Ask ILT: Grotesque & Neo-Grotesque

For the first in my brand new series of reader questions, I begin with two common type classifications. They sound pretty much the same and they do have a lot in common, but their differences are significant, and that makes them suitable for different applications.

It’s also worth emphasizing that this is not about pedantry. Grotesque and Neo-Grotesque are two of the most popular kinds of typeface, and whether we are fans of the nomenclature or not (I’m not) doesn’t make these terms go away. For better or worse, these terms are here to stay, and while they are here, let’s at least ensure we understand them. What’s more, understanding the differences between these two genres of type is both a lesson in type history and in type choice.

If Instagram is your thing, then you can see this slideshow on our new Instagram account.

Colophon: Typeface used in slides: Adapter PE Text by Rosetta (a Neo-Grotesque). The last slide also includes an example of a Grotesque, Americane by HvD Fonts.

ask ILT classification