



A Font of Useful Information

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There's an old bumper sticker that says, "He who dies with the most toys wins." The desktop publisher's version says, "She who dies with the most fonts wins." Here are a few things you may not know about the wonderful world of fonts.

They are actually designed by someone and are often trademarked. Many of you probably have a font on your computer that looks *something like this*. Is it called "Technical" or "Techno" or even "Notebook"? It was originally named "Tekton" and all of the new versions have slight – probably imperceptible – differences. This allows the software companies to offer the typeface without paying royalties to the original designer. Some fonts have not been duplicated and are only available in their original format. To purchase one, you can easily pay over \$100!

The little "feet" and "hands" in a font are called serifs. Fonts without them are referred to as "sans serif." Serif fonts are great for text blocks. Sans serif fonts make good headlines. The most common serif font is Times Roman. The most

frequently used sans serifs are Helvetica and Arial (the Windows adaptation of Helvetica.)

You can *italicise* or **boldface** a font to attract attention to a word or phrase. You can **reverse** it in some contexts. Avoid underlining or using ALL CAPITAL letters. They are both dated methods. And remember that too much of any modified text is hard to read, so use a technique sparingly.

Choose one or two font families (one serif and one sans serif) for your publication and stick with them. A family may include bold, italic, condensed or wide versions of the font. Mixing fonts from the same family can be more effective than using several fonts.

Postscript fonts will only print properly on Postscript printers. True Type fonts are a safer bet if you don't have a Postscript printer or aren't sure.

Use 10, 11 or 12 pt. type for text blocks. Anything smaller is hard to read and larger is unnecessary. "Fine print" on forms or contracts can be from 6-8 pt. type depending on how badly you want people to be able to read it.

