

# Designing and Printing Address Labels

This file will show you one way to use your computer for producing stick-on address labels, helping you to reduce the time involved in preparing the year's set of Christmas cards and letters. We'll be using Microsoft Word - a very widely available software package - but lots of other programs would do an equally good job.

As we work through, you'll pick up a number of valuable techniques for producing general text documents of greater-than-usual complexity.

One of the primary advantages of using your computer to print Christmas-Card address labels is that, for most of us, the address list remains fairly constant from year to year. Although the work of setting up the system will take a little time, in subsequent years you will save a lot of time, much better spent in enjoying the festive spirit. Once the preparation is complete, printing a complete set of labels is as easy as printing a single ordinary text document.

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Preparing the label print document involves:-

- 1) Deciding on a label format (size)
- 2) Scanning the template usually provided with the label pack (or downloading it from the Internet)
- 3) Making a blank print template
- 4) Adding your chosen names and addresses to copies of this template
- 5) Saving the set of print pages as a single file

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Printing the labels then involves:-

- 1) Putting a stock of blank sticky labels in your printer
- 2) Printing the document
- 3) Sticking the labels on the envelopes

The document can easily be maintained when your friends' addresses change, or if you want to add or delete entries.

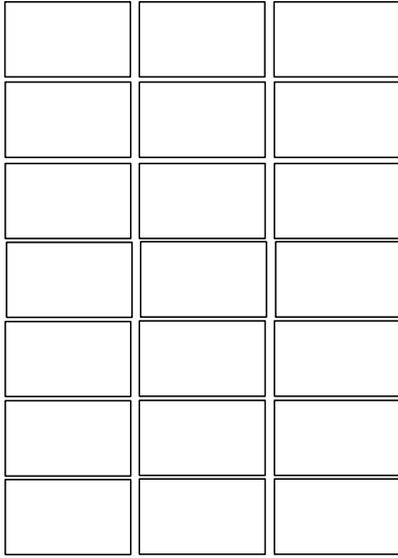
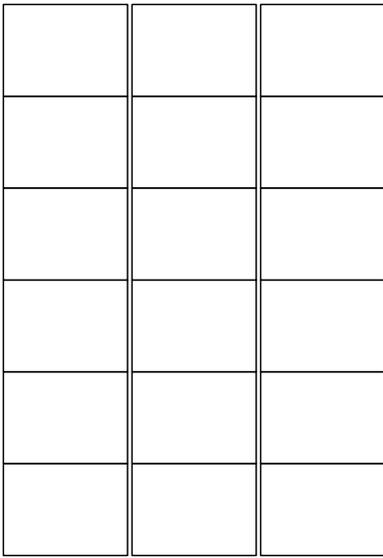
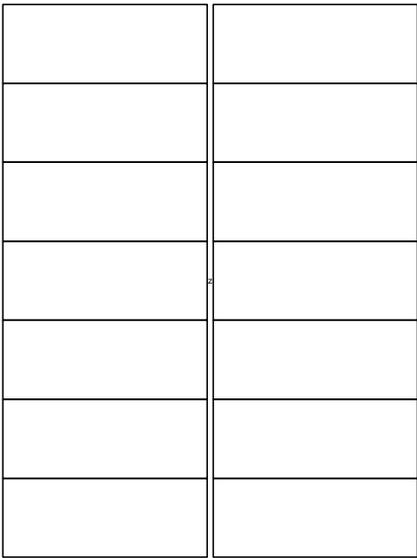
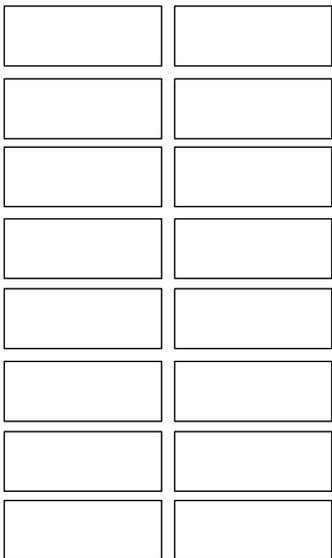
Stick-on labels are available in a wide variety of formats. For A4 printers, typical layouts include -





You can choose any size label that's available in the shops and appears to provide adequate space for the length of the address text you intend to use. We often use 2 (columns) x 7 (rows).

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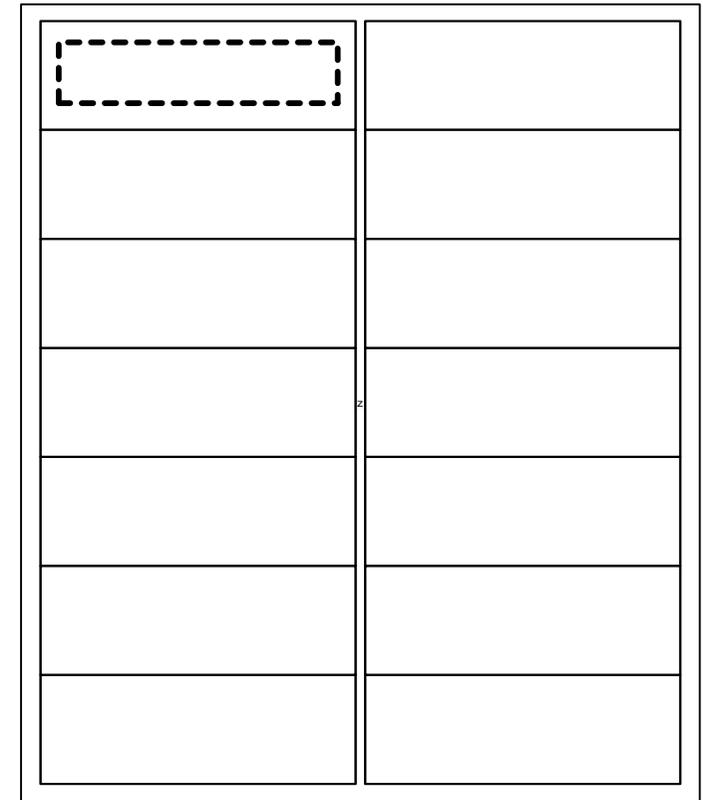
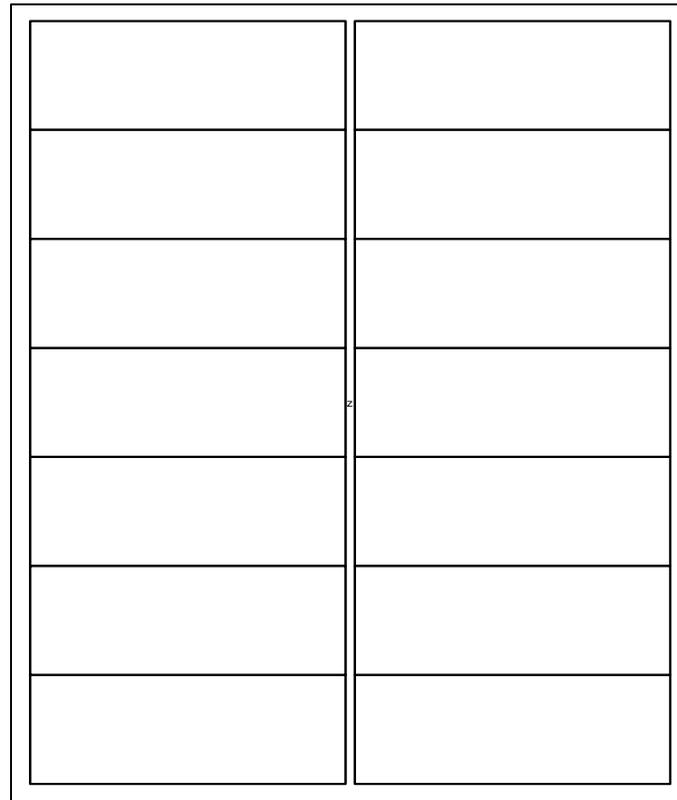
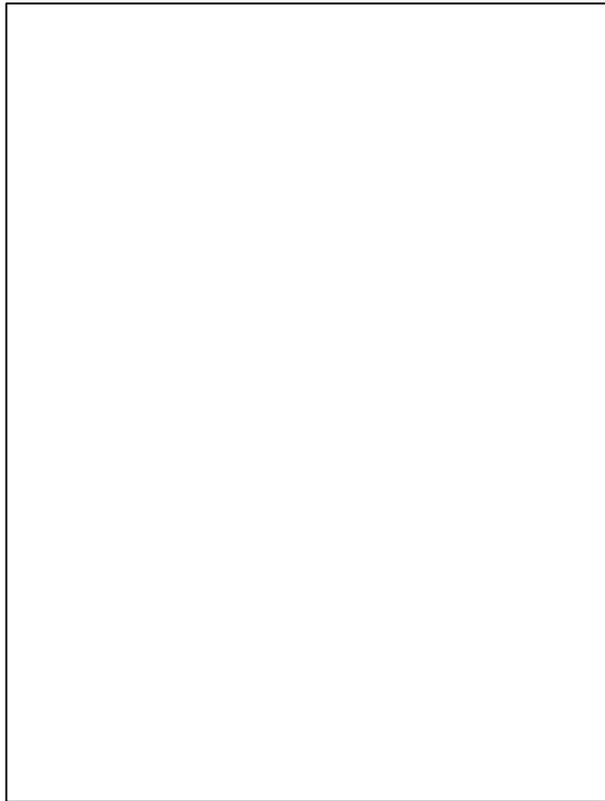
The pack of labels will very probably come with an extra sheet containing a full-size picture of a page of labels. You should scan this (to, say, a .JPG file) in order to make a template. You'll afterwards add the address information to copies of this template. It may be possible to download the label layout from the manufacturer's website, rather than having to scan it.

Open a new 'Microsoft Word' document and set all the margins to zero (file/page setup/margins).

Insert the scanned picture of the page of labels (insert/picture/from file).

Now select insert/text box and draw a box nearly filling the first label

You should save and then print the file at this point to check the guidelines line up with the real labels.



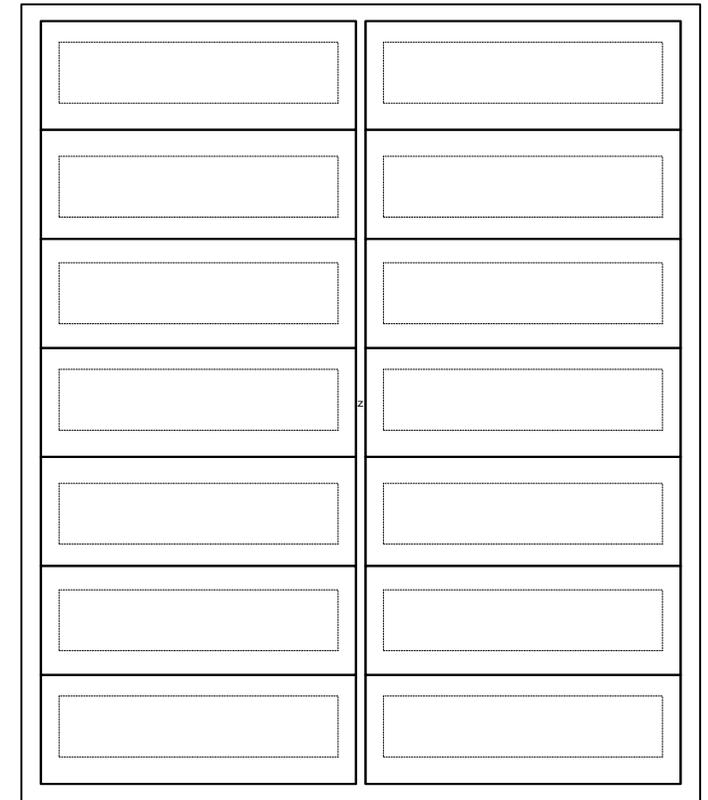
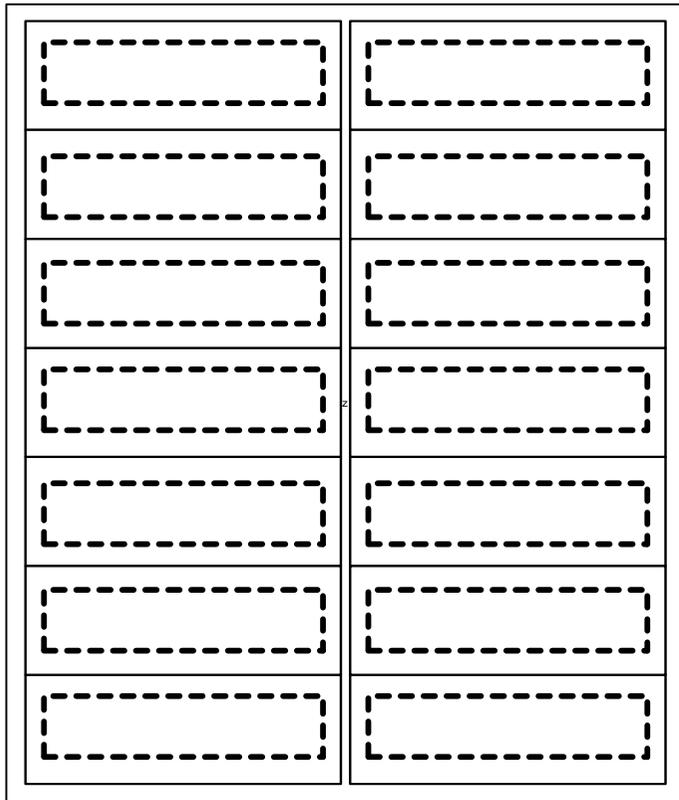
Repeat this process for all the empty labels on the template.

Save the file (just in case!)

Select all the text boxes (left click each in turn when continuously holding down 'shift').

Now from the 'Drawing' toolbar set linecolour = white. All the text boxes will disappear (but they're still present).

Save this template file (as, say, 2x7\_template.doc)



Click in the space of the first text box (which is not actually visible!) and type away. Add address text to all 14 boxes.

Now click on an area of the document which is blank label (not text, not spaces) and press the 'delete' key. The label outlines disappear. Save this document.

When you print this document on a page of real labels only the text will print and it should ( ! ) be lined up with the labels themselves.

santa	mum
aunty	brother
bank manager	

santa	mum
aunty	brother
bank manager	

# Exploring Windows Fonts

This presentation addresses the questions:-

- 1) What are font files?
- 2) Why do we use them?
- 3) How do we use them in Windows applications?
- 4) Where can we get font files from?
- 5) Are there any limitations?
- 6) Special font sets

What are font files?

A font file contains the printing and display shape information for all the available characters in the font set. The font set is usually -

a ... z    A ... Z    0 ...9    and some punctuation marks.

The information is held in a form so that Windows can create a large character or a small character with equal ease from the same font file - i.e. it can be readily scaled up.

The font file will probably not hold the information for the corresponding italic font, or for bold characters. This shape information will be held in a separate but related font file.

The font file also does not hold any text that you enter - the letter to the bank manager or the shopping list.

Here's an example of a font file - in fact the one being used to display this very text.

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# Arial (OpenType)

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OpenType Font, Digitally Signed, TrueType Outlines

Typeface name: Arial

File size: 290 KB

Version: Version 2.95

Typeface © The Monotype Corporation plc. Data © The Monotype Corporation plc/Type Solutions Inc. 1

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**abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy**

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ**

**123456789.:,;(:\*!?)**

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12 The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 1234567890

18 The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 1234567890

24 The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 1234567890

Why do we use them?

The information required (around 1 kByte) to describe exactly the shape of a letter 'k' (for example) is much larger than that required (just 1 byte) to specify the 11th letter of the roman alphabet. If a document contains more than one letter 'k' it clearly isn't necessary to define the shape on subsequent occasions. And since the shapes frequently used are common to most computer systems, the shape information is in fact not carried by the document at all. Instead it is held in the font file, which for standard fonts is already installed on the computer.

How do we use them in Windows applications?

Most Windows-based text-processing applications allow you to specify - on a character-by-character level if you wish - the font, size and format (bold, italic, underlined). Typically the whole document will use the same font settings, in which case they should be selected prior to entering any text.

Here's part of the text-entry screen for Microsoft Word, showing the boxes where font, size and format can be specified:-



The left-hand box in the picture above allows you to search through all the fonts installed on your computer, and gives the name of the font displayed in the characters drawn from that font - so you can immediately tell whether or not you like the effect. The middle box allows you to change the size of the font (larger number -> larger font) and the B, I and U buttons control bold, italic and underline features.

The exact layout for these options varies from one application to another, and some simple text-processing applications do not allow any variations in fonts.

Where can we get font files from?

Most Windows applications which process text (Word, Excel, etc.) have a useful and standardised set of fonts supplied with them. Extra fonts are available from a very wide variety of websites. Many are free, some are surprisingly expensive. One of the many good sites is:-

<http://www.fontspace.com/>

And what do we do with them when we've downloaded them?

Until a font is 'installed' on your computer it will not be presented as an option for your text documents.

Right-clicking on some font files will offer an 'install' option. That should do nicely.

For Windows XP you can go to:-

Start Menu / Settings / double-click 'Control Panel'

Open 'Fonts' and under 'File' select 'Install New Font'

Are there any limitations?

We've just seen that until a font is installed on your computer you can't use it. Of course your friend can't use it until it's installed on his computer. So if you incorporate a non-standard font into a document you email to a friend, it won't display properly on his computer until he's installed it too.

Does this mean you have to accompany all your documents with the font files you've used, and that your friend needs to install them before he can read your letter? If you're using standard fonts the answer is 'no' - they'll already be on other people's computers. For non-standard fonts, the answer may be 'yes', though for Microsoft Word documents there is an option (Tools/Options/Save/Embed True Type Fonts) which forces the fonts used in the document to be incorporated into the .DOC file itself. This causes the .DOC file to be larger than it otherwise would be.

You should also note that all fonts used by your computer are loaded into memory from disc at startup, and going mad and installing lots of fonts will slow down the startup process.

## Special Font Sets

We said earlier that most font sets support the alphabetic and numeric characters and a few punctuation marks. Some specialist fonts don't contain any normal characters at all - rather, they contain a set of special symbols.

The example on the right is the font set for a music-score printing program and contains symbols for notes, sharps and flats and other music-specific signs. You can obtain symbol font sets on many different themes.

How can we incorporate these symbols in our documents?

## NWCV15 (TrueType)

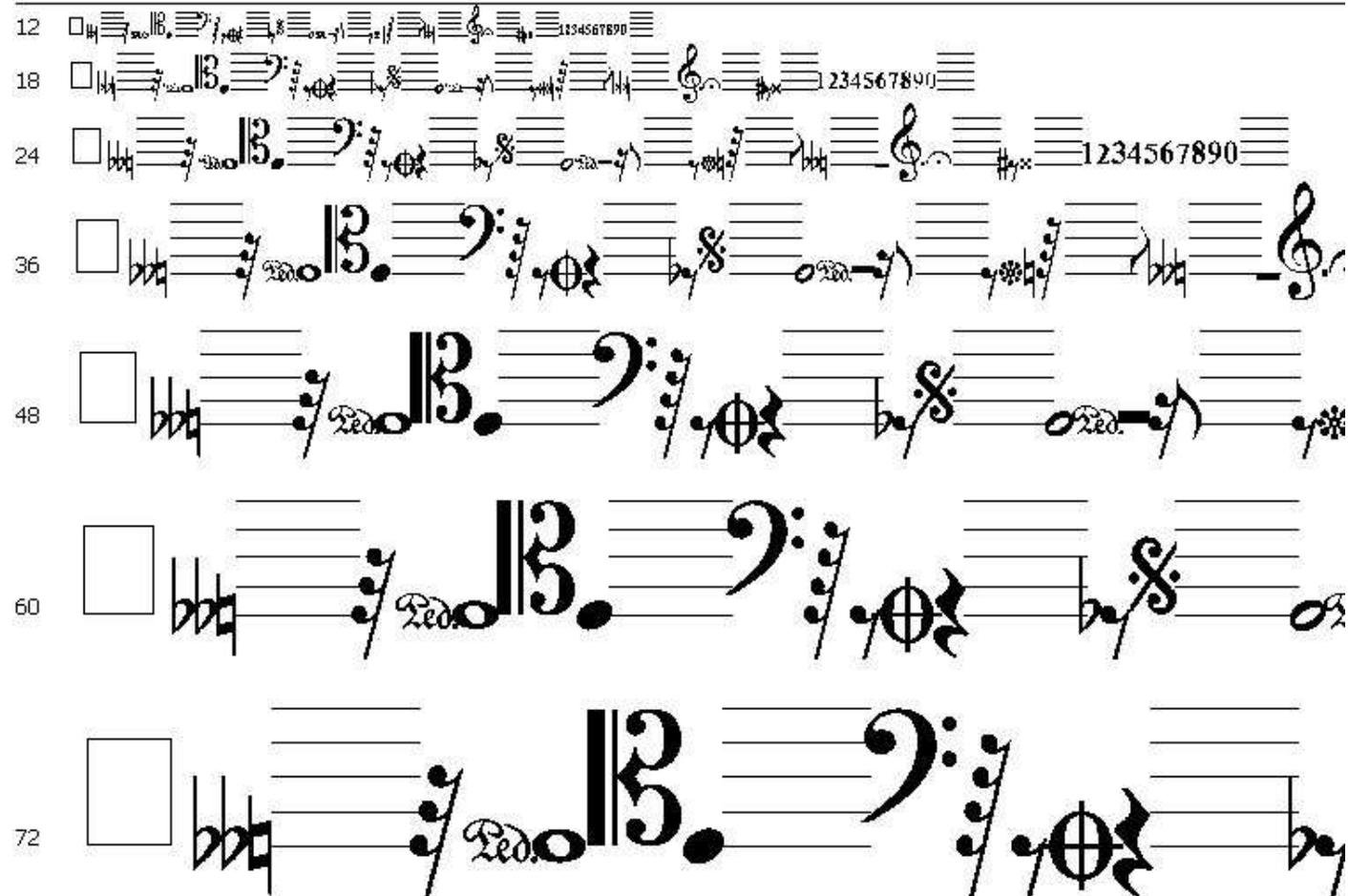
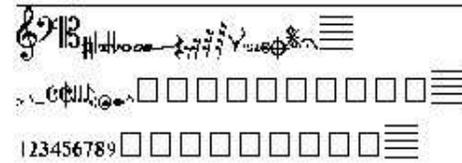
Typeface name: NWCV15

File size: 15 KB

Version:

Copyright (c) 1997 by NoteWorthy ArtWare, Inc.

All rights reserved.



Here's our earlier example of the 'Arial' font. Note in the 3rd section (starting 'abcd ...') the character set is given. These symbols are in the order of the letters they correspond to, so typing the 'a' key will result in an 'a' symbol.

---

# Arial (OpenType)

---

OpenType Font, Digitally Signed, TrueType Outlines

Typeface name: Arial

File size: 290 KB

Version: Version 2.95

Typeface © The Monotype Corporation plc. Data © The Monotype Corporation plc/Type Solutions Inc. 1

---

**abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy**

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ**

**123456789.:,;(:\*!?)**

---

12 The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 1234567890

18 The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. 123456

24 The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy

So if we select font set NWCV15 and type 'a', we'll get the first symbol listed on this page. It's rather small on this screen and it's a 'treble clef' sign.

I'm going to change the font selected and type 'a'. Here we go 

So you can easily use all the fancy symbols you find in any font set you like by just typing the corresponding letter. Of course you have to count carefully to use the right letter - or employ some trial and error.

# NWCV15 (TrueType)

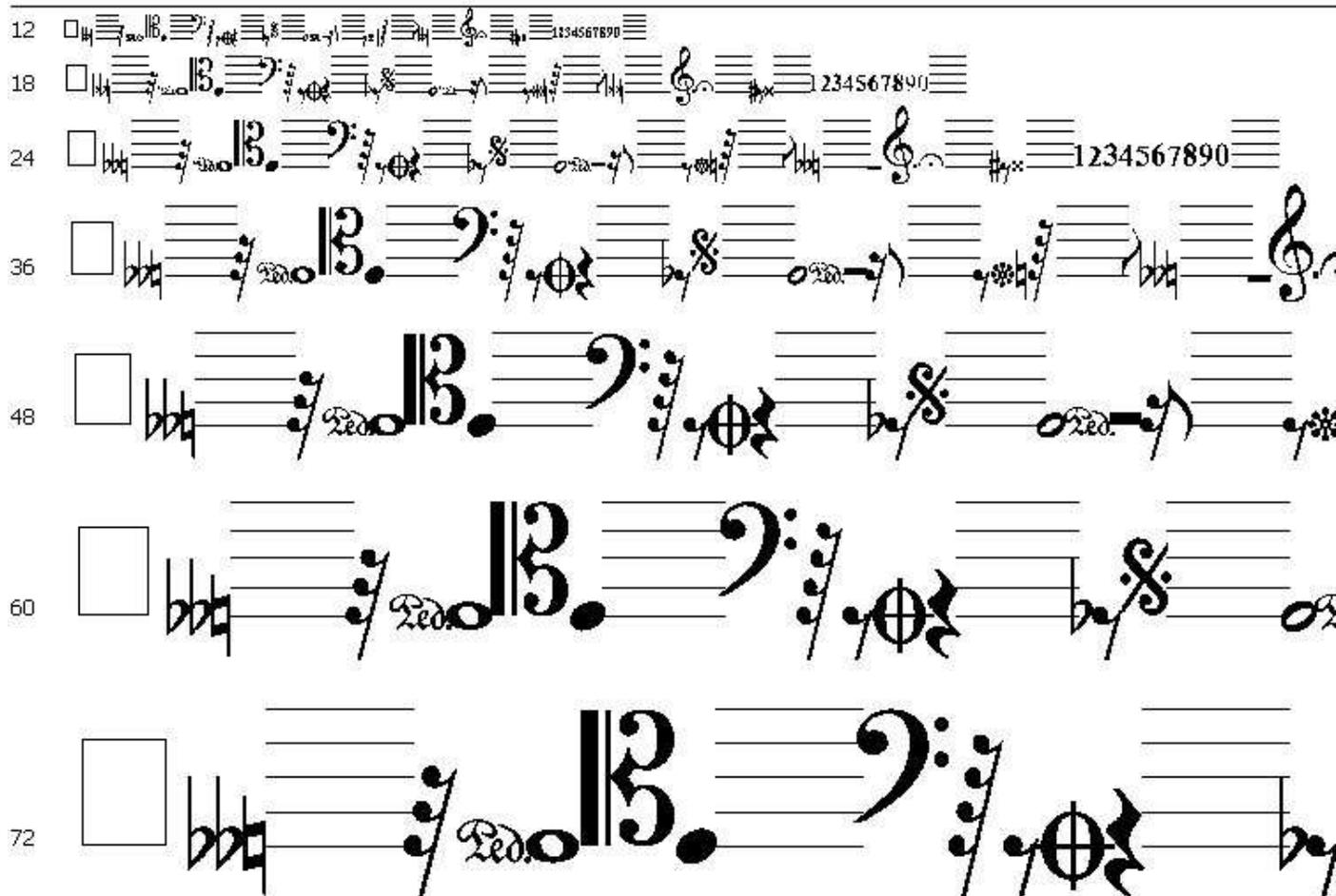
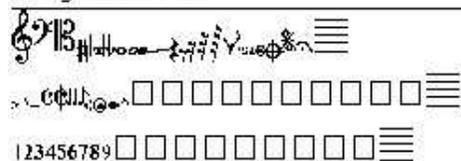
Typeface name: NWCV15

File size: 15 KB

Version:

Copyright (c) 1997 by NoteWorthy ArtWare, Inc.

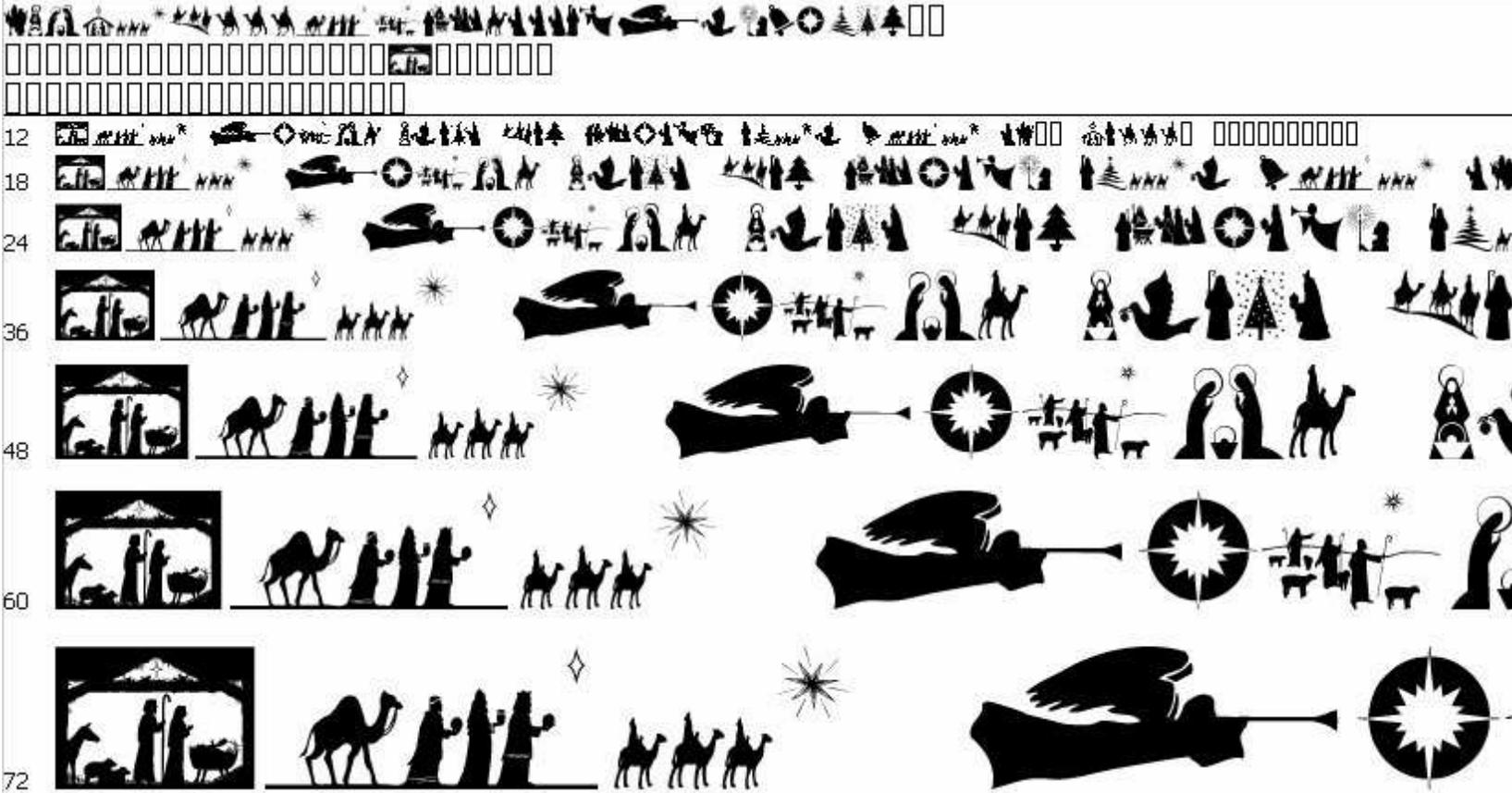
All rights reserved.



Here's another example out of thousands you can find on the internet.

# SL Christmas Silhouettes Normal (TrueType)

Typeface name: SL Christmas Silhouettes  
File size: 33 KB  
Version: Macromedia Fontographer 4.1 30-10-2000  
Fonted by Su Lucas. Copyright 2000.



## More Flexible Text

The basic text-handling tools in Microsoft WORD suffer from some serious limitations when you want to use text in complex arrangements with pictures and other graphic items:-

Simple rotation of the text is restricted.

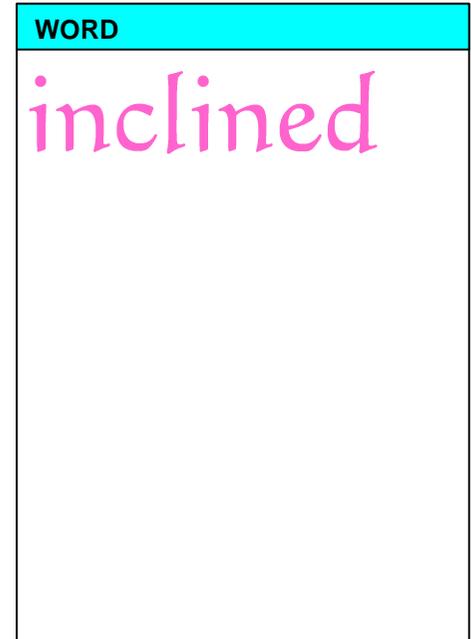
*inclined*

Other fancy changes to the text are unavailable

*distorted*

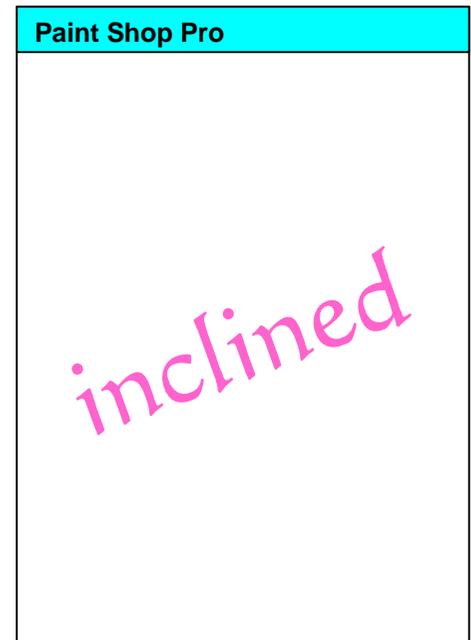
Here's a way around these problems. Let's re-create the 'inclined' text ...

Open Microsoft WORD and enter the text 'inclined'. Set the font size, colour and typeface as required.



Now select the text (drag the mouse across it with left-button held down) and paste it into a 'suitable' graphics program.

When I paste it into Paint Shop Pro the 'paste' dialogue box asks me for the size (height, width) required in pixels for the image. I make these as large as practical - and of course in the proportions of the original image. Here the image might be 1000 wide \* 100 high. A smaller resolution may start to show pixelated edges to the characters.



Now you can use your graphics editor to manipulate the image - for example by rotating it.

Now crop the image and save it as a .GIF file with transparent background. (Details of this procedure will vary considerably from one graphics package to another.)

You can now use this picture (which looks exactly like some high-quality text, but with all those graphics alterations or distortions you might want to add) in a WORD document just like any other picture.



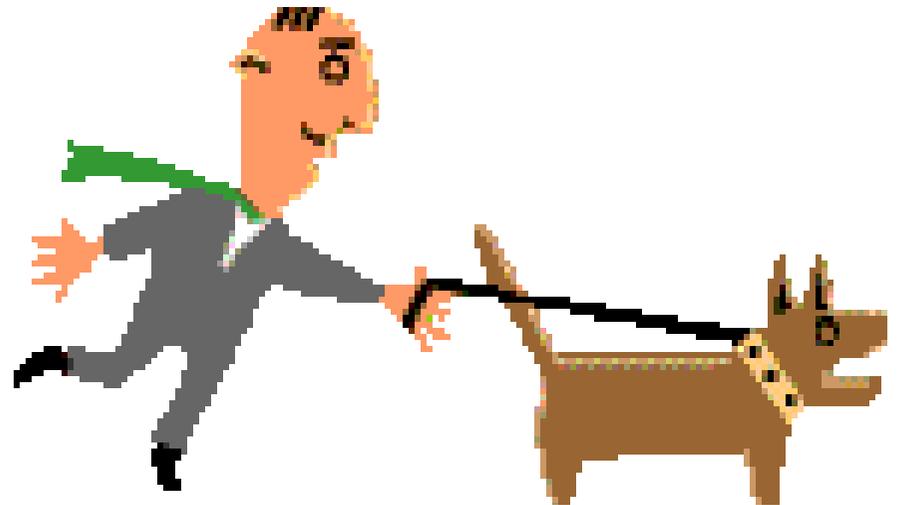
## Transparent Backgrounds to Pictures

Here's a man walking his dog (or is it the dog walking the man?)



You might consider the picture is just what you need to incorporate into your letter to Auntie Flo, which you're going to print onto a standard A4 piece of white paper. Of course the green background will be printed too.

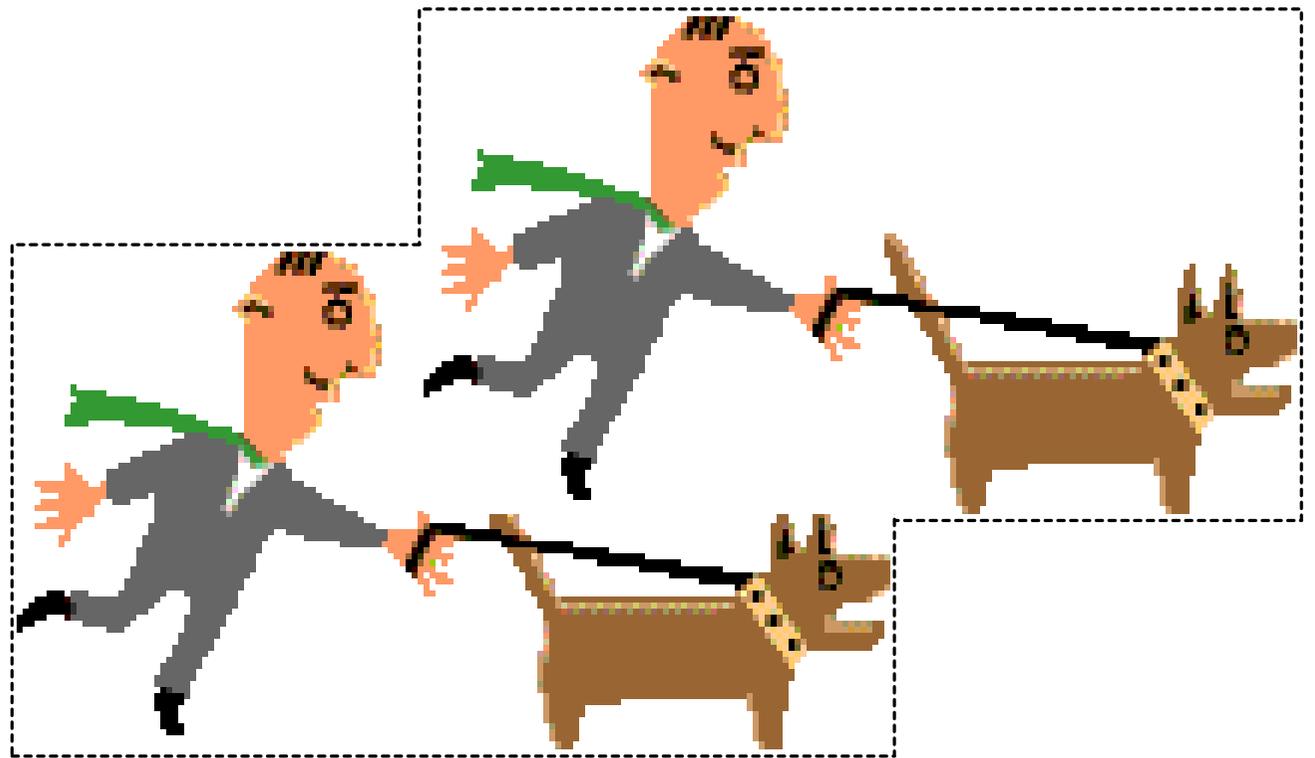
What you'd had in mind was this:-



How can you change one picture into the other?

Or you might have wanted to do this:-

(I've added outlines to the two copies of the picture so you can see how I've overlapped them.)



But you end up with:-

You can't simply correct this in a graphics editor by replacing all the green with white - the upper instance of the picture will still be spoiled.



The simple solution is to convert the original picture so it has a transparent background.

A transparent background has no colour (not white, not black, not anything else). The graphic file tells the screen not to affect the already-present colour in the background area, and tells the printer not to print any ink in those areas. So the background to the printed picture will be the colour of the paper you use, and the background to the picture on the screen will be whatever was there before you placed the picture there.

How do you specify that a picture has a transparent background?

Graphics can be saved in many different formats (.JPG, .BMP, .TIFF, etc.) and most of them do not support the concept of transparent background. A common format that does support this capability is .GIF, so achieving our objective involves:-

- 1) Converting the file to .GIF format
- 2) Identifying the background and specifying it is to be transparent

This conversion is a standard operation for many graphics programs.