# Basic Typography Rules

AND HOW TO USE THEM IN MICROSOFT WORD

## INTRODUCTION

You may ask why to deal with typography rules and rules of typesetting of an electronic document. When the printing press was invented in the 15th century it was a huge turn in the history (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printing_press>). This allowed documents to be printed in a large number of quality copies and it also led to extension of written texts.

The next step in printing history was at the beginning of the 19th century when the typewriter was invented (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typewriter>). Despite its limited abilities in comparison with the book composition it allowed people to create printed material very easily.

The essential moment in the history of text documents was the beginning of the era of computers. The first machines were in general only improved typewriters (text editor T602 or text602). The final product was a typewriting. However, the most important improvement was the ability to change or edit any text and to print many copies of the same quality.

Nowadays, there are lots of programs which allow us to implement a real book composition. These applications are called using the term DTP (DeskTop Publishing <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DTP>). Their abilities are very wide but still not only a computer and a top application are needed to create a quality document for printing. There has to be a person who can use these technologies in harmony with the rules of book composition and typography rules.

Unfortunately, there are still many computer users who create documents full of typographic mistakes and of problematic esthetic quality. For this reason we try to involve at least basic rules for creation of an electronic document and for using our computer to get the best result we can.

## FONT SELECTION

We differentiate two basic types of fonts:

### Serif fonts

Fonts which include so called *serifs*. Serif fonts are for example Georgia, Bookman Old Style, Palatino linotype and many others.  
These three fonts are standards in every version of Microsoft Windows and are typographically correct thus usable.

Using the font *Times New Roman* is a common problem and mistake, although it is set as the default one, because this font draws the hook above “t” incorrectly. Compare the following examples:

In the previous row you can see the fonts Georgia, Palatino Linotype, Bookman Old Style, Garamond and the last one is Times New Roman. It is clearly visible that the placement of the hook is not correct at all in the last two words written by fonts Garamond and Times New Roman. This defect creates a disturbing effect because of the inadequate spacing. You should know that there are more versions of the font Garamond thus it is not a rule that all of them are incorrect – this version which was listed in the previous example was implemented in systems Windows 2000, XP and Vista. Of course you can buy a quality Garamond font from any font manufacturer who does not suffer from the same mistake. Note that the bottom parts of letters are called serifs (remember also the sans-serif fonts).

You should remember three concluding remarks from the previous paragraph:

* In case you decide to send an electronic document which was written using a text processor like Microsoft Word, you have to ensure that it is compatible with the recipient’s version of that program (otherwise he might not be able to open the document – like formats .doc in Word 2003 and .docx in Word 2007).
* In case you use a font which might not be available on the recipient’s computer then it will be replaced by another font and the whole composition can change dramatically. This might have a negative impact on the readability and usability of your document (for example a text or a table can overflow from one page to another etc.).
* You can avoid these two mentioned problems using the format PDF (*portable document format*) developed by Adobe Systems which should appear the same under every system. However, there might be a problem in case you need the recipient to reedit the document. Then you have to ensure that he has the same version of text processor and the same fonts you have. In all other cases (electronic communication, swapping documents or publishing documents on the Internet) you should use the PDF format which is accessible easily and for free using the free version of Adobe Reader so everyone can see the document exactly as the writer wanted.

Serif fonts are commonly used for book typesetting (books, essays, thesis, Master’s works …). Because of the serifs they lead the eyes along the line and the readability of text is improved.

### Sans-serif fonts

These fonts do not contain serifs; typical examples are Arial, Tahoma or Verdana.

Serif and Sans-serif fonts can be combined within one document (serif ones for common text and sans-serif ones for headlines).

Note that these types of fonts can also be divided:

* **Proportional fonts** – the place (box) for single characters are using the same width as the width of each letter (can differ).
* **Non-proportional fonts –** the place for each single characters is identical (a typical example is the Courier font). Note the width of letters “i” and “s” – the both letters occupy the same width in the text. The term typescript font is used because of the fact that these fonts were produced by typewriters. There fonts are not used for a book composition anymore but they are utilized for examples of computer outputs (source codes, etc.).

Typewriters were invented at the beginning of the 19th century as a replacement for handwritten documents. The limitations of typewriters are quite large compared to a book composition – we can use only one font, there are not all characters (like quotation marks, dashes, mathematical symbols etc.). There is also only one available type of space – *one shot* – its width is usually one tenth of an inch (2,54 mm).

However, these fonts are still used nowadays (despite their limitations) but their application is usually connected with administrative purposes.

Compare the following two sentences which illustrate a good example of difference between a book composition and a typescript font.

## TEXT HIGHLIGHTING

Any text can be highlighted using one of these options:

* *Italics* – this way can be used for example to highlight concepts, technical terms etc. You can select a text in Microsoft Word and apply italics by pressing the combination of keys CTRL+I.
* **Bold** – change of width of font – this option is being used in textbooks and the highlighted text is very distinct. The combination of keys is CTRL+B.
* Underline – this options is being used to highlight hypertext links or very essential important messages. Use this variant wisely (do not underline headlines for example). The combination of keys is CTRL+U.

You can naturally combine these options (for example ***bold italics***) bud you should always consider whether the result is suitable.

## HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between a hand-written and a typewriter-written document for a reader of the document?
2. Find any server in the Internet where you can download fonts for free. Can you use any of these fonts without problems? Why not?
3. Are there fonts which are available under a particular operating system only (for example not available under Windows XP but available under Windows Vista)? If there are such fonts which difficulties can occur after creating a document in a text processor like Microsoft Word and using these fonts?
4. Where are fonts located in operating systems?
5. Find websites which offer sale of quality Czech fonts.
6. Try to find more information about the product Adobe Fontfolio and characterize it in terms of its content and its price.
7. What is a font foundry? Try to find several ones in the Internet and summarize their offers.
8. How can you assure that a particular font is usable for Czech texts (that means it has to contain all Czech characters)? Try to illustrate it in a text processor using the sentence “Příliš žluťoučký kůň úpěl ďábelské ódy”.