016: The Johnston legacy

Few typefaces can claim their place as a true classic, fewer still make up the fabric of an entire city. But British calligrapher, lettering artist and designer Edward Johnston's namesake design is one of the rare examples that has become truly iconic in typography.

Described by many as one of the longest-standing examples of a corporate typeface in existence, it was first commissioned in 1913.

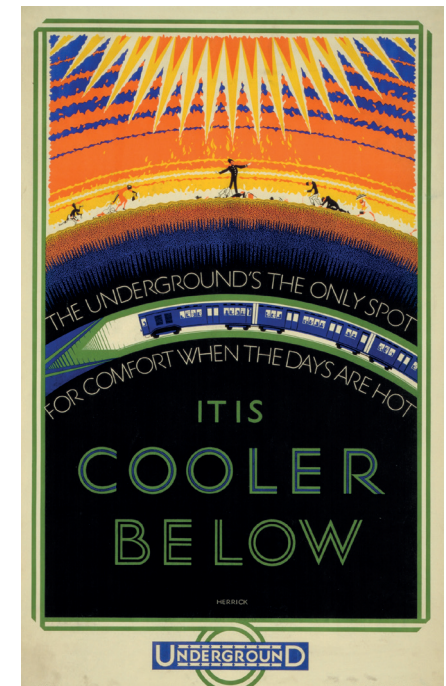
Johnston was asked to create a typeface with "bold simplicity" that was truly modern (for the era) yet rooted in tradition. Johnston's design, completed in 1916, combined classical Roman proportions with humanist warmth.

Johnston's type became a distinctive feature of the Underground brand over the years, but by the late 70s it was less practical to use the old wood and metal fonts. Inevitably, the brand was getting watered down as other typefaces were chosen for different uses around the system. In 1979, London Transport asked design agency Banks & Miles to modernize 'Johnston' and prepare it for the typesetting systems of the day.

Eiichi Kono, a new designer at Banks & Miles, was asked to revise and revive the family. Not only did he redraw the proportions for better display and even out some of the inconsistent details of the original, he also took on the challenge of adding two new weights and accompanying italics for the full set, giving the family much greater versatility. This updated version of the original typeface is known as "New Johnston" and is the version that has been used exclusively by TfL for the past 40 or so years – bringing the typeface into 2016 and to the introduction of Johnston100.

Top left: Scan of original Johnston, taken from 'London's Handwriting', archival book by Banks & Miles which documents the journey of the Johnston typeface. Top right: Edward Johnston. London Underground posters taken from TfL's poster archive.

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Johnston100: Two New Contemporary Weights

The new Johnston100 family features five weights of the design, including two brand new weights: hairline and thin. These two new weights demonstrate the challenge of trying to strip a typeface of its mass and find its skeleton – both a design and research task. The result, especially the hairline, is enchanting as it harks back to Johnston’s original design but is simultaneously very contemporary in flavour.

Monotype Type Director Nadine Chahine and Senior Type Designer Malou Verlomme completed extensive research, exploring archive material and original drawings by Edward Johnston to return to the soul of the typeface and pinpoint key elements, which had been lost over years of the typeface’s evolution, and which were necessary to reintroduce for Johnston100.

“The philosophy of the Johnston design is consistent throughout, and in such a way, the typeface was versatile enough that it could sustain all of these different fashions and usages that have come in the last 100 years,” said Chahine. “It was very important to TfL that we add the extra-thin weights, because of today’s digital trends. It’s a technical skill, and it’s also a testament to technology, in that it is able to render and print very delicate lines. We were able to capture the contemporary trend and the fashion of having something very light and very elegant, but because we are still using the original structures, we were able to maintain the soul of the typeface.”

Johnston100 has been made wider to give a more relaxed feeling, and calling back to Edward Johnston’s original drawings. Over its evolution, the Johnston typeface became narrower and more mechanical as functionality took precedence over historical design. Instead, Johnston100 has a feeling of injected geometry. As well as this, Johnston100 now includes proportional figures, rather than tabular. The typeface’s character set has been expanded to include more accented characters and diacritics to allow the Johnston typeface to be used in a wider variety of languages.



Nadine Chahine, left
and Malou Verlomme, right.

Medium

Regular

Light

Thin

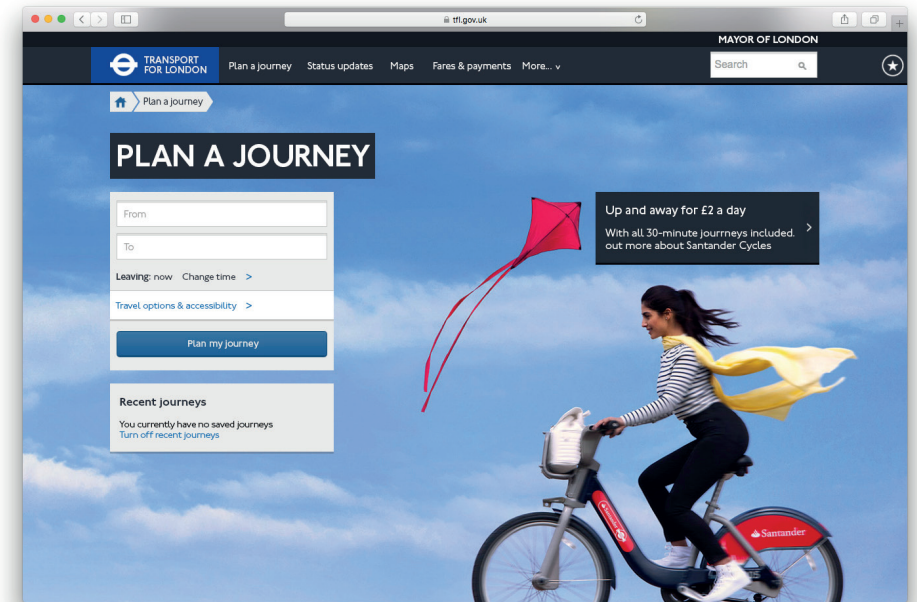
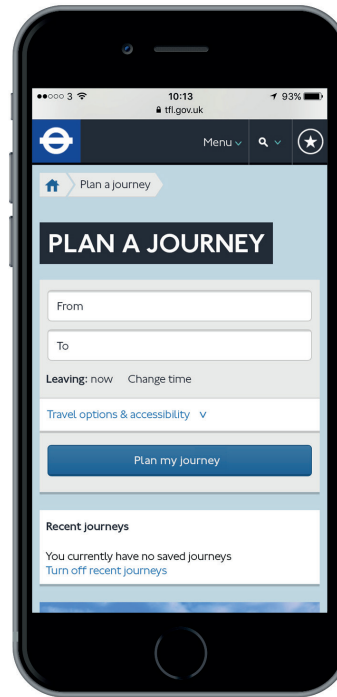
Hairline

JohnstonI00 In Use

JohnstonI00 will be rolled out by TfL from July 2016, initially for printed materials, such as Tube maps and posters. Over time, the typeface will be used within TfL's trains and station signage including for London's new Crossrail Elizabeth line – scheduled to open in 2018.

JohnstonI00 can also be seen for the first time on a special edition poster designed by Monotype to celebrate the Johnston centennial. The Monotype poster joins a series of I0 developed in partnership with TfL, with further poster designs from Pentagram, SEA and Alan Kitching. The series will be live across the Underground network from June 10, 2016 for two weeks and limited edition prints can be purchased directly from the London Transport Museum shop.

For more information on JohnstonI00, visit: www.monotype.com/johnstonI00



New Johnston
Johnston100

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#Johnston100

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