

Basic Font and Font Family Facts

What is a font? A font is a complete set of characters in a single size and typeface. One of the most effective ways to impact any project is the font you choose. There are many fonts available and knowing which font to use is often confusing. Do not use a font only because it looks great—it must also be legible in the layout. This fact sheet will guide you in the basics and help you choose the best font for your project.

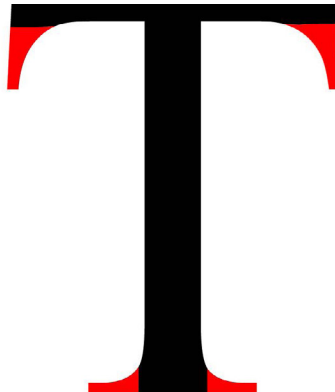
Basic Font Hints

1. Be consistent—don't change fonts mid-project for no reason.
2. Use sans serif fonts for online or on-screen projects.
3. Use serif fonts for printed projects.
4. Do not use more than three fonts per page.

Five Types of Font Families

In typography there are five basic types of font families: serif, sans serif, monospace, cursive, and fancy (or fantasy).

Serif Fonts are among the oldest type of fonts in existence; some have been around since the year 1200. Serif fonts have small lines or strokes that extend from the tips or ends of letters and symbols. They look like small feet, tails, flags, or caps on the letters.



serifs

Basic Font and Font Family Facts, continued

Serif fonts are more suitable for print media due to the high resolution. The higher resolution makes the extra information (tails, feet, flags) clearer and more legible. Serif fonts are not generally used for online or on-screen materials unless the font point size is larger than normal. Examples of serif fonts are Times New Roman, Georgia, Book Antiqua, Palatino, and Garamond.

Serif

Sans Serif

Sans Serif fonts are simple and do not have any serifs. These fonts are generally used for headers, captions, on-screen documents, and technical documents. They are well suited for online media because they have less detail and can be read from a distance. Examples of sans serif fonts are Arial, Helvetica, Veranda, Lucinda, and Impact.

Monospace fonts are fixed-width fonts in which all characters are the same width. This makes them more difficult to read. These fonts are the type that typewriters used. Today, they are most often used by computer programmers for source code and code samples. Courier New is an example of a common monospace font.

Monospace

Basic Font and Font Family Facts, continued

The final two font families are cursive and fancy (or fantasy). These are special and should not be used for the body text. They are generally used for headers, logos, invitations, or decorative purposes. Examples of these type fonts are Comic Sans, Script, Jokerman, Calligraphy, and Chancery.

Cursive

Fancy

References

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Site-Reference.com. (2008). *Fonts - The history and basics*. www.site-reference.com

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