

*Prepared for Leslie Cabarga's "Learn FontLab Fast" book**

PC TrueType / OpenType TT

(Also known as: Data-fork TrueType, Windows TrueType, TrueType-flavored OpenType, TTF)

Pros: Works on Windows, Linux and Mac OS X. May contain up to 65,535 characters, supports Unicode and can contain OpenType layout features, making the format suitable for multilingual fonts, non-latin fonts and advanced typographic features (such as automatic ligatures, small caps). TrueType hinting allows precise control in small screen sizes, can also contain bitmaps. Can include embedding rights information defining whether or not the font may be attached to electronic documents.

Cons: Does not work on Mac OS 8/9; not completely cross-platform. May cause output problems on ten-year-old PostScript output and printing devices. The designer usually needs to convert the outlines from beziers which may introduce slight changes in the shape. When converted back to beziers (e.g. in Illustrator), the resulting curves have superfluous points. Manual TrueType hinting is laborious to create. The multilingual and advanced typography features only work with new OpenType-savvy applications, otherwise just the basic character set is available. For font families, requires two versions of the family name within each font: the first may contain any number of styles; the second "mini-family" may contain only four styles.

OpenType PS

(Also known as: OpenType-CFF, PostScript-flavored OpenType, OTF)

Pros: Works on Windows, Linux, Mac OS 8.6, 9, and OS X. Uses the bezier curve system preferred by designers and used in drawing apps such as Illustrator and Freehand so letterforms can be drawn precisely and outlines need not be converted. May contain up to 65,535 characters, supports Unicode and can contain OpenType layout features, making the format suitable for multilingual fonts, non-Latin fonts and advanced typography (automatic ligatures, small caps). Type 1 hinting is comparatively easy to create. Can include embedding rights information.

Cons: Type 1 hinting does not allow precise control in small screen sizes. Can theoretically contain bitmaps, but they are not displayed. Since this is a relatively new format, there are problems with some applications (some styles are not displayed in menus, kerning for non-Western characters does not work.) The multilingual and advanced typography features only work with new OpenType-savvy applications, otherwise just the basic character set is available. Two alternative family namings within each font must be devised: one where a family contains an arbitrary number of styles, and second where one family does not contain more than four styles. Does not work on Mac OS 8.