



Selecting fonts is not as simple as it seems

I'm not a type designer and I consider myself adequate as a user of fonts on the web, but I've been around for the full progression of fonts on the web.

We will not review the full history of web fonts in this post. If interested you can read the history on [Brief History of Webfonts](#)

Font selection

The first decision we need to make is what font we want to use. It is a deceptively simple question since it is not just a matter of picking up a font that looks nice.

I follow this list, taken from Google Fonts [A checklist for choosing type](#). It provides a good overview of what's necessary to choose a font for your project.

- The typeface suits the purpose of the project
 - Its personality will prompt the appropriate emotional response(s) from our audience
 - Its design fits the intended use
- The typeface's design is comprehensive
 - It has enough multi-language support
 - It contains legible details
 - It has at least the basic weights and styles
 - Even better: It has alternate glyphs
 - Even better: It has additional weights and styles (or grades)
 - Even better: It has multiple widths
 - Even better: It has different optical sizes
- The font files are reliable
 - All of the design features checked above are actually included in the font files being used
 - The fonts are properly spaced
- The fonts are usable in the situation(s) required
 - If serving as a secondary typeface to a primary choice, there's a suitable balance between distinction and harmony
 - We have, or our client has, the appropriate font license(s)

Asking these questions prepares you in terms of font usefulness, potential cost and licensing issues that you may run into.

One thing that is important to consider is that most, if not all, foundries have a usage cap when you buy the license.

The license for a font use on the web will have some kind of text like **10000 page views per month** or similar. This is important because foundries have a way to enforce these values and may require you to buy a larger license (more pageviews and higher cost) if you go over the pageviews covered in your license.