PDF Tools Working Group
Technical Lead

DATE: January 19, 2026

TO: Document Processing Stakeholders

SUBJECT: CUI Header Font Selection (Cinzel vs Trajan)

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: PdfTools

1. **Purpose**

   This memorandum documents the decision to use Cinzel as the display font for "CUI" header text in the SF901 LaTeX template, rather than the Trajan Bold font used in the official GSA template.

2. **Background**

   The official SF901 CUI Cover Sheet template (Standard Form 901, 11-18) uses the **Trajan Bold** font for the large "CUI" header text displayed at the top and bottom of the cover sheet. This font was identified by extracting font metadata from the official PDF template obtained from the National Archives:

   ```
   $ pdffonts SF901-Official-Template.pdf
   name                      type
   ZMPPSD+Trajan-Bold        Type 1C
   ZMPPSD+TimesNewRomanPSMT  CID TrueType
   ZMPPSD+MinionPro-Regular  Type 1C
   ```

   Two implementation approaches were considered:

   - **Approach A:** Use Trajan Bold (exact match to official template)
   - **Approach B:** Use Cinzel (free open-source alternative)

3. **Analysis**

   Approach A: Trajan Bold (Original Font)

   - Exact visual match to official GSA template
   - Requires purchase ($35–70) or Adobe Creative Cloud subscription

- Not freely redistributable due to commercial license
- Adds licensing complexity to the LaTeX template
- May not be available on all systems where the template is used

Approach B: Cinzel (Open Source Alternative)

- Free font directly inspired by Roman inscriptional lettering (same design tradition as Trajan)
- Available under SIL Open Font License (OFL) — permits free use, redistribution, and modification
- Available from Google Fonts — easy installation across Windows, macOS, Linux
- Classical Roman capital letterforms with elegant, refined stroke weights
- All-caps display styling optimized for titles and headers
- Not an exact match, but visually very similar

Other Alternatives Considered:

- **Times New Roman Bold:** Pre-installed on most systems, but visually quite different (too heavy, wrong character style)
- **Times New Roman Regular:** Pre-installed with lighter weight, but different letterform style and not a display font

4. **Decision**

   Approved: Approach B — Use Cinzel as the CUI header font.

   Rationale:

   - Eliminates licensing costs and restrictions on template distribution
   - Maintains visual consistency with official SF901 appearance
   - Widely available and well-maintained font
   - Easy installation via Google Fonts
   - The visual difference from Trajan is minimal and acceptable for this use case

   Implementation:

   - Install Cinzel font on target systems (documented in SF901.tex)
   - Define \cuifont in SF901.tex using fontspec package
   - Apply \cuifont to CUI header text nodes
   - Document font installation in build instructions

   Font Installation (macOS):

```
curl -L -o /tmp/cinzel.zip \
  "https://gwfh.mranftl.com/api/fonts/cinzel?download=zip\
&subsets=latin&variants=regular"
unzip -o /tmp/cinzel.zip -d ~/Library/Fonts/
```

5.   **References**

- Official SF901 Template: https://www.archives.gov/cui/registry/forms
- Cinzel Font: https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Cinzel
- Trajan Font: Originally designed by Carol Twombly for Adobe, 1989
- SIL Open Font License: https://scripts.sil.org/OFL