

The return to the classics

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Abstract When did width margins in a page become less important than having a small number of pages in a book? We have been inundated by bad printed material since most of the publishers are now more interested in getting as much profit as possible, leaving the art of publishing aside. The premise of book designers should be to create not only attractive printed material but to provide a pleasant reading.

There are quite a few examples of designs that are now considered classics because they have prove themselves to be aesthetically incomparable. These designs include

Ternary canon: 2:3 page proportions where the height of the typographic box is equal to the width of the page, the left margin is half the right margin and the top margin is half the bottom margin.

Gutenberg's Göttingen bible: same as above but in two columns with a width column separation.

Universal Scaling: the page is created when the user defines a unit box and the design takes multiples of three times the unit box; the left margin is the unit's box width, the top margin is the unit's box height, and the right and bottom margins are twice the unit's box width and height respectively.

Diagonal and double diagonal methods: the page dimensions and the left margin are provided by the user and all the other elements are defined in terms of either a diagonal or using both diagonals.

iso 216: the typographic box is sized either A5 or A6 depending on the choice of A4 or A5 paper size, and the left and top margins are half the right and bottom margins respectively.

2–3–4–6 system: page dimensions and the margin unit are defined by the user; and the typographic box is adapted to have two, three, four, and six times the margin unit as left, top, right and bottom margins respectively.

In this paper I am going to present `classics`, my brand new class that allows the user to typeset camera-ready books using any of the afore-mentioned designs. This class uses the `calc` and `geometry` packages to create the design, and `crop` to generate the crop marks. If `classics` is used with Hàn Thế Thành's microtypographic extensions, the user will get state of the art printed material. Let's recover centuries of publishing tradition!