

1

Chapter One Modifying Your Fonts

- ◆ Steps to Modifying Fonts
- ◆ Opening Fonts
- ◆ Changing Character Weight
- ◆ About Font Piracy
- ◆ Creating Oblique Fonts
- ◆ Creating Fractions
- ◆ Creating Ligatures
- ◆ Creating Condensed Characters

Imagine an ideal world where you can create completely new fonts without ever drawing a thing. Picture yourself in this “Font Utopia,” creating new weights of your font, new small caps versions, and new oblique typefaces—without drawing a line, placing a point, or manipulating a curve. Does the very concept sound so far-fetched as to be beyond belief? Well, it’s not...because Fontographer lets you create *completely* new fonts by modifying your existing fonts.

Why would you want to modify a font instead of buying a new one? The answer is simple: You’ve invested a lot of money in the typefaces you own. Although many talented people create their own from scratch, the easiest way to create a completely new typeface is by modifying the fonts you already have. Fontographer makes it so easy to modify your existing typefaces, that you practically don’t even have to think about it. So, if you don’t have to think about it...what’s the point of this section? This section gives you some quick ways to make modifications. Hopefully, it will encourage you to create some outstanding typefaces of your own.

Steps to modifying your font



Note

- 1. Open a font.**
- 2. Modify it; for example, you can simply change the weight.**
- 3. Save the file (Optional).**
- 4. Generate an installable font.**
- 5. Install the font.**
- 6. Put it to work!**

Opening a font

You start Macromedia Fontographer the same way you start other applications—by double-clicking the program icon. In a few seconds, Fontographer’s About box appears. Choose “Open Font” from the File menu to open one of the fonts in your System, a folder, a file server, or a disk (or you can use one of the fonts provided in the Sample Fonts folder).



Note

The standard file selection dialog works in the normal fashion, so you can change drives or directories, open a file, or cancel. You can also specify which types of font file formats you want to display. On the Macintosh you can eject disks as well.

Once the selection dialog is open, you can select a font file by clicking on its name and then “Open,” or simply by double-clicking on its name.

One or more progress dialogs will appear before Fontographer displays the Font Window. To cancel progress dialogs, type Command-period on the Macintosh, or Esc on the PC.

Fontographer's progress dialogs keep you informed of the program's status...



...until Fontographer displays the Font Window.



Changing the character's weight

You can quickly create a heavier or lighter version of your character (or the entire font) by using Fontographer's Change Weight command.

To change weight:

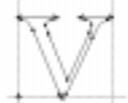
1. Go to the Font Window and double-click on the "v" to open it.
2. Choose "Change Weight" from the Element menu.

The "Change Weight" dialog appears.

3. Enter "30" in the "Change by" text edit box and click "OK."

Fontographer increases the weight of the "v" by 30 em units.

Open any character's Outline Window...



...and Fontographer changes the weight of the character.

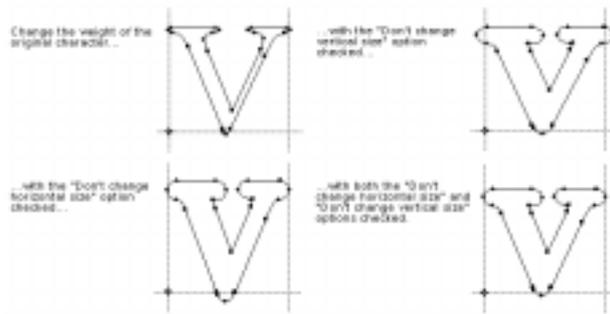


Fontographer also gives you the option of changing the weight of your character (or entire font) without affecting the vertical or horizontal size of the character.

Go back to the "v" and select "Undo Change Weight" from the Edit menu to undo the changes you performed in the last exercise. Repeat the exercise above, but check the "Don't change vertical size" option before you click "OK."

Look at the difference in the two options. You can try the option with the "Don't change horizontal size" option next.

Now try the exercise with both options checked.

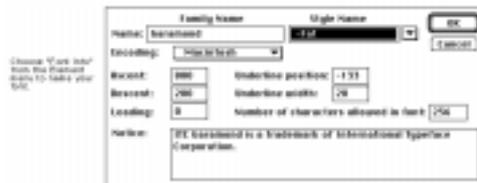


Tip

You can now apply the desired weight to the entire font, or just selected characters. From the Font Window, use the pointer tool to click and Shift-click on the desired characters. (You can choose them all by choosing “Select All” from the Edit Menu.) Then repeat the procedure above to apply the selected changes to the desired characters.

Naming your font

You can name your font by choosing “Font Info” (-General on the PC) from the Element menu. The Font Information dialog appears. For this exercise, name your font something simple like “Garamond-Fat.” (Don’t forget the hyphen before the Style Name.) For more information about naming your font, refer to the section “[The menu name](#)” in Chapter 7, “Generating and Exporting Fonts.”



If you want to use a custom style name, be sure to let Fontographer assign a standard style name first and then re-assign your custom name. So, if you want to call your bold-italic version of a font “fat slanted,” use the pull-down menu and select “bold italic” first, then change the style name to “fat slanted.”

This will allow Fontographer to recognize and assign the proper style to your custom name.

Be sure to name your font *before* you save your database file and generate a font. Otherwise your fonts will end up with unusable names like “Untitled.ttf” (for a TrueType font), and you’ll have to start over.

Saving your work



Tip

You save Fontographer database files via the Save or Save As commands in the File menu. The database file is where Fontographer stores all the parts needed to construct any font. Just like you save documents in Microsoft® Word, or graphics in Macromedia® FreeHand™, the database is where you save your fonts in Fontographer.

The standard file saving dialog appears. You can name your databases anything you like, because there's no relationship between the name of the actual font you'll use in your programs and the name of the database itself.



Note

1. Choose "Save as" from the File menu.

Macintosh users have the option of creating and naming a new folder to store a font in. You can save your font directly to another folder, drive, or directory on all platforms.

2. Type in "MyFatFont."

PC users will note that Fontographer automatically gives you the name "MyFatFon.fog" if you also named it "MyFatFont" in Font Info.



...and, if you are using Fontographer on a Macintosh, create and name a new folder or directory to store your fonts in.



Generating your font

After you save the file, it's time to generate an installable font. You will have to do this if you want to use the font in another application besides Fontographer.

Fonts are composed of different files which you will need to install before you can use the font. For more about installing fonts, refer to Chapter 9, *"Installing and Removing Fonts."*

1. Choose "Generate Font Files" from the File menu.

The Generate Font Files dialog offers a number of options (including the ability to generate fonts for several computer platforms), but for the purposes of this exercise you'll use the Easy mode. Choose the computer you're generating fonts for and select TrueType for the Format. We've typed some commonly used bitmap sizes in our example and you can do the same. However, bitmaps are only

necessary if you'll be using a PostScript font on the Macintosh.



The **Set Folder/Directory** button gives you the option of generating your fonts directly into a specific folder. This saves you the extra step of moving files into folders later.

The **Overwrite existing files** option lets you replace an existing file (that has the same name) with a new file. If you don't choose this option (and have a font with the same name), Fontographer will create a new font with the same name followed by a bullet (•), on the Macintosh, or a dollar sign (\$) on the PC.

Installing the font

Since installing fonts is different depending on the platform and operating system you're using, we can't really cover this in a quick "how-to" here. If you need more information about installing fonts, refer to [Chapter 9](#) or your System's *User's Manual*.

Using the font

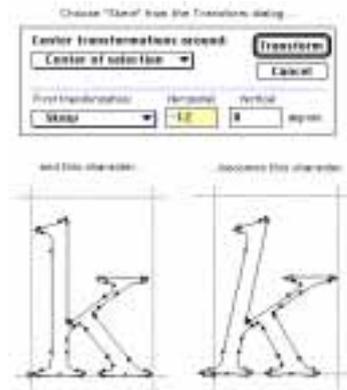
Once you've installed the font, go to the application of your choice, type some text, and select your font (just like you would any other font) from the Font menu.



Creating an oblique font

By using Fontographer's Skew feature, you can create your own oblique font. You can consider this an easy way to make an oblique

typeface. Actually, it's sort of like cheating since an oblique font is just a right-slanted version of a Roman typeface; a true italic typeface has redesigned characters that compliment the face. But, skewing is a really easy way to create a new typeface that can add emphasis to your text.



Again, Fontographer allows you to skew one, several, or all characters at once. As in our previous example, we recommend that you try out your modifications on one character before you apply the transformation to the entire font.

Follow the steps given in the [“Change Weight”](#) exercise to open your font.

To skew a character:

1. Go to the Font Window and double-click on the character “k” to open it.
2. Choose “Transform” from the Element menu.
3. Drag down in the “First transformation” pop-up menu until you’ve selected the Skew option and made sure the other pop-up menus say: “Do nothing.”

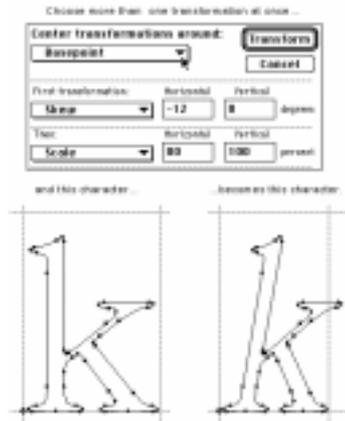
Fontographer defaults to a horizontal skew value of -12 degrees (the appropriate angle for an oblique font, depending on who you ask).

4. Click the Transform button, and Fontographer skews the “k.”

Fontographer gives you the option of applying other transformations at the same time you skew the character.

To apply more than one transformation:

1. Double-click on the “k” and select “Undo Transform” from the Edit menu to undo your last move.
2. Select “Skew” from the Transform dialog and enter -12 degrees Horizontal (leave Vertical at 0).



3. Then select “Scale” and enter “80” in the Horizontal text box.
4. Select “Basepoint” from the Center Transformations around pop-up menu.
5. Click “Transform.”

Fontographer skews and condenses the “k” at the same time.

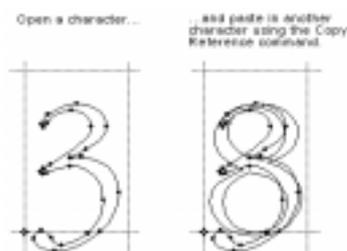
Try some of the other transformation options to see what effects they have on your character.

Once you’ve finished trying out all the options, you can apply the transformation to several characters or the entire font, by selecting groups of characters in the Font Window.

Skewing multiple characters

You can skew, scale, flip, or move either a single character or a range of characters. Select more than one character in the Font Window by holding down the Shift key while clicking on characters. Select a range of characters by dragging through the characters. In this way you can apply transformations to one, several, or all characters.

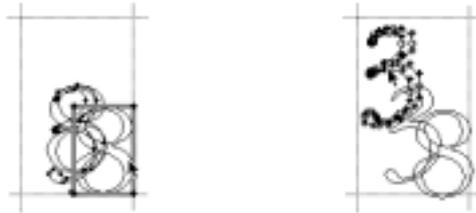
Creating a fraction using composite characters





Move the eight towards the bottom right...

...and the three towards the top left.



Have you ever checked out how many fractions are in your font? If you have, you know that most commercial fonts have a small number of fractions, if any. Historically, if you wanted to type the fraction $3/8$, you had to type the 3, the forward slash, and the 8, and even then the fraction didn't look so hot! Fontographer makes it extremely easy to add composite characters made up of more than one character combined in a single character slot to your font. So you can now have traditional fractions in all your fonts!

To create a fraction:

1. Go to the Font Window and double-click on the “3” to open it.
2. Click on the “8” character slot in the Font Window (it's not necessary to open the Outline Window to copy the character) and then select “Copy Reference” from the Edit menu.
3. Click on the “3” Outline Window and choose “Paste” from the Edit menu.

Fontographer pastes the number “8” on top of the “3.”

4. Select everything in the Outline Window by choosing “Select All” from the Edit menu.
5. Go to the Transform menu, select “Scale Uniformly” as your first transformation, enter 60%, and make sure all the other transformation pop-ups say “Do nothing.”

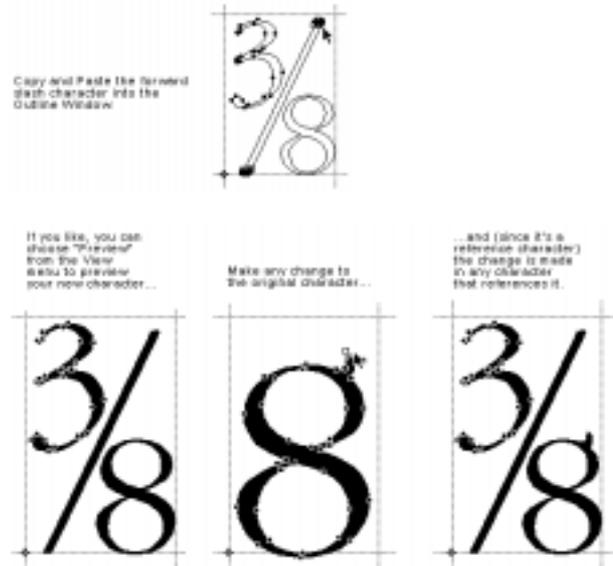
Fontographer scales both characters to 60% of their original size.

6. Position your pointer away from the characters, and click on nothing to deselect everything (or simply press the tab key, which always deselects everything). Then click the mouse on the outline of the “8.”

A box will appear around the number “8” (this represents the composite character's bounding box). Composite characters do not show the points you normally see. (You cannot edit points in a composite character unless you first choose “Unlink Reference.”)



Note



7. Drag the box containing the “8” toward the lower right-hand corner.
8. Double-click on the path or on any point on the number “3” to select all of it, and then move the “3” toward the top left corner.

You can create the divisor line by copying the forward slash into your character. You can also draw the divisor line if you prefer. However, it is often much easier to use existing characters to create parts.

9. Select the forward-slash character in the Font Window.
10. Choose “Copy” from the Edit menu.
11. Paste the forward-slash character into the “3” character slot.

To change a reference character:

1. Open the Outline Window for the actual character “8.”
2. Modify some part of it.



Tip



Note

You’ll see any changes you make to the original eight reflect in the denominator you created in your fraction character.

Unlinking a reference character

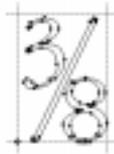
Fontographer also lets you remove the link from any composite character. This gives you access to the points in the character as well as removing the link to the original character.

To unlink a reference character:

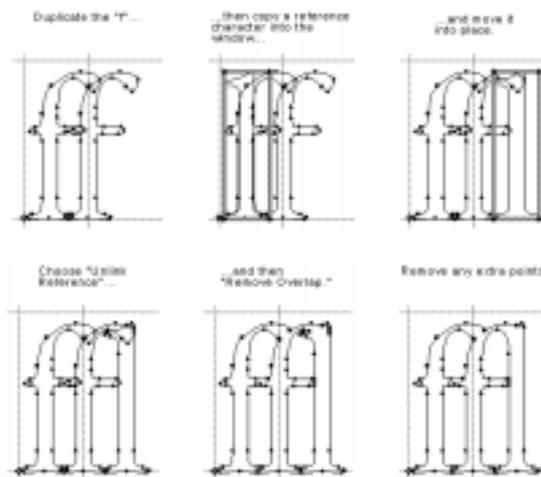
1. Click on the fraction you created (in the “3” character slot).
2. Choose “Unlink Reference” from the Edit menu.

As you can see in our illustration, the character’s points are now visible and you can move them individually, or together as a group.

Choose "Unlink Reference" to remove any reference to the original character.



Creating a ligature



A ligature is a character made up of one or more characters. Most commercial fonts have some commonly used ligatures like “æ,” and “œ.” However, Fontographer makes it easy to create ligatures of your own without drawing a thing.

To create a ligature:

1. Open the Outline Window for the “f.”
2. Choose “Select All” and then choose “Duplicate” to create another “f.”
3. Move the new “f” to the right.
4. Go back to the Font Window.
5. Copy the “l” into the same window using the “Copy Reference” command from the Edit menu.
6. Move the referenced “l” to the right of the second “f.”
7. Choose “Unlink Reference” from the Edit menu.
8. Choose “Remove Overlap” from the Element menu.

Changing the character width

You probably noticed the vertical line that runs through the second “f.” This is the character width line. Width is a moveable vertical line which specifies the width of each character. (Width is covered in more detail in [Chapter 5](#).) When you print a line of text, the origin line of the next character is placed on top of the width line of the current character. Since you changed the contents of this particular Outline

Window, it's important that you change the width as well.

To change the character's width:

1. Make sure you still have the Outline Window for the "f" open.
2. You can choose "Preview" and turn off Show Points from the View menu to get a better look at the character if you like.
3. Move the width line with the selection pointer.



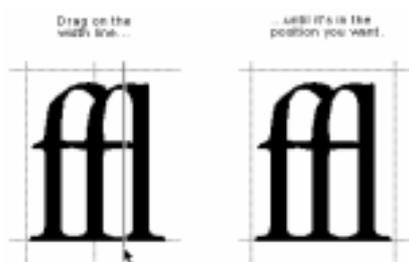
Note

That's all there is to it! So, if your font doesn't contain the ligature you want, you now know how to create your own with Fontographer.



Tip

In some word processing and page layout programs you can set the preferences to automatically substitute curly quotes for straight ones, or the fl ligature if you type "fl." For the substitutions to occur, you'll need to be sure to use an Adobe encoded font.



Creating a condensed character or font

Fontographer has the ability to modify character images to produce interesting special effects. You can create these effects in either the Outline Window (on one particular character) or the Font Window (on the whole font). For example, you can create an oblique font by selecting all the characters in the Font Window and skewing them -12 degrees (like we did in the earlier exercise "To skew a character"). Or you can create an extended font, by increasing the horizontal scaling factor of the font. Your options are limitless.



Note

You can also create a condensed font by scaling the character 80% horizontally. Condensed versions of a font are the same height as their counterparts, but are narrower to fit into a more compact space.

To create a condensed character:

1. Click on the Font Window to make it active, and then press and hold the mouse button while you drag through the characters "a" through "e."



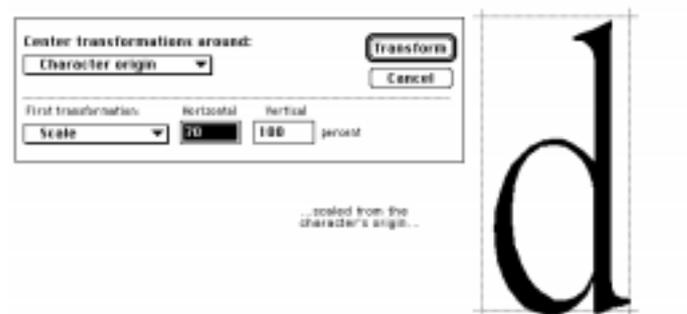
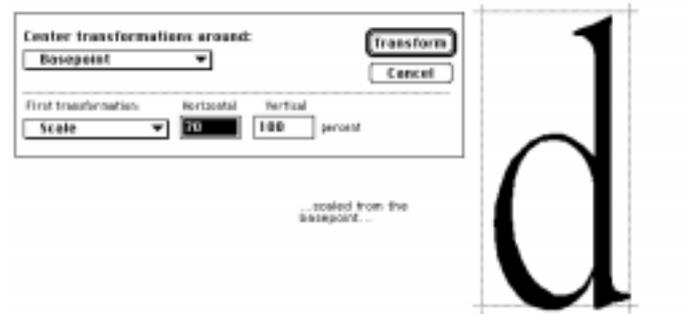
Click on the character you want to drag.

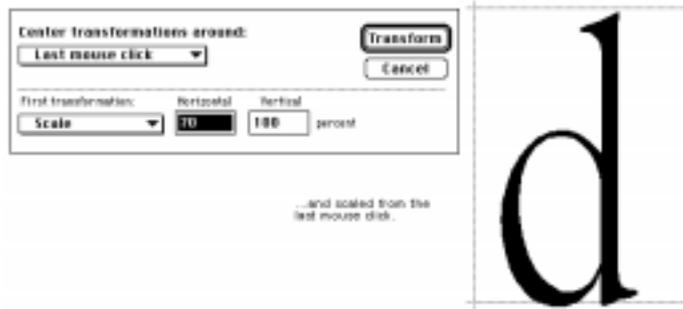
2. Choose "Transform" from the Element menu.

The Transform dialog appears.



As you can see from the screen shots on this page, Fontographer scales the characters horizontally without changing their height.

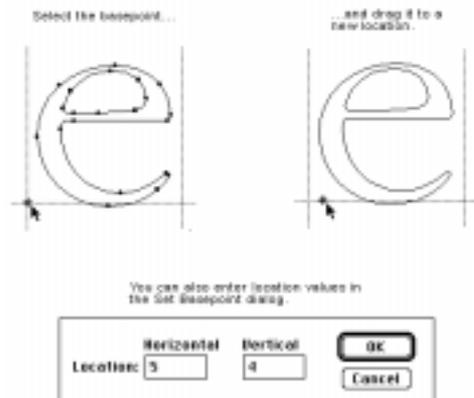




Setting the basepoint

The *baseline* is the line upon which the letters sit. The baseline position is always at a vertical location of zero. The dot at the intersection of the origin line and baseline is the basepoint.

The *basepoint* is used to accurately and quickly align points and characters. The basepoint is generally at the character's origin (where the origin line and the baseline intersect at 0,0); but, you can position the basepoint anywhere. Fontographer allows you to set each character's basepoint differently. It can be moved as needed by selecting the pointer tool and dragging it to a new location, or by entering a specific horizontal and vertical location.



For precise numeric entry, choose “Set Basepoint” from the Points menu. To reset the basepoint back to the origin point, choose “Reset Basepoint” from the Points menu.

If you select one point and choose “Set Basepoint,” Fontographer will move the basepoint to that point. However, if you select more than one point, Fontographer will set the basepoint to the center of selection.

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In the position display in the Outline Window, distance from the basepoint is continuously updated as the pointer moves within the drawing area. This on-screen measuring tool makes it easy to measure character parts. Just place the basepoint on a reference point of the character and watch the position display as you move the pointer.

Horizontal or vertical alignment of points is very easy to check; set a basepoint on one point then drag the other until the horizontal or vertical delta is zero.