



Is This An OpenType Format Font?

Yes, this is an OpenType format font named with a .ttf file extension for compatibility with older applications and operating systems.

What is OpenType Format?

The one support question that we're asked more often than any other is why, when we were asked for an OpenType format font, have we delivered a TrueType format font with an OpenType icon? Many clients and customers have already experienced OpenType format fonts from other foundries that have an .otf file extension, whereas Dalton Maag OpenType format fonts have a .ttf extension. Have we, perhaps, made a mistake?

The confusion is understandable when .otf obviously stands for "OpenType Font", and .ttf obviously stands for "TrueType Font", but the reasons for choosing to give an OpenType format font a .ttf extension rather than an .otf extension are subtle, significant, and of enormous value to users.

The History of Font Formats

When Microsoft and Adobe announced the end of the font format war in 1996, the resulting marriage between the TrueType Open and PostScript Type 1 font formats left us with a single font format with two distinct flavours – those based on TrueType format font outlines, and those based on CFF (a descendent of PostScript Type 1) outlines.

While all OpenType format fonts can include support for advanced typographic features, created by the font engineer to be sympathetic and appropriate to the individual typeface design, there are some differences between where the two font flavours can be reliably used.

Support for OpenType Format Fonts

CFF-based OpenType format fonts are supported in many design applications, and by Mac OS X and Windows XP natively, plus many other environments when you use Adobe Type Manager. Unfortunately, not all applications see them correctly; some Windows-based applications show them as "printer fonts" and so don't give correct behaviour, or refuse to allow them to be used at all.

Why the .ttf Extension?

TrueType-based OpenType format fonts are supported by the same operating systems and applications, but because they are a clean superset of the TrueType format, they behave as traditional TrueType format fonts in applications or operating systems that aren't aware of OpenType features but know about the TrueType format. Older versions of Windows, proprietary applications, embedded systems, etc. are all able to use the high quality font display that can be produced by a carefully-engineered OpenType format font based on TrueType format outlines – as long as you use the legacy .ttf file extension.

Because of the opportunity that the format gives to our engineers to produce a pixel-perfect result every time, and because of the exceptional backwards and forwards compatibility, TrueType-based OpenType format is Dalton Maag's delivery format of choice. So, next time you see an OpenType icon on a .ttf file, remember that it's because we care about how our fonts look and where you can use them.

OpenType Font Compatibility

Operating System	TrueType-Based OpenType Format	CFF-Based OpenType Format
Windows 95 †	✓	✓ ¹
Windows NT 4.0 †	✓	✓ ¹
Windows 98 †	✓	✓ ¹
Windows 2000 †	✓	✓ ¹
Windows Me †	✓	✓ ¹
Windows XP	✓	✓ ²
Windows Vista	✓	✓ ²
Windows 7	✓	✓ ²
Mac OS 8.0 †		
Mac OS 8.1 †		
Mac OS 8.5 †		
Mac OS 8.6 †		✓ ¹
Mac OS 9.0 †		✓ ¹
Mac OS 9.1 †		✓ ¹
Mac OS X 10.0 †	✓	✓
Mac OS 9.2 †		✓ ¹
Mac OS X 10.1 †	✓	✓
Mac OS X 10.2 †	✓	✓
Mac OS X 10.3	✓	✓
Mac OS X 10.4	✓	✓
Mac OS X 10.5	✓	✓
Mac OS X 10.6	✓	✓

† Dalton Maag is unable to offer technical support for the operating systems marked with a dagger. Support is offered for a period of five years after the release of each OS's upgrade or replacement. For example, our support for Mac OS X 10.3 will end five years after the release of Mac OS X 10.4, on 29 April 2010, and support for Windows XP will end five years after the release of Windows Vista, on 30 January 2012.

1 Supported by the installation of the latest version of Adobe Type Manager.

2 The operating system has native support, but some applications ignore the fonts.