# Fonts in Writing, Printing & Advertising   Version 1.7   14 August 2012

As farming incomes decrease, relative to others, the necessity for income from other than farming increases. Writing paid for articles on farming or anything, is one way, a website on your pedigree herd, is another, and there are many more such as home hosting, some of which may need signs and advertising, so how to do these in the best possible way could be useful.

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## Experience

I'm 82 and have been doing advertising, graphic art, printing, etc., on and off since helping start the New Zealand National Fieldays in 1969 and running the Gallagher advertising department in 1980, and starting the DeLaval one in 1986, during which time I attended many seminars and read many books on the subjects.

What I learned was when to use the correct fonts, so would like to suggest that for text, instead of a sans-serif headings fonts such as Helvetica, Arial, etc., you use a serif one like Times New Roman for all printings and publications.

Serifs are the minute horizontal lines on the top and bottom of the characters (fonts) of Times New Roman. This is Times New Roman which is a serif font.

The serifs were added to sans-serif fonts by a Swiss in about 1900 to give the eyes lines to follow to make reading faster and easier. Sans is French and means "without".

**All newspaper**s use serif fonts because they are text (reading) fonts, not headings (sans-serif) fonts.

All electronic printers are set to use Times type fonts and some print it more quickly than other fonts.

Some people are affected by the fact that when looking at a printed page, the sans-serif font page looks cleaner and smarter than a Times New Roman one, but we are not talking about pretty pictures, but about communicating.

Another problem is that most computer default fonts are sans-serif ones and many users don't know how to change them.

## Comparisons

Some compared fonts subjectively (not proper tests) all in 10 point on computer screens and reported that Times New Roman was the hardest to read, but Times New Roman fonts are smaller, so should be increased by one point which is easy to do.  See below.

Objective techniques to enhance readership and comprehension of written material have been researched and documented by many. What I'm recommending comes from research by Colin Wheildon in "Communicating, or Just Making Pretty Shapes"; David Ogilvy's "Ogilvy on Advertising"; "The Confessions of an Advertising Man" by Alastair Crompton; "The Craft of Copy Writing" by Sir Ernest Gowers; "The Complete Plain Words" and from Gordon Dryden (very successful New Zealander) from seminars and from my experiences over four decades.

In the 1990's proper objective comparative tests in Australia, Canada and UK all showed that readers had difficulty in holding concentration and poor comprehension of articles written in sans-serif fonts. All three countries got similar results.

One group of 112 who read an article of direct interest in sans-serif showed the following.

- 67 had poor comprehension.
- 53 complained about the difficulty of reading the type.
- 32 merely said that the type was hard to read.
- 22 said they had difficulty in focusing after having read a dozen or so lines.
- 11 said the task caused them physical discomfort (eye tiredness).
- 10 said they found they had to backtrack to try to maintain concentration.

Yet when this same group was asked immediately afterwards to read an article of little interest to them, set in serif, they reported no difficulties.

Another group showed comprehension as -

|  | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|
| Serif type font - Times New Roman | 67% | 19% | 14% |
| Sans-serif font - Arial | 12% | 23% | 65% |

Some commercial printers prefer to use the faint grey (compared with Times New Roman) sans-serif darker fonts because they use less ink, but the readers and the advertisers suffer. Some artists prefer sans-serif fonts because a page of sans-serif printing looks cleaner, but we are talking about communicating, not 'looks'.

On web sites, faint fonts are harder to read, especially on laptops and old computers.

Click http://www.vaughanjones.info  for an easy to read web site using Times New Roman font.

Click http://www.woodlands.co.nz/ or others like NZ Fieldays http://www.fieldays.co.nz/ for hard to read san-serif ones.

On average, students using a serif font gained higher marks than those using a sans-serif font, showing that serif fonts were easier to read so made tutors more relaxed, more attentive and more receptive.

Get your children using Times New Roman for easier reading, less eye strain and higher exam marks.

### Font Comparisons for optimum reading and comprehension

Note how although some fonts below are in different sizes, the first sentence is the same length. In Times New Roman a larger font number should be used, but takes no more space.

### Times New Roman 13 point serif

This is to wish you a very happy birthday and many more to come in good health and happiness. 123456789.

Times New Roman is best because spacing between letters and words is consistent and it prints faster on most printers. All newspapers and most books use serif fonts. Times New Roman numbers have character. 12-34567890. The numbers are clearer and sharper.

### Apple Myungjo 12 point serif

This is to wish you a very happy birthday and many more to come in good health and happiness.

Times New Roman is best because spacing between letters and words is consistent and it prints faster on most printers. All newspapers and most books use serif fonts. Times New Roman numbers have character. 12-34567890. This font is very good, well spaced and clear, but has no Bold or Regular, and has a space before apostrophes.

### Garamond 12 point serif

This is to wish you a very happy birthday and many more to come in good health and happiness.

Times New Roman is best because spacing between letters and words is consistent and it prints faster on most printers. All newspapers and most books use serif fonts. Times New Roman numbers have character. 1234567890. This font bold is weak and numbers are too close together.

### New Peninim MT 12 point serif

This is to wish you a very happy birthday and many more to come in good health and happiness. 123456789

Times New Roman is best because spacing between letters and words is consistent and it prints faster on most printers. All newspapers and most books use serif fonts. Times New Roman numbers have character. 12-34567890. This font numbers are too small.

### Imprint MT Shadow 12 point serif

This is to wish you a very happy birthday and many more to come in good health and happiness.

Times New Roman is best because spacing between letters and words is consistent and it prints faster on most printers. All newspapers and most books use serif fonts. Times New Roman numbers have character. 12-34567890. This font has no Bold or Regular.

### Helvetica 11 point sans-serif

This is to wish you a very happy birthday and many more to come in good health and happiness.

This is a frequently used font because it is the default one in some computers. No publications of any note use it as text. Note how letters in this if is jammed together. The numbers are too close together. 12-34567890.

### Arial 11 point sans-serif

This is to wish you a very happy birthday and many more to come in good health and happiness.

This is a frequently used font because it or another sans-serif font is the default font in most computers, but is bad because sans-serif is so hard to read. Also note how if and the are jammed together. 12-34567890. Arial numbers have no character.

### Capitals make reading difficult

READ THIS BELOW IN CAPS AND SEE HOW HARD IT IS TO READ. YOUR EYES WILL PAUSE EVERY NOW AND THEN AND MAY GO BACK.

"WE WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AND MANY MORE TO COME, IN GOOD HEALTH AND HAPPINESS." 11 point.

Below is 15 point and is the same length (space) and will be faster to read.

"We wish you a very happy birthday, and many more to come, in good health and happiness."


Cartoons and some advertising may benefit from fancy fonts. Always remember that if it slows reading, then it is not communicating as well as it should.


Vaughan Jones
Agricultural consultant & journalist
GrazingInfo Ltd