

Fonts

Hello all,

My apologies if this topic has been covered extensively, but I'd like to hear some of your opinion on fonts.

Notwithstanding court-specific rules, I'd like to consistently use a nice looking, professional font. My low vision doesn't help this process, obviously, so I'd value hearing what other folks use, preferably regarding fonts I wouldn't have to buy.

I know Times New Roman is the go to, but I've also read that, since it was default for so many years, it's become bland and promotes the idea that you put little effort in to your work.

Again, thanks in advance for your thoughts.

Cheers

I recently attended a presentation by Matthew Butterick, author of *Typography for Lawyers*. It's pretty interesting and he had some good recommendations on font styles: <http://www.typographyforlawyers.com/?p=587>

Blair Schlecter, California

I just bought Buttericks book. Check out the website that Blair mentioned.

David Masters, Colorado

I agree with a lot of Butterick's recommendations. I use Garamond because it looks nice and is already on most people's computers. Using non-system fonts can be problematic when you are exchanging drafts with other people who don't have the font you are using.

Rebecca C. Lavie, Florida

SoloSez Popular Threads, December 2012

Expect about 20 e-mails in response because this topic has been covered before and elicits a lot of opinions.

The material from Butterick is very good but take to heart his statement that typography is a lot more than picking a font. My recommendation is Times or Times New Roman. Times New Roman reads well in both print and on a computer screen. Everyone has this font so it is never problematic when exchanging or transferring documents. Perhaps bland is a synonymous with not calling attention to itself but this is a good thing with legal documents. Frankly, fonts that look appealing to some typographers will look dated or quirky to other people. For example, I think Bembo is an elegant book font but in my opinion it looks a bit contrived when used in a brief. I don't think any judge or client is going to care if your documents are set in Times New Roman but some are going to think that typefaces such as Goudy or Palatino (which I personally like) are a bit "off."

I would recommend against sans serif fonts and by no means ever use the ever most cursed Courier New.

Bert Krages, Oregon

Anyone else wonder why David bought a book of patterns?

Deb

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Deborah G. Matthews, Virginia

After digesting Butterick's book I chose to go with Book Antiqua. It's one of the system fonts that he doesn't hate, satisfies all the courts I deal with, and looks good.

But I agree that the Butterick book is worth reading. Borrow a copy and peruse. You may even buy a copy after that.

Roger Traversa, Pennsylvania

<http://www.ca7.uscourts.gov/Rules/type.pdf>

Also, USSC says:

Revised Rule 33.1 requires: The typeface must be in a Century family (e.g., Century Expanded, New Century Schoolbook, or Century Schoolbook) 12-point. The typeface of footnotes must be in 10-point type.

Craig McLaughlin, California

Embedding the fonts in the document solves the problem with non-system fonts. Word, WordPerfect, and every print-to-PDF driver I have seen can embed fonts.

Steven Finell, California

I don't know that anyone else uses it, but I personally like to use Calisto MT.

Amy E. Mitchell, Texas

I urge you to reconsider your idea of ignoring court rules so you can use one typeface for everything. One should always follow court rules.

For appellate briefs, I prefer Century Schoolbook. I also use it for bar association committee reports. It is extremely legible and has a stately, official look. The US Government Printing Office uses Century or Century Schoolbook for most official publications, including US Reports and the official reports for the DC Circuit. The typeface in all of the NY official reporters looks like a Century-family font to me. The US Supreme Court requires that briefs use a typeface in the Century family, which I regard as an important endorsement. The only downside is that Century typefaces yield fewer characters per inch than most typefaces (which is one reason they are so legible), and therefore increase the page count. The Times family at the other characters-per-inch extreme.

I am partial to Georgia for correspondence.

Times typefaces are a poor choice except for narrow newspaper and magazine columns, which is what the original Times typeface was designed for--specifically, the London Times. Its ubiquity is another disadvantage: it is so familiar that it is the word processing equivalent Courier on typewriters, and therefore loses the "magic" of "real" professional printing.

SoloSez Popular Threads, December 2012

In my opinion, choosing one typeface for everything is equivalent to wearing the exact same clothing every day, regardless of the activity, from appearing in court to working out at the gym.

Steven Finell

Times New Roman was not designed for ease of reading, but rather for getting lots of words in newspapers.

7th Circuit disdains Times New Roman and prefers (as do I) Century Schoolbook for serif and Century Gothic for san serif.

I often use Calibri, particularly for letters to clients and email. It is very clean and easy to read.

Hint: when communicating with older clients, increase font size to 14 point. Makes it much easier to read.

-- Steve Terrell, Indiana

I purchased the Equity font for \$120 and don't regret it. I use it for everything from letters to briefs.

See http://www.typographyforlawyers.com/?page_id=3047

Brian T. Pedigo

+1 for Equity. I bought it and I'm very happy with it.

Cheers,

David Allen Hiersekorn, California

I've always liked Chank Diesel's Asswipe font. (Get your mind out of the gutter, it's pronounced Ah-SWEE-pay.) But I don't think I'd use it for legal stuff.

<http://www.searchfreefonts.com/free/asswipe.htm>

James S. Tyre, California

SoloSez Popular Threads, December 2012

Looks like a teenage prank.

Craig McLaughlin

When I moved up to WordPerfect X5, which I'm still using, 98% of the font names were unintelligible - they were not the names I knew, they sounded like names from another language, many of the names I knew and liked were no longer there, Anyone else have that experience?

I don't do court, but I would agree, use the font the court wants.

Miriam N. Jacobson, Pennsylvania

Chank's a fun guy. And one of the more noted font designers around.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chank_Diesel

James S. Tyre

Who is going to use it or reuse it? ;)

Craig McLaughlin

For professional correspondence, pleadings, etc., I use Book Antiqua, 12 point, which is a serif font and, too me, looks a little less "crowded" than CG Times and Times New Roman. It came with my MSWord.

Caroline A. Edwards, Pennsylvania

Thanks for all the replies! I knew I could count on you guys.

Cheers,

Paul Sullivan

+2 for Equity. I've used it for two years and don't use much else.

Eric D. Ridley, California

Craig and others, the latest WordPerfect X6 has the fonts Century and Century Gothic. The font Century looks almost identical to Times New Roman, the default font on wordperfect and many other programs. The font Century Gothic looks "different" and, in Wordperfect X6, there is no listing for Century Schoolbook or New Century Schoolbook.

While many other fonts may be better or more appealing than Times New Roman, people are accounted to that particular font.

Therefore, for those of us who are ignorant about these matters, is it desirable to switch the default font to Century from Times New Roman? In that way, we won't forget and send something inappropriate to a federal court.

Thanks for these email messages.

Roberta Fay, California

New Times Roman works for me. It may be mundane to some, but it complies with the rules of nearly all federal courts I have filed papers in. The Central District of Calif. requires NTR to be in size 14. See local rules. Before changing to a type style that pleases the writer, I would wonder what the clerks and the judge think. Doubtless asswipe type style would draw ire, especially if used more than once. :)

Craig McLaughlin
