KD2

Style Guide

v0.1

This KD2 style guide is historical.

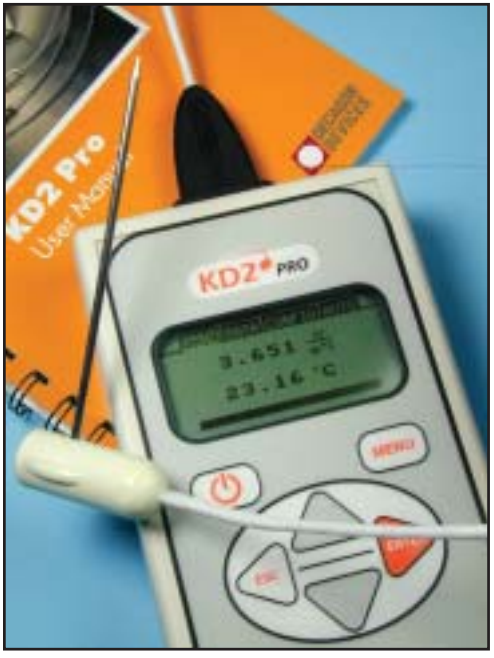
Consider this guide a “making-of” documentary. The design evolution’s been organic (not planned). There are reasons for everything we’ve done. In other words, “calf path” experimentation led to market adjustments as we focused.

The future will be even better.

Original Orange Generic Packaging

The orange was selected by Bryan Wacker and was originally an unmixed Pantone Orange 021.

This simplified color matching across various media like screenprinted decals, gasketing, and press manual cover as shown.



INDUSTRIAL PRINT COLORS

Gold 126
Red 484
Black 5185

As the KD2 found applications for power engineeers, there was a need to brand the product more for industrial segmentation. Color and type theme changed on most printed materials.

Interstate

Familiarity is the foundation of legibility, lending this sans serif a strong edge as one of the most legible faces. Interstate is based on the signage alphabets of the United States Federal Highway Administration, alphabets that we read every day as we drive. Tobias Frere-Jones designed Interstate in 1993-94 and, with the assistance of Cyrus Highsmith, has expanded it into a plethora of enticing text and display styles. ($40 /wt.)

extralight
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

light
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

black
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

ultrablack
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

light compressed
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

regular compressed
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

bold compressed
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

light condensed
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

regular condensed
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

bold condensed
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

black condensed
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1994

Interstate will work as a font pair to most serif faces. But the family works for both headlines and body text.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuv
wxyz1234567890
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQ
RSTUVWXYZ

Blue Highway Font Freeware Clone

Blue Highway is now replaced with Expressway by the same type foundry. It renders better ($30 per weight.)

Expressway is a direct competitor to Interstate since the original specs were public domain with the D.O.T.

Blue Highway is still available.

regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

condensed

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

delight expaned

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

deluxe

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

deluxe expanded

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

D Type

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

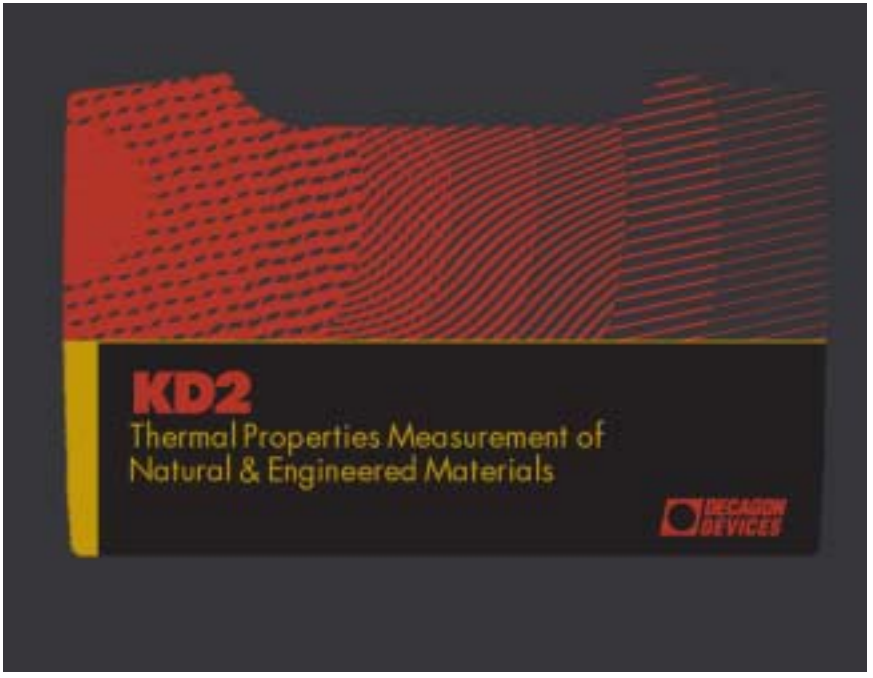
Blue Highway, shown above, is a free font family.
(Interstate knockoff from Larabie fonts. It does not have the same weights.)

Decal color palette
5185 rich black
484 red
126 gold

Materials
Lexan decal with a matte finish and radiused corners

Graphic element
"heat" bitmap
mezzotint
stretched-to-fit

The bitmap is on file at Decagon.



HeatPulse Newsletter Original

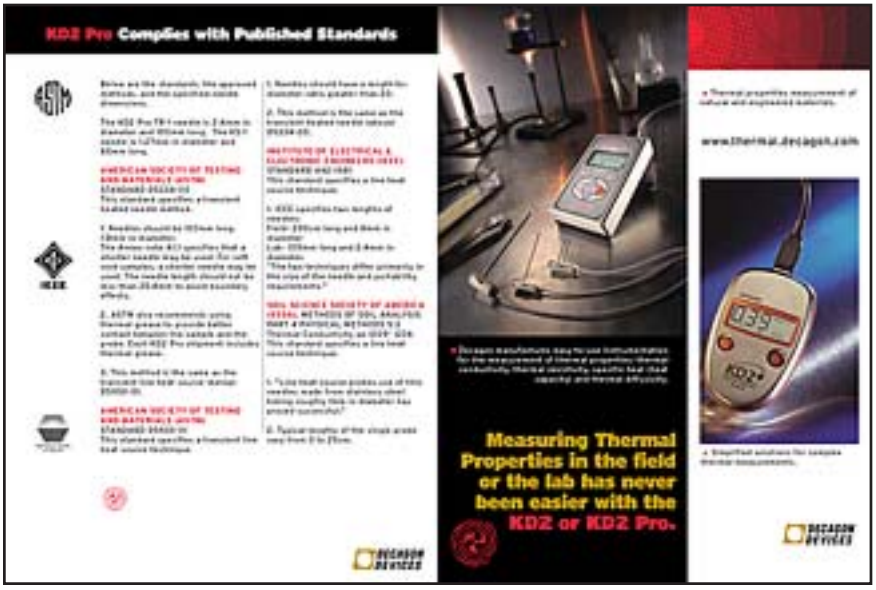
This first-issue used a color palette brighter than the industrial colors.
The red was 485 and the yellow 1225.

Black was an "official" rich black.

The main font for text was still Interstate but display fonts varied.

The latest newsletter now uses only Interstate font and none other. And colors are standardized.

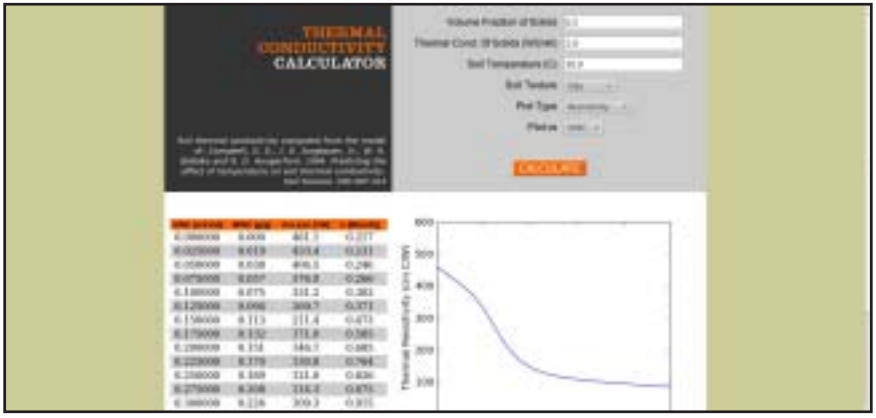
The spiral was a decorative element, not a logo. It is not used as much.



“Spirals” dingbat font lowercase“n”

Screens

The Thermal Resistivity .com website was designed to incorporate the original orange color. These are not necessarily recommended any more.



KD2update.info was using the newer industrial colors with sprinkles of Pantone orange 021.

Both these sites need to be rebuilt or dismantled soon.

This horizontal format brochure was never printed but demonstrates the proper use and hierarchy of design elements - colors, type, symbol, and company logo.

NOTES

from Steve

The theme is “powerful”.

“Powerful” works well for high-tech industrial markets. The color palette and type were selected accordingly. But there are many color combinations that also communiate “powerful”. And type, too, for that matter.

Always keep the “black” dominant. Cover the most area with black. There will be artistic exceptions for variety. Try and avoid them too much.

Applying the 3 colors + white with Interstate type on the actual product will make it appear more rugged and durable. Dominant orange is a “friendly” color except when implying “danger”. It’s not bad but it is at conflict with “powerful”. So this needs consideration for the future. Black and metallic colors can be elegant or powerful. Think Duracell copper-top.

Orange and the logo were never unacceptable. They were experimental and non-market specific (generic). As applications and opportunites present themselves, the KD2 needs different identities to match market perceptions of value. This increases the worth of the product and can command a better price. It’s an adaptive process.

It's recommended the product logo be redone and modernized or simply made out of the Interstate typeface.

Ideally, the KD2 would have a real product name instead of an engineering model number. This would make the device more appealing to a specific market. That will come with time.

The Ubiquitous Swoosh (Swish)

The "swoosh in a logo" phenomenon died shortly after the dot com crash at the turn of the century. Swooshes are a perennial favorite because they're thought to represent hightech companies and because many communication giants started using them around 1996. Many designers believe the swoosh originated with the Nike logo, but that mark was around for eons before swishes were getting slapped on logos left and right.

Swishes are a favorite with designers because they're incredibly fast to produce. While we celebrate the swoosh for serving many deadline crunched and concept-addled designers for years, it's time to give it a rest.

Thank you for letting me participate in the evolution of this product identity.

It's a good product with a bright future.

Steve Teare
2011