

FontCreator 5.6 • High-Logic

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The latest release adds several substantial enhancements to a program that was already very powerful and easy to use, at no extra cost to registered users. If you need a professional tool at a budget price, look no further, FontCreator is the best there is. The program author's response to user feedback is amazing. Users can get help very quickly on the active » [Support Forum](#) « even if they have not yet registered the 30-day trial version.

New Features

■ Not available in the Home Edition

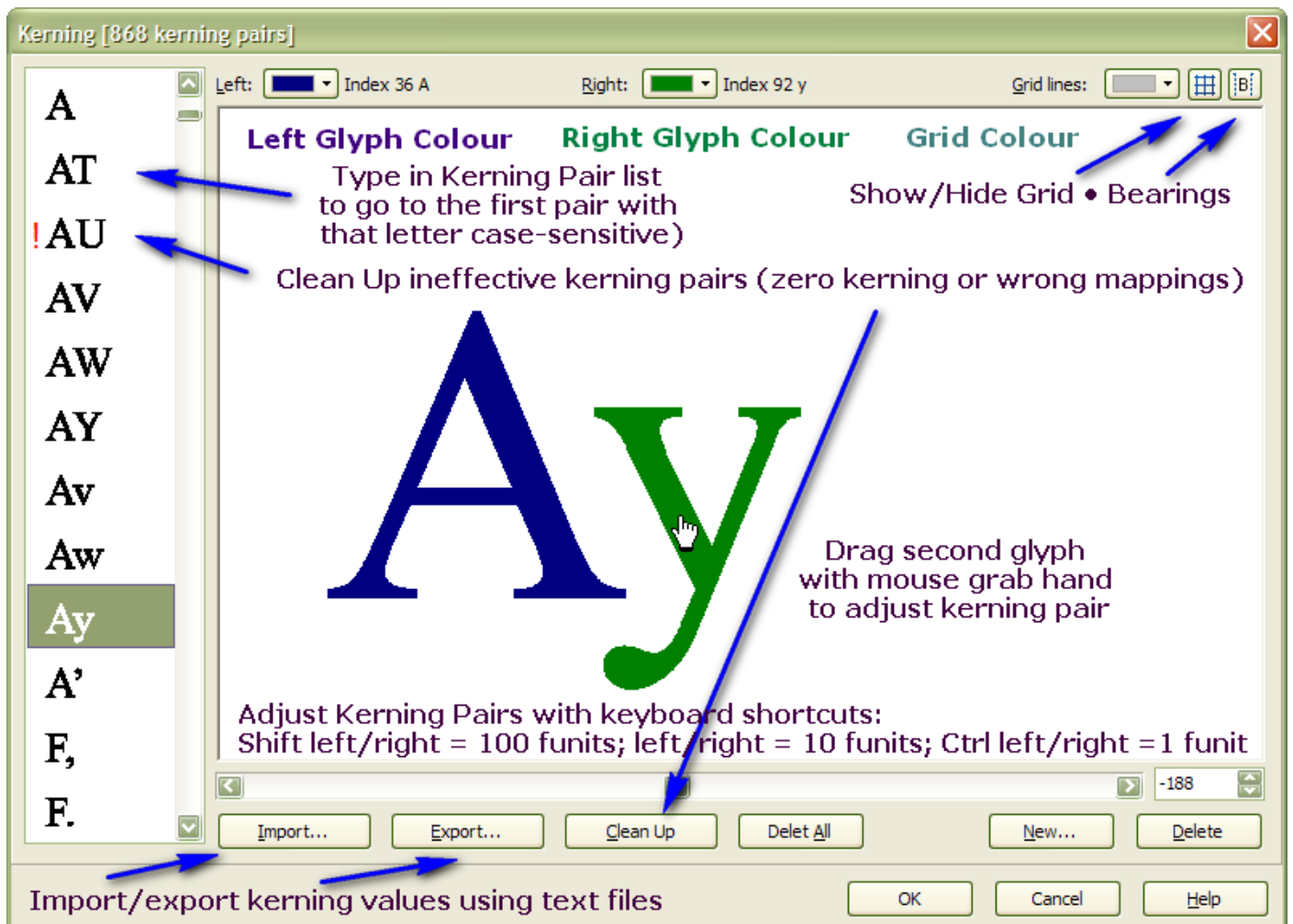
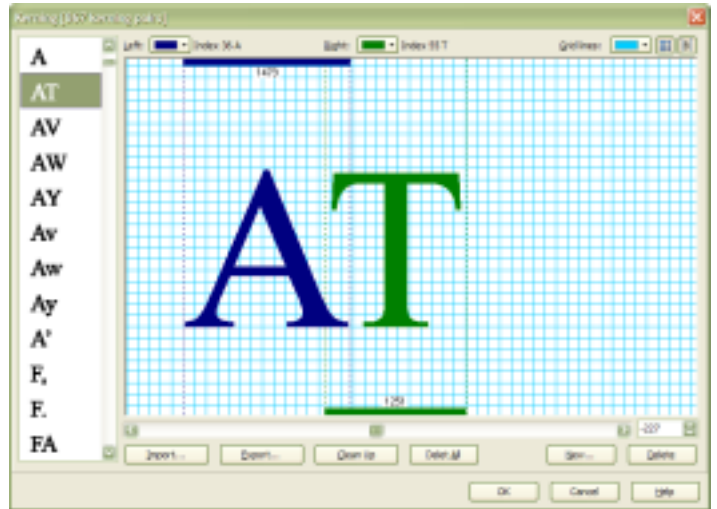
- ❖ Greater Ease of Use:
 - ❑ On start open fonts from last time
 - ❑ Zoom to fit and centre glyph edit window automatically on resize
 - ❑ Metrics Options: Caps Height, xHeight, TypoAscender, TypoDescender, WinAscent, WinDescent and Baseline have labels. Line style and colour can be changed from the Metrics Options dialogue.
 - ❑ MainType added to "Launch Externals" submenu (Shortcut Control F5)
 - ❑ New Toolbar Icons: Save As, Launch MainType, and Sort Font
 - ❑ Open Composite Glyph Member in New Window
 - ❑ Font Properties Dialogue shows index of glyphs with highest/lowest values
 - ❑ Calculate Cap height and x-height added to Ranges Tab of the Settings dialogue
 - ❑ Add language automatically adds font subfamily name
 - ❑ Active Links on the Advanced Naming dialogue (open in your browser)
 - ❑ New "Force valid Names" option on Postscript Names dialogue
 - ❑ Sort glyphs in different orders
 - ❑ Recommended glyphs added to new fonts
 - Get Union of Contours now works with composites
- ❖ Windows Vista Compatible
- ❖ Unicode Updates:
 - ❑ Unicode Character Database updated to Unicode 5.0
 - ❑ Auto-naming wizard support for Unicode font names
- ❖ Custom Rotation/Skewing of Composite Glyph Members
- ❖ Improved Kerning:
 - ❑ Larger Kerning Window, Show/Hide bearings and Grid
 - ❑ Drag hand for easy adjustment with the mouse
 - ❑ Shortcuts for easy adjustment with the keyboard
 - ❑ Quickfind kerning pairs by typing
 - ❑ Clean up ineffective kerning pairs
 - ❑ Import/Export Kerning Pairs with values
 - ❑ Maximum number of kerning pairs in a font increased to 65,535
- ❖ Glyph Transformation Improvements:
 - Italic — slants glyphs and updates font metrics to match
 - Greater precision for Scale, Rotate, and Skew
 - Increase/decrease width option added to fixed width
 - Comments — add your own comments to scripts
 - Preserve side-bearings for Thin, Bold, Hollow, and Scale
 - Randomise off/on-curve points
- ❖ New Glyph Transformation Presets
 - Petite Capitals in Private Use Area (multilingual support)
 - Small Capitals in Private Use Area (multilingual support)
 - Insert Eastern Europe, Extended Greek, Vietnamese, or WGL4 character ranges
 - Outline — Light, Medium, Bold, and Heavy Outlines
 - Old Style Figures, Nut Fractions, and Fixed Width Spaces
 - Medieval Unicode Font Initiative Ligatures Collection
- ❖ Complete Composites: Many Composite definitions added or updated
 - Phonetic Extensions Small Capitals
 - Private Use Area Small Capitals with Accents for Latin, Greek and Cyrillic
 - Private Use Area Selected Ligatures from the » [Medieval Unicode Font Initiative](#) «
 - Private Use Area Nut Fractions (Stacking Fractions)
- ❖ Complete Composites: Advanced New Features
 - Inherit Side Bearings — used for composing ligatures like ffi or AE.
 - Autoposition diacritics — works with most composites
 - Relative Alignment — works better for different fonts and styles

Improved Kerning

Most professional fonts have at least a few hundred kerning pairs to improve the spacing of letter pairs like AT. FontCreator Professional has an Automatic Kerning Wizard that generates kerning pairs for you, but you still need to do some fine-tuning to get the best results. The Home Edition only supports manual kerning.

Major improvements to the manual kerning dialogue have made it much easier and faster to adjust kerning pairs.

- ❖ Typing in the kerning pair list goes straight to the first pair starting with the letter typed. Quick find is case-sensitive, and also works in the "New Kerning Pair" dialogue.
- ❖ The left and right cursor keys can be used to adjust the current kerning pair. Shift increases the step to 100 funits, while control reduces it to 1 funit.
- ❖ The mouse can be used to drag the second glyph of the pair directly.
- ❖ A background grid can be shown or hidden, and its colour can be changed.
- ❖ The bearing lines can be hidden to adjust the kerning visually, which is the best way to do it. The Automatic Kerning Wizard can be adjusted to give tighter or looser kerning, but the results won't be perfect for all pairs. You may get very tight kerning for some pairs, e.g. G AV To.
- ❖ Ineffective Kerning Pairs can be removed by using the Cleanup button. Pairs with a value of zero, or pairs that use a glyph without Microsoft Unicode BMP mappings do not work.
- ❖ Import Kerning Values from a text file
- ❖ Export Kerning Values to a text file



Glyph Transformations

Glyph transformations are scripts for changing the shape and size of glyphs, and for automating other repetitive tasks. Several new features have been added to make them more powerful and easier to use.

Italic Transform Script

This script skews glyphs using degrees instead of by tangents, making it easier to know what value to use. After skewing the selected glyphs, it updates the font metrics that are required to convert a regular style to an italic style. It enters the italic angle in the Post Tab of the Format, Settings dialogue, recalculates the Caret Run on the General Tab, changes the Font Design and Mac Style to italic on the Metrics Tab, and enters the appropriate data on the Panose Classification Tab to suit the font family kind and italic angle. All you have to do is remember to give it a new name when you save it instead of overwriting your regular type style.

Preserve Side Bearings

Bold, Thin, Hollow, and Scale transformations now have options to preserve side bearings. This makes it much easier to preserve the correct spacing when modifying glyphs. Often, a bold style will need wider glyphs, but the spacing either side of the glyphs will not change much, if at all. Some font designs aim to preserve the copy fit of text, whether or not bold or italic attributes are applied. For these designs, the new options for the width transform are useful.

Width

New options allow the user to increase or decrease the width by a fixed amount, as well as setting a fixed width. To make a glyph bolder or lighter without changing its width use the Width transform, Increase with a value of zero.

Comments

All presets have comments to advise the user how to use the script, and what the intended purpose is. All presets can be edited or saved as new scripts. The comment feature makes it much easier to keep track of changes. You can edit existing comments or add your own. Scripts can have several comments to explain different functions of the script.

Greater Accuracy

The scale transform now allows scaling to an accuracy of two decimal places (e.g. 97.25%). Rotate and skew transforms allow four decimal places.

New Presets

Several new presets have been added that take advantage of the new transform features. The italic preset changes the slant of the glyphs and the font style, while the oblique preset just changes the slant of the glyphs.

Small Capitals and Petite Capitals presets insert small capitals in the Private Use Area, making use of new definitions in the CompositeData.xml file. They scale the uppercase glyphs of the font by about 80% and 60% respectively, then make them bolder. They add a full range of accented Small Capital composites covering most European Languages. Small Capitals and Petite Capitals scripts are also defined for Greek and Cyrillic.

Petite Capitals are designed to match the x-height of a font, while Small Capitals are somewhat

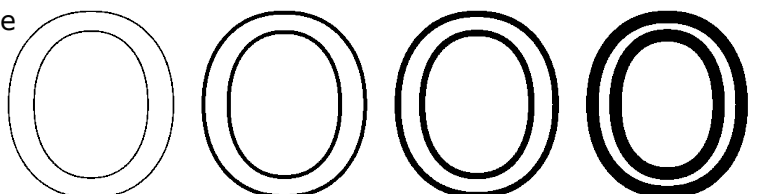
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larger, and better suited to subtitles. Petite Capitals are proportionally wider than Small Capitals. For Bodoni, on the right, which has a smaller x-height than Times New Roman, I reduced the scale factor to about 60% and also reduce the bold effect to match the lowercase stems. Since Petite Capitals are designed to be mixed with lowercase, they should have the same "colour" or weight as the lowercase.

Old Style Figures are designed to use with body text. The tops of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 align with the x-height, while 6 and 8 sit on the baseline as usual. $\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{2} \frac{2}{3} \frac{1}{5} \frac{5}{6} \frac{3}{8}$

Nut Fractions or stacking fractions use smaller numerals stacked vertically with a horizontal separator instead of a diagonal fraction slash.

Outline scripts are defined for four stroke weights — light, medium, bold, and heavy. Each script tries to preserve the original glyph size and side bearings. Results for different fonts will vary.



East European and **Vietnamese** scripts insert all of the accents and accented characters needed for these languages.

Ligature Collection inserts the ff, fi, fl, ffi, ffl and st, Alphabetic Presentation forms, plus a selection from the Medieval Unicode Font Initiative, a proposal to the Unicode Consortium. Improvements to Complete Composites set the side-bearings to match the left and right glyphs in the ligature group.

Complete Composites

Major improvements to the way that "Complete Composites" works means that much less work is required by the user after completing composites.

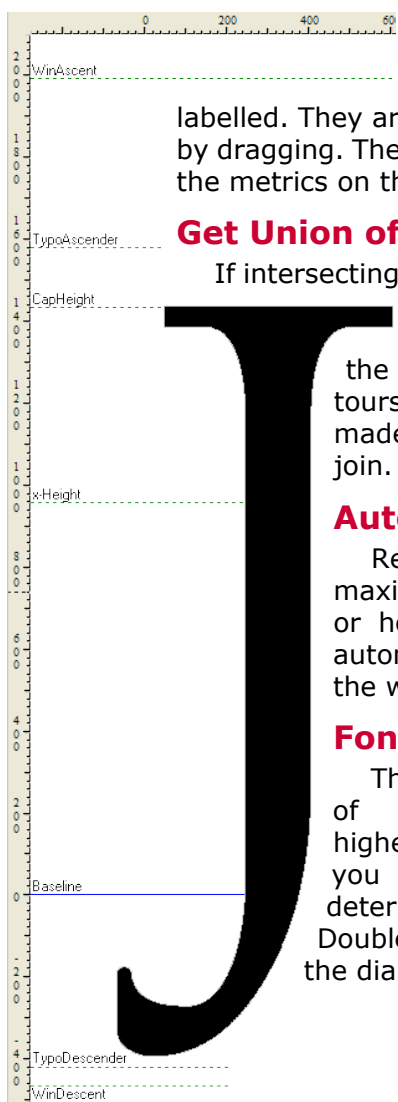
Inherit Side Bearings: Ligatures like AE or ffi, and composites like Y (Greek capital Upsilon with tonos) now have the correct advance width, or at least the correct left and right side bearings.

Auto Align: Composite definitions can now align accents horizontally and vertically on the base glyph. Accents like circumflex or macron are centre aligned on the vowel, while grave and acute accents are offset slightly to the left and right of the vowel's centre line. Vertical alignment is based on the Caps Height of the font, which is found on the Ranges Tab of the Settings dialogue. For italic fonts, the italic angle (caret run/rise) is used to adjust the offsets.

Other Improvements

Small improvements often make a big difference. Font editing is often very repetitive — not only are many glyphs similar, and therefore require similar changes if you modify one glyph, but fonts often have at least four type styles with the same glyphs, so saving one click or one keystroke can save a lot of time.

New Metrics Options



Show/hide any of Left/right side bearings, Y-Axis, WinAscent, TypoAscender, CapHeight, x-Height, Baseline, TypoDescender, and WinDescent. Change the line style or colour. Horizontal bearings lines are labelled. They are calculated from the font metrics and, unlike guidelines, cannot be moved by dragging. They can be moved only by recalculating the font metrics or manually changing the metrics on the Format, Settings dialogue.

Get Union of Composites

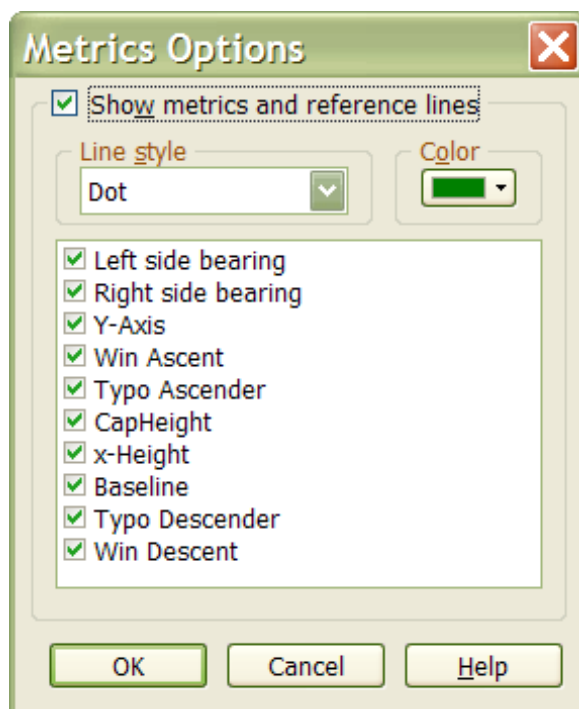
If intersecting composite glyph members are selected, "Get Union of Contours" will now decompose the composite and join the contours. Glyphs like Ç or ƒ are best if made simple. Align the accents and join.

Automatic Zoom to Fit

Resizing the Glyph Edit Window, maximize and restore, tile vertically or horizontally, cascade, will now automatically zoom the glyphs to fit the window.

Font Properties Dialogue

This now shows the glyph index of the glyphs with the highest/lowest values. This helps you quickly find the glyphs that determine the bearings of the font. Double-click on the Y-Maximum in the dialogue, for example, to find the highest glyph.



💡 Font Properties has moved from the File menu to the Font menu.

Open Composite Glyph Member in New Window

When adjusting accents, seeing both the composite and its accents side by side in tiled windows is very helpful. As well as jumping to a glyph member, one can now open it in a new window.

Active Links on the Advanced Naming Dialogue

Buttons next to the links on the Advanced Naming dialogue open the links in your default browser. Check that the links are correct and that the information on the links is correct before publishing your font.

Custom Rotation

Very few fonts use custom rotation of composite glyph members, but FontCreator now supports this feature. If you need to rotate a glyph member by 45° just select the check box. Other angles are possible for mathematicians. To skew a composite glyph member, set the X and Y scales to 1, set the X and Y transforms to zero, then increase the Y transform to skew the glyph horizontally.

Resume Option

Loads all of the fonts that you were working on the last time you used FontCreator. Tools, Options, General, "On start load fonts from last time." This saves more time than you might think because you're so accustomed to doing this in most programs that you don't notice.



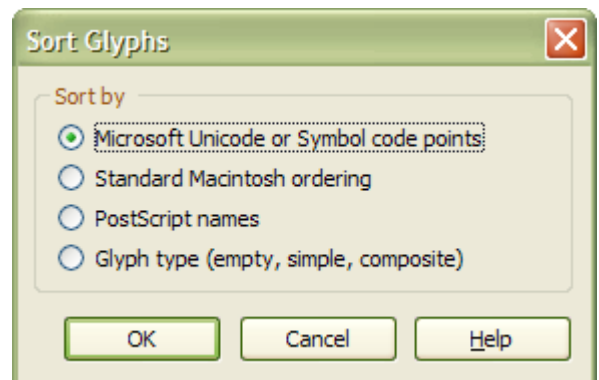
Get into the habit of saving your work-place as you edit a font with Control + Shift + zero.

Sort Glyphs by Different Orders

The Sort Font feature now offers a choice of four different sort orders:

- Microsoft Unicode or Symbol code points
- Standard Macintosh ordering
- PostScript names
- Glyph type (empty, simple, composite)

The Macintosh ordering is used by many existing fonts, but it is not the most convenient for editing fonts. The sort operation is not undoable, but the font can always be sorted again later to return it to the standard Macintosh order.



Recommended Glyphs Added to New Fonts

On starting a new font, the user can opt to add outlines from a default template font. This will add all of the recommended glyphs apart from the basic A-z characters.

One of the most frequently asked questions on the support forum is, "Why do my quotation marks show as rectangles in Word?" This is because autocorrect in most word-processors replaces straight quotes with smart quotes, and some users who are new to font editing don't realise that they need to add the smart quote glyphs to their fonts.

Now, they don't have to as FontCreator will do it (along with many other glyph outlines). Obviously, these glyphs won't match all fonts, but at least new users will be able to get up and running more easily. Later, they will learn how to modify these glyphs to suit their font, and how to add new ones.

New fonts no longer use the WGL4 character set. The Windows Glyph List 4, developed by Microsoft contains a wide range of European characters, arrows, and symbols, which is probably far more than most new users will want to add. The reduced character set is less intimidating for new users.

Experienced users can add the characters that they need from the Insert Characters dialogue, or by running one of the Transform scripts. To include the WGL4 character set, just run the WGL4 Character Set transform script, which will add any missing characters to the current font (though it won't remove any extra characters).

