FontCreator 5.5 ● High-Logic

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Though this version was only a minor version number upgrade, it added several substantive enhancements to a program that was already very powerful and easy to use. If you need a professional tool at a budget price, look no further, FontCreator is the best that there is.

The program author's response to user feedback is simply amazing.

New Features

- ❖ New interface with redesigned icons and more toolbars
- ❖ Additional shortcuts for the most frequently used commands
- ❖ Additional commands on the right-click context menu
- ❖ Bookmark shortcuts extended to the Glyph Edit window
- ❖ Improved Panose Classification
- ❖ New Glyph Transformations for inserting characters and completing composites
- ❖ Font Preview added to open installed fonts dialogue
- ❖ Improved Font Test Window
- ❖ New Align and Distribute toolbar for quick alignment of contours
- ❖ Validation Toolbar incorporated into Validation Report
- ❖ New Rectangle and Ellipse drawing tools
- ❖ Added line wrapping to Preview Toolbar
- ❖ Fixed left and right side bearing issues
- ❖ Improved glyph validation
- ❖ Unicode Character Database updated to Unicode 4.1
- ❖ Composites data updated for automatic completion of more composites

New Interface

I hope that you don't have to use FontCreator on a 640 x 480 resolution monitor, but if you do, there are now many more creative ways of arranging the interface to maximise available workspace. On a wide-screen monitor, the toolbars can be arranged outside of the FontCreator Window to make better use of the extra width.
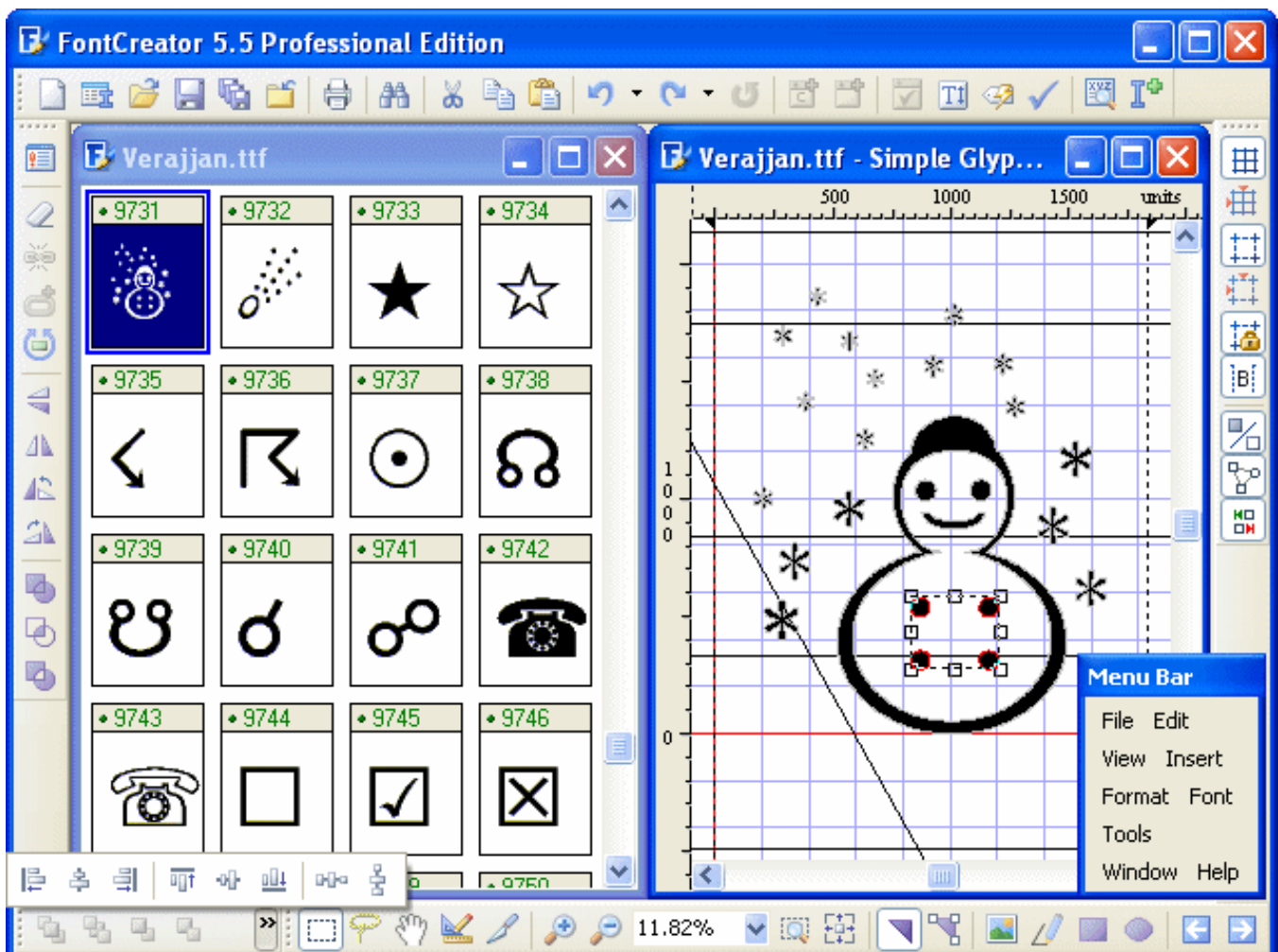
The icons have been updated, some new icons have been added, and the toolbars can now dock at all four sides of the window. The toolbars have extenders so that icons that do not fit in the available space will pop up on clicking the extender. Mouse-over the toolbars on the above illustration to see what the new icons do.

With the help of the new shortcuts for toggling toolbars, you can maximise workspace while still having rapid access to all of the available tools.

New Shortcuts

- ❖ F3 = Find Next when searching text of Postscript Names with Find (Control F)
- ❖ F4 = Show/Hide Statusbar
- ❖ F6 = Show/Hide Transform Toolbar
- ❖ F7 = Show/Hide Glyph Validation Report with Validation Toolbar
- ❖ F8 = Show/Hide Preview Toolbar
- ❖ F9 = Show/Hide Background Image Toolbar
- ❖ F11 = Show/Hide Comparison Toolbar
- ❖ F12 = Show/Hide Samples Toolbar
- ❖ Ctrl F11 = Launch Windows Font Folder
- ❖ Ctrl F12 = Launch Windows Character Map
- ❖ Left/Right Up/Down Cursor keys = Pan Glyph Edit Window
- ❖ Spacebar = select Hand Tool to Pan in the Glyph Edit Window
- ❖ Control Shift 0-9 = Set Bookmarks in Glyph Edit Window
- ❖ Control 0-9 = Go to Bookmarks in Glyph Edit Window
- ❖ / = Fit to window
- ❖ Enter (while inserting contour) = Apply
- ❖ Backspace (while inserting contour) = Back

Panose Classification

Change the field for Family Kind and the entire dialogue updates to show appropriate values for the other fields.

The "Value" field shows the Panose number of the font. By copying this number you can quickly fill in the fields for four different type styles of the same font. Only the weight and letterform fields usually need to be changed.

If you're unsure what the Panose classification should be you can copy the Panose number from a similar font.

The esoteric art of Panose classification just got a little less mysterious. See Dave Crosby's » online tutorial « for an introduction to Panose.
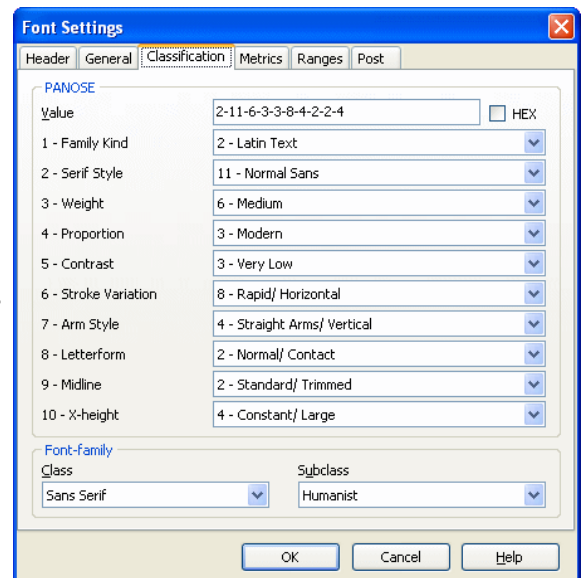
Glyph Transformations

New options have been added to insert characters, complete composites and to decompose them.

Transformations can be loaded from the open button. Modify them to suit yourself and save them, or create some of your own.

Illustrated is the transformation for superscripts which will insert, compose, decompose, scale, embolden, move, set the width and adjust the bearings.

The superscript transformation starts by completing composites from your font's existing digits (0-9). You need to adjust the width value to suit the font that you are working on. Theoretically, it should be 65% of the figure width, plus 52 funits. Heavier or lighter fonts may also need some adjustments to the values for bold and move. The scale around the top left corner of the glyph and movement after emboldening should ensure that the tops of superscripts align with the tops of numerals (7^17) as recommended by Microsoft Typography.
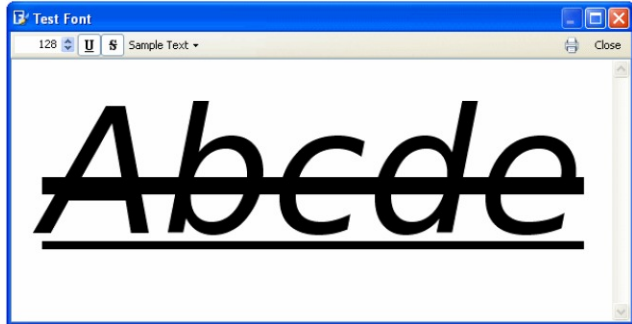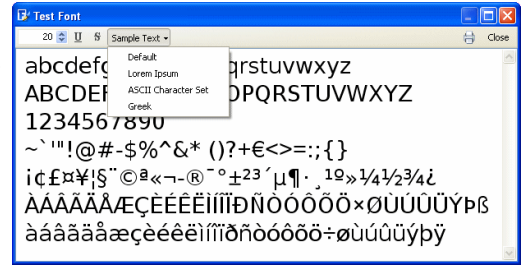
Further transformations are predefined for subscripts, a full range of italic angles, Small Capitals, bold, condensed, and outline. You can save your own transformations or modify the existing ones to suit your own particular needs and preferences.
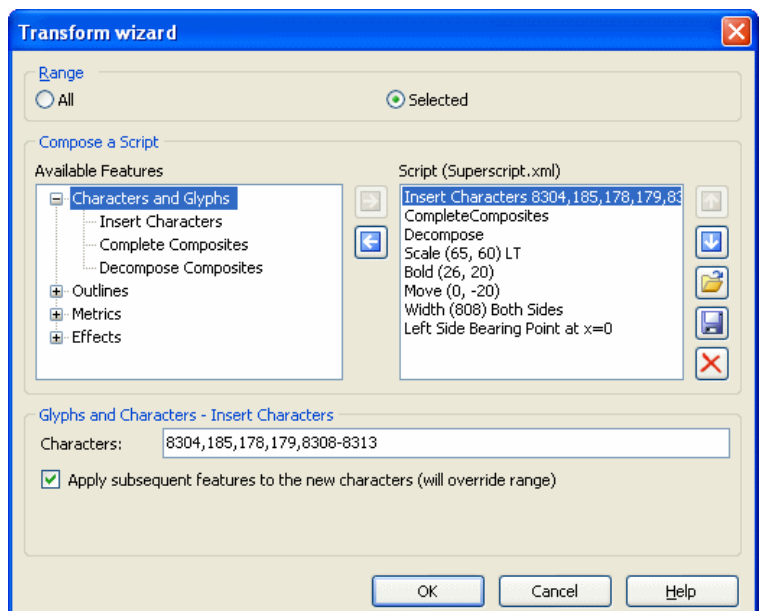
Test Font Window

The Test Font Window offers a choice of predefined character sets to display a sample of the current font. Text now wraps to the Window.

The size and position of strikeout and underlining can be tested with the Underline and Strikeout buttons. Strikeout weight and position are defined in Format, Settings, General, and the underline weight and position are defined in Format, Settings, Post.

Preview Toolbar

Text now wraps to multiple lines in the preview toolbar, and there is a drop list of text samples. With a new shortcut (F8) to toggle the toolbar on and off this toolbar becomes much more useful.
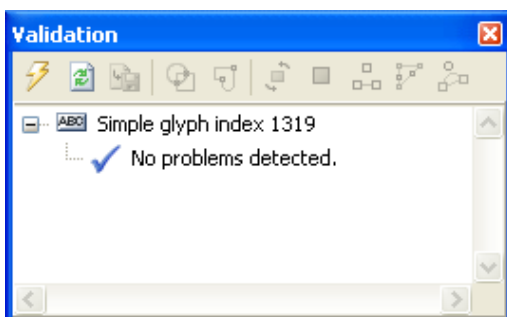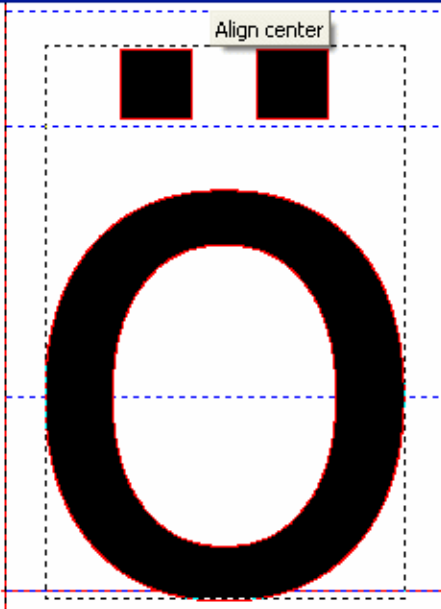
Align/Distribute Tools

The new align and distribute tools save a lot of time when adjusting diacritics, The majority of accents need to be aligned horizontally with the centre of the base glyph.
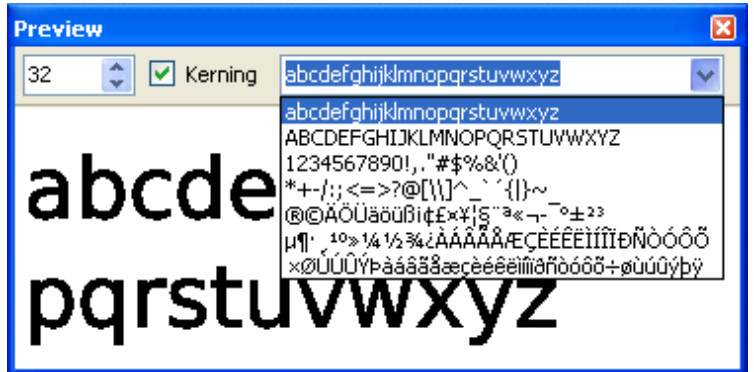
The toolbars can be detached for greater convenience and easy of use, then quickly docked at the edge of the window when not needed by double-clicking on the title.

The tools work with both simple and composite glyphs. With simple glyphs, nodes can be aligned or evenly distributed to ensure that straight lines are truly horizontal or vertical.

For designing glyphs like maths symbols (÷ ≡) or miscellaneous symbols, the other align and distribute tools are very helpful to make the glyphs symmetrical.

Validation Toolbar

The validation toolbar has been moved to the validation report window. When you check a glyph for errors is the only time you need this toolbar, so moving the tools here saves space on the main toolbars.

If you double-click on an error in the report list, the node or contour that caused the error will be focused ready for fixing with the toolbar buttons: change contour direction, remove redundant nodes, remove duplicate contours, add on-curve extremes, etc.

If real-time glyph validation is off, the Refresh button will confirm that there are no further problems after fixing the problems.

Some tests, like that for incorrect contour direction, cannot be run due to other errors such as intersecting contours. After fixing the first errors, Refresh will run all tests again to uncover such errors.

The validation report window can be toggled with the F7 shortcut, by clicking the "Show Glyph Validation Report" on the Glyph Toolbar, or from the View, Toolbars Submenu, Validation.

This option is not available in the Home Edition of FontCreator.
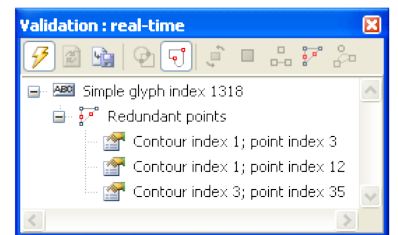
Open Installed Fonts

When opening installed fonts you can now see a preview of the selected font. Hold down the control key and click to select more than one font to open.

This option is not currently available with uninstalled fonts.

To edit installed fonts, use the save as option to save the TTF file somewhere else other than in the Windows Font folder. After editing it, run the font Autonaming Wizard to give it a new name before installing it.

To preview uninstalled fonts before opening, right-click and select "Open" from the context menu to preview the font in FontView. This is a function of Windows Explorer, which is also available from Font Creator's File Open dialogue.

If you have » MainType « font manager, you can use that to preview uninstalled fonts, and open fonts for editing in FontCreator directly from MainType.
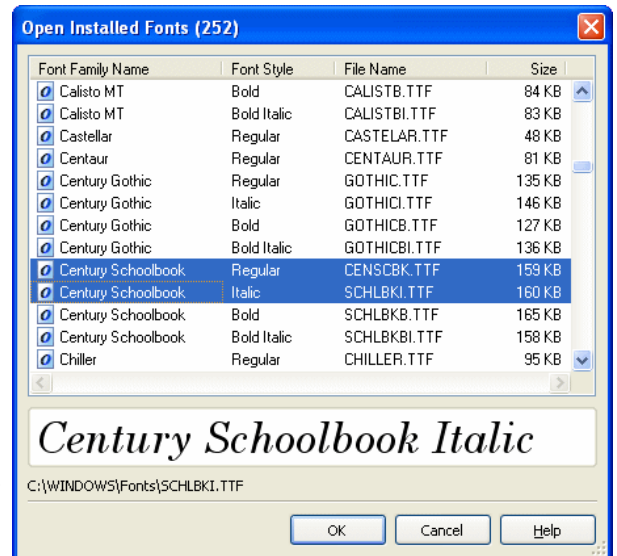
Online Manual
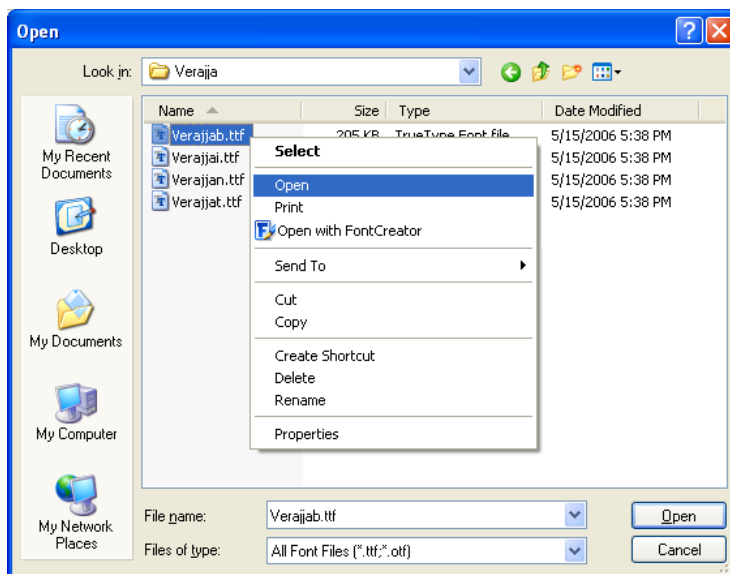
If you think font editing is easy, you have a lot to learn. Though it is not too hard to create » your first font « getting it to look properly spaced, and adding all of the extra characters and fields to bring it up to a professional standard takes a bit more effort. Fortunately, FontCreator 5.5 has an » updated online manual « that is easy to navigate via the Table of Contents and hyperlinks. It has a searchable index, which you can search for key words. It suddenly got a whole lot easier to find out what you need to know about Font Editing, and a few things you thought you didn't need to know.

If you prefer to read at your leisure off-line, FontCreator ships with a PDF version of the manual, which you can print out to read away from your computer.

If you need further help, the High-Logic Forum is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Read the » FAQ « read the » Tutorials « created by experienced users, or » search « the Support forum for threads that might answer your questions.

If you're still stuck, post a question in the » Support Forum « and someone will try to help solve your problem.