



# Redesigning the Vector Logo

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Last semester, Vector debuted our brand new logo designed by Layout Editors Carlos Villapudua and Nick Blackley as a part of a larger push to solidify and modernize the Vector brand. Vector was founded back in 1990 and the logo since then had simply been the word “vector” in Georgia font with an arbitrarily sized arrow over the top of the ‘v’. The logo had served us well, but had a number of standing issues. For example, the arrow over the ‘v’ never had any standardized sizing rules, so each time a layout editor had to make the logo, the arrow was a completely different size. We were also finding that the old logo didn’t look great on digital screens because

of how thin and generally flimsy the text was. This was all going to change as we intended to create a unified logo that would be better in

digital contexts while still looking good in print.



Some of the old logos of Vector from Spring 2013 (Top Left), Winter 2013 (Top Right), Winter 2016 (Bottom Left), and Spring 2018 (Bottom Right).

We started our journey towards a new logo by identifying who we are as an organization in short, simple terms. We brainstormed words and phrases that we thought represented our brand best and by listing out the defining properties of Vector like core audience and purpose. Some of our favorite phrases that came out of that session were creatives, community of collaborators, and goofs. After the brainstorming was over, we crafted this mission statement:

We are a publication devoted to covering topics interesting and relevant to the engineering students at The University of Texas at Austin. Consisting of makers. creatives. innovators.

and all-around goofs, Vector serves as a creative outlet and collaborative platform for engineering students to explore

writing, photography, and design. We create opportunity for engineering students, provide exposure for cool projects, and inspire our readers to change the world.

By figuring out who we were first, we could build a logo that would really suit Vector and be able to visually communicate what we were about.

From here, we looked at the old logo to see what worked. To us, the best aspect of the logo was the 'v' with the arrow. It was iconic and felt like it would work well as the shorthand version of our full logo. This would be particularly relevant in square contexts like favicons or app icons. The logo also had a very math and science sort of vibe. Finally, the font of the logo, Georgia, was the font that we used in the body of our layouts, so it was communicative of Vector as an editorial project.

Now we could build a new logo, and the first step was identifying a base font that we could build the logo off of. The math and science vibe of the old logo was a bit more “textbook” than we wanted, so we looked at fonts that were a bit more angular

and blocky like something from *Wired*. This would also help us avoid the previous issue of a visually flimsy and boring logo. We sifted through a

number of different base fonts before finally settling on a font called Rokkit. We liked Rokkit because it felt modern and techy without being too gaudy, and it felt unique enough that we would be able to craft something special out of the font.

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Vector in the base logo font Rokkitt.

With Rokkitt selected as our base font, we immediately ran into a slight block. The font does not have an italicized version of the font, and we wanted to keep the slant in the new logo since it felt like it implied progress and was a nice call back to the previous logo. We solved this by manually shearing the logo by 7%. Then we decided we wanted a 'v' that would be more iconic and have more continuity from our previous logo. So we dropped in a 'v' from a completely different font called Pluto and sized it appropriately to

match the rest of the logo. This was actually a source of debate as we weren't sure whether or not the 'v' was "too silly." Once we added the arrow over the 'v', the essence of the logo was actually done. But there was still a lot of subtle work we had to do: tweaking individual letter forms, custom kerning, making sure the tops and bottoms were aligned properly, etc.

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The logo after shearing the base Rokkitt font and adding the 'v' from the Pluto font.

The last step was rigorous testing of the logo in as many different contexts as we could think of. We placed the logo in old magazine covers to see if it would fit with past styles, overlaid the logo as watermarks in photos, tried it as an app icon, paired it with different potential new brands and flavors of Vector, made sure it looked good in any color. After many, many revisions of the logo, we settled on the version we have now (although I made one slight alignment adjustment after one semester of use).

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The logo before and after tweaking. Notably the 't' and 'r' underwent major changes, but every letter received some form of special attention.

When we started our redesign, we wanted to build a logo that Vector could use for another 30 years, and we feel like we hit that mark. We made a logo that looks professional, but isn't overly serious. The logo also feels like a natural evolution of the old logo which helps maintain brand continuity, but also helped quell some of our older member's fears that the redesign was going to destroy a brand identity that was dear to them. The logo is also much more versatile and looks great on digital screens and in print. Overall, the redesign was a huge success, and you can see the logo on future issues of Vector for years to come.





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