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3QD
DEVELOPMENTS LTD

APDL

FontFX6

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This document last edited on 29/09/26



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FontFX 6

Introduction

FontFX is a utility to create a drawing of a string using outline font designs. A number of special effects are available to modify the result; these include colours, shadows, rotation and distortion. The finished product is a Draw-format file, which is ideal for use with desktop publishing software.

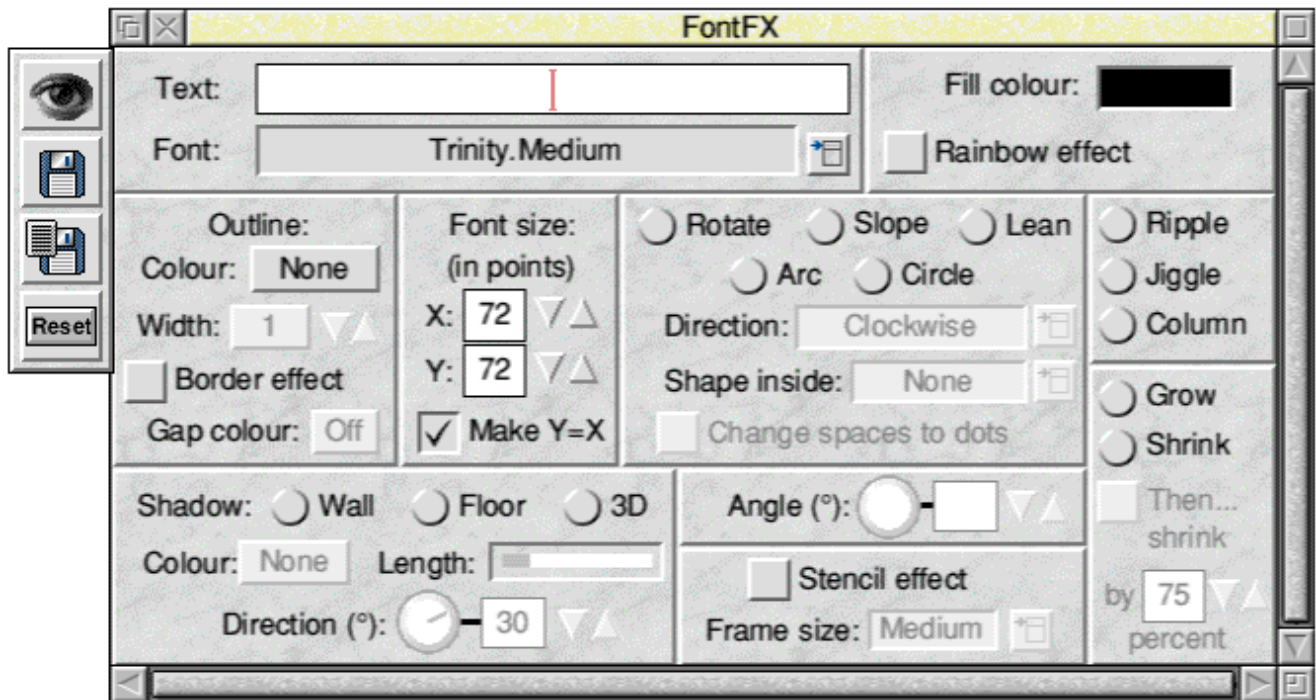
NOTE: Version 6.00 (and later versions) of FontFX no longer support RISC OS 2.

How it works

The Acorn Outline Font Manager stores the definition of its characters as a sequence of coordinates linked by straight lines and curves, i.e. an outline. This is the same method of storing a drawing as is used by the Draw module, which is the heart of the !Draw application, and which is used by many other applications to reproduce line drawings. It is a relatively simple process, therefore, to convert the definition of a character from an outline font into a 'path' (a sequence of lines and curves) compatible with the Draw module. Once these 'paths' are packaged into a file, the file can be saved, or transferred directly into another application. During the conversion process, the 'paths' can be transformed, that is, rotated, scaled, duplicated (shadowed) or otherwise distorted, and the fill and outline colours selected.

How to use FontFX

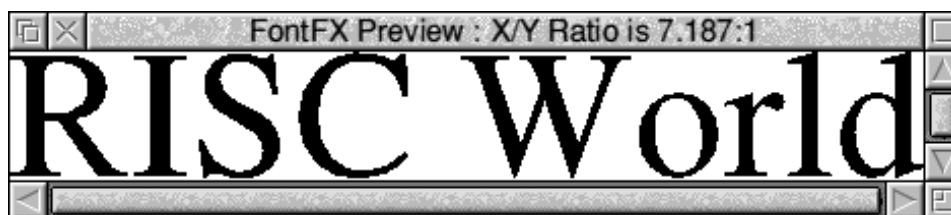
When you run FontFX, an icon will appear on the RISC OS Desktop iconbar. Clicking **MENU** whilst pointing at this icon brings up a small 'icon bar menu' giving the means of quitting the application, and some information about the program itself. Clicking **SELECT** opens the main control window for FontFX. This is divided into a number of panels; at the top, a writable icon to hold the string of characters you want converted - the maximum number of characters is 250; under this is an icon showing the name of the outline font that will be used to define the characters. To the right is an area which lets you select the fill colour(s) for the characters in your string. Below are panels dealing with outline colour and thickness, font size, arc or circle effects, rotation, rippling, column, shadows, stencils and growing and shrinking.



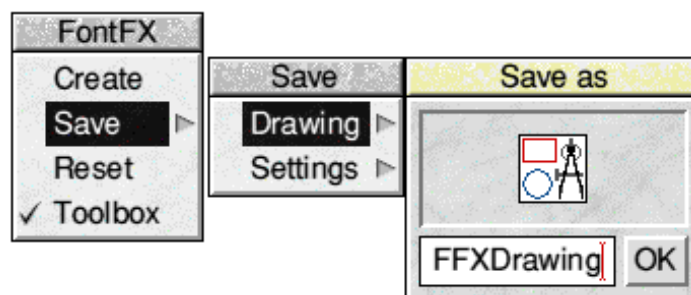
Depending on your personal preference, there may be a 'toolbox' attached to the left-hand side of the main control window. This has icons which create and display the drawing, create and open a save box for the drawing, open a save box for the control window settings and finally reset the control window to normal settings. Whilst your mouse pointer is within the main control window, clicking **MENU** will normally produce the 'main menu' which duplicates the toolbox functions and allows you to switch the toolbox on and off. The only exceptions to this are when the mouse pointer is above the fontname icon (in which case the font menu appears) or the stencil size icon (in which case the stencil size menu appears).

The minimum amount of work you have to do to create a drawing is to type in some text and click on '**Create**' in the main menu, or on the '**Create**' (eye) button in the toolbox, or on the '**Save**' (disc) button in the toolbox, or by pressing '**F3**' whilst the caret is in the text icon. The resulting drawing will have the default settings shown in the control window whenever you first run FontFX: normally, this means the font will be Trinity Medium, coloured black, with no outline, X and Y font size 72pt and using no other special effects, but it is possible to customise your copy of FontFX to start up (i.e. default to) other settings if you wish. For details of how to use the special effects, or alter any of the other settings, see the following sections.

When you click on '**Create**' there will be a short pause whilst FontFX does its work, and then a new window will appear, within which is your created drawing.



If the drawing is satisfactory you can then either save it to disc or transfer it straight to another application. To do this, bring up the 'preview menu' by clicking **MENU** within the preview window and slide across '**Save drawing**' to open a traditional 'save box' containing an icon to represent your drawing. To save your drawing onto disc, drag the icon into a directory viewer, or type in a pathname in the writable area under the icon and then click on '**OK**'. If you want to transfer it to another application, drag the icon to that application.



A special case is !Draw itself: if you want to transfer the drawing to !Draw, all you have to do is click on '**OK**' *without* entering a pathname. Incidentally, you can also do all of this by sliding across '**Save**' in the 'main menu', which opens a submenu: this contains the further option '**Drawing**', and if you slide across that, the 'save box' appears as described above.

A quick note: if you have typed in your string and want to change letters from upper to lower case, or vice versa, you can do this quickly by positioning the caret before the character you want to change and pressing **Ctrl-S**.

Fonts

The default font is normally Trinity.Medium, but you can use the designs of any outline font in your possession. To change the font, bring up the 'font menu' by clicking on the menu button to the right of the font name icon, or by clicking **MENU** over the font name icon itself. By doing this, a list of all the fonts on your system will appear. Just click **SELECT** or **ADJUST** on the desired font, and its name will appear in the control window, displayed in the font itself. If you click with **ADJUST**, the menu will remain on the screen, so you can keep selecting different fonts to see what they look like.

Note that it may take a little time to display the text string, as the definitions of the characters have to be read from a font file on disc unless the font definition is already held in the computer's font cache. If you have a lot of fonts, this process will be speeded up by having a large font cache (memory size permitting). In case the font name is obscured in the control window, the currently selected font is always ticked in the font menu.

Font Size

The size and shape of the drawing you create are determined by the settings of font size. These can be set within the range 1 to 999 in points. The X and Y sizes can be altered separately: a larger X size than Y size results in characters that are wider than they normally are for their height, whereas a larger Y size than X size makes the characters taller than normal.

Although you can change the size of your drawing, to get the best resolution you should keep the size as high as practicable - remember that all DTP packages rescale to fit a frame in any case. To change the sizes, click on the arrow icons on alongside the box that shows the current setting. Clicking **SELECT** on the up arrow increases the size, whilst **ADJUST** decreases it. On the down arrow, **SELECT** decreases and **ADJUST** increases. If you want to lock the two sizes together, click on the '**Make Y=X**' option icon: this will force the Y size to be equal to the X size, and changing either one will alter both together. The arrows increment or decrement the size in varying steps: if the current setting is 1-32, the change is in single points; if the current setting is 32-128, the change is in steps of 8 points; if the current setting is 128 or more, the change is in steps of 32 points.

Another way of changing the sizes is by typing in a value - first click in the X- or Y-size icons, so that the caret appears there, then type in a value. If you type in a value which doesn't correspond to one you could obtain using the arrows, and subsequently use the arrows, the first click on an arrow will change the setting to the nearest value normally obtainable, e.g. if you had typed in 67 and clicked down, the new setting would be 64. Note that you can 'by-pass' the Y=X option if you type a value directly into either box, but as soon as you click on one of the arrows, the Y size will be made equal to the X size again. Pressing '**Return**' or '**Page Up**' or '**Page Down**' or the up or down cursor keys moves the caret from the X size icon to the Y size icon, and vice versa.

Outline and Fill Colours and the Rainbow Effect

Normal outline font characters have a black fill colour and no outline. These are the normal default settings in FontFX too. You can change either of these settings to any of sixteen million available colours, or have no fill, or no outline colour at all (but you must have at least one of them set). To change the colours, you click on the box showing the currently selected colour to open a '**Colour Picker Dialogue Box**'.

Here you can select a colour from the 'colour cube', or by dragging up and down the levels of red, green and blue in the colour, or by typing in percentage values of red, green and blue. You can also use **CMYK** or **HSV** models for choosing colours (only recommended for the knowledgeable or the adventurous!), or even restrict your choice to one of the 16 desktop palette colours, which appear in a grid above the **OK** button. As long as the outline colour is not sent to 'none', you can select 'none' as the fill colour, and vice versa: in other words, only one of them can be 'none'.

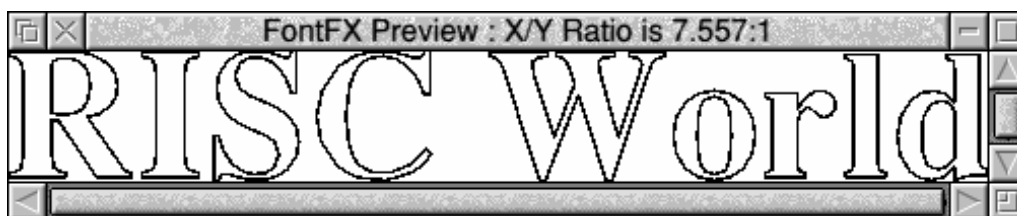
A further option for fill colour is to choose the '**Rainbow**' effect. In this case, each letter will have a different fill colour, in a sequence that can be defined by the user. If this option is selected, you cannot manually alter the fill colour - if you want to do this, switch off the rainbow effect. Note also that switching on rainbow will disable the stencil option (see below), and vice versa.



To alter the sequence of colours in the rainbow effect, click over the fill colour icon in the main control window (which will become 'stripy' as soon as the rainbow option is selected). Instead of the colour picker, a window will appear showing the current rainbow sequence. If you just want to alter the colours in the sequence, click on the appropriate colour icon to open a colour picker box. If you want to extend or shorten the sequence, click on the up or down arrow beside the box telling you how many colours are in the sequence: this can be from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 16. If you reduce the number of colours, the appropriate icons in the sequence will be greyed out: if you extend the sequence, the appropriate icons will be reactivated. Note that when you save either default settings or a script file (about which more below), the rainbow sequence will be saved in the file.

Outline Width

If you select an outline colour, you can also specify how thick the outline should be. There are five settings, ranging from 1 (very thin) to 5 (very thick). You alter the current setting using the arrow icons in the same way as described above for font size and colours. If you produce a drawing with font sizes 72pt, and transfer it to !Draw, the outline width settings correspond to the line width settings in the !Draw menu, i.e. 1 (FontFX) = 'Thin' (Draw), 2 = 0.25 points, 3 = 0.5 points, 4 = 1 point and 5 = 2 points. If you create your drawing to a different size, the point width of the outline will be scaled accordingly, e.g. font size 144pt, FontFX outline width 5, gives !Draw line width 4 points.



Fill colour of white with a black outline with a width of 3

FontFX Special Effects

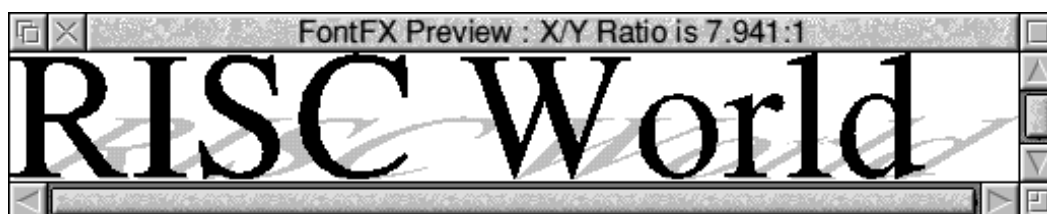
Shadow and Border Effects

An attractive special effect can be a shadow of your string behind the characters themselves. This effect is activated by clicking on one of the 'Shadow' icons with **SELECT**.

A 'wall' shadow can be imagined by shining a light at your characters from immediately in front of them, creating a shadow on a wall behind.



A 'floor' shadow is created by shining a light from above, creating a shadow on the floor behind. The 'floor' shadow is most effective on a string which has not been rotated, sloped or leant.



A '3D' shadow is created by having a smaller version of the string in the background, which is joined to the full-size string in the foreground. The shadow colour can be selected much as outline and fill colours are, except that if no shadow option is selected, the shadow colour will be shown greyed out, and you will not be able to change this: as soon as you select one of the shadow options, the shadow colour will be restored to the correct colour, and you will then be able to change it. If you subsequently switch off the shadow option, the shadow colour will automatically revert to being greyed out. In a 3D shadow, the shadow colour is the colour of the rear of the 3D effect, with the intermediate parts blending from there to the fill colour of the foreground.



One particularly nice effect is to have no outline colour, fill colour white and a wall shadow: try it and see! You can also set the direction in which you want your shadow to fall, and the distance (wall/3D) or length (floor) of the shadow. You can alter the direction by typing in a number, by clicking on the up and down arrows or by clicking on the compass. To alter the distance/length, drag the slider left or right.

The **Border** effect adds an outline to all the characters in your string. If no outline colour is selected, this border will be the same colour as the fill colour of the characters, with a gap between the border and the character. The colour of this gap can be determined by the user, but if you choose the same gap colour as fill colour, an alternative gap colour will be used. This is shown in a triangular flash across the icon which shows the normal gap colour. If you select an outline colour, the border will have this colour. Note that you cannot select the border effect at the same time as the stencil effect. The **outline width** setting will affect the thickness of the border and the gap.

Stencil Effect

This creates a solid area with the characters of your string 'cut out' in the middle.

The colour of the solid area (the '*frame*') is the 'fill' colour you have selected in the control window (which means that you cannot select the rainbow option at the same time as the stencil option). Should you select an outline colour, this will appear around the characters but not around the frame.

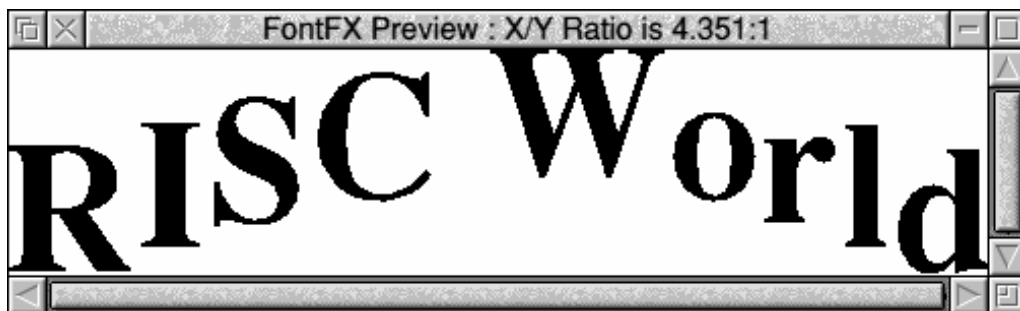
If you import a drawing like this into !Draw and place it on top of another object, you will find that the other object shows through the characters of your string: in other words, the characters are transparent. This would allow you to create some interesting effects - for example, if you create your drawing with a white fill colour, and place the created drawing on top of a repetitive pattern, you will create pattern-filled characters on an apparently white background.

RISC World

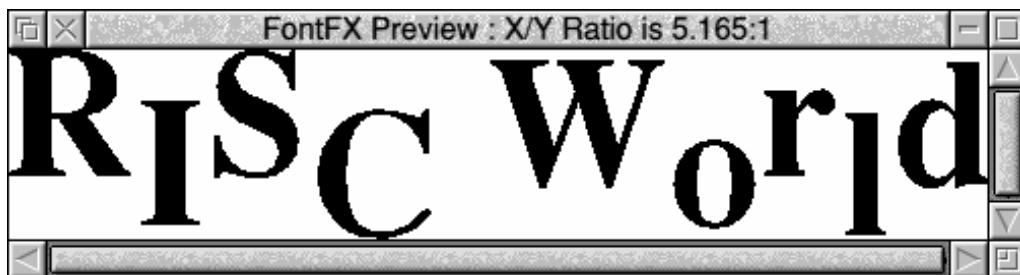
Alternatively, you might use a desktop publishing package to type inside the created characters. The size of the frame can be altered by clicking on the menu button next to the current size icon, or by clicking the mouse **MENU** button over the size icon, and selecting an alternative size from the menu that appears.

Ripple and Jiggle

Normally, all the characters in your drawing will be sitting on an invisible baseline which is straight. The ripple and jiggle effects alter the baseline, making it ripple (i.e. a regular deviation from character to character like a wave) or jiggle (an irregular deviation, chosen at random for each character). Either of these effects can be chosen by clicking on the appropriate icon with **SELECT** . To deselect one of these effects, either select the other, or click with **ADJUST** . Note that the column and circle options described below cannot be selected at the same time as ripple or jiggle, but stencil, rotate, slope, lean and arc can be.



Ripple



Jiggle

Column

The column option sets your string in a vertical column, each character placed beneath the previous one. You cannot select column at the same time as ripple, jiggle, circle, rotate, slope, lean or arc. Beware of bizarre

effects if you select a floor shadow with a column - not recommended! You should also remember that 'columns' look best with 'capital' letters - no pun intended!

Circle

This effect makes the characters of your string follow the circumference of an imaginary and invisible circle. There are three versions of the circle effect: a clockwise circle, an anti-clockwise circle, and a bi-directional circle, where the string will be split into two parts at the nearest word break to the middle, with the first half laid out clockwise and the remainder anti-clockwise. In each case, the point around the circle that the text starts from can be set using the angle compass. The default direction is clockwise, and this is the option that will be set when you first select 'Circle'.

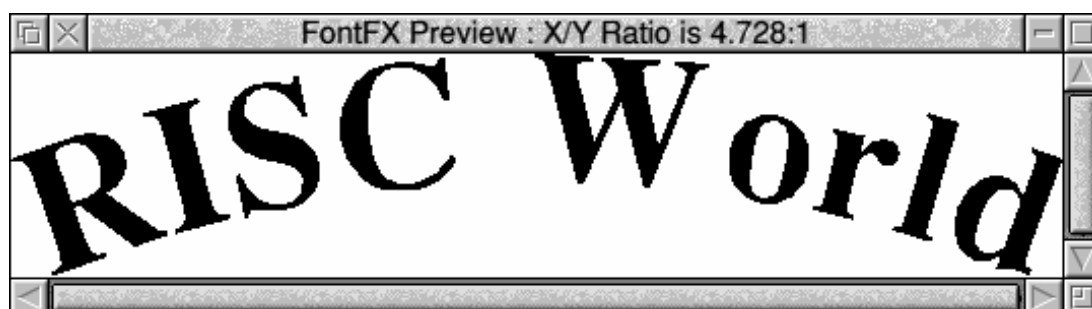


You can also select an optional shape which will be drawn inside the text circle: this can be either a circle, a square, a diamond or a five-pointed star. Finally, you can choose to have the spaces between words replaced by a dot. Note that neither stencil, ripple, jiggle, column, rotate, slope, lean nor arc can be selected at the same time as circle.

Warning: not all fonts are suitable for use in a circle, particularly when you are mixing upper and lower case characters in your string, so be prepared to have to select an alternative font if the drawing you create does not look right.

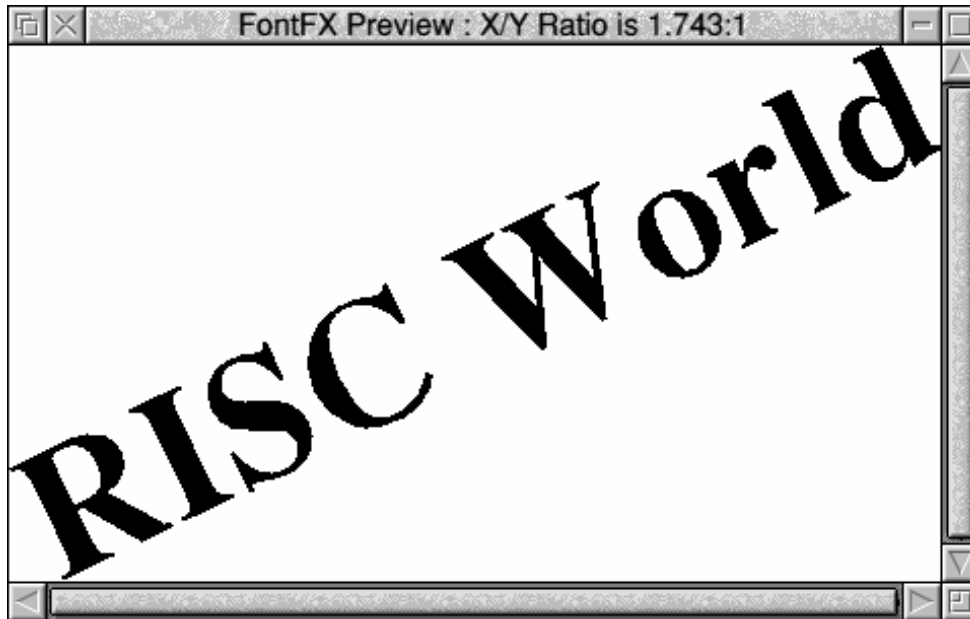
Arc

Arc is similar to a circle effect, except that the text only follows a part of a circle and not a whole circle. The number of degrees of this arc is given in the angle box. Obviously, you cannot have an arc of 0, so if the angle is set to 0 when you select 'arc', it will be automatically changed to 45. Whilst 'arc' is selected, you will not be able to set the angle to 0. You can alter the angle by typing in a number, by clicking on the up and down arrows or by clicking on the compass. Remember that in order to fit all the characters in neatly, the smaller the angle of arc, the larger the radius of the imaginary circle: this means that the smaller angle, the flatter the arc will be. You can have either a clockwise or an anticlockwise arc, but not a bi-directional one! You can also change the spaces between words to dots, as with a circle.

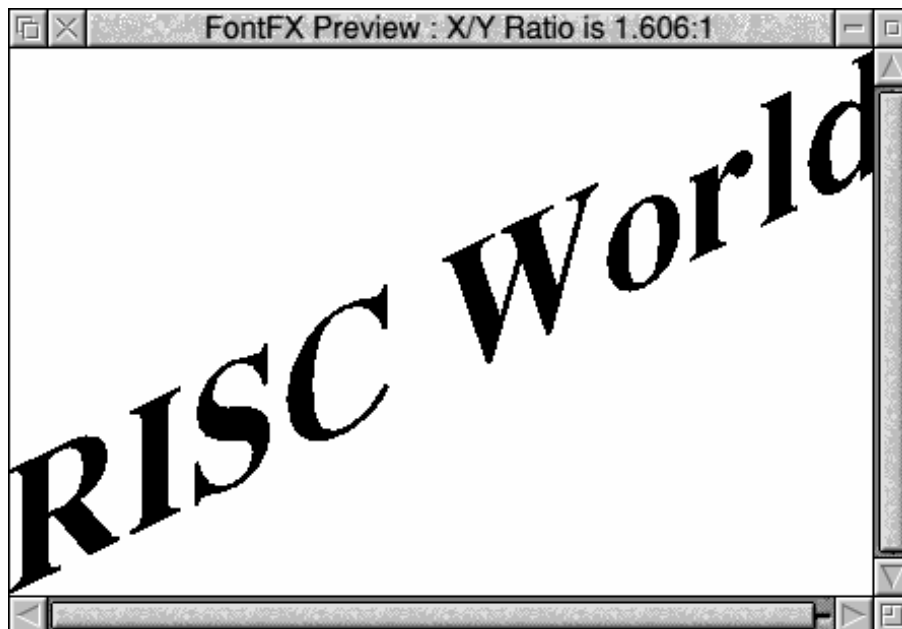


Rotate, Slope and Lean

Rotate rotates the baseline of your string by the angle shown in the box, but the characters of the string remain normal. An angle of 0 is a normal baseline, 45 goes from bottom left to top right, 90 from bottom to top and so on - that is, the baseline rotates anti-clockwise as the angle increases. The angle is altered as described above under the Arc option.



Slope also uses the angle setting, but this time, whilst the baseline and horizontal element of the characters are rotated, the vertical element of the characters is not. For example, a slope of 45 would mean that the horizontal bar of a capital T would be at 45 (instead of the normal 0), but the vertical bar would remain at 90 as normal. Using slope can give some strange effects: a slope of 90 or 270 makes the string disappear altogether, so FontFX won't let you do it! Any slope between 95 and 265 gives a mirror image of the string in the Y-axis.

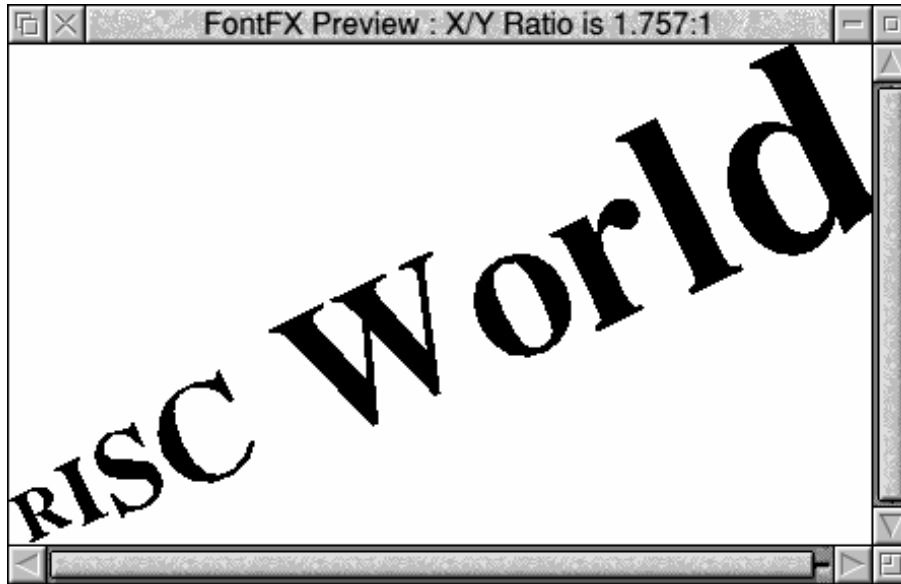


Lean is similar to slope, except it is the vertical, or Y-axis, that is rotated, and not the baseline or the horizontal. For example, a lean of 45 would make the vertical bar of a capital T lean 45 to the left, but the horizontal bar would remain parallel to the baseline at 0. Again, some strange effects can be given by lean: a lean of 90 or 270 makes the string disappear and so is not allowed, and between those values, the string is reflected about its X-axis. Lean angles from 275 to 355 produce an effect similar to italic fonts

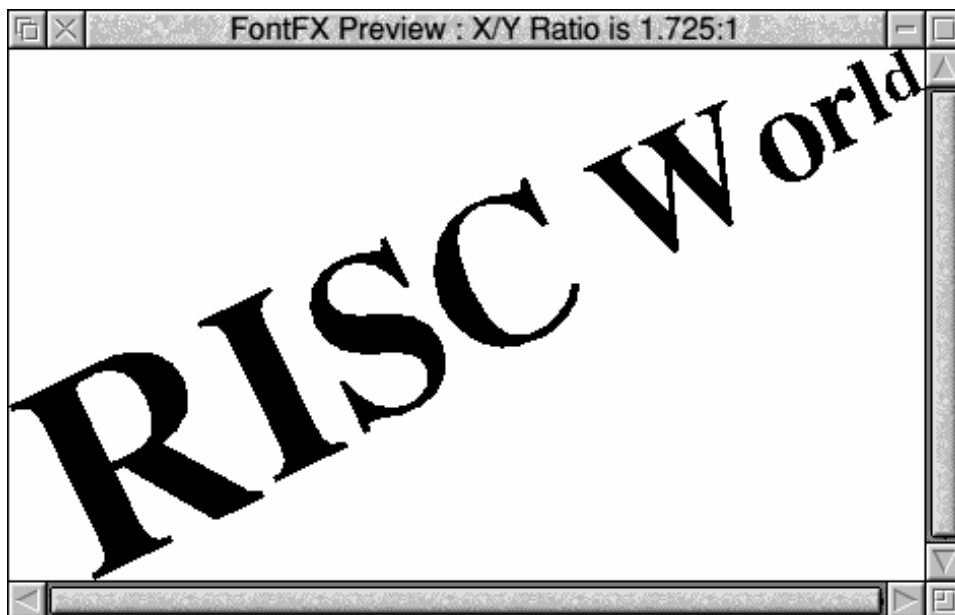
Because it is sometimes difficult to visualise the effect of rotate, slope and lean, a small 'example' window opens showing how the word 'FontFX' would look based on your current setting. This remains open whilst you alter the angle, and closes a few seconds later. If you want to re-open it to check the setting, just click on rotate, slope or lean again.

Grow and Shrink

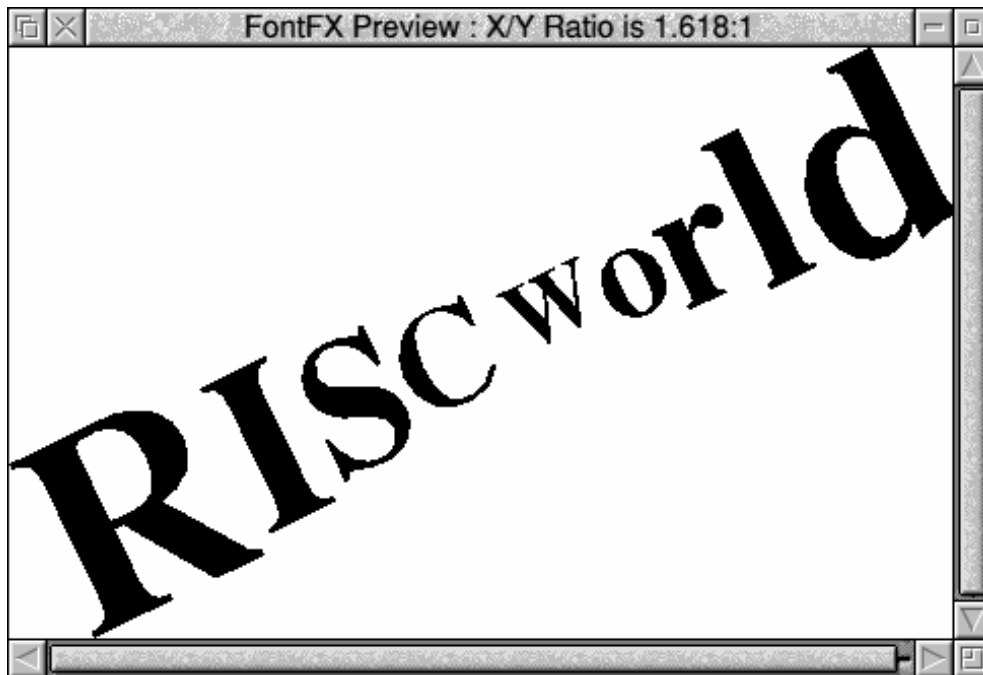
These simple effects make each character in the string a different size. When '**Grow**' is selected, the character at the beginning of the string will be smaller than your chosen fontsize, with the character at the end full size.



With '**Shrink**', the sizes are reversed. If you have the '**Then...**' option selected along with '**Grow**', the middle character(s) will be 100% and the start and end characters will be smaller.



Similarly, 'Shrink then grow' starts at 100%, the middle is smaller and then the end will be 100% again. The actual size of the smallest character in the string is defined by a percentage reduction setting: i.e., if this setting is 75% reduction, the smallest character will be 25% of the normal fontsize. This effect is very effective when used in conjunction with circle and arc, or with slope to create perspective.



Don't forget that you can combine a number of effects to produce all sorts of results.



Customising FontFX Start-Up Settings

When you run FontFX, for the first time, the control window will show a particular range of settings: font Trinity.Medium, fill colour black, no outline colour, outline thickness 1, X and Y font sizes 72pt and no special effects selected. You may wish to change this selection, and this is easily done.

First set up what you want - perhaps you want a wall shadow, or a rotation effect. When the control window shows everything as you want it, bring up the 'main menu' and slide across the **Save** option. You will find two options, '**Drawing**' and '**Settings**'. Slide across '**Settings**' to open the **Save Settings** save box. You can also get to this point just by clicking on the 'Save settings' icon in the toolbox. Now click **SELECT** or **ADJUST** on '**As default**', and then on '**OK**': your current set-up will be saved back into FontFX. Next time you run FontFX, these settings will be restored.

ScriptFiles

When you save your personal settings as described in the above paragraph, you are actually saving a '*scriptfile*'. This is a file containing commands which FontFX understands to set up the control window. You can open a save box for such a scriptfile at any time, by sliding across the '**Settings**' option in the **Save** submenu or by clicking on the '**Save settings**' icon in the toolbox. You can also do it by pressing **Ctrl-F3** whilst the caret is in the text icon. A standard save box will appear, and you can drag the icon into a directory viewer to save a scriptfile containing the current settings, or transfer it directly to !Edit if you like.

Note that when you save settings in this way, whatever text string is shown in the control window will also be saved, but if you save Defaults as described above, the text string is NOT saved.

Preparing Script Files for FontFX

The above method saves the current string and settings automatically into a scriptfile, but you could create such a scriptfile manually if you like. A scriptfile can also contain a number of strings with their special effect settings which will be created one after another. If you have included the appropriate commands in your script file, FontFX can also go straight ahead and create each drawfile, and then save it or transfer it straight to !Draw. Otherwise, when the first string has been dealt with, and you are ready for the next string (if there is one), just click on the word '**Text:**' next to the text box, and the next string will be inserted, and the next selection of special effects will be set.

The FontFX Command language.

All the facilities of FontFX can be selected by using the FontFX command language in your script files. Before discussing how you can write the script files, here is a list of all the commands, with their syntax. Where parameters are required, they are shown in angled brackets. Where a parameter is optional, it is also shown in round brackets. If a parameter is shown as **<angle>** it can have a value between 0 and 360. If a parameter is shown as **<colour>** it can have a value between 0 and &FFFFFF. Other parameters are described in the text.

<a blank line>	A blank line in a script file is taken to mean the end of a 'packet'. A packet is a group of commands, optionally including a text string. Each packet is taken as an entity by FontFX, and execution of a script file will pause at a blank line, only to continue when you click on the icon 'Text:' in the control window. You can force FontFX to continue beyond a blank line by including the command \TR in a packet (see below).
<textstring>	Any line in the script file which does NOT start with a \ will be taken as a text string to be converted. If you want to start your text string with the character '\', start it with two '\'s to avoid confusion with any commands.
*<textstring>	Comment line - has no effect at all.
\AA<angle>	Anticlockwise arc of angle <angle>.
\AC<angle>	Clockwise arc of angle <angle>.
\BE	Activates the border effect.
\CA<angle>	Anticlockwise circle, with the text starting <angle> degrees around the circle.
\CB<angle>	Bi-directional circle, with the text starting <angle> degrees around the circle.
\CC<angle>	Clockwise circle, with the text starting <angle> degrees around the circle.
\CO	Activates the column effect.
\CR(<filename>)	Create drawfile and pop up the save box, optionally inserting the <filename> in the save box filename field. This command is only acted upon when FontFX detects the end of a 'packet' of commands - see above for details of what a 'packet' is.
\DE	Defaults. This command restores FontFX to the special effect settings that are set up when you first run the program.
\FC(<colour>)	Fill colour <colour>. If <colour> is omitted, fill colour will be set to 'none'. If <colour> is 'R', the rainbow option will be set.
\FO<fontname>	Font name <fontname>. Remember to separate the different elements of a font name with full stops, e.g. Corpus.Bold.Oblique
\FS<colour>	Floor Shadow of colour <colour>
\GR	Grow effect enabled.
\IS<code>	Internal shape for circle. <code> can be one of the following: C Circle D Diamond P Pentangle S Square
\JI	Activates the jiggle effect.
\LE<angle>	Lean at angle <angle>.
\OC(<colour>)	Outline Colour <colour>. If <colour> is omitted, outline colour will be set to 'None'.
\OT<value>	Outline Thickness <value>. <value> can be between 1 and 5.
\RB	Activates the rainbow effect.
\RC <colour> <colour> (<colour>...)	Defines the sequence of colours in the rainbow effect. A minimum of two colours is necessary, and a maximum of sixteen.
\RI	Activates the ripple effect.
\RO<angle>	Rotate by angle <angle>
\RS	Replace spaces with dots.
\SC<value>	Size to value <value>. <value> can be between 1 and 999 in points. This affects both the X and Y sizes together. This command exists to retain compatibility with early versions of FontFX and you should use SX and SY (see below) in preference in any new work.
\SD <angle>	Shadow direction of angle <angle>.
\SF <value>	Shadow 'fall' (length or distance). <value> can be between 1 and 40, 7 being normal. 1 would make the shadow very close to the original, whereas 40 would make it a long way away.
\SH	Shrink option enabled.
\SL<angle>	Slope to angle <angle>.
\ST<code>	Stencil, with frame size <code>. <code> can be S, M or L.

\SX<value>	X Size to value <value>. <value> can be between 1 and 999 in points. If this command is included in a script file but there is no corresponding SY command (see below), the X AND Y sizes will both be set to <value> and the Y=X option will be selected.
\SY<value>	Y Size to value <value>. <value> can be between 1 and 999 in points. This command can be omitted if you want the X and Y sizes to be equal - see SX above. On the other hand, if the Y=X option is currently set, and you load a script file that contains an SY command but NOT an SX command, the Y=X option will be unset, and the Y size altered to <value> but the X size left unaltered.
\TB	Switches the toolbox (attached to the side of the main control window) on.
\TH	'Then...' option enabled (in conjunction with 'Grow' or 'Shrink').
\TR(<filename>)	Transfer, i.e. create drawfile, and immediately save it into a file of name <filename>. If no filename is given, the drawfile will be transferred straight into !Draw (if it is already running or can be located on your discs). Like, \CR, this command is only executed at the end of a packet. However, if there is another packet following on in the script file, the \TR command will force FontFX, after transferring the drawfile, to start execution of the next packet in the scriptfile.
\TS<colour>	3D Shadow with the rear of the shadow effect of colour <colour>.
\WS<colour>	Wall Shadow of colour <colour>.

All commands can be negated by prefixing the code with an 'X', for example 'XBE' means deactivate the border effect.

Layout of a script file

Script files can be fairly free in format, but the following rules apply:

1. If there is more than one packet in a scriptfile, they must be separated by a blank line.
2. All commands must start on a new line.
3. All commands have to be in capital letters, i.e. \CIA, not \cia.
4. Parameters, where given, can either run straight on from the command, or be separated from the command by a space, i.e. \CI A or \CIA.
5. You should only enter \X commands to cancel settings if those settings would not otherwise be cancelled by other commands in your file. For example, you should not follow the command \CIB with the command \XRI, because selecting a circle would automatically cancel ripple anyway. A good idea, if in doubt, is to include the command \DE at the beginning of each packet: this will ensure that no special effects are left set by previous usage of FontFX to disturb the effect of the following packet.
6. Parameters which do not fall in the ranges specified above will be ignored, but no error message will be given.
7. Text strings should be no more than 250 characters long. If they are, they will be truncated to 250 characters.

Summary

As with so many programs, the best way to become fully aware of the many different effects you can achieve using FontFX is to experiment. The Acorn Interactive Help system is fully supported, and it is recommended that you use this whilst you get used to the program. Once you have done so, FontFX will greatly increase the facilities of any desktop publishing package or graphic word processor.

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