Learn and be inspired.

LetterMat: 142

Correcting the Spacing in Captions

Instructor: Brian Wolf, CPF, GCF

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Correcting the Spacing in Captions

Whether it is FrameShop™ or MatDesigner™, the main purpose of Wizard's design software is to align rectangular openings.

The software was designed to measure the distance between letters as if they, too, were rectangles—without compensation for the angles and curves of letters. Some letter pairs will be incorrectly spaced. In these cases, we need to correct the spacing manually to make a caption look its best.

Spacing Strategies

One method for repairing the spacing is to click the **Explode Font** button under the **Advanced** tab. This splits the entire caption so that each letter is a separate LetterMat item. Though everything about each letter is now individually adjustable—size, font, and placement, this option discards the most useful LetterMat utilities. There is no longer easy spacing control with **Kerning** and **Tracking**. And the letters are no longer automatically lined up along the baseline.

A more surgical approach to spacing is to divide the caption into pieces at the incorrect space. Then line up the parts of the caption and move them closer to correct the spacing. Each part of the caption still has **Kerning** and **Tracking** control, and no letters will be accidentally moved off the baseline.

The Bristol Font

With such traditional strokes and letterforms, there are only a few spacing problems with the **Bristol** font.

In this name, the **n** and the **j** are clearly too far apart. Reading is interrupted.

The **f** and the **e** are not grievously far apart, but the caption could be improved if they were closer, too.
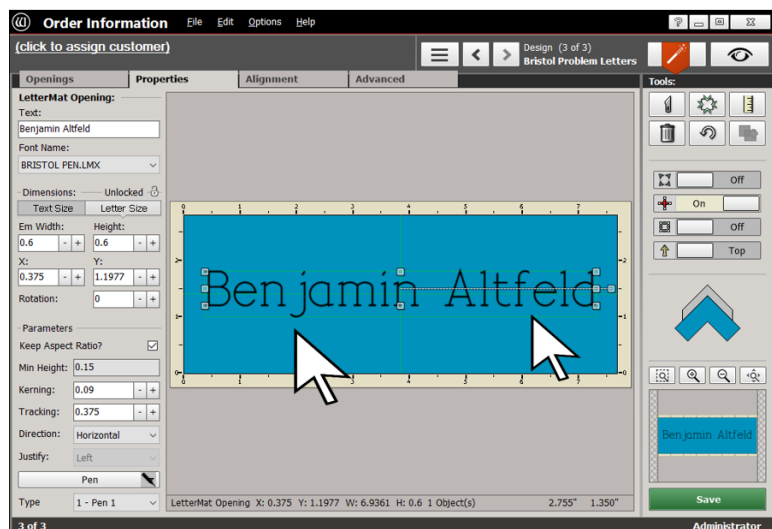
Decisions

The examples in this section point out spacing questions and offer a method for making improvements. In this example, it could be seen that the **j** interrupts readability, but the **f** causes only a minor aesthetic hiccup for the typography purist.

There is also the design context. This may turn out to be a small caption under 1 of 7 photos in the arrangement. Effort spent on minor improvements may go unnoticed and unappreciated. Every framer will evaluate when corrections need to be made.

Dividing the Caption

In the previous illustration of the caption, the **Dimensions**, **Kerning**, and **Tracking** were set.

‣ **Copy** and **Paste** so that there are 3 copies of the caption.

‣ Change the **Text** for each.

– The first part is **Ben**.

– The second part is **jamin Altf**.

– The third part is **eld**.
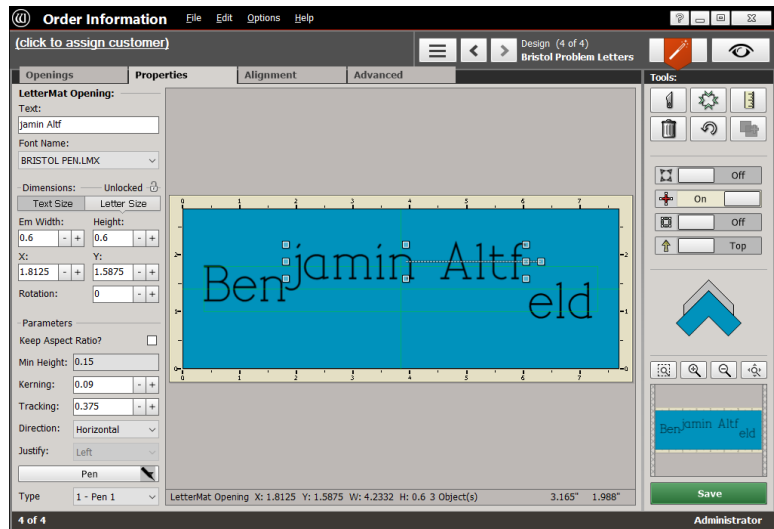
Aligning the Parts

‣ Select all 3 parts of the caption.

‣ Click the **Alignment** tab at the top.

‣ Click the **Align Objects to Bottom** button at the left. With LetterMat items, this button lines up letters to their baselines—not the actual bottoms of the letters.
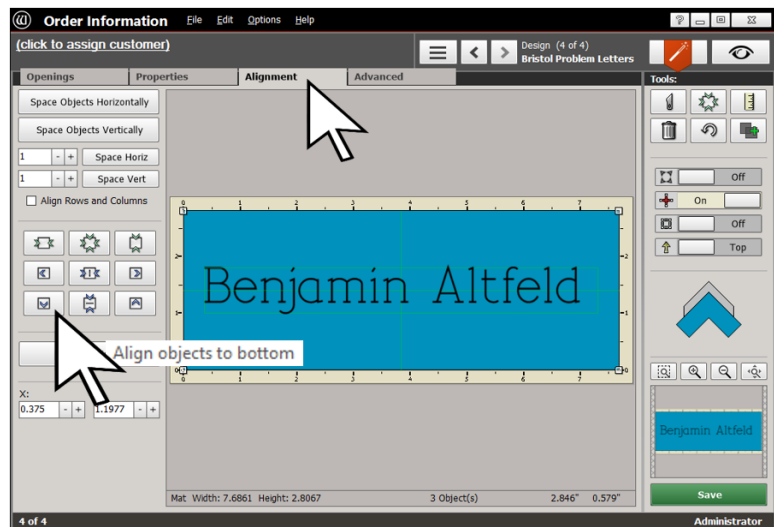
Be sure to use this button because the two other buttons in the bottom row—**Align Objects to Middle**, and **Align Objects to Top**—treat letters like any other openings. These buttons line up the letters' actual middles and tops.

‣ Once the parts of the captions are in line, use the arrow keys to move the parts left or right so that the spacing looks better.

*Note: Remember that holding the **Alt** key as you click the arrow keys changes the increment to 0.01 inch (0.2mm in metric) per click instead of the usual sixteenth inch (1mm in metric).*

The Vienna Font

Though this font presents as purely geometric, there are several elements in the letters that cause possible spacing problems.

- In **Georgia**, the spaces both before and after the **g** need correction.
- In Elijah, the space between the **i** and the **j** needs to be more narrow.
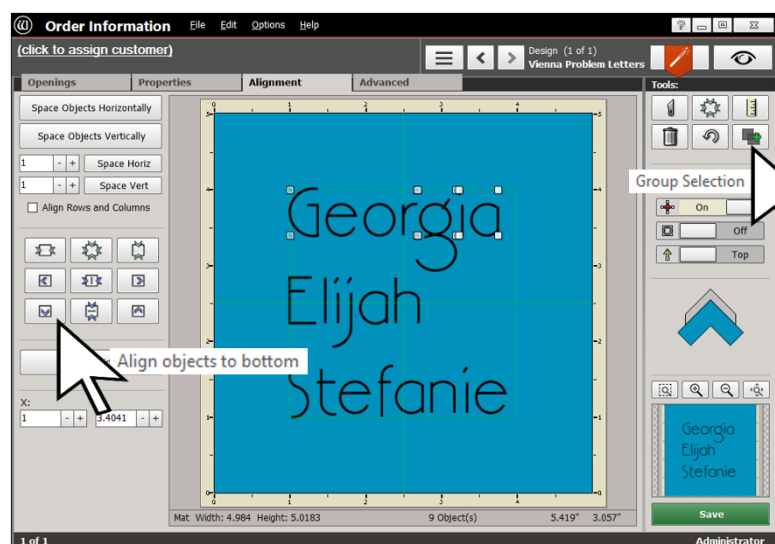- In Stefanie, the spacings for **te** and **fa** might be improved.
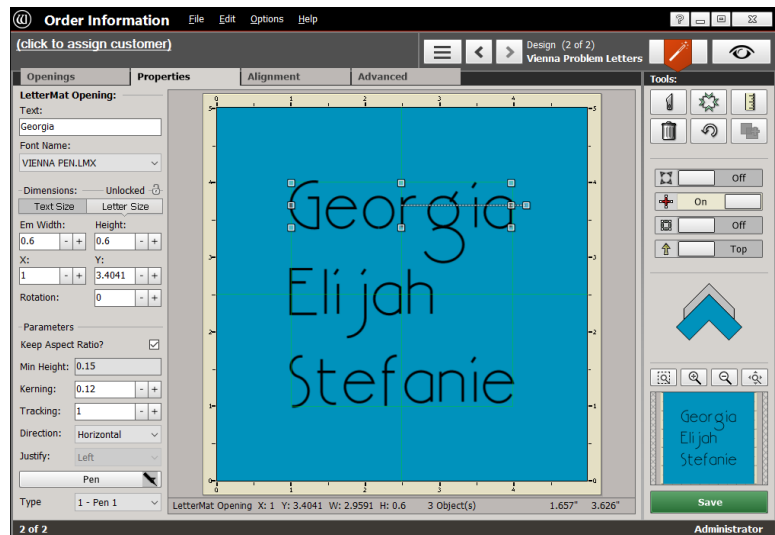
Dividing the Captions

- **Georgia** is divided into **Geor**, **g**, and **ia**.
- **Elijah** is divided into **Eli** and **jah**.
- **Stefanie** is divided into **St**, **ef**, and **anie**.

Follow the procedure in the **Bristol** example.

Use the **Align Objects to Bottom** button and the arrow keys to line up the parts of each caption and improve the spacing.

Grouping

After this manual alignment, there will likely be more design work with the project.

‣ Select all the parts of the caption then click the **Group Selection** button at the upper right. This locks the parts of the captions together. Then, as work continues, none of the parts will be accidentally nudged out of place.

The Ariadne Font

A decorative flourishing italic font will always have dramatic strokes that break out of the standard boundaries. Without them, what is the point of a decorative font?

The spacing problems in this illustration can easily be seen.

And it can be easily seen that with a font with so many slanted strokes, that there will be more spacing problems than in a nice straight unadorned font.

Dividing the Captions

- Jayden is divided into **Ja** and **yden**.

- Parker is divided into **Park** and **er**.

- Margaret is divided into **Mar** and **garet**.

- Alejandro is divided into **Ale** and **jandro**.

- Enzo is divided into **Enz** and **o**.
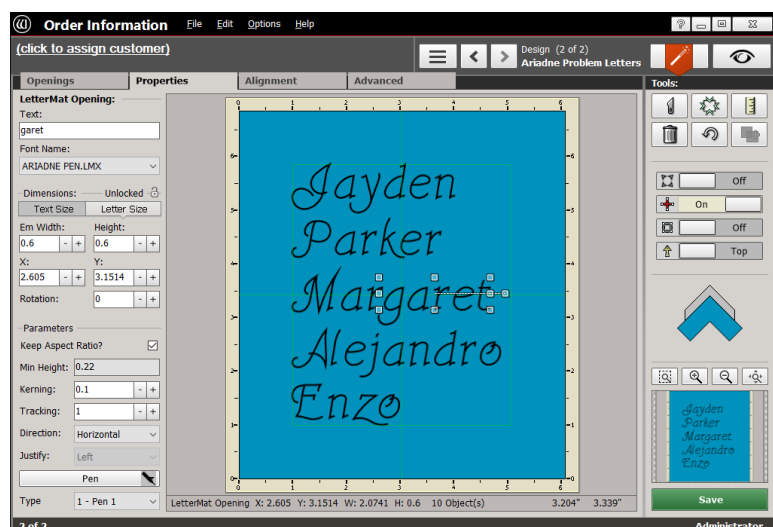
Once again, follow the procedure outlined earlier to finish the captions.

Use the **Align Objects to Bottom** button and the arrow keys to line up the parts of each caption and improve the spacing.

Things to Remember

★ Divide the caption into sections at the point of the incorrect space. This preserves the **Kerning** and **Tracking** adjustments for the sections.

★ In a course about correcting spacing problems, of course every measurable problem will be corrected. Evaluate each caption, though, and decide when corrections need to be made.

★ The examples show the single line fonts, but as you work more with captions and use other fonts, all the hints in all these presentations will prove helpful.